

For discussion
on 8 June 2007

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Committee on Libraries: Recommendation Report**

Purpose

This paper sets out the key recommendations of the Recommendation Report (the Report) of the Committee on Libraries (the Committee), and the Administration's response.

Background

2. To follow up the library-related recommendations of the Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC)¹ as well as the recommendations of a consultancy study report on the future development of Hong Kong Public Libraries² (HKPL), the Government established the Committee on Libraries in November 2004 for a tenure of two years to advise the Secretary for Home Affairs on strategies and plans for betterment of Hong Kong's public library facilities and services, with enhanced community cooperation and partnership.

3. Since its establishment in late 2004, the Committee has proactively reached out to solicit the views of local library stakeholders in the course of formulating its recommendations. A series of focus group meetings were held with representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), chambers of commerce, youth organisations, as well as principals and teacher-librarians of primary and secondary schools, advisers on literary arts and library staff. The Committee had a fruitful

¹ The CHC was established in April 2000 to advise the Government on the policies as well as funding priorities on culture and arts. It submitted the "Culture and Heritage Commission Policy Recommendation Report" to the Government in April 2003, putting forward its policy recommendations, inter alia, on public library services.

² The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) commissioned the "GML Consulting Limited" and "GHK (Hong Kong) Limited" in November 2001 to conduct a study on the future development of the HKPL. The Consultants submitted their report in December 2002, containing a range of strategic recommendations on the development of the public library services.

exchange of views with them on the enhancement of public library services and on the promotion of reading interest and literary arts.

4. Apart from meeting with library stakeholders, the Committee also took the initiative to contact library organisations overseas and in the Mainland in order to gain a better understanding of the operation of different public library systems. In addition to receiving overseas library institutions during their visits to Hong Kong, the Committee conducted two official visits to libraries in Singapore and the Mainland in 2005 and 2006 respectively.

5. In drawing up its recommendations, the Committee carefully considered the views and suggestions through various channels as follows –

- (a) Policy recommendations of the CHC;
- (b) Recommendations of the Consultancy Study on the Future Development of Hong Kong Public Libraries in 2002;
- (c) Views collected through focus group meetings with library stakeholders;
- (d) Major observations during the Committee's visits to Singapore's and the Mainland's libraries; and
- (e) Discussions and dialogues with representatives of overseas library institutions visiting Hong Kong.

The Recommendation Report of the Committee (**Annex**) was formally submitted to the Secretary for Home Affairs in May 2007.

The Administration's Response

6. We fully appreciate the hard work and dedicated efforts of the Committee, and accept in principle all the recommendations put forward by the Committee. We believe that the recommendations would not only help further enhance the provision of public library services to meet the public needs and expectations, but also strengthen the role of HKPL as cultural and educational institutions in the community.

7. Highlights of the Recommendation Report and the Administration's response are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Key Recommendations

Mission of the Hong Kong Public Libraries

8. While the Committee considers that the existing mission of HKPL³ is generally wide enough to cover the services and functions of public libraries in Hong Kong, it sees that the role of HKPL as a “cultural base” for the community should be strengthened to enhance the cultural atmosphere in Hong Kong, in particular, to promote the pursuit of knowledge and love of reading. Public libraries should not be just a place for borrowing books, but also a venue for organising a variety of cultural activities. It therefore recommends that the mission of HKPL should be restructured to comprise two important dimensions – the local community service dimension and the broader cultural dimension.

9. We agree with this recommendation and have restructured the HKPL's mission. The “community service” objective will be substantially realised upon full implementation of the co-management of all district libraries by District Councils (see paragraphs 28-29 below). Regarding the enhancement of the “cultural” elements, the Hong Kong Central Library will be further developed to fulfill its role as a major cultural, learning and information hub serving the community (see paragraph 10 below).

Hong Kong Central Library

10. The Committee sees that the Hong Kong Central Library should assume a leading role among the HKPL in the provision of cultural and information services. We support this recommendation and will draw up a strategic development plan to position the Hong Kong Central Library as –

³ HKPL aims to provide, manage and develop public library services to meet community needs for knowledge, education, information, research and recreation, to offer library extension activities to all ages, and to promote reading and literary arts.

- (a) a library of regional significance by bringing the world's current and up-to-date knowledge and information to the community;
- (b) a leading library in fostering Hong Kong's cultural identity; and
- (c) a library to meet the learning needs of the broader public through leveraging on technology.

The Hong Kong Central Library will also focus on fostering Hong Kong's cultural identity through efforts to preserve Hong Kong's cultural heritage, such as by maintaining a central register of locally printed materials, maintaining a comprehensive bibliography of current Hong Kong publications, and providing a centralised and integrated source of information on Hong Kong's heritage.

Making Knowledge Accessible and Affordable

Better Library Environment and Facilities

11. The Committee recommends an enhancement of the space provision for new libraries under planning from the current 3 310 sq m to 6 200 sq m for major libraries and 2 200 sq m to 2 900 sq m for district libraries, so as to provide more spacious library environment that is conducive to learning and reading. The Committee also recommends that a regular review of space provision of new libraries under planning, say at an interval of every five years.

12. We agree to these recommendations and will suitably enhance area provision for new libraries, while taking into account site constraints and availability of resources. We have in fact already adopted a new standard for the planned major library in Tin Shui Wai scheduled for operation in early 2012. The new library will have a space provision of 6 100 sq m, which is about 50% to 120% larger than the five existing major libraries in the territory. The enhanced floor space will allow spatial configuration of the libraries to accommodate more and newer collections and resources, information technology (IT) services and other ancillary facilities (e.g. multimedia services, reading corners, self-charging terminals etc). The increased area will also facilitate the provision of a wide range of reading

and literary promotion activities in new libraries.

Bringing Library Services to the Local Communities

13. The Committee recommends improvements to accessibility of library services to sustain the interest of frequent library users and attract patronage of non-library users. We agree to this recommendation and will explore more opportunities to provide library services at convenient locations including shopping malls as appropriate. A successful example is the Tin Shui Wai North Public Library which is housed at the Tin Chak Shopping Centre.

Collection and Acquisition Policy

14. The Committee recommends that the collection and acquisition policy of HKPL should be regularly reviewed to meet the changing needs of the different sectors and that an appropriate mix of print, non-print and electronic collections should be built up. We support these recommendations.

Enhanced Community Partnership

15. In addition to setting up new Government-run libraries at locations of easy accessibility, the Committee recommends that HKPL should bring library services to the community through partnership with educational institutes, NGOs and district organisations. We agree to the Committee's recommendation that a closer partnership and collaboration with these various groups for the provision of library services will render our library services more responsive to community needs, achieve a greater degree of cost-effectiveness with a larger pool of resources, and help build a broader reader spectrum.

16. In this regard, we have earlier launched the Community Libraries Partnership Scheme under which community libraries are set up through collaboration with different local bodies and non-profit making organisations. The scheme aims to promote reading at local community level and enabling residents, children, teenagers, housewives and the elderly in particular, to enjoy convenient and accessible library services.

As at April 2007, a total of 28 community libraries have been set up at offices of resident organisations, elderly centres, youth centres etc., at various districts.

17. On the recommendation of fostering closer connections with tertiary institutions, secondary schools, primary schools and parent-teacher associations, we agree that such connections will encourage students' patronage of library services and hence help to cultivate their interest in reading and appreciation of literary arts. We will endeavour to seek closer collaboration with schools and related organisations in areas such as promotion of the prevailing block loan services to schools; and enhancement of the students' information seeking skills in library and on internet.

Supporting Life-Long Learning

18. In support of life-long learning, we welcome the Committee's recommendation to enhance library services to complement the educational programmes in schools and will, inter alia, continue strengthening liaison and cooperation with schools through goodwill visits to schools and focus group meetings with school representatives; establish close contacts with parent-teacher associations and School Liaison Committees in the districts; collaborate with school librarians for promoting block loan services and block readers' registration; and organise more users' education sessions to meet the dedicated need of different groups of students.

Supporting Continuing Education for the Community

19. The Committee also recommends a continual development of thematic reference collections in the major libraries as a means to support and promote continuing education in the community. We accept this recommendation. Thematic collections currently under planning include subjects on sports and fitness at the Sha Tin Public Library; food and nutrition at the Tuen Mun Public Library; and modern living at the Tsuen Wan Public Library.

Bringing Culture to the Community

20. The Committee is of the view that libraries should be useful and effective means of bringing culture to the public by virtue of its extensive geographical network in the territory and high public utilisation rate. In this connection, the Committee recommends that HKPL should formulate strategy for development of specific collections of cultural interest by strengthening existing network of cultural, educational and literary sectors, both local and overseas, and identifying new areas of partnership. The Committee also proposes that HKPL should explore collaboration opportunities with the Public Records Office on sharing of archival information and mounting exhibitions on the history of Hong Kong. We agree with these recommendations and will work to bring them into effect.

Leveraging the Use of Information Technology (IT)

21. In major metropolitan cities, technology has been playing an increasing role in improving library management. With a significant impact and wider application of IT in modern libraries, librarians would spend less time on manual processing tasks but focus more on delivering professional services such as readers' advisory service or organising book displays on special subjects. Nevertheless, IT should serve as an enabling tool rather than a substitute of services provided by public libraries.

22. Taking into account the limited life span of the existing Library Automation System (LAS) which has been in use for almost 6 years, the Committee supports the plan to replace the LAS currently in use, and recommends that HKPL should conduct a detailed cost-benefit analysis on adopting Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). We agree with this recommendation and have sought the approval of the Legislative Council Finance Committee in February 2007 for funding the replacement of the existing LAS and the launch of a pilot run of RFID. In particular, the RFID technology will help to locate library materials and enable us to carry out stock-taking more efficiently. We will also conduct a cost-benefit analysis on adopting RFID upon the completion of the pilot scheme before deciding on whether the new technology is to be applied in all public libraries.

