

Report No. 44 of the Director of Audit — Chapter 6

STATION IMPROVEMENT AND AMALGAMATION PROJECTS

Summary

1. In 1999, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) implemented a station improvement project at an estimated cost of \$649.2 million for making physical improvements and security enhancement to 59 police premises. In the same year, the HKPF started to implement a station amalgamation project to merge a number of police stations for more effective deployment of frontline staff and to achieve savings.

Delay in completion of the station improvement project

2. *Insufficient internal communication.* The entire station improvement project was substantially completed in March 2004, after a delay of 21 months. One of the major causes of delay was the inadequacy of internal communication among different formations of the HKPF. *The Audit Commission (Audit) has recommended that in planning all station improvement projects in future, the Commissioner of Police should ensure that users' requirements are taken into account and all limitations to the improvement works are made known to all parties concerned at an early stage.*

3. *Management of pilot schemes.* Another cause of