

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB192

(Question Serial No. 2211)

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 mentioned in the Budget that an additional \$200 million will be allocated to the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) in the coming 5 years to promote reading among children and families. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) What initiatives or plans did the HKPL adopt to promote reading among children and families in the past 3 years? What were the expenditures involved each year? In the coming year, what initiatives or plans will the HKPL adopt to promote reading among children and families and what will be the expenditures involved?
- (b) With regard to the additional \$200 million to be allocated, how will the HKPL make use of the additional resources to promote reading?
- (c) In the coming year, how will the Leisure and Cultural Services Department work with the Education Bureau, community partners, local authors and publishers to promote the culture of reading for all?

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 49)

Reply:

- (a) The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) adopts a multi-pronged approach in promoting public library services and nurturing a reading culture in the community. A series of measures were put in place in the past 3 years to promote reading among children and parents –
 - (i) organising a wide variety of reading activities at the territory-wide level to promote family and children's reading. The actual expenditures borne by the LCSD in organising these territory-wide reading activities in 2015-16 and 2016-17 were \$2.04 million and \$1.94 million respectively. The estimated expenditure for 2017-18 is \$2.48 million.
 - (ii) collaborating with the District Councils (DCs) and local organisations to organise diversified extension activities with DC funding. The expenditures for 2015-16

and 2016-17 were \$1.48 million and \$1.55 million respectively. The estimated expenditure for 2017-18 is \$1.8 million.

- (iii) supporting the Education Bureau (EDB), schools and other educational bodies by providing block loan services and implementing a “Library Cards for All School Children” scheme and other initiatives. Expenditure for providing the services is included in the annual provisions under Programme (5) Public Libraries.
- (iv) maintaining a rich and balanced library collection by acquiring around an annual average of 0.8 million items of new print and audio-visual library materials in the past 3 years, acquiring or subscribing to 9 e-book collections and 65 e-databases as well as enhancing the digitised collection. The expenditures on the acquisition of library materials for 2015-16 and 2016-17 were \$97 million and \$98 million respectively. The estimated expenditure for 2017-18 is \$96 million; and
- (v) launching a pilot scheme in 2017-18 to provide 3 self-service library stations, 1 each on Hong Kong Island, in Kowloon and in the New Territories at convenient locations with heavier pedestrian flow and far from existing libraries. In 2017-18, the non-recurrent cost and the recurrent cost for the first library station are estimated at about \$2.6 million and \$0.7 million respectively. The LCSD has earmarked \$3.5 million for the daily operation and maintenance of the library stations in 2018-19.

(b) and (c)

In 2018-19, apart from continuing the on-going measures mentioned in paragraph (a) above, the LCSD will make use of the additional allocation of \$200 million from the 2018-19 to 2022-23 financial years to launch new initiatives to promote reading in Hong Kong. The LCSD will work with the EDB, community partners, local authors and publishers in organising activities at the territory-wide and district levels. Initial proposals include –

- (i) re-branding and promotion of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) as a joyful and interesting place for reading and exploration;
- (ii) launching large-scale Reading-for-All campaigns to foster partnership with different community sectors in promoting reading culture;
- (iii) out-reaching programmes targeting young children in kindergartens and child care centres;
- (iv) community engagement programmes such as “Storytelling Ambassador Programme”;
- (v) minor refurbishment of libraries to create joyful and lively ambience to attract children and family visitors;
- (vi) collaboration with local authors and the publishing sector in organising reading and literary art activities; and
- (vii) launching a three-month pilot scheme in the third quarter of 2018 to extend the opening hours on Sundays and public holidays in 3 selected public libraries on Hong Kong Island, in Kowloon and in the New Territories. The 3 selected libraries will be open until 8:00 p.m. on Sundays and Public Holidays during the period.

The proposed initiatives aim to instil a reading culture across the territory. Programmes are planned on both the territory-wide and district-levels involving the entire HKPL network. In the process, the LCSD will seek to foster community partnership in order to

promote shared vision, create synergy and enhance visibility and impact. Priority will be placed on attracting new readers especially young children, youth and families.

The initiatives will involve an additional allocation of about \$200 million spanning over a period of 5 years, covering programme costs of activities, procurement of children books, minor refurbishment for libraries, expenses for the engagement of design and supporting services, publicity and promotion, and time-limited manpower support for the projects. The LCSD will review the merits and effectiveness of the programmes on an on-going basis by gauging the feedbacks of stakeholders and the general public.

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