Offering Value-added Services

23. The Committee considers that there are many ways through which HKPL could offer value-added services with involvement of the private sector. These proposed services include book delivery service at a charge; engaging public relation services provider to market and promote HKPL; and partnership arrangements with book vendors and publisher. Such recommendations will be implemented as resources permit.

Promotion of Reading and Literary Arts

24. The Committee recommends HKPL to strengthen existing promotion activities on reading and literary arts to keep pace with the changing expectations of the community in close partnership with outside organisations and other government departments. We accept this recommendation and will further enhance existing relationships with related bodies and explore new areas of partnership for the benefit of pooling resources for the promotion of reading and literary arts.

25. In the light of the Committee's recommendation to dedicate concerted efforts to promote library services to target groups of non-library users who have little interest to read, we will conduct detailed surveys on non-library users when resources permit and to explore areas of further cooperation with community organisations in order to reach out to more potential library users.

26. We agree with the Committee's recommendation that measures should be taken to encourage a greater use of public library services by children and teenagers so as to nurture their reading interest at an early stage. We will sustain and further enhance ongoing activities in collaboration with community bodies and Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and invite EMB as supporting organisation to HKPL's major events.

27. The Committee also recommends enhancement of publicity efforts in order to further promote reading and literary arts. We agree to this

recommendation and would strengthen public awareness of reading and literary arts through the following means –

- (a) Producing publicity films to promote public library services and life-long pursuit of knowledge;
- (b) Displaying publicity posters extensively in the community; and
- (c) Collaborating with local newspapers and magazines to cultivate public interest in reading and literary arts.

Mode of Governance

Management of District Libraries by District Councils (DCs)

28. The Committee notes the recommendation made in the consultation document “Review of the Role, Functions and Composition of District Councils” that DCs would be actively involved in the management of selected district facilities, including libraries, community halls, sports venues and swimming pools. For public libraries, it was proposed that with the exception of two, namely the Hong Kong Central Library and the Basic Law Library, which have been operating as territory-wide facilities, all the remaining district-based library facilities should be brought under DC’s management.

29. The Committee welcomes the Administration’s plan for the DCs to participate in the management of district libraries and considers it a significant step in enhancing community involvement in the provision of public library services.

Institutional Arrangement for HKPL

30. According to a public opinion survey conducted in 2004, over 83% of the adult users were satisfied with the overall facilities and services of HKPL. Taking into account the impending involvement of DCs in the management of district libraries and the generally effective delivery of HKPL’s services under the existing Government-run model, the Committee considers there is no imminent need for introducing any major institutional changes. We agree with this recommendation.

New Advisory Board on Hong Kong Central Library

31. While a change to the institutional arrangement for HKPL is considered not necessary, the Committee recommends improving HKPL's operation and management system by increasing the degree of public accountability and community participation. We welcome this recommendation. With DCs' participation in the management of district libraries to meet local needs, we will set up an advisory board in 3-4 months' time to advise the Government on the role, functions and work of the Hong Kong Central Library. Specifically, the advisory board will be tasked to advise on how best to fulfill the broad "cultural" dimension (as opposed to the "local community services" dimension) of HKPL's mission through the Hong Kong Central Library. A mechanism for dialogue between this advisory board and the DCs which would participate in the management of district libraries would also be put in place.

The Way Forward

32. We have accepted in principle all the recommendations made by the Committee. We will carefully study each of them and draw up implementation details as appropriate.

Home Affairs Bureau

May 2007

Committee on Libraries

Recommendation Report on Provision of Public Library

Services and Facilities in Hong Kong

Chapter 1 - Background

Public Libraries in Hong Kong

1.1 The UNESCO Manifesto proclaims the belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women. The provision of public library services in Hong Kong aims to provide public library services to meet the community's need for information and research, to support life-long learning, continuous education and profitable use of leisure time and to promote local literary arts. The mission of Hong Kong Public Libraries covers the following six areas:

- As an information centre where information and the latest development on all subject disciplines are freely and readily available to the public;
- As a tool in support of self-education and continuing education through resource-based learning;
- As a community cultural centre where a balanced range of resource-based library activities are organised to provide information, recreation and relaxation for people of all age groups;
- As a centre for the promotion of reading, literary arts and literary research in Hong Kong to cultivate public interest in creative writing and literary research, to encourage and promote literary writing, preserve Hong Kong literature, and to promote cultural exchange;
- As a source of enjoyment for the profitable use of leisure

where library materials may be borrowed for home use;
and

- As a source for the enrichment of everyday living where members of the public may learn about current affairs, hobbies, and leisure pursuits.

1.2 There are 66 static libraries and 10 mobile library vans under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in Hong Kong. With over 11.9 million books and multimedia materials, and 3.4 million registered library users, libraries are one of the most widely used cultural facilities in Hong Kong. An average of 61 million books or materials are being checked out each year. Outreach programmes form an integral part of library services. Apart from regular programmes like storytelling sessions, book displays and exhibitions, thematic talks and seminars, group visits and community talks and user education programmes, a variety of reading programmes and activities in promotion of creative writing and literary arts have been organised to incubate and sustain reading habits and interest as well as appreciation of literary arts. Other large-scale cultural activities such as topical seminars, public lectures and exhibitions are also being held throughout the year to meet the information needs and for the cultural enlightenment of the public. Over 18 000 cultural activities were held in our public libraries in 2006 and these activities were well patronised, recording a total attendance of 17.3 million.

Culture and Heritage Commission

1.3 The Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC) was established in April 2000 for advising the Government on the policies as well as funding priorities on culture and the arts. The CHC submitted the “Culture and Heritage Commission Policy Recommendation Report” to the Government in April 2003, putting forward its policy recommendations on a wide range of areas relating to the long-term cultural development in Hong Kong. The CHC’s recommendations on public library services are extracted at Annex I. Major recommendations are as follows:

- Positioning public libraries as a place where citizens are encouraged to acquire knowledge, broaden their horizons and improve themselves;
- Deploying resources to enhance the cultural atmosphere of the society, in particular, to promote the pursuit of knowledge and the love of reading so that libraries become a base for a variety of cultural activities;
- Developing individual libraries' own character by focusing on certain themes in their collections (for example business, computer, children books), thus achieving greater cost-effectiveness;
- Raising the number of professional librarians to commensurate with international standards;
- Establishing close partnership with the education and cultural sectors; and
- Reviewing the management structure of public libraries.

Consultancy Study on the Future Development of Hong Kong Public Libraries

1.4 The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) commissioned the “GML Consulting Limited” and “GHK (Hong Kong) Limited” (the Consultants) in November 2001 to conduct a study on the future development of Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL). The Study sought to formulate a strategic plan for the development of the LCSD’s public library services upon a review of their existing performance; and to recommend the most appropriate institutional arrangement and organisational strategy for operating public library services. The Consultants submitted their final report in December 2002.

Committee on Libraries

1.5 To follow up on the CHC’s recommendations relating to library services and facilities as well as the recommendations of the Consultancy Study Report, the Government established the Committee on Libraries (“the Committee”) in November 2004 for a tenure of two years.

The Committee is tasked to advise the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) on strategies and plans for the development of Hong Kong's public library facilities and services, and to further reflect public views and enhance community cooperation and partnership. Its terms of reference and membership are at Annexes 2 & 3 respectively.

Work Plan of the Committee

1.6 In addition to the Committee's familiarisation visits and meetings, the Committee held a Brainstorming Session on 25 June 2005 to discuss and exchange views on: -

- (a) How the public library facilities and services could be operated to keep pace with the changing needs and expectations of the community; and
- (b) Innovative ideas to expand into areas outside of the traditional activity scope of libraries.

1.7 Having regard to views expressed in the meetings and the Brainstorming Session, the Committee endorsed a Work Plan which consisted of both long-term and short-term targets. The following five service areas are the key components of the Work Plan (as at Annex 4): -

- ♦ Serving the community;
- ♦ Supporting life-long learning;
- ♦ Bringing culture to the public;
- ♦ Leveraging the use of Information Technology; and
- ♦ Offering value-added services.

1.8 To review the above five service areas in the Work Plan, two subcommittees had been formed to facilitate a more in-depth study and more focused discussion on the relevant issues. The subcommittees are: -

- ♦ Subcommittee on Development Strategy of Provision of Library Services; and
- ♦ Subcommittee on Community Involvement and promotion

of Reading and Literary Arts.

1.9 The terms of reference and memberships of the two subcommittees are at Annexes 5 & 6 respectively.

Chapter 2 – Views of Library Stakeholders

2.1 The Committee attached great importance to the views of our library stakeholders and the successful experiences of overseas library systems in the course of formulating its recommendations.

Local Library Stakeholders

2.2 The Committee reached out to various categories of local library stakeholders to canvass their views, including the following:

- Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs);
- Headmasters and teacher-librarians of primary schools;
- Principals and teacher-librarians of secondary schools;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Youth organisations;
- Advisers on Literary Arts; and
- Library staff.

2.3 A total of seven focus group meetings were held to exchange views and to explore collaboration opportunities with them on the enhancement of public library services and on the promotion of reading interest and literary arts. Stakeholder groups whom the Committee has met are at Annex 7.

Networking with other Library Systems

2.4 Apart from exchanging views with local library stakeholders, the Committee considers it useful to establish network with other library organisations to gain a better understanding of their library systems for reference purpose.

