

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSTB293

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Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Manda CHAN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism

Question:

Regarding the new Smart Library System being developed to enhance the quality of the facilities and services of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL), please inform this Committee of the following:

1. What is the progress of the development of the above system? What are the manpower and expenditure involved?
2. What services are expected to be provided by the system? What is the expected timetable for commissioning the system?
3. As the public have been accustomed to reading on electronic devices in recent years, will the Department consider developing a cloud-based platform to allow the public to borrow books online and promote a reading culture? If yes, what are the details and expenditure involved?
4. Will consideration be given to enhancing the facilities of the HKPL by drawing reference from local and overseas practices, such as setting up smart cultural and creative zones and immersive rooms for nurturing the creativity of the public, as well as introducing book return robots? If yes, what are the details and estimated expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent (LegCo internal reference no.: 56)

Reply:

1. & 2. A new Smart Library System (the new system) is being developed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to replace the existing library systems. As an integrated library system, the new system supports the daily operation of all public libraries, including collection management, borrowing and return of library materials and online electronic resources. The new system will be implemented in phases, with the Digital Resources Management System, the Integrated Library Core System and multi-functional self-service equipment enabled with Radio

Frequency Identification technology expected to be rolled out in 2025. Other systems including the Event Planning and Management System and the Business Intelligence System are expected to commence operation in 2026. The estimated expenditure on the development of the new system is about \$591 million.

The LCSD has created 4 permanent and 5 time-limited posts to handle and oversee the development of the new system.

3. At present, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) allows the public to browse and borrow e-books online with electronic devices (such as smartphones, tablets and e-readers) via a cloud-based e-book lending platform provided by e-book suppliers. In 2025-26, the HKPL plans to acquire or subscribe to 20 e-book collections, replenishing about 20 000 e-books to bring the total to 570 000. The estimated expenditure is about \$14.9 million.
4. By drawing reference from newly-built libraries in the Mainland and overseas from time to time, the LCSD will continue to enhance the environment and facilities of the HKPL to meet the needs of patrons from different age groups. For example, parent-child reading areas are provided in children's libraries where facilities are tailor-made for paired reading by young patrons and families; leisure reading areas are set up in adult libraries to provide a comfortable reading environment for patrons; and create • info zones equipped with multimedia digital service facilities are provided for the youth. The HKPL will also apply new technology in developing library services. Robots for stocktaking of collections and answering patrons' enquiries are planned to be introduced in 2026. The relevant expenditure is included in the development of the Smart Library System.

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