

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**HAB404**

Question Serial No.

5030

Head: 95 – Leisure and Cultural Services  
Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

- (a) In recent years, the Administration has repeatedly increased funding for reprovisioning public libraries/setting up new libraries and creating additional posts. Has the Administration assessed and followed up on the staffing and public usage of public libraries in the 18 districts on a regular basis? If so, please state the details. If not, what are the reasons? Is there any mismatch of resources? Is there any imbalance in workload and manpower distribution between frontline staff and others which affects the work efficiency and morale of library staff and the provision of public services?
- (b) Besides, regarding the libraries which have a high number of users, does the Administration have any plans to extend their opening hours on, say weekends and public holidays? What are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. MOK, Charles Peter

Reply:

- (a) 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. To this end, LCSD adopts a three-pronged approach, i.e., strengthening the library network through setting up new libraries and reprovisioning/upgrading existing libraries thereby providing a more comfortable and spacious environment for users; adopting information technology to increase the accessibility and user-friendliness of library services and achieving greater cost-effectiveness in service provision; and outsourcing non-core library functions (e.g. sorting and shelving of library materials) to service providers. Civil service posts are created only to provide core services (e.g. counter services, readers' registration and reservation of library materials, library extension activities and clerical duties) of new libraries and to replace non-civil service contract positions in existing libraries which have long-term service needs.

Specifically, the introduction of self-charging terminals for borrowing of library materials across the library network, the use of Octopus cards for collecting library fees and charges, the installation of electronic lockers to replace cloakroom service, and the pilot use of the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for handling self-service borrowing and returning of library materials, as well as outsourcing of non-core library services such as processing of new library materials, sorting and shelving of library materials and patrolling duties have helped reducing the workload of frontline staff, thereby enabling them to attend to the core duties and provide better customer services. So far, these measures have been smoothly implemented, bringing more efficient and better quality services to the public and enriching the job content of frontline staff.