Visit to Singapore

2.5 The Committee attended a visit programme in Singapore on

26 and 27 September 2005 with the objective of acquiring a better understanding of the Singapore public library system, especially the role played by their National Library Board (NLB) in the following areas: -

- The experience of the NLB in the governance of the public library system in Singapore;
- Development strategy on provision of library facilities in Singapore, e.g. standard of provision, positioning and benchmarking, thematic libraries, acquisition policy, levying of fees, use of information technology, online access to library resources, etc.;
- Solicitation of community involvement via collaboration with tertiary institutions, schools, non-governmental bodies, organisations and other neighbourhood bodies; and
- Promotion of reading and literary arts via educational and outreaching programmes.

The major observations are at [Annex 8](#).

Experience Sharing with Overseas and the Mainland Library Systems

2.6 In February 2006, the Committee met with a delegation of Urban Libraries Council consisting of senior executives from major urban library institutions from the United States and Canada. The opportunity was taken to have a dialogue with the delegates on the future of public libraries under the respective library systems.

2.7 A delegation of the NLB, Singapore paid a visit to Hong Kong in late March 2006 and had a fruitful exchange of views with the Committee on each other's library system and services, particularly in the following areas: -

- Provision of adult services;
- Provision of young people services;
- Provision of children's services; and
- Children reading programmes and initiatives.

2.8 The Committee visited the two new libraries in Dongguan and Shenzhen of Mainland on 27 September 2006. Observations made by Members are detailed at Annex 9.

Chapter 3 – Improvements to Library Services and Facilities

3.1.1 The Committee sees library an important institution which provides the community with vast resources for life-long learning and knowledge acquisition. Through its wide range of activities and programmes, it also provides social spaces to foster a love for the literary arts and to reinforce community bonding and integration. Compared to other international public library systems, the Committee notes that Hong Kong Public Libraries provide facilities and services of international standards, and that most of the library users are satisfied with the public library services in general.

3.1.2 In drawing up its recommendations for the betterment of library services and facilities, the Committee has taken into account-

- The policy recommendations of the CHC;
- The recommendations of the Consultancy Study on the Future Development of Hong Kong Public Libraries in 2002;
- The views collected through focus group meetings with library stakeholders;
- The major observations from the Committee's visit programme in Singapore in September 2005;
- Discussions with overseas library systems visiting Hong Kong; and
- Insights drawn from the visit to the new libraries in Dongguan and Shenzhen in September 2006.

3.2 Mission of Hong Kong Public Libraries

3.2.1 The Committee considers the existing mission of Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) generally wide enough to cover all the services and functions of public libraries in Hong Kong. The Committee is of the view that libraries should be a base for cultural activities through

deploying a significant amount of resources to enhance the cultural atmosphere of the society, in particular, to promote the pursuit of knowledge and the love of reading. The Committee considers that public libraries should become not just a place for borrowing books, but also a venue for a variety of cultural activities. To these ends, the Committee **recommends** that the HKPL consider restructuring its mission into one which encompasses two distinct dimensions - the “local community service” dimension and a broader “cultural” dimension in order to express its cultural and community service roles more vividly. This is also in line with CHC’s recommendation.

3.2.2 As for the “local community service” dimension, HKPL should service the needs of people of all ages and backgrounds, individuals groups and institutions with different needs in the local communities. This dimension of the mission could be translated into the following objectives:

- To serve community needs by locating libraries within easy access of the public
- To promote a reading community
- To complement the education programmes in schools
- To provide a gateway to information for the general public
- To support and encourage life-long learning
- To promote civic education outside schools
- To provide value-added services to the community

3.2.3 Regarding the “broader cultural” dimension, HKPL should align with the needs of Hong Kong from a wider perspective to become a cultural metropolis in Asia with a strong cultural identity, through hosting collections reflecting Hong Kong’s position in the international arena and networking with other major public library systems in the region. This cultural dimension of HKPL’s mission could be elaborated into the following objectives:

- To develop a rich collection reflective of Hong Kong’s cultural identity - strong roots of Chinese traditions with a global and pluralistic outlook
- To promote local literary works and studies

- To harness information technology to help build a knowledge-based economy
- To form partnerships in support of life-long learning

Hong Kong Central Library

3.2.4 The Committee sees that the Hong Kong Central Library should assume a leading role among the HKPL in the provision of public, cultural and information services. To support the acquisition and application of knowledge, the Hong Kong Central Library should position itself as a library of regional significance by bringing the world's knowledge to Hong Kong, making them accessible, and creating positive social and economic impact. The Central Library should continually adapt and reconfigure its thrusts and orientations to meet the needs of a knowledge-based society.

3.2.5 The Hong Kong Central Library should be vested with a variety of roles, both principal and subsidiary. The Library should primarily be responsible for setting guidelines and standards in archiving Hong Kong's repository of printed materials. It should also take on complementary roles as partner and collaborator with community organisations by filling perceived gaps of a common agenda and supporting the work of these agencies.

3.2.6 The Hong Kong Central Library should broaden its activities through leveraging on technology so that knowledge can be exported and applied socially. Disparity in usage patterns among different spectrum in the community should be adequately addressed in order to achieve social cohesion and equitable access to knowledge for all. Its social role should be so strengthened to meet the learning needs of the broader public by transforming libraries into social learning spaces and nurturing self-renewing learning communities.

3.2.7 On the other hand, the Hong Kong Central Library should take a leading role in fostering Hong Kong's cultural identity through –

- Preserving Hong Kong's cultural heritage through

maintaining a central register of locally printed materials covering the historical, cultural, scientific and literary publishing output of Hong Kong

- Maintaining a comprehensive bibliography of current Hong Kong publications for public inspection and also distribution to national libraries in the world as well as local and overseas academic libraries
- Providing a centralised and integrated source of information on Hong Kong's heritage and reinforcing the depth of research by building up a wealth of reference materials on the subject

3.3 Serving the Community

3.3.1 The Committee recognises that HKPL has been providing multi-farious resource-based services to the local community through its extensive network of major and district libraries. Having regard to the need to establish closer partnership with the education and cultural sectors, the Committee has come up with a series of recommendations to further enhance HKPL's services to the community in the following areas.

Space Provision for New Libraries

3.3.2 According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards & Guidelines, one district library should be provided for every 200,000 population and at least one district library should be set up in each district. At present, the 6.9 million population in Hong Kong is served by 66 static libraries and 10 mobile library vans. In view of the different floor area of each library, the provision can also be evaluated in terms of population to floor area, which is a population of 6,994,500 to 110,588 sq m (that is, population of 63.24 to be served per sq m).

3.3.3 The above figures show that the provision of public libraries is generally adequate by existing planning standards. In districts where the

provision of library services is pending enhancement, there is a need to supplement the provision of main library services through small or mobile libraries in many districts. The Committee **recommends** that the demand for library services be closely monitored to facilitate timely planning of new libraries in future.

3.3.4 The Committee **recommends** an enhancement of space provision for new libraries under planning from the current 3 310 sq m to 6 200 sq m for major libraries and 2 200 sq m to 2 900 sq m (plus 200 sq m for mobile library office) for district libraries. An increased space provision is required to accommodate a variety of new and expanded services and facilities including: -

for New Major Libraries

the Public Exhibition and Display Area, Young Adult Library, Toddlers' Corner, Computer and Information Centre, Multimedia Information Service, Coffee Corner, On-line database terminals, Internet Express terminals, Self-check terminals, Book drops and User Education Hall; and

for New District Libraries

the addition of Computer Information Centre, Multimedia Information Service, Coffee Corner, On-line database terminals, Internet Express terminals, Self-check terminals and Book drops.

3.3.5 Additional space is also required to house the increased number of library materials, the strengthened special collections, the equipments for the extensive use of IT technologies to cater for the changing needs nowadays and for the increased back office support. The enhancement would enable the HKPL to meet the growing demand of the public for better and more versatile library services and facilities, create an ambience conducive to fostering reading habit and provide the necessary space required for a more extensive application of innovative information technology in HKPL's operation. The Committee **recommends** a regular review of space provision for new libraries under planning, say at an interval of every five years. Arising from the plan to build a new major library in Tin Shui Wai, the Committee **recommended** to adopt a new

space requirement - 6 200 sq m for this and other major libraries.

Improving Accessibility of HKPL Services

3.3.6 Accessibility is the major consideration in the provision of library services. According to the results of the Public Opinion Survey on HKPL in 2004, 37.8% of persons aged 12 or above (some 2 257 000 persons) had not used any public library facilities or services in the 12 months prior to date of interview. Around 10% of these non-users cited inconvenient location as the reason for not using library services and facilities. The Committee **recommends** that effective measures be adopted to improve accessibility of library services so as to attract non-library users. Adding more mobile libraries in certain remote areas in the New Territories, locating libraries within shopping malls and other busy city areas, making block loan arrangements to community service centres, making greater use of “virtual libraries” through Internet technology are some of the initiatives which could be explored for this purpose.

3.3.7 During the study visit to Singapore in September 2005, the Committee observed that many of the NLB libraries are located at popular shopping malls with easy accessibility. The Committee **considers** that providing library services in shopping malls will save the lengthy lead time in construction which is required if library is provided in a purposely-built municipal building. As such, this practice is worthy of further exploring if proved to be cost-effective.

Collection and Acquisition Policy

3.3.8 According to the results of the Public Opinion Survey on HKPL in 2004, 41.3% of the non-library users had read books in the 12 months prior to date of interview. The Committee considers that a strong stock collection which caters to the needs of the community is very important both in promoting the use of HKPL and promoting the reading culture in the community. The Committee **recommends** that the collection and acquisition policy of the HKPL should be reviewed regularly to meet the changing needs of different sectors of the population. Whilst noting

that HKPL has already built up a comprehensive stock to meet the lending and reference needs of its users, the Committee **recommends** the HKPL to regularly review its collection development strategies to ensure the provision of an appropriate mix which could accommodate the rising and varying community needs. On top of the territory-wide collection development plan, individual stock development programmes with collection profile and development plan for libraries at district level should be brought under regular review to satisfy the district demands.

