

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1238)

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 in the Budget that \$200 million will be allocated to libraries to promote reading among children and families in the coming 5 years. Please provide the following information:

1. What are the details? Which libraries will implement the programme and what are the expenditures involved every year?
2. How to assess whether the programme can effectively achieve its objective of promoting the culture of reading for all? Will the use of the provision be scrapped if results are not satisfactory? Or will adjustments be allowed, such as accepting open applications from schools or non-governmental organisations, etc?

Asked by: Hon YEUNG Alvin (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 69)

Reply:

An additional allocation of \$200 million will be provided to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) 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 Education Bureau, community partners, local authors and publishers in organising activities at the territory-wide and district-level. Initial proposals include –

- (a) re-branding and promotion of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) as a joyful and interesting place for reading and exploration;
- (b) launching large-scale Reading-for-All campaigns to foster partnership with different community sectors in promoting reading culture;
- (c) out-reaching programmes targeting young children in kindergartens and child care centres;
- (d) community engagement programmes such as “Storytelling Ambassador Programme”;
- (e) minor refurbishment of libraries to create joyful and lively ambience to attract children and family visitors;

- (f) collaboration with local authors and the publishing sector in organising reading and literary art activities; and
- (g) 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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