

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**CSTB234****(Question Serial No. 0774)**Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not SpecifiedProgramme: (5) Public LibrariesControlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and TourismQuestion:

Regarding mobile libraries and self-service library stations, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- a. the number of mobile library vans in the territory, their distribution, stock size, attendance, number of loans and number of returns, and the expenditure and manpower deployment involved in the past 3 years; as well as the average annual expenditure and manpower for operating a mobile library van;
- b. the number of self-service library stations in the territory, their distribution, stock size, number of loans, number of pickups of reserved library materials and number of returns in the past 3 years; as well as the average annual expenditure and manpower for operating a self-service library station;
- c. Did the Bureau evaluate and compare the effectiveness of the services of mobile library vans and self-service library stations in terms of cost-effectiveness and level of public satisfaction? Did the Bureau consider providing more self-service library stations in various districts to render round-the-clock services such as borrowing, return, payment and pickup of reserved library materials?

Asked by: Hon NGAN Man-yu (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

- (a) to (b) The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) operates 12 mobile libraries, with a total of 111 service stops, providing services for the public across the 18 districts in the territory. The stock size, attendance, number of loans and number of returns of the 12 mobile libraries in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Year	2020	2021	2022
Stock Size	495 030	498 396	495 026
Attendance	78 487	141 845	192 681
Number of Loans	128 095	264 853	235 183
Number of Returns	115 293	299 564	270 674

Note: In line with the Government's monitoring of the COVID-19 epidemic and the implementation of infection control measures, mobile libraries were temporarily closed during 2020 to 2022 intermittently.

The LCSd provides 3 self-service library stations under a trial scheme, 1 each on Hong Kong Island, in Kowloon and in the New Territories at convenient locations with heavier pedestrian flow but far from existing libraries, rendering round-the-clock services such as borrowing, return, payment and pickup of reserved library materials. The stock size, number of loans, number of returns and number of pickups of reserved materials of the 3 self-service library stations located at the Island East Sports Centre Sitting-out Area, Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Kowloon, and Tsuen Nam Road, Tai Wai of the New Territories in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Year	2020	2021	2022
Stock Size	39 678	42 596	44 416
Number of Loans	33 476	40 369	46 023
Number of Returns	73 669	117 545	120 563
Number of Pickups of Reserved Materials	7 554	14 078	17 564

Note: In line with the Government's monitoring of the COVID-19 epidemic and the implementation of infection control measures, self-service library stations temporarily suspended services in 2020 intermittently.

All libraries under the Hong Kong Public Libraries are inter-connected by an integrated automated library system. The total operating expenditures for providing library services are \$1.234 billion, \$1.25 billion and \$1.328 billion in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively, covering staff cost and the costs of library materials, replacement of furniture and equipment, public utilities, system maintenance, store items, rental for libraries at leased premises, hiring of contracted services and other operational expenses. Since many functions are co-ordinated centrally, breakdown on the recurrent operating expenditures incurred by individual libraries (including mobile libraries and self-service library stations) is not available. The government staff establishment for operating 12 mobile libraries is 52, which comprise officers from the Librarian Grade, the Clerical Grades and the Cultural Services Assistant Grade. During the trial scheme of self-service library stations, the LCSd temporarily deploys internal manpower to cover the daily duties at self-service library stations.

- (c) Self-service library stations and mobile libraries enhance the library network by providing complementary services for the public in different modes. Self-service library stations render round-the-clock library services at fixed locations, while mobile libraries provide the public with convenient library services by setting up service stops at different locations across the territory. The LCSd reviews the utilisation of mobile libraries from time to time and collects views from the public on mobile library services through different channels, which include regularly holding reader liaison group gatherings and maintaining close communication with District Councils. Since the commencement of operation of self-service library stations, the LCSd has been collecting usage data for analysing the utilisation of various library stations and has conducted opinion surveys on services of the library stations. Generally speaking, the services provided by mobile libraries and self-service library stations have been well-received by the public.

To enhance the overall library services, the LCSD is now developing a Smart Library System, which will include a full application of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to enable the development of more diversified and user-friendly self-service facilities, such as the provision of additional self-charging terminals and book drops, and the installation of smart lockers for members of the public to pick up reserved materials when libraries are closed. The LCSD will make timely acquisition of book dispensers, book drops, multi-functional kiosks, etc. that are enabled with the new-generation RFID technology for self-service library stations to replace the existing facilities, and will consider providing additional library stations.

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