

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**HAB413**

**(Question Serial No. 5355)**

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:

The Hong Kong Public Libraries currently provides book drops at 3 Mass Transit Railway (MTR) stations:

1. Please provide the annual usage of book drops at each station over the past 3 years, as measured by the number of books; and
2. Does the Department have any plans to provide book drops at more MTR stations or other public areas? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon IP Kin-yuen (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 76)

Reply:

1. The total number of library books returned through the book drops at 3 major Mass Transit Railway (MTR) interchange stations in the past 3 years is set out in the table below:

Year	Central Station	Kowloon Tong Station	Nam Cheong Station
2015	187 346	195 736	79 840
2016	193 303	187 897	78 470
2017	206 623	187 077	81 179

2. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has provided book drop service under a trial scheme at 3 major MTR interchange stations, namely Central, Kowloon Tong and Nam Cheong since late September 2011. The review on the scheme conducted in 2013 revealed that the service was under-utilised as most readers still preferred visiting the libraries in person to return and borrow books on the same occasion. The monthly average usage of the book drop service in 2017 was about 45% of the planned capacity. In consideration of the habits and preference of the library users and the cost-effectiveness of the service, the LCSD has no plan to extend the service to more MTR stations at this stage.

On the other hand, the LCSD has launched a pilot scheme 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, offering round-the-clock services such as borrowing, return, payment and pickup of reserved library materials. The first library station in the Eastern District was opened on 5 December 2017 while the remaining 2 in the Yau Tsim Mong District and the Sha Tin District respectively are planned to be opened by phases in the second half of 2018 tentatively. The LCSD will conduct a review in 2018-19 to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot scheme taking into account the utilisation, cost effectiveness, feedback of the users, sustainability and complementarity with other library services.

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