

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**HAB527**

**(Question Serial No. 4769)**

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:

Please provide the following information:

- (a) The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) indicated that an opinion survey was conducted in the second half of 2014 to gauge public views on public library services and that it would be completed by the end of 2015. What are the findings of the opinion survey? What are the follow-up measures taken by the LCSD to further improve the services?
- (b) It is noted that, in general, libraries have higher attendance during weekends and after-school hours. Will the Department consider redeploying resources and manpower so as to make available more resources and manpower during sessions with higher attendance? If so, or if the Department has any specific plans, please provide the estimates for the 2016-17 financial year.
- (c) At present, how many MTR stations are provided with book drops? What are their usage rates? What is the total expenditure incurred for the Department in the provision and operation of book drops in 2015-16?
- (d) Does the LCSD have any plans to extend the book drop service to more MTR stations? What are the details and the estimated expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (Member Question No. 72)

Reply:

- (a) The Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) conducted an opinion survey in 2014-15 to gauge public's opinions on the prevailing public library services and their future needs. The findings showed that 85.6% of library users were satisfied with the services and facilities of public libraries, 97.5% of them were satisfied with the customer services provided by the library staff, and 98.8% were satisfied with the overall library environment. Lending services and reference services recorded

satisfaction rates of 82.4% and 82.6% respectively. The HKPL will further study and analyse the data obtained from the survey to further enhance the library services to meet the rising expectations of users and also to attract non-users to use public library services and facilities.

- (b) The HKPL plans and deploys its resources taking into account the attendance and usage patterns during peak and non-peak sessions.

Apart from having a dedicated team of staff to provide core services, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) also leverages on the use of technology to encourage self-service and enhance efficiency. In addition to introducing the self-charging terminals for borrowing of library materials across the library network, using Octopus cards for collecting library fees and charges, providing digital service workstations to all static libraries, the LCSD also launched the online payment service for overdue fines/reservation fees and the provision of self-service booking system for digital service workstations of libraries in 2015. Together with the active development of the “Library without walls” that provides a rich and comprehensive collection of electronic resources through the library’s workstations and Internet for remote access by the public, all these measures have been smoothly implemented, bringing more efficient and better quality services to the public.

- (c) The book drop service is currently provided at 3 major MTR interchange stations, namely Central, Kowloon Tong and Nam Cheong. In 2015, a monthly average of 15 612, 16 311 and 6 654 library books were returned through the book drops at the 3 MTR stations respectively. The estimated expenditure to be incurred in 2015-16 is \$3.69 million, which covers the hiring of logistics services for collecting, checking in, sorting and delivering the returned books to the respective libraries.

- (d) The LCSD completed a review on the book drop service at the 3 MTR stations in early 2013 by examining its usage statistics as well as the public views collected through an opinion survey. The findings showed that while the service was generally welcome by the public, the usage of the service was below the planned capacity as the majority of readers still preferred visiting the libraries in person to return and borrow books on the same occasion. Despite the gradual increase in usage over the past 3 years, the monthly average usage of the service at the 3 stations in 2015 was only about 44% of the planned capacity. In view of the high recurrent cost involved (around \$8 per returned book) and the readers’ habit of using the library service, the LCSD has no plan to extend the book drop service to more MTR stations using the current mode of operation.

To explore other mode for delivery of public library services beyond library premises, the LCSD plans to provide on a trial basis in 2017-18 3 self-service library units, one each on Hong Kong Island, in Kowloon and in the New Territories, at locations with heavier pedestrian flow and far from existing libraries. The self-service units will provide round-the-clock library services on borrowing, returning, picking up reserved library materials, and payment of library fees and charges through Octopus.