

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**CSTB236**

**(Question Serial No. 3023)**

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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

Programme: (3) Heritage and Museums, (5) Public Libraries

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism

Question:

While the usage of e-book collections of local public libraries has increased substantially in recent years, the total attendance of libraries and the number of materials borrowed have been decreasing for years. According to the Financial Secretary, the estimated expenditure for 2023-24 is \$1,502 million, representing an increase of 5.2%. It is believed that this is due to the expected increase in the number of library users serviced, the number of books borrowed and the number of staff trained in using online library resources. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What are the attendance figures of various public museums and libraries in various districts in the past financial year?
2. Please tabulate the respective numbers of books that were newly acquired and those that were written off in the past financial year with a breakdown by District Council district.
3. It has been reported by the media in recent years that quite a number of library books are suspected of teaching young people to evade criminal liabilities and undermining law-abiding awareness by deliberately depicting the "grey area" in law. Are there any measures in place to regularly review such library books so as to examine whether they contain any undesirable notions and are still suitable to remain in the library collection?
4. Libraries all over the world are facing the same challenges. To reform the library functions, it is a major trend to tie in with community needs and develop libraries into hubs of activities and learning for the public, narrowing down the knowledge gap among people. Will the Government consider integrating libraries into the community, and trying to provide ancillary facilities such as musical performance areas, music rehearsal rooms and theatres in addition to books for loan by the public, similar to libraries in western countries, so as to allow the public to enjoy different services, thereby diversifying knowledge delivery to the public and increasing the number of library visitors?

5. Will the Government set up book-floating points and make available at these points, for members of the public to freely take away for reading, those books which have been written-off by public libraries each year but are still in readable conditions, and will the Government, by making reference to the aforesaid overseas practices, reform public library services with a view to promoting a reading culture through a multi-pronged approach? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
6. Did the Government conduct any study on the reading habit of Hong Kong people during the epidemic, and assess how the lethargic reading culture had affected (i) Hong Kong's competitiveness, (ii) the cultural literacy of members of the public and (iii) their language competency? If yes, what are the details? If not, will the Government consider conducting the relevant studies and further promoting a reading culture in the territory?

Asked by: Hon SHANG Hailong (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

1. Attendance figures of museums and public libraries under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in the past financial year are set out at **Annex**.
2. The Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) maintains an integrated and inter-connected network of static libraries and mobile libraries with access to its entire library collection. Acquisition and withdrawal of library materials are processed centrally, and books can be transferred between libraries from time to time. The number of books acquired and withdrawn by the HKPL in the past financial year are tabulated below:

Financial Year	Number of newly acquired books (items)	Number of books withdrawn (items)
2022-23 (as at 28 February 2023)	660 000	170 000 <sup>(Note)</sup>

Note: The withdrawal of some books for 2022-23 has yet to be approved.

3. The HKPL has been committed to providing a balanced and diversified library collection to meet the needs of people of different ages and sectors for information, research, self learning and profitable use of leisure time. Due emphasis is given to healthy and educational content when procuring books. In addition, library materials are regularly reviewed to ensure conformity with the collection development direction of the HKPL. If any library material is found containing undesirable notions or suspected of breaching the laws of Hong Kong, the matter will be handled in a serious manner. The library materials concerned will be suspended from service and withdrawal will be considered.
4. The LCSD is committed to providing public library services to meet the community's need for knowledge, information, self-learning and continuous education, to support profitable use of leisure time, and to promote local literary arts. In response to the

change of social role of public libraries and the development of Hong Kong society and people's lifestyle, the HKPL has formulated a strategic plan as the blueprint for the development of its services and collected views from the public and local community on library services, facilities, collections and future needs through interaction and communication. In addition to engaging stakeholders, the HKPL has also conducted opinion surveys and usage and data analysis, while making reference to the experience of public library systems in different parts of the world, in order to leverage its role of promoting reading and lifelong learning as well as making libraries become the community's cultural focal points.

