

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2335)

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:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2021-22 that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will continue to actively promote reading culture in the community to tie in with the reading-for-all campaign "Discover and Share the Joy of Reading". In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) What initiatives or plans did the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) adopt to promote reading in the territory (especially among children and families) in the past year? In particular, what additional initiatives were adopted to promote reading under the epidemic? What are the expenditures involved? In the coming year, what initiatives or plans will the HKPL adopt to promote reading and what will be the expenditures involved?
- (b) The LCSD has been allocated an additional \$200 million for promotion of reading for the financial years from 2018-19 to 2022-23. What initiatives or plans were adopted to promote reading with the funding in the past year? What are the expenditures involved? What is the current commitment balance?
- (c) In the coming year, how will the LCSD 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 (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

Since 2018-19, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has been working in collaboration with the Education Bureau (EDB) in taking forward the 5-year campaign "Discover and Share the Joy of Reading" to promote a city-wide reading culture.

In 2020-21, in view of the situation of COVID-19, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) further enhanced the promotion of its e-services, including "Online Registration for Borrowers" and the e-book promotion campaign "Take a Break - eReading Corner", to facilitate readers' access to e-book collections upon login with their library accounts. The

HKPL also organised reading activities both online and in-situ for public participation. Over 2 000 reading promotion activities were organised during the year. The expenditure involved in the above promotion activities/programmes was absorbed within the recurrent expenditure for the reading promotion campaign of the LCSD.

In 2021-22, the HKPL will continue to launch large-scale publicity programmes under the theme of “Discover and Share the Joy of Reading” to encourage reading for all. The programmes include:

- (i) continuing to organise over 9 000 reading promotion activities in collaboration with the EDB, education sector, community organisations, District Councils, local authors and publishers. Reading promotion activities such as the World Book Day, Summer Reading Fiesta, Library Festival were organised online and in-situ;
- (ii) extending outreach services to different communities, mainly targeting young children and families;
- (iii) inviting local authors to attend major library promotion activities and strengthening collaboration with the publishers in organising reading and literary art activities;
- (iv) carrying out minor refurbishment works for libraries to create joyful and lively ambience to attract children and family visitors;
- (v) enhancing community engagement by organising promotion activities to engage the public and recruiting people from different sectors in the community to plan activities together or to serve as storytelling ambassadors; and
- (vi) strengthening publicity through different channels/platforms and interacting with readers through social media and interactive platforms to arouse public awareness of leisure and purposeful reading.

In addition to existing resources, additional expenditures estimated at about \$40 million and \$45 million will be required by the HKPL in 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively to cover the staff cost, hiring of contract services and other operational expenses related to the above promotion activities. The balance of the additional resources allocated for the initiatives to promote reading is about \$90 million.

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