3.3.9 The Committee recognises that electronic resources are increasingly being integrated as part of the HKPL collection as well as core resources in HKPL's reference and information service and web-based library service. Such resources include online databases, e-books, Internet resources, quick reference tools and also library resources in CD-ROMs, audio and visual materials, and online formats. These resources are becoming more appealing to students and young adults. To tie in with this changing pattern of use of public library services, the Committee **recommends** the HKPL to further enhance its provision of electronic resources, with a view to providing timely information, quality learning resources and research materials for users from different walks of life. The Committee considers that a convenient remote access to electronic library resources would help maximise the potential of electronic resources for reaching out to those inactive users of public library services.

3.3.10 The Committee **recommends** the building up of an appropriate mix of print, non-print and electronic collection which should be put under continuous review to meet the emerging trends in information provision on the one hand and usage pattern on the other. A statistical study on the usage of various electronic library resources would provide a clear picture regarding the trend of the popularity of electronic library resources vis-à-vis paper-based library resources. This will facilitate better planning of acquisition of library items in future.

Extending the “Libraries” to the “Community” through Partnership with Non-governmental Organisations

3.3.11 The Committee considers that greater cost-effectiveness and

efficiency can be achieved through different partnership arrangements between the HKPL and NGOs. NGOs may make good use of the resources and professionalism of the HKPL and help extend library services to the community. To this end, the Committee **recommends** the following measures which could be implemented in collaboration with suitable NGOs where appropriate and subject to availability of resources: -

- To extend the prevailing block loan services to more NGOs particularly in new NGO centres or centres under renovation. The HKPL may consider helping NGOs to make use of appropriate library management software in community libraries;
- To provide dedicated library services to targeted social and aged groups;
- To provide thematic display of collections to cater for the different reading interests of the public;
- To arrange book delivery service to homes of the elderly and those with physical disabilities;
- To make available more books with large-print and on areas of their interest to elderly users (e.g. health care and nutrition); and
- To consider setting up “Reference Corner” at libraries for adults of little schooling, with collections on job-related skills and language proficiency.

3.3.12 In other countries, public libraries serve the function of community information and civic education centers. The Committee **recommends** HKPL to provide public and civic information by leveraging their network and locations. This would serve to strengthen HKPL’s links with the community. This recommendation could be considered by the relevant District Councils when they are involved in the management of district libraries in future.

3.4 Supporting Life-long Learning

3.4.1 HKPL should cater for the more general life-long learning needs of the public and school students.

Complement the Educational Programmes in Schools

3.4.2 Taking into account the needs of the secondary and primary schools, the Committee **recommends** to enhance library services to schools in the following ways: -

- Strengthen cooperation with schools at the district level and design tailor-made extension activities or workshop programmes to meet specific needs of students in different districts;
- Establish closer connections with parent-teacher associations for the purpose of cultivating and nurturing students' reading habit;
- Facilitate schools to make greater use of HKPL's Block Loan Scheme by enhancing the administrative support involved;
- Strengthen library collection in areas of liberal arts education to tie in with the new curriculum for secondary and tertiary education;
- Compile reference list of reading materials and relevant website addresses to facilitate students' project learning, and make available sufficient copies of library materials for coordinated use by students from different schools of the same district; and
- Provide students with training on information seeking skills by offering them relevant training materials and training sessions through, for example, a train-the-trainer approach to train the student librarians first.

Support Continuing Education for the Community

3.4.3 To support the provision of information and address the life-long learning needs of the community, the HKPL has, in fact, developed several thematic reference collections in major libraries¹ in

¹ There are at present five major libraries in Hong Kong. They are the City Hall Public Library, Kowloon Public Library, Sha Tin Public Library, Tsuen Wan Public Library and Tuen Mun Public Library.

recent years. At present, the Arts Resource Centre, the Hong Kong Literature Room and the Map Library are housed in the Hong Kong Central Library; the Business and Industry Library, the Creativity and the Innovation Resource Centre in the City Hall Public Library; and the Education Resource Centre in the Kowloon Public Library. This echoes CHC's recommendation that individual libraries should focus on certain themes in their collections so that individual libraries may develop their own character and achieve greater cost-effectiveness.

3.4.4 The Committee **recommends** a continual development of thematic reference collections in the major libraries as a means to support and promote continuing education in the community. The themes for reference collections should be selected having regard to HKPL's mission to offer a balanced range of services to cater for different age and social groups in the society, the needs of the relevant districts or region's characteristics, in particular the growing public interest and concerns on improving the quality of life.

3.4.5 In view of the fact that the current thematic collections are primarily housed in major libraries in the urban area, the Committee **recommends** HKPL to develop the following thematic collections in major libraries in the New Territories by phases: -

- Build a thematic collection on sports and fitness inside the Shatin Public Library;
- Set up a thematic collection on food and nutrition in the Tuen Mun Public Library; and
- Develop a thematic collection on modern living in the Tsuen Wan Public Library. The collection should embrace a variety of topics such as interior decoration, creating an environmental-friendly household lifestyle, application and the use of energy-saving household design products etc.

These suggestions could be considered by the relevant District Councils as and when they are actually involved in the management of district libraries in future.

3.4.6 The Committee further **recommends** the following measures to boost patronage of the thematic reference collections: -

- Host subject talks by experts and celebrities of the relevant fields in the major libraries where the thematic collections are housed;
- Deploy more professional staff to thematic libraries in order to provide expert advice to users; and
- Make available spacious environment for the thematic libraries and incorporate this requirement in its plans for new major libraries or renovating/expanding the existing ones.

3.5 Bringing Culture to the Public

3.5.1 The Committee considers HKPL a useful and powerful means of bringing culture to the public, by virtue of its extensive geographical network throughout the territory and high public utilisation rate.

3.5.2 Overseas experience has revealed that the development of special collections of historical and/or cultural interest such as old and rare books in specialised areas, have been effective both in attracting non-users to visit public libraries, and also in soliciting corporate sponsorship and donations. The Committee **recommends** that HKPL formulate a strategy for developing specific collections of cultural interest, particularly on collections of Hong Kong literary writers, in collaboration with the literary arts sector, other cultural institutions and museums. While bringing culture to the public, this would also be conducive to encouraging research and appreciation of literary works.

3.5.3 The wide adoption of project-based learning and continued education has given rise to the increased demand and interest in Hong Kong's history. The Committee **recommends** that HKPL explore collaborative opportunities with the Public Records Office to share information on archives for the purpose of enriching reference materials and mounting exhibitions on the history of Hong Kong. In this connection, the Committee welcomes HKPL's partnership with the Hong Kong Jockey

Club to undertake a Hong Kong Memory Project whereby a digital repository for the collection, preservation and dissemination of Hong Kong's unique historical and cultural heritage will be established, to provide open and free access through the Internet to digital collections that reflect the collective memory of Hong Kong people, with capital funding from the Hong Kong Jockey Club.

3.5.4 The Committee notes that HKPL has been cooperating closely with the educational and literary arts sectors in promoting reading and literary arts programmes. To diversify the user base of public libraries, the Committee **recommends** that HKPL take a more proactive approach in fostering cross-sector collaborations and partnerships both in delivering public library services and making innovative use of public library premises, particularly in organising special programmes. Examples of such collaborations could include-

- Cooperating with museums, public archives, and commercial publishers in the development of special collections of particular historical or cultural significance to Hong Kong, such as old and rare books from renowned authors or fiction categories, which appeal to special readers' interests;
- Cooperating with performing arts sectors in staging cultural performances on selected literary works; and
- Cooperating with visual artists in producing illustrative displays of selected literary works.

These partnership and collaboration programmes would bring literary culture to a wider spectrum of the community, including the non-reading public. They would also be able to attract public and corporate donations to HKPL.

3.5.5 The Committee notes that HKPL has developed partnership relationships with other library systems in the Mainland and the region. Within the Greater Pearl River Delta Region, library news and happenings are shared through hyperlinks among the Hong Kong Public Libraries, Sun Yat-Sen Library of Guangdong Province, Shenzhen Library and Macau Central Library. Reading activities organised by individual library system

in celebration of the World Book Day are also uploaded on the web for sharing. Reciprocal library visits for continual professional exchange and development of joint services in the areas of cataloguing and reference services are in place. The HKPL has also joined hands with the University of Hong Kong Libraries in holding the Fifth Conference of Chinese Resources Cooperation and Development in Hong Kong, bringing in representatives from the largest public and academic libraries from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and other parts of the world to enhance the development of Chinese resources and promote the cooperation amongst different Chinese resources centres and libraries worldwide.

3.5.6 The Committee considers that such partnerships would yield substantial potential benefits for HKPL and the Hong Kong community, including enhancing the cultural richness and diversity of HKPL's collections, pooling of knowledge and expertise, and sharing of trials on new library technologies. The Committee **recommends** that HKPL should continue to develop and sustain the existing partnership arrangements, extend and enhance them as and when appropriate. HKPL could also seek to assume a leadership role amongst public library systems in the region.

3.6 Leveraging the Use of Information Technology

3.6.1 Information technology (IT) has had a significant impact on modern libraries. As revealed by experience in other service industries, IT should serve as an enabling tool rather than a substitute of services provided by public libraries. Whilst there are numerous opportunities of using IT to enhance public library services, public libraries are still regarded as repositories of books where a reading culture is to be nurtured through physical handling of documents and participation in extension activities.