The HKPL adopts a multi-pronged approach to continuously develop, enhance and promote library services in order to keep abreast of the needs of the public and social development. As for the development of hardware, new library facilities are planned as appropriate, having regard to district development, the availability of resources and technical feasibility, which includes actively exploring the feasibility of incorporating library facilities into other development projects of cultural and recreation/community/public service facilities of the Government, so as to optimise the use of sites zoned for "Government, Institution or Community" uses, thus enhancing the synergy of the service delivery of new facilities to bring greater convenience and appeal to the public. In addition, the LCSD will carry out renovation/minor refurbishment at existing libraries for facility enhancement where it is technically feasible and resources are available. Design elements will be employed for creation/flexible use of space, with user-friendly facilities. With improved library facilities as well as enhanced reading environment and ambience, libraries can meet the needs of different stakeholders with inviting facilities, and turn into cultural focal points. For example, parent-child reading areas are provided in children's libraries where facilities are tailor-made for paired reading by young readers and families; leisure reading areas are set up in adult libraries to provide a comfortable reading environment; and discussion rooms and create • info zones equipped with computers and multimedia digital service facilities are provided for the youth. As for software, the HKPL will continue to explore and develop different forms of service to enhance the reading experience of the public, actively strengthen and promote e-reading and digital services through online platforms in view of the prevailing reading trends and habits, and promote a reading culture by organising diversified activities at libraries.

5. To further optimise the use of resources, the LCSD, subject to compliance with government regulations and cost-effectiveness, has implemented the "Books Sharing in the Community Scheme" (the Scheme) by donating outdated library books to be withdrawn to organisations in the fields of education, science, culture and charity for non-profit-making purposes. Community libraries participating in the "Libraries@neighbourhood – Community Libraries Partnership Scheme" of the HKPL have been invited to join the Scheme for promoting reading in the community.
6. In the past 3 years, the services of the HKPL had been affected by the COVID-19 epidemic in varying degree. In response, the HKPL actively promoted e-reading, online services and e-resources to encourage members of the public to make extensive use of online platforms during the epidemic so as to maintain a reading habit for lifelong learning, thus enhancing their cultural literacy in support of Hong Kong's development as an international metropolis. During 2020 to 2022, the HKPL organised over

480 online programmes, with a total of over 5.9 million participants or viewers. The usage of e-book collection also increased from around 970 000 in 2019 to around 3.62 million in 2022.

The HKPL will continue to collect public opinions on library services and programmes through various channels for analysis and formulation of programmes for the next year. In 2023-24, the HKPL plans to collaborate with academic institutions, professional organisations, schools, non-governmental organisations, community organisations, etc. to offer reading promotion activities, with a view to stimulating interest in reading among members of the public, and leveraging its role of promoting reading and lifelong learning. Highlight programmes include:

- (a) launching large-scale reading promotion programmes: organising the “4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition” to encourage children and young people to broaden their scope of reading; working with schools, the publishing sector and community partners on reading promotion in organising a rich array of reading promotion activities at libraries in various districts and on online platforms on the “4.23 World Book Day” and during the “Hong Kong Book Fair”, so as to integrate reading into our daily lives and build a persistent reading habit;
- (b) through the HKPL’s outreach reading service, providing more easily accessible library service for the general public in different local communities so that they can enjoy the fun of reading;
- (c) enhancing the promotion of e-reading and the recommendation of online reading resources: participating in the “Hong Kong Book Fair” in 2023 to promote the e-resources of the HKPL to the public; and recommending e-books and e-databases on various topics to readers on relevant webpages of the HKPL.

