

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**HAB148**

**(Question Serial No. 3024)**

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

1. What were the number of library materials returned through each of the book drops at major Mass Transit Railway (MTR) interchange stations and the usage rates (i.e. the percentage of usage over the maximum capacity of each book drop) in the past 3 years?
2. What was the handling cost for each material returned through book drops at major MTR interchange stations in the past 3 years? What was the additional expenditure incurred in each of the financial years? What will the estimated expenditure in the coming year be?
3. Upon the completion of a review on the trial scheme in 2013, did the Government conduct any other review on the effectiveness of providing book drops at MTR stations? Is there any plan to provide book drops at more MTR stations, transport interchanges or other public places?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (LegCo internal reference no.: 102)

Reply:

1. The total number of library books returned through the book drops at 3 major Mass Transit Railway (MTR) interchange stations and the usage rates<sup>(1)</sup> in the past 3 years are set out in the table below:

| Year                | Central Station       |            | Kowloon Tong Station  |            | Nam Cheong Station    |            |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
|                     | Total number of books | Usage rate | Total number of books | Usage rate | Total number of books | Usage rate |
| 2018                | 203 946               | 58%        | 180 124               | 51%        | 79 268                | 23%        |
| 2019                | 165 475               | 47%        | 158 240               | 45%        | 74 474                | 21%        |
| 2020 <sup>(2)</sup> | 65 609                | 29%        | 62 389                | 27%        | 39 497                | 17%        |

## Notes

- (1) At each of the MTR stations, there are 4 book drops, each of which can contain 120 books, and the books are collected twice daily. The maximum capacity for each MTR station is 960 books a day.

$$\text{Usage rate} = \frac{\text{Number of books returned}}{\text{Total maximum capacity of the book drops}}$$

- (2) In view of the COVID-19 epidemic situation, public library service and book drop service at the 3 major MTR interchange stations were suspended intermittently in 2020, leading to a decline in usage rates of book drops at MTR interchange stations.
2. The handling cost for each library book returned through book drops at major MTR interchange stations in 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 is \$9.12, \$11.30 and \$18.82 (estimated) respectively, and the expenditure on repair and maintenance is \$110,000, \$120,000 and \$130,000 (estimated) respectively. While continual easing of the epidemic may lead to gradual increase in usage, it is expected that the estimated expenditure in 2021-22 will be comparable to those of the past 2 years since a minimum monthly service charge has to be paid to the contractor as required in the logistics service contract.
3. 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. A review was conducted on the scheme in 2013. Since then, the LCSD has been paying close attention to the usage and effectiveness of the book drop service, and there has been a slight increase in the usage rate. The service has not been used to its full capacity mainly because most readers still prefer visiting the libraries in person to return and borrow books on the same occasion. Taking into account 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 or other public areas at this stage.

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