3.6.2 As in the case of other cities, technology has been playing an increasing role in improving library management so that librarians spend less time on manual processing tasks and focus more on delivering professional services such as readers' advisory service or organising book displays on special subjects.

3.6.3 Since the merging of the library systems of the two ex-municipal councils in early 2000, the existing Library Automation System (LAS) has been in use for almost 6 years. It is a mission-critical system for daily provision of library services. In addition, the Hong Kong Public Libraries system has developed a state-of-the-art Multimedia Information System (MMIS) in support of the public's self-learning and information needs. Equipped with powerful and sophisticated search facilities, the system provides a one-stop search enabling users of all ages to explore the multimedia archives via the Internet at home or through some 600 workstations in the HKCL and the 26 branch libraries. In recognition of the system's uniqueness, innovativeness, user-friendliness and expandability, the MMIS has been honoured with a number of awards both locally and internationally since its launching in 2001. To further improve the system, a long-term revamp of MMIS will be made in 2011.

3.6.4 LCSD commissioned a consultant in October 2005 to conduct a feasibility study on the replacement of the existing LAS of the HKPL which is approaching end of its life cycle. The study includes the subject of whether the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology is to be introduced to the public library system in Hong Kong. The use of RFID in library environment will be beneficial to the library management and operation. It will certainly bring more user-friendly self-service for the borrowing and returning processes. The increased usage of self-service will correspondingly reduce staff time in repetitive and labour intensive circulation processes. Besides, more accurate and faster sorting, shelving of library materials, efficient inventory management and stock taking control will be achieved.

3.6.5 Taking into account the limited life span of the existing LAS and the need to further enhance the functions of the system, the Committee **supports** the plan to replace the LAS. To ensure value-for-money and capability of delivering the service requirements if RFID technology is to be adopted, the Committee **recommends** that HKPL conducts a detailed cost-benefit analysis on adopting RFID, and assesses the feasibility of collaboration with academic libraries as some of them are also considering the use of RFID.

3.7 Offering Value-added Services

3.7.1 To provide more options and convenience for members of the public using the public library services, the HKPL has offered value-added services whereby patrons are allowed to return borrowed library materials to any public libraries regardless of their original lending libraries at no cost, and also to have free choice of pickup library location for collection of their reserved library materials at only a small fee.

3.7.2 The Committee considers that there are numerous ways by which HKPL could offer value-added services with involvement of the private sector. The Committee **recommends** that the following proposals from the consultancy study in 2004 be worth consideration by HKPL:

- (a) Book delivery service at a charge;
- (b) Advertising of projects and services in HKPL;
- (c) Hiring of service for the provision of specific services such as computer information services, marketing functions, running of outreach programmes or workshops;
- (d) Engaging public relations service provider to market and promote HKPL's brand and services; and
- (e) Partnership arrangements with book vendors and publishers.

Chapter 4 - Promotion of Reading and Literary Arts

4.1 The Committee is of the view that HKPL has a distinguished cultural role in promoting reading and literary arts in Hong Kong. This could be elaborated into the following two objectives:

- Encourage and cultivate regular reading habits amongst people from all walks of life; and
- Promote public interest and appreciation of literary arts, literary research, and creative writing.

4.2 Extension Activities

4.2.1 The Committee notes that HKPL has been organising an extensive series of activities and programmes to promote reading and literary arts in Hong Kong. Apart from regular reading programmes held in branch libraries, the HKPL also organises a variety of territory-wide activities to incubate the reading habits of the public in support of life-long learning and to build an extensive patron base. These activities include the Reading Programme for Children and Youths, Reading Clubs, Summer Reading Month of a thematic exhibition and various children programmes, thematic storytelling hours, storytelling workshops and performances, meet-the-author sessions, World Book Day activities, Reading Carnival, Good Book Selection Scheme for Secondary School Students, etc. Participation was active and response to these programmes was enthusiastic. An attendance of over 16 million in 10,455 reading related activities in 2006 was recorded. On promotion of literary arts, the HKPL organises extension activities to encourage creative writing and literary art appreciation. The variety of activities on literary arts organised, to name a few, are large-scale seminars and competitions on story-writing, creative writing, classical Chinese poetry and published works, workshops on creative writing, Monthly Literary Talks, literary authors' talks and the biennial 'Hong Kong Literature Festival'. While it actively collects and preserves information on local literature and literary writers, it also publishes literary works to promote publication of healthy reading

materials. In 2006, over 422,000 participants took part in 360 literary arts promotional activities. HKPL continues to establish close partnership with literary arts bodies and educational organisations to raise community awareness and solicit expert support in the organisation of related activities.

4.2.2 The Committee considers that the existing programmes organised by HKPL for the promotion of reading and literary arts are comprehensive and well received by the community.

4.3 Strengthening Promotion Activities

4.3.1 To accomplish the aforementioned objectives and build on the HKPL's on-going efforts, the Committee **recommends** to strengthen HKPL's existing promotion activities on reading and literary arts to keep pace with the changing expectations of the community, at both territorial and district levels, in close partnership with outside organisations and other government departments.

Non-library users

4.3.2 According to the results of the Public Opinion Survey on HKPL in 2004, 41.3% of the non-library users (aged 12 or above) had read books in the 12 months prior to date of interview. This implies that around 60% of these non-users do not have a frequent reading habit.

4.3.3 In addition to sustaining reading interest of active readers, the Committees **recommends** the HKPL to conduct more detailed surveys on the profile (demographic characteristics, educational and occupational background) and needs of non-library users who do not read, as opposed to those non-library users who have a reading habit. Based on such survey findings, dedicated efforts should be made to promote library services to target groups of non-library users who have little interest to read.

Children and Teenagers

4.3.4 The Committee considers it very important to cultivate the reading habit of children and teenagers. For this purpose, the Committee **recommends** the following measures: -

- Thematic reading activities in collaboration with schools or through the District School Liaison Committees of the eighteen districts;
- Guided library visit tours for students to encourage more frequent patronage;
- Activities to encourage parental participation so as to reinforce the reading habit of their children; and
- Closer collaboration with the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) in organising out-reaching activities in schools such as roving exhibitions in order to promote reading interest.

Reading Docents

4.3.5 The Committee **recommends** the HKPL to recruit parents and teachers as reading docents at children's libraries. If the demand warrants, the recruitment may be extended to suitable senior secondary school students, housewives and senior citizens. As the docents will be entrusted to have close contact with the children, a stringent set of selection criteria should be put in place. With proper training, these volunteers may be able to conduct out-reaching reading activities such as visiting elderly homes to read newspapers or stories to the elderly.

Activities on Drama Script Writing

4.3.6 The Committee **recommends** the HKPL to consider organising activities on drama script-writing for students to foster their interest in creative writing, such as through competitions. Participating students should be encouraged to read up some classic scripts before writing their own. Talks and workshops by renowned scriptwriters could

also be arranged for the participants to acquire the basic techniques of effective script writing.

Training on Information Searching Skills

4.3.7 The Committee noted that conducting literature search has become very popular among adult learners (in addition to students) for self-enhancement. To cater for their need, the Committee **recommends** that HKPL should organise dedicated end-users training on information seeking skills via Internet, online database, e-books, and library resources in audio and visual materials, and online formats.

Reading in other Languages

4.3.8 The Committee **recommends** that more activities should be organised to promote reading and creative writing in other languages. This is in line with Hong Kong as an Asia's world city who aspires to be a cultural metropolis rooted in Chinese tradition with a global vision.

Encouragement to Active Library Users

4.3.9 The Committee **recommends** that active library-users should be offered incentives as recognition of their dedication. Such incentives may include Certificates of Appreciation, entitlement of additional items of library materials to be borrowed at a time, etc.

4.4 Enhancing Publicity

4.4.1 The Committee considers it necessary to enhance publicity efforts by increasing media coverage for the purpose of promoting reading and literary arts.

Reading Ambassadors

4.4.2 The Committee considers it worthwhile to engage reading ambassadors in order to enhance the publicity impact of HKPL's reading promotion activities. The Committee invited four local celebrities representing four different target groups of the local population (youths, working adults, parents and senior citizens) to serve as Reading Ambassadors. The Reading Ambassadors have been invited to appear in the publicity films of the Committee and would participate in the production of other publicity materials and/or appear in the appropriate promotion library activities. Similar efforts could be replicated in future promotion activities if this measure proves to be successful.

Publicity Films

4.4.3 The Committee **recommends** the production of publicity films to promote the patronage of HKPL. The Committee had initiated the production of a series of four publicity films to promote reading and life-long pursuit of knowledge. The four Reading Ambassadors have appeared in the films to appeal to the respective target groups (namely youths, working adults, parents and senior citizens) to promote reading and life-long learning. Broadcasting of the films commenced in July 2006 to tie in with the launching of the Summer Reading Month 2006--an annual territory-wide major event organised by the HKPL in the summer to promote reading. Arrangements have been made for broadcasting the films in all public libraries, other venues of LCSD (e.g. museums, cultural centres, recreation and sports venues), primary and secondary schools, voluntary agencies' centres (e.g. youth and elderly centres), etc. Broadcasting of the publicity films in trains, television and radio have also been arranged in order to disseminate the messages as widely as possible amongst the community.

READ Posters

4.4.4 Having regard to the successful experience of the READ Posters designed by the American Library Association to promote reading

in the community, the Committee **recommends** the HKPL (or with collaboration with outside organisations) to produce similar promotional posters. The produced READ posters should be displayed extensively in the community, including schools, cultural and leisure venues, community facilities and other public places as appropriate.

READ Column on Newspapers

4.4.5 The Committee **recommends** exploring areas of collaboration with newspapers or magazines, such as introduction of a standing column for sharing of views on reading or book recommendations to promote and sustain public interest in reading and library services.

