

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB469

(Question Serial No. 3711)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

1. Did the Government conduct timely review of the usage rates of the public libraries in all the 18 districts in the past 5 years? If so, what were the details and the expenditures involved? Did the Government conduct public consultations in all the 18 districts in the past 5 years on the provision of additional libraries? If so, what were the details and the expenditures involved? Does the Government have any plan to review the usage rates of the public libraries in all the 18 districts in 2017-18? If so, what are the details and the estimated expenditures involved? Does the Government have any plan to provide additional public libraries in all the 18 districts in 2017-18? If so, what are the details and the estimated expenditures involved?
2. Did the Government conduct timely review of the usage rates of the mobile library vans in all the 18 districts in the past 5 years? If so, what were the details and the expenditures involved? Did the Government conduct public consultations in all the 18 districts in the past 5 years on the provision of additional mobile library vans? If so, what were the details and the expenditures involved? Does the Government have any plan to review the usage rates of the mobile library vans in all the 18 districts in 2017-18? If so, what are the details and the estimated expenditures involved? Does the Government have any plan to provide additional mobile library vans in all the 18 districts in 2017-18? If so, what are the details and the estimated expenditures involved?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (Member Question No. 542)

Reply:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is committed to enhancing the quality, accessibility and cost-effectiveness of public library services on a continuous basis. Apart from monitoring the patronage and usage statistics, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) also conducts periodic public opinion surveys at the territory-wide level, and holds annual customer liaison group meetings, focus group meetings with teacher-librarians,

community bodies/non-profit making organisations, etc. at the district level to gauge public views on its services, facilities and collection as well as their future needs.

The latest territory-wide “Opinion Survey on Hong Kong Public Libraries” was conducted in 2014-15 to collect public opinions on the prevailing public library services and their future needs. The cost of the survey was about \$0.9 million. The findings showed that 85.6% of library users were satisfied with the services and facilities of public libraries. An Executive Summary of the survey report is available at the HKPL’s web-site.

In considering the provision of new public libraries, the Government will take into account a host of factors including the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, current provision and utilisation of existing libraries at the territory-wide and district levels, demographic characteristics and changes, changing needs of the community, views of District Councils (DCs), site availability and technical feasibility.

In 2017-18, the LCSD plans to open the reprovisioned Yuen Long Public Library, which is part of the capital works project under 49RG - Public Library and Indoor Recreation Centre in Area 3, Yuen Long at a total estimated cost of \$704.1 million.

Apart from planning new libraries or reprovisioning/upgrading existing ones, the LCSD will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach in strengthening library services, including leveraging on the new and information technology (e.g. via the online and mobile platforms) to continue enhancing the round-the-clock online library services, developing the electronic library resources such as e-books and digitised materials for public enjoyment at their own time and their own place, and expanding the network of community libraries in suitable locations in collaboration with non-government organisations and district groups so as to extend public library services to different segments of the community.

Regarding mobile library services, the above survey recorded an overall satisfaction rate of 78.6%. Apart from conducting surveys, the LCSD regularly monitors and reviews its mobile library services and maintains an on-going dialogue with the DCs on the provision of services and service stops. Having regard to the views of the DCs and the findings of the reviews, the LCSD has enhanced the mobile library service progressively since July 2014 by introducing 2 new mobile library vans and reshuffling the routes of the existing mobile library vans. Since then, 17 new mobile library stops have been added or are being arranged. The visiting frequency of 9 existing mobile library stops with high usage or potentially high usage has also increased. The cost of conducting the above reviews was absorbed by the existing manpower resources.

The LCSD will continue to monitor and review the usage of its static and mobile library services having regard to the public views collected through various channels, for the effective utilisation of resources to better serve the public.

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