

**Business Facilitation Advisory Committee
Food Business and Related Services Task Force**

Provision of Action Timetables for Food Business Licence Applications

Purpose

This paper briefs members on the administrative measures of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on setting action timetables for food business licence applications to facilitate applicants in obtaining full licences in a timely manner.

Background

2. To facilitate food business licence applicants' early compliance with the licensing requirements for a full licence so that they can obtain full licences before the expiry of their provisional licences, the FEHD has introduced a number of measures in various aspects, which include a further reminder about the validity period of the provisional licence in the Letter of Requirements and the letter concerning the provisional licence to remind the applicant of the need for compliance with all licensing requirements for a full licence as soon as possible within that period, reminding the applicant of the expiry date of the provisional licence by email or SMS, and sending a copy of the notification letter on outstanding licensing requirements to the premises under application for the licence. These measures aim to keep business operators updated on the progress of their applications so that they can take appropriate follow-up action.

3. In order to further assist an applicant holding a provisional food business licence to obtain a full licence in a timely manner, the FEHD will set a specific action timetable for each application so that the key dates of the application process are clear at a glance for the applicant.

Action Timetables for Applications

4. The FEHD will set out, in respect of each application, in the notification letter for approval for a provisional food business licence a specific timetable with

suggested dates for relevant actions to be taken by the applicant, including the suggested last action dates for submitting a revised final layout plan and reporting compliance of all licensing requirements, so that the applicant can take clear note of the important dates and take timely action to obtain a full licence in due course.

Revised Deadline for Compliance with the Licensing Requirements for a Full Licence

5. In addition, under the prevailing licensing policy, the time allowed for a food business licence applicant to comply with all licensing requirements for a full licence is six months after the expiry of the provisional licence or 12 months after the issue of the Letter of Requirements for a full licence (if only a full licence application is made or no provisional licence has been issued), unless the applicant can demonstrate that the delay in meeting the licensing requirements is due to factors beyond his reasonable control. The application for a full food business licence will be deemed withdrawn if the licensing requirements are not fully met after the above period of time. However, FEHD's records showed that most applicants who had failed to obtain a full licence before the expiry of the provisional license were able to obtain a full licence within the subsequent one or two months.

6. With a view to further rationalising the licensing mechanism, the above deadline for compliance with the licensing requirements for a full food business licence has been revised from six months after the expiry of the provisional licence to three months after the expiry of the provisional licence. If the licensing requirements are not fully met after the deadline, the application for a full food business licence will be deemed withdrawn. This revised requirement is applicable to all food business licence applications submitted on or after 1 March 2023.

Advice Sought

7. Members are invited to note and comment on the contents of this paper.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
April 2023