

LCQ14: Yaumatei Shelter

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Kwok-hung and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Ms Florence Hui, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

I have learnt that the Yaumatei Shelter ("the existing hostel") of the Street Sleepers' Shelter Society Trustees Incorporated, which is located at 1/F, 345A Shanghai Street, will be demolished and relocated to Hau Cheung Street at Yaumatei under the arrangement by the Government. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether the new hostel will, like the existing hostel, consist of only two storeys, with the street sleepers' shelter and the Salvation Army Day Relief Centre for Street Sleepers on the first floor; given that the current waiting time for single-room placement in urban singleton hostels is as long as four months, whether the Government will consider building a 16-storey new hostel at the new site to provide about 300 single-room places for urban singletons, so as to alleviate the current housing difficulties of urban singletons, including street sleepers;

(b) given that the odour currently emitted from the refuse collection point and the public toilet on the ground floor of the existing hostel directly affects the street sleepers housed in the shelter on the first floor, whether a similar problem will arise in the new hostel; of the details of the design of the new hostel and the nearby community facilities; and

(c) whether it has completed consultation in the district on the construction project of the new hostel?

Reply:

President,

In January 2009, we sought the endorsement of the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) under the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council on the funding application for the conversion of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre (YMTT) and the Red Brick

Building into a xiqu activity centre (now formally named as Yau Ma Tei Theatre). PWSC supported the proposal and suggested relocating the Shanghai Street Refuse Collection Point (RCP), public toilet and the Street Sleepers' Shelter (SSS) adjacent to the YMTT so as to create a better cultural atmosphere and enhance the YMTT's surrounding environment. The Government has actively followed up on PWSC's proposal and identified in 2011 a feasible site at Hau Cheung Street for reprovisioning the RCP and SSS. Since there is no suitable site in the vicinity for relocating the public toilet, it will be reprovisioned at the YMTT Phase II project site.

Regarding the three parts of the questions, my reply is as follows:

(a) As mentioned above, the purpose of the planned reprovisioning project is to make available the existing site for the Phase II development of YMTT. The Social Welfare Department and the current operators, namely Yaumatei Shelter, Street Sleepers' Shelter Society Trustees Incorporated and the Salvation Army Integrated Service for Street Sleepers, undertake to continue the existing dedicated supportive services for street sleepers on the new premises.

(b) In the past four years, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has not received any complaints against bad odour emission from the Shanghai Street RCP and public toilet. The new RCP will be equipped with modernised odour control system (such as water scrubber system) to control the emission of unpleasant odour and avoid causing nuisance to the users of the SSS as far as possible.

(c) The relocation of the Shanghai Street RCP and SSS was discussed at the meetings of Yau Tsim Mong District Council's Community Building Committee in February, May and August 2011, and the proposal was agreed. Subsequently, Yau Tsim Mong District Office carried out a local consultation exercise in January 2012 on the proposed relocation of the Shanghai Street RCP and SSS to a government site at Hau Cheung Street. The proposal received local support in general.

Ends/Wednesday, May 9, 2012

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