**Attendance of Museums and Public Libraries  
under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2022-23**

**(A) Museums**

<b>Museums/Art Space</b>		<b>2022-23<sup>(4)</sup></b>
1	Hong Kong Museum of Art	519 263
2	Hong Kong Museum of History <sup>(1)</sup>	287 782
3	Hong Kong Heritage Museum	406 983
4	Hong Kong Science Museum	1 058 995
5	Hong Kong Space Museum	555 451
6	Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence <sup>(2)</sup>	62 177
7	Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum	61 940
8	Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery	57 400
9	Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware	69 051
10	Hong Kong Railway Museum	144 617
11	Law Uk Folk Museum	7 633
12	Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum	19 419
13	Sam Tung Uk Museum	48 427
14	Sheung Yiu Folk Museum <sup>(3)</sup>	12 540
15	Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre	39 656
16	Oil Street Art Space (Oi!)	553 613
17	Hong Kong Film Archive	56 456
<b>Total</b>		<b>3 961 403</b>

**Notes**

- (1) The permanent exhibition of the Hong Kong Museum of History has been temporarily closed for renovation since 19 October 2020.
- (2) The Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence was reopened on 24 November 2022 upon completion of major repair and renovation.
- (3) The Sheung Yiu Folk Museum was reopened on 23 December 2022 upon completion of repair.
- (4) Attendance as at 28 February 2023.

**(B) Public Libraries**

<b>Public Libraries</b>		<b>2022-23<sup>(5)</sup></b>
<b>Static Libraries</b>		
Central and Western	City Hall	471 032
	Shek Tong Tsui	170 268
	Smithfield	109 757
Eastern	Chai Wan	236 294
	Electric Road	78 230
	North Point	109 326
	Quarry Bay	152 740
	Siu Sai Wan	178 429
	Yiu Tung	53 515
	Southern	Aberdeen
Ap Lei Chau		61 638
Pok Fu Lam		52 061
Stanley		44 711
Wan Chai	Hong Kong Central Library	1 264 717
	Lockhart Road	182 471
	Wong Nai Chung	53 741
Kowloon City	Hung Hom	118 381
	Kowloon	241 795
	Kowloon City	76 557
	To Kwa Wan	198 659
Kwun Tong	Lam Tin	281 017
	Lei Yue Mun	56 812
	Ngau Tau Kok	168 186
	Sau Mau Ping	97 761
	Shui Wo Street	186 739
	Shun Lee Estate	65 188
Sham Shui Po	Lai Chi Kok	254 180
	Po On Road	312 267
	Shek Kip Mei	108 365
	Un Chau Street	88 041
Wong Tai Sin	Fu Shan	51 896
	Lok Fu	83 357
	Lung Hing	74 169
	Ngau Chi Wan	136 566
	San Po Kong	292 364
	Tsz Wan Shan	111 545
Yau Tsim Mong	Fa Yuen Street	217 516
	Tai Kok Tsui	101 975
	Tsim Sha Tsui	74 435
	Yau Ma Tei	324 589

<b>Public Libraries</b>		<b>2022-23<sup>(5)</sup></b>
Islands	Cheung Chau	61 067
	Mui Wo	14 814
	North Lamma	16 642
	Peng Chau	13 472
	South Lamma	468
	Tai O	3 971
	Tung Chung	200 745
Kwai Tsing	North Kwai Chung	294 357
	South Kwai Chung	318 395
	Tsing Yi	374 339
North	Fanling	285 094
	Fanling South	150 041
	Sha Tau Kok	19 991
	Sheung Shui	253 237
Sai Kung	Sai Kung	150 667
	Tiu Keng Leng	434 955
	Tseung Kwan O	325 673
Sha Tin	Lek Yuen	33 912
	Ma On Shan	472 063
	Sha Tin	485 435
	Yuen Chau Kok	321 910
Tai Po	Tai Po	476 302
Tsuen Wan	Shek Wai Kok	24 614
	Tsuen Wan	465 930
Tuen Mun	Butterfly Estate	54 083
	Tai Hing	107 858
	Tuen Mun	692 649
Yuen Long	Ping Shan Tin Shui Wai	425 438
	Tin Shui Wai North	92 664
	Yuen Long	494 815
<b>Mobile Libraries</b>		
Mobile Libraries 1-12		206 549
<b>Total</b>		<b>14 385 656</b>

Notes

(5) Attendance as at 28 February 2023. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, public libraries under the LCSD have been temporarily and intermittently closed since 7 January 2022.

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