Chapter 5 - Mode of Governance

5.1 The Committee considers that proper governance is conducive to the effective delivery of public library services and achievements of HKPL's multiple objectives.

5.2 The Need for Changing the Mode of Governance?

Dependency on Public Funding

5.2.1 The Committee acknowledges that the public library function is a recurrent expenditure item of the Government. This is especially so because of the public libraries' obligation to provide the general public with free and accessible services. Any change in the mode of governance is not expected to generate enough income to cover its operating costs and most of the operating costs would have to be funded by the Government.

Consultancy Study's Recommendation

5.2.2 The Committee noted that, of the four options on institutional arrangements (i.e. government, corporatisation, privatisation and contracting-out), the Consultancy Study on the Future Development of Hong Kong Public Libraries in December 2002 recommended to consider the option of corporatisation with gradual contracting-out of non-core services. This recommendation was made mainly on the ground of its potential to achieve cost savings through outsourcing and lower staff costs, and to secure new sources of income, without having to compromise on the need to provide free and quality public library services. The Consultant also mentioned the need to conduct a more detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of this institutional option, and to sort out the implementation details.

Comparison of HKPL's Library Services with Overseas Cities

5.2.3 The above Consultancy Study included a comparison on the provision of public library services in Hong Kong with those in six major overseas metropolitan cities (namely New York, Toronto, Singapore, London, Sydney and Tokyo). The comparison covered aspects such as performance indicators, items per capita and issues per population etc. Having regard to the findings of the Consultancy Study, the Committee acknowledged the following strengths of the HKPL: -

- Notwithstanding its relatively short history, HKPL has been actively developing public library services through the building of new library facilities and introduction of new services during the past decades, and they are still undergoing expansion²;
- HKPL operates the busiest libraries with the highest number of loans per opening hour and average population served per library. In terms of a single public library system, it has the largest number of books on loan in a year;
- HKPL has been operating effectively at the lowest cost per capita and per registered borrower, and on average serves a larger number of population; and
- HKPL has the lowest provision of full-time and professional staff while enjoying a high level of public satisfaction³.

Involvement of District Councils in the Management of Public Libraries

5.2.4 In April 2006, the Government issued the Consultation Document on “Review of the Role, Functions and Composition of District Councils” to seek public views on proposals to enhance the role of District Councils (DCs) in district management. The recommendations include the

² At present, HKPL have 66 static libraries and 10 mobile libraries, and have plans to provide 5 new libraries in the coming 6 years.

³ According to the survey conducted in December 2004, 83.1% of the adult users were satisfied with the overall facilities and services of HKPL and 16.0% rated them average. Only less than 1% expressed dissatisfaction.

proposal to actively involve each DC in the management of selected district facilities, including libraries, community halls, leisure grounds, sports venues and swimming pools. For public libraries, it was proposed that with the exception of two, namely the Hong Kong Central Library and Basic Law Library which have been operating as territory-wide facilities, all the remaining district-based library facilities be brought under DCs' management. Specifically, a District Facilities Management Committee (DFMC) would be set up under each DC to steer and oversee the work involved. On public libraries, the DFMCs would be invited to provide input, consider and endorse proposals from LCSD, subject to the approved departmental operational budget for the public libraries concerned and the DC funds available, on the following:

- (a) Annual plans on the district library extension activities;
- (b) District library stock development programme;
- (c) Location of mobile library stops;
- (d) Customer service improvement initiatives;
- (e) Design and details of renovation projects and minor facility improvement projects; and
- (f) Monitoring of service output and standards.

In addition, DFMC members could initiate ideas on new or innovative programmes in the light of demographic characteristics in their districts. Examples pertaining to public libraries may include:

- (a) Organising library extension programmes to cultivate reading habits among different age groups and to encourage life-long learning;
- (b) Initiating book acquisition requests to enhance the library collection and to better meet the taste and needs of the district readers;
- (c) Fostering closer collaboration with local organisations in enhancing the library collection and in developing the community-based library scheme; and
- (d) Providing community input to the management of library premises so as to ensure that the design and configuration of the libraries better meet the local needs.

5.2.5 The Committee generally welcomes the above proposal in the Consultation Document as a significant step in enhancing community involvement in the management of public libraries.

Need for Change?

5.2.6 Taking into account the above proposal to involve DCs in the management of public libraries, and in view of the generally effective delivery of HKPL's services under the existing government-run model, the Committee **considers** that there is no imminent need for introducing any major institutional changes.

5.3 Improvements to the HKPL's Operation and Management System

5.3.1 Notwithstanding the above view that there is no immediate need to introduce any major changes in the mode of governance for HKPL, the Committee **recommends** the following improvements to the operational and management system of HKPL so as to increase the degree of public accountability and community participation:

An Advisory Board on Development Strategy of Public Libraries

5.3.2 On whether this Committee should continue after its two years' tenure, Members generally agree that the mission tasked with this Committee should have been satisfactorily accomplished upon the finalisation of the recommendation report. With the impending DCs' involvement in the management of the district libraries, Members **recommend** the reinforcement of the roles of the Hong Kong Central Library for it to serve as a territory-wide public library in helping the community to establish its own cultural identity, which are similar to those assumed by libraries at national level. The majority of the Members **recommend** the setting up of an advisory board on the overall development strategy of public libraries. This advisory board should

comprise individuals from professionals, academics, community personalities as well as government representatives to form a balanced mix. The board should primarily be tasked to advise the Government on how best to fulfill the broader “cultural” dimension (as opposed to the “local community service” dimension) of HKPL’s mission as set out in para 3.2.3, i.e. align with the needs of Hong Kong from a wider perspective to become a cultural metropolis in Asia with a strong cultural identity. Specifically, the advisory board would advise the Government on:

- (a) The role, functions and management of the Hong Kong Central Library; and
- (b) Strategic plans and measures (which cannot be undertaken by individual district libraries alone) to achieve the following objectives under the broader cultural mission of HKPL:
 - To develop a rich collection of information and publications reflective of Hong Kong’s cultural identity - strong roots of Chinese traditions with a global and pluralistic outlook
 - To collaborate with museums and the Public Records Office for documentation of oral history and collection of historical documents
 - To promote local literary works and studies
 - To harness information technology to help build a knowledge-based economy
 - To form partnerships in support of life-long learning
 - To network with other major public library systems in the region

5.3.3 To support the work of this advisory board, HKPL would have to formulate strategy plans together with proposed measures in the above aspects for the Board’s consideration.

5.3.4 This advisory board would also have dialogues with the DFMCs to exchange views on the overall development strategy of HKPL in fulfillment of HKPL’s broader cultural mission.

Review of Performance Management System

5.3.5 HKPL has in place a series of performance indicators which are quantitative output indicators seeking primarily to assess the cost-effectiveness of the services. The Committee **recommends** that HKPL should take the opportunity of tasking the above proposed advisory board to review their performance management system such as by including indicators capable of assessing the cultural and community impact of HKPL's services. Reference could also be drawn from the performance indicators being used in other public libraries outside Hong Kong.

Opinion Surveys and Consultation with Stakeholders and Users

5.3.6 Conducting public opinion surveys is an effective tool to gauge views of library users regarding their usage pattern, comments on existing services and expectations of future needs. The survey findings are also valid indicators of the performance of the HKPL. The latest opinion survey on the HKPL was conducted in late 2004. The Committee **recommends** that similar surveys be continued to facilitate HKPL's strategic planning of future library services and facilities. The scope and contents of the surveys should be strengthened by:

- Comparing the survey findings with those conducted on other countries' libraries;
- Tailoring the questions to tie in with the service improvements and new sets of performance indicators; and
- Elaborating on the profile and needs of non-library users who have not had a reading habit.

5.3.7 The Committee **recommends** that HKPL put in place a mechanism to solicit views from major stakeholder groups and library users on the management and operation of public library services. This could be done in conjunction with the above proposed advisory board on overall development strategy of public libraries. This would ensure that public library services could keep pace with users' expectations, consider

innovative ideas, strengthen civic engagement in public library services, and foster stronger partnerships with different sectors.

Review of Staffing Composition

5.3.8 Noting that the number of professional librarians in the HKPL is lower than those of the other major metropolitan cities as set out at Annex 10, the Committee **recommends** the HKPL to review their staffing composition and consider adjusting the ratio of their professional staff in order to match with the international standards. More importantly, HKPL should ensure that sufficient full-time staff with the required expertise are available to support HKPL's expanding and improved services. In the short-run, HKPL may consider taking forward CHC's suggestion of ameliorating the situation by training and transferring personnel internally. In the long run, the Committee **recommends** that HKPL should, in the formulation of the overall development plan of public library services, give due priority in aligning its ratio of professional staff with that of other major metropolitan cities.

Committee on Libraries

May 2007

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Extract of CHC Policy Recommendation Report

Libraries

4.6 Public libraries, the most widely used cultural facilities, best reflect the principle of equal access.

4.7 LCSD manages 70 public libraries, including the Central Library, 5 major libraries and 27 district libraries (and other small and mobile libraries). LCSD libraries have approximately 1,300 staff, 18% of which are trained librarians. In 2001/02, \$670 million was spent on the provision of library services.

4.8 LCSD commissioned a consultancy study on the future development of Hong Kong public libraries in late 2001. We support in principle the major recommendations of the consultancy report¹. Many of the consultant's recommendations are at the operational level, while our recommendations are mostly at the policy level.

Role

4.9 While still under the management of the two former Municipal Councils, public libraries were a place for leisure reading. Hong Kong has since been developing into an information and knowledge-based economy. Therefore, we propose that public libraries should become a place where citizens are encouraged to acquire knowledge, broaden their horizons and improve themselves. We have the following three strategic recommendations -

¹ The consultancy report of GML Consulting Limited was published in December 2002.

