

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB208

(Question Serial No. 3057)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Ms Michelle LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

It is stated under Programme (5) that the Government will strengthen the library collection to provide a balanced mix of library materials for free use by the public. Will the Government provide the following information:

What are the respective designed library collection sizes for major, district and small libraries this year? What is the current average collection size of all libraries in the territory? Which three libraries have the largest collection sizes and which three have the smallest?

How do libraries with a large collection size handle the routine acquisition of new books? Is there any mechanism in place to transfer their books to libraries with a small collection size? Which sections are responsible for acquiring library books and monitoring the collection size this year? What are the numbers of staff and posts, and the amount of expenditure involved?

What are the criteria for the disposal of public library books and the ways to deal with the stock that requires disposal? How many public library books were disposed of in the past three years? Please provide a breakdown of reasons for the disposal. What is the total value of the disposed books? What are the quantity and the total value of the library books donated to non-profit making organisations?

What are the estimated collection size and the area of the new Yuen Chau Kok Public Library and Fanling (South) Public Library to be commissioned in the coming year? Has the Government received any requests from District Councillors to provide additional libraries this year? If so, how many District Councils (DCs) have made such requests and what are these DC districts? Has the Government accepted the requests made by the DCs? If so, what are the DC districts whose requests have been accepted? When are the works of the additional libraries expected to commence? When will the works be completed?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (Member Question No. 64)

Reply:

The initial stocks of a new major library and a new district library are about 280 000 items and 140 000 items respectively upon commissioning of service. As the size of small libraries varies, their initial stocks vary as well. As of February 2016, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) has a collection of 14.20 million items of library materials. The 3 libraries with the highest number of stock items are Hong Kong Central Library, Kowloon Public Library and City Hall Public Library, which are central or major libraries. The 3 libraries with the lowest number of stock items are South Lamma Public Library, North Lamma Public Library and Sha Tau Kok Public Library, which are small libraries with a smaller floor size and hence can only accommodate a limited stock of library items.

The HKPL provides a network of 68 static libraries and 12 mobile libraries, which are inter-connected by an integrated automated library system to provide convenient access to a wide range of library collections for people from all walks of life irrespective of their locations. Readers can access the entire library stock of the HKPL by searching and reserving library materials for pick up at any library of their choice. The acquisition and processing of new library materials are handled centrally by the Technical Processing Unit (TPU) of the HKPL. TPU has a staff establishment of 78, comprising Librarian grade staff and supporting staff such as Clerical grade officers, Typists and Cultural Service Assistants. The total staff cost of TPU in 2015-16 is about \$29.35 million.

The HKPL writes off unserviceable library books in accordance with the Disposal Procedures laid down in Government's Stores and Procurement Regulations. In general, library books will be written off when (a) the library items become worn out/damaged; or (b) the information contained is outdated. The numbers of library books disposed in the past 3 years are about 600 000 volumes (2013-14), 400 000 volumes (2014-15) and 50 000 volumes (April 2015 to February 2016) respectively. The HKPL does not have a breakdown by the stated categories of disposal. The monetary value of the written off items after depreciation should be insignificant. 168 items of books that were considered as surplus to library needs had been donated to 9 community libraries in late 2015. The monetary value of these donated items after depreciation was insignificant. Apart from donations, the HKPL arranges disposal of unserviceable materials by contracting paper recycling services.

The initial stock of the new Yuen Chau Kok Public Library, a district library, is about 140 000 items upon commissioning of service and the floor area of the library is 2 900 square metres (m²). The initial stock of the new Fanling South Public Library, a small library, is about 41 000 items upon commissioning of service and the floor area of the library is about 560 m². In 2015, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has received proposals on the provision of additional library facilities from 4 District Councils, namely Central and Western, Eastern, Sha Tin and Yau Tsim Mong. The LCSD has critically reviewed the proposals and considered that in general, the existing provision of public library facilities in all districts has already met the standards set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. Nonetheless, in response to the community needs, the LCSD has decided to further enhance the public library facilities in the Eastern and Sha Tin districts where the LCSD is planning a new district library in Lei King Wan and identifying a suitable site for a small library in Tai Wai area. For the Yau Tsim Mong district, the request is under study. The LCSD will closely monitor the utilisation of libraries in various districts and continue to enhance library services in various aspects to

cope with the community development.

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