

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB449

(Question Serial No. 3885)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

Regarding the operation of public libraries, will the Government inform this Committee:

- (a) of the number and expenditure of new books acquired by the public libraries in 2015-16; and among such books, the number of books first published in 2015-16;
- (b) of the number of public library books disposed of in 2015-16 and the ways of their disposal, with a breakdown by individual public library.
- (c) of the number of loans of public library materials in the past 5 years, with a breakdown by year and type of materials.
- (d) given that book sanitisers have been provided in public libraries in neighbouring regions for sanitising books for hygienic purpose, whether the Government will consider the introduction of such kind of equipment; if so, of the details; if not, of the reasons for that?

Asked by: Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok (Member Question No. 374)

Reply:

- (a) In 2015-16, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) plans to purchase 770 000 new books with an estimated expenditure of \$52 million. The HKPL does not keep information on the number of books first published among the books acquired.
- (b) Weeding is an on-going process to ensure the vitality and usefulness of the collections to the community and to make room for new materials. 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books will be written off when (i) the library items become worn out/damaged; or (ii) the information contained is outdated. The total number of library books of the HKPL withdrawn for disposal in 2015-16 (April 2015 to February 2016) was about 50 000. Withdrawal of library materials is conducted according to the above stated criteria for

the whole library collection. The HKPL arranges disposal of unserviceable books by contracting paper recycling service.

- (c) The total number of loans by types of library materials in the past 5 years are as follows:

| Type of library materials | Total number of loans (million) | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Chinese books | 43.97 | 41.45 | 40.81 | 38.93 | 37.77 |
| English books | 11.49 | 11.86 | 12.07 | 11.60 | 11.42 |
| Others | 3.04 | 2.85 | 2.66 | 2.33 | 2.15 |
| Total* | 58.50 | 56.15 | 55.54 | 52.86 | 51.34 |

* The figures may not add up due to rounding.

- (d) The HKPL has all along followed the guidelines of the Department of Health by conducting regular cleaning of library facilities and adopting measures to prevent the growth and spread of bacteria. When handling library materials returned by readers and carrying out routine shelving of library materials, library staff will remove those with stains or dirt for cleaning and disinfection. Alcohol-based handrub is also available at all public libraries for public members to clean and disinfect their hands. In view of high circulation of library materials and the limited capacity of a book sanitiser, it is considered not cost effective to provide book sanitisers in public libraries.

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