

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSTB332

(Question Serial No. 0096)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism

Question:

It is stated in Programme (4) that the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau will provide steer on the enhancement of library services next year. As the Ombudsman's investigation has revealed that the longest waiting time required for an e-book is 5 years, will the Bureau provide steer to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department on enhancing the review on the loan of library materials and acquisition of more copies of popular e-books? If yes, what are the details? What are the respective manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon NG Wing-ka, Jimmy (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

In response to the public demand for popular e-books, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) monitors the usage of e-books from time to time. Each month, the HKPL systematically selects e-books that are more popular according to data such as their accumulative reservation counts and those with the largest usage as provided by service providers. Arrangements will then be made to acquire or subscribe to additional copies of these e-books to shorten their waiting time based on different factors such as their usage, the number of patrons on the waiting list and the waiting time for reserved items.

In the past year, the HKPL maintained close contact with service providers and acquired about 700 additional copies of popular e-books so that the average waiting time for most of the popular e-books was reduced from a few months previously to about 3 weeks. However, due to the commercial considerations of service providers or copyright restrictions, the HKPL cannot acquire additional copies of some popular e-books, resulting in longer waiting time for them. In 2024-25, the HKPL will acquire or subscribe to 19 e-book collections and acquire about 20 000 additional copies of e-books so that the total number of e-books will reach 540 000, thereby providing more Chinese and English e-books of different categories for the public to borrow. The estimated expenditure in this regard is about \$12.9 million. The above work is undertaken by 29 Librarian grade members among their other library duties.

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