- **A base for cultural activities:** Libraries should deploy a significant amount of resources to enhance the cultural atmosphere of the society, in particular, to promote the pursuit of knowledge and the love of reading. We hope to see libraries become not just a place for borrowing books, but also a venue for a variety of cultural activities.
- **Developing the character of individual libraries:** Apart from the Central Library, individual libraries do not have their own character in terms of collections and target users. We propose that some libraries focus on certain themes in their collections (for example business, computer, children books). This could help individual libraries develop their own character and achieve greater cost-effectiveness².
- **Professionalism:** According to the consultancy study, the number of librarians in our public libraries is low by international standards. This needs to be rectified. In the short-term, LCSD could ameliorate the situation by training and transferring personnel internally. In the long run, the government should consider direct recruitment of librarians above the entry level.

Resource Development and Partnership

4.10 We propose that public libraries establish close partnership with the education and cultural sectors. This could facilitate the sharing of resources so that libraries are in a better position to fulfill their role in disseminating knowledge and promoting culture.

² LCSD plans to develop the Hong Kong City Hall Library and the Kowloon Public Library into a business and trade library and an education resources centre respectively.

- 4.11 Partnership between libraries and the education sector may include: strengthening collaboration with school libraries to promote reading, and establishing information exchange networks with libraries in tertiary institutions.
- 4.12 Partnership between libraries and the cultural sector may include: organising seminars with the academic sector, arranging arts appreciation programmes with the arts sector, and launching reading schemes with publishers and bookshops.

Management Structure

- 4.13 We support the consultancy proposal of establishing a statutory body, a "Libraries Board", to manage public libraries. We believe that the new body could facilitate the development of public libraries, and strengthen professional management as well as community involvement. The government should ensure that library services are not disturbed during the process of implementing the proposal.

Committee on Libraries

Terms of Reference

To advise the Secretary for Home Affairs on the provision of public library services, including:

1. The promotion of the pursuit of knowledge and the love of reading;
2. The formulation of strategies and plans for the development of library facilities and services, with reference to the Culture and Heritage Commission policy recommendations; and
3. The encouragement of community support and partnership with different sectors in promoting reading, life-long learning and literary arts.

Committee on Libraries

Membership

Chairman	Prof LEONG Chi-yan, John, JP
Vice-Chairman	Prof LEE Chack-fan, SBS, JP
Members	<p>Dr CHAN Kin-wai</p> <p>Mr CHAU Yin-ming, Francis, MH</p> <p>Ms CHENG Kit-yin, Kelly</p> <p>Mr CHEUNG Chi-kong</p> <p>Dr Anthony Walter FERGUSON</p> <p>Dr KAN Lai-bing, MH</p> <p>Mr KWOK Chun-wah, Jimmy, MH</p> <p>Mr Daniel LAI, BBS, JP</p> <p>Mr LEE Shung-tak, Peter, BBS, JP</p> <p>Mrs LEUNG NGAI Mou-yin, Justina, JP</p> <p>Mrs PANG TSUI Mei-wan, Josephine, MH</p> <p>Mrs TAM CHEUNG Kit-ying, Grace</p> <p>Mr TANG Wai-man, Tony</p> <p>Mr TIN Ding-sin</p> <p>Mr WU Man-keung, John, MH</p> <p>Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS, JP</p> <p>Mr YING Tze-man, Kenneth</p> <p>Mr KWOK Chung-kai, Peter Principal Assistant Secretary (Culture)², Home Affairs Bureau</p> <p>Mr LEE Yuk-man Assistant Director (Libraries and Development), Leisure and Cultural Services Department</p>
Secretary	<p>Ms Cecilia IP Chief Executive Officer (Culture)², Home Affairs Bureau</p>

Committee on Libraries

Work Plan for the Committee on Libraries

Long-term Targets

Mode of Governance

- ♦ To consider the most appropriate mode of governance for the library services and to advise whether the options of corporatisation, privatisation or setting up a Library Board should be pursued.

Development Strategies

- ♦ To advise on the collection policy to meet the changing community requirement and to support the life-long learning.
- ♦ To review the provision of library services in the light of the population and district requirement.
- ♦ To consider the need to develop special libraries such as thematic libraries and virtual libraries.
- ♦ To consider means to boost the library usage rate.
- ♦ To review the resource deployment and to consider the feasibility of adopting the 'users pay' principle.
- ♦ To consider the possibility of making use of IT application to streamline administrative work and to spare staffing resources for longer opening hours.
- ♦ To strengthen the provision of professional librarians.

Short-term Targets

Enhancement of Community Involvement

- ◆ To consider the extension of block loan arrangement to non-governmental organisations.
- ◆ To establish closer collaboration among district libraries and local schools and to improve the existing block loan arrangement to schools.
- ◆ To expand the existing library network by providing library services at the neighbourhood (library at doorstep).
- ◆ To establish networking with local university libraries.
- ◆ To expand the current docent scheme for better promotion of library services and facilities.

Promotion of Reading/Literary Arts

- ◆ To explore areas of wider media coverage of library activities such as the annual 'Summer Reading Month' and the biennial 'Hong Kong Literature Festival'.
- ◆ To consider more proactive means to promote reading and to explore opportunities for partnership with various government departments as well as non-governmental organisations for the purpose.
- ◆ To consider ways to expand the young readership such as closer collaboration with the Book Fair.
- ◆ To advise on measures to promote life-long learning.

<p style="text-align: center;">Subcommittee on Development Strategy of Provision of Library Services</p>

Terms of Reference

By making reference to the recommendations of the Report of Consultancy Study on the Future Development of Hong Kong Public Libraries and the policy recommendations of the Culture and Heritage Commission, to advise the Committee on Libraries on:

- (a) The future mode of governance of library services; and
- (b) The formulation of strategies and plans for the development of library facilities and services.

<p style="text-align: center;">Subcommittee on Community Involvement and Promotion of Reading and Literary Arts</p>
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Terms of Reference

By making reference to the recommendations of the Report of Consultancy Study on the Future Development of Hong Kong Public Libraries and the policy recommendations of the Culture and Heritage Commission, to advise the Committee on Libraries on:

- (a) The enhancement of community participation and partnership with different sectors for the development of library facilities and services; and
- (b) The promotion of reading and literary arts.

<p style="text-align: center;">Subcommittee on Development Strategy of Provision of Library Services</p>

Membership

Convenor

Mr YING Tze-man, Kenneth

Members

Mr CHAU Yin-ming, Francis, MH

Dr Anthony Walter FERGUSON

Dr KAN Lai-bing, MH

Mr Daniel LAI, BBS, JP

Prof LEE Chack-fan, SBS, JP

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Assistant Director (Libraries and Development), Leisure and Cultural Services
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Secretary

Ms Cecilia IP

Chief Executive Officer (Culture)2, Home Affairs Bureau

Subcommittee on Community Involvement and Promotion of Reading and Literary Arts

Membership

Convenor

Mr CHEUNG Chi-kong

Members

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Department

Secretary

Ms Cecilia IP

Chief Executive Officer (Culture)2, Home Affairs Bureau

Committee on Libraries

List of Stakeholders met by the Committee

Non-governmental Organisations

Caritas Hong Kong
Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association
The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups
The Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong
Helping Hand

Primary Schools

Maryknoll Fathers' School
T.W.G.Hs. Hong Kong & Kowloon Merchants Association Limited School
(P.M.)
NT Women & Juveniles Welfare Association Ltd. Leung Sing Tak Primary
School
Tai Kok Tsui Catholic Primary School (Hoi Fan Road)
Hennessy Road Government Primary School (AM)
S.K.H. Tak Tin Lee Shiu Keung Primary School
S.K.H. Yautong Kei Hin Primary School

Secondary Schools

St Paul's Co-educational College
St Paul's Convent School
Hong Kong Chinese & Women's Club College
S.K.H. Lui Ming Choi Secondary School
Pui Ching Secondary School
Lok Sin Tong Leung Chik Wai Memorial School
S.K.H. Lam Kau Mow Secondary School

Fukien Secondary School
Fanling Lutheran Secondary School
Fung Kai Liu Man Shek Tong Secondary School
Ling Liang Church M H Lau Secondary School
Kit Sam Lam Bing Yim Secondary School
Ju Ching Chu Secondary School (Tuen Mun)
Tang Shiu Kin Victoria Government Secondary School

Chambers of Commerce

The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce
Federation of Hong Kong Industries
Federation of International SME
The Hong Kong Chamber of Small & Medium Business Ltd
Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
HK Small & Medium Enterprises Association Limited
Junior Chamber International Hong Kong

Youth Organisations

Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Groups
Hong Kong United Youth Association

Advisors on Literary Arts

Hong Kong Arts Development Council Advisors on Literary Arts
Leisure & Cultural Services Department Advisors on Literary Arts

Library Staff

Government Librarians Association
Association of Government Cultural Services Assistants

Committee on Libraries

Major Observations of Study Visit to Singapore by Committee on Libraries in September 2005

Provision Level

1. The National Library Board (NLB) manages one national library, three regional libraries and community libraries totalling to a network of 73 libraries. Each of the three regional libraries in Singapore serves a population of approximately 800,000 residents and each spans an area of 8,000 to 10,000 m². Provision of community libraries in Singapore is based on the population sizes and development of the new towns they are targeted at. They normally have a floor area of approximately 2,000 to 3,000 m².
2. By comparison, Hong Kong has been using the Hong Kong Planning Standard Guidelines (HKPSG) of a district library for every 200,000, and LCSD's standard of a major library for every 400,000 population. For the existing five major libraries opened since 1962, their floor area ranges from some 2,900 m² to 4,000 m². For the six district libraries opened since 2000, their floor area ranges from some 2,000 m² to 3,700 m².
3. There is a need to review the HKPSG as well as LCSD's standard to accommodate the community's rising demand of a more spacious library ambience and extra space required for wider application of IT in our libraries.

Library Collection

4. The NLB has different categorisation of library collections in meeting needs and aspirations of different target groups (e.g. young and senior citizens, adults, the business sector etc.) in various phases

of their personal learning journeys.

5. The Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) may need to review their collection and acquisition policy to meet the changing demographic education and employment profiles of our population.

Customer Focused Initiatives

6. The NLB aims to structure in such a way to serve their diverse customer groups in the most effective way, e.g. the Jurong Library focuses on youth, library@orchard presents a whole new library experience with piped-in music built into the library's infrastructure, and library@esplanade serves as a hub for the performing arts in Singapore. Moreover, the NLB installs Senior Citizens' Room and music posts at selected libraries, as well as Programme Zone (for holding activities such as talks, performances and screenings of videos, movies and documentaries) in most of their libraries.
7. The HKPL may consider providing additional services and thematic programmes to meet diversity of needs of specific interest groups e.g. the disabled, aged, non-skilled workers etc.

Community Partnership

8. The Community Partnerships and Outreach (CPO) division was set up by the NLB to engage the community for collaboration in promoting active volunteerism at the public libraries in Singapore. Under the programme, community groups and corporations partner with the NLB to run joint activities and programmes to promote discovery, reading and learning to enrich the lives of library users.
9. With reference to the experience of Singapore's CPO, the HKPL may consider setting up closer partnership with Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), schools and other community bodies to extend library services to the community.

Fees for Enhanced Services

10. In Singapore, fees will be charged if library users wish to have enhanced services. For instance, for Singaporeans and permanent residents, library services for basic membership are free but an annual fee is chargeable for premium membership. For basic membership, only 4 books/magazines can be borrowed at one time, whereas for premium membership, 4 additional items comprising either books, magazines, audio-visuals or music scores can be borrowed.
11. The HKPL may consider exploring the feasibility of applying the user-pays principle to non-core or enhanced library services.

Leverage on Technology

12. Singapore adopted the first generation of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) in its library services in 2000. The system currently in use is the second generation of RFID. All libraries under NLB are equipped with the Electronic Library Management System which uses RFID technology to identify the books and hence allow the library to have a fully automated handling system that has improved the borrowing, returning and other processes.
13. HKPL may explore the implementation of the RFID technology in our public library operation, with due regard to the cost implication and effectiveness.

Benchmarking and Performing Indicators

14. The NLB is keen to collect information from library users and non-users on the performance of their libraries. They have developed Key Performance Indicators, Service Quality Feedback Form,

customer survey and non-users survey to keep track of their work and progress.

15. While the HKPL conducts similar opinion surveys regularly, views from non-users should also be collected more comprehensively so that incentives can be devised to encourage them to use our library services. Also, comparison on the performance index collected from libraries in other metropolitan cities will be useful for reference purpose.

Life-long Learning/Promotion of Reading

16. The NLB works closely with the Ministry of Education, Singapore to service school and academic libraries. By the same token, there are rooms for HKPL to establish closer collaboration with the Education and Manpower Bureau and other community partners to develop strategic programmes targeted for life-long learning and reading promotion.
17. The Programmes and Events Management (PEM) division of NLB plans and develops programmes as a service to the community to enrich their learning experience at the libraries. Thematic programmes appealing to specific interest groups as well as national and special initiatives are planned to promote life-long learning and reading. Where applicable and subject to availability of resources, the HKPL may draw reference to the work of the PEM in planning its own programmes.

Committee on Libraries

Major Observations of Study Visit to Dongguan Library and Shenzhen Library by Committee on Libraries on 27 September 2006

Cultural Identity

1. The Dongguan Library (DGL) was opened in September 2005 and the Shenzhen Library (SZL) soft opened this July. Besides serving as a resource centre for the pursuit of knowledge, the two libraries also form an integrated part of the new cultural landmark of their respective city:

- The DGL is located adjacent to the new government building and exhibition centre of Dongguan; whereas
- The SZL is connected to the new Shenzhen Concert Hall and opposite to the Citizen Centre in Shenzhen.

2. The Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) may draw reference to the DGL and SZL in the planning of future public libraries in Hong Kong. Instead of being a single structure of a sole entity, consideration should be given to associate each individual library with surrounding cultural facilities to achieve a clustering effect. The visual image of the cultural complex will tie in with the mission of the HKPL to enhance the cultural atmosphere of the community and promote cultural exchange.

Complementary Private Development

3. A mega Shenzhen Book Mall is being constructed opposite to the SZL. Upon completion, the Mall will be rented to shops selling books and related products. The co-existence of the two buildings in the vicinity, with similar target groups, will bring about the mutual benefit of boosting patronage of the two.

4. The HKPL may make reference to this mutual benefit in the course of identifying appropriate site for new libraries in future.

Special Design Features

5. The DGL is installed with an environmental-friendly sunshade system under which the angles of the automated shading shutters at the roof can be adjusted for regulation of indoor lighting.

6. The SZL is an artistic work by the famous Japanese architect Arata Isozaki. It has unique appearance of modern inspiration and a “modulus pattern” layout, which forms a stand-out cultural structure.

7. Despite limited land provisions which imposes constraints on the design of new libraries, the HKPL is recommended to introduce more creative and environmental-friendly design for future libraries (e.g. the major library at Tin Shui Wai under planning), with a view to establishing their respective individuality while creating a comfortable library ambience for the users.

Library Environment

8. The delegation is impressed by the spacious provision and relaxed interior setting of the DGL and SZL, and concurs that an enhanced space provision will encourage visitation of library for leisure reading as well as pursuit of knowledge. The DGL, for example, provides comfortable and cosy seating facilities in between bookshelves instead of the conventional design of setting up a designated reading area away from the bookshelves. The revolutionary design will encourage visitors to stay longer in the library to do reading.

9. Subject to availability of space, the HKPL could adopt similar layout concept for the libraries under refurbishment/renovation.

Ancillary Facilities

10. The DGL has a grand multi-purpose piazza suitable for holding outdoor activities (e.g. exhibitions, outdoor fora, cultural performance and other library-related promotion events). The SZL also has a sizable podium for such purposes.

11. Similar facilities could be added to our future libraries subject to availability of space. This will help to impose a better versatile cultural image to our libraries.

Leverage of Technology

12. The SZL is the first library in the Mainland to introduce the Digital Library Architecture Study and Application Platform Development Project (DILAS) system. It is also the first library in the country adopting the technology of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). The utilisation of RFID brings significant benefits to library operation management mode - it enhances efficiency in service delivery and provides a powerful technical safeguard against theft of collections.

13. The HKPL is considering the adoption of the RFID technology in selected libraries on a trial basis and the experience of the SZL will serve as a good reference.

Electronic Resources

14. Both the DGL and SZL have built up a comprehensive base of electronic resources to meet the rising community demand for non-paper based library materials. They have put in tremendous resources to facilitate convenient online access to e-books for their readers, particularly the young adults and students.

15. Subject to copyright clearance, the HKPL may consider

strengthening services in this area so as to keep pace with the varying needs of the community.

Thematic and Special Collections

16. The DGL has rich thematic and unique collections to meet the specific demands of different target reader groups, e.g. over 5,000 library items on Cantonese opera and a unique collection on rare editions of Hungloui Meng. In addition, to accommodate the reading need of over 100,000 Taiwanese currently operating business in Dongguan, the DGL has specially set up a “Taiwan Bookstore” housing almost 20,000 library items of traditional Chinese character which are directly procured from Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Community Library

17. In Dongguan, a community library (理想 0769 分館) is located in a private residential development and operated by the developer’s management company. The library is about 700 sq m and has a collection of 18,000 items.

18. In Hong Kong, private developers may be encouraged to set up similar libraries in their developments if deemed suitable, with the assistance of the HKPL as and when required. This will supplement HKPL’s current initiative to introduce community libraries in collaboration with NGOs.

Other Value-added Services

19. The DGL has a special DIY self-service corner which operates 24 hours a day all year round. Valid library cardholders can gain access to the DIY corner to borrow or return books beyond normal opening hours of the library with the aid of self-service terminals. The self-service corner, the first of its kind nation-wide, houses more than 10,000 library items therein.

20. The DGL also offers book delivery service upon request by users who have reserved their library items by telephone or through the Internet. Fee will be charged for the service.

21. The HKPL is recommended to consider introducing similar value-added services where resources permit, on a fee-charging basis if necessary.

Recruitment of professional staff

22. Both the DGL and SZL are “Institutions” for which recruitment of professional staff including the top management is to be conducted openly and nation-wide. This enables the two libraries to have flexibility in recruiting the most qualified candidates to fill their vacancies. Attributable to this reformed recruitment mechanism, both the DGL and SZL are now playing a leading role in the application of IT in library operation in the Mainland.

23. The HKPL may wish to revisit the feasibility of external recruitment of professional librarians to fill selected managerial posts to strengthen its pool of expertise. This option may be explored without causing major changes to HKPL’s existing institutional arrangement.

Comparison of Professional Staff Ratio with Other Metropolitan Cities

	HONG KONG		TORONTO		NEW YORK		LONDON		*SINGAPORE	*TOKYO	*SYDNEY
	2000	2004/05	2000	2004/05	2000	2004/05	2000	2004/05	2000	2000	2000
Ratio of Professional Staff to Population	0.004%	0.004%	N.A.	0.018%	0.052%	0.013%	0.016%	0.015%	0.012%	0.009%	0.012%

* For the three places, only figure for 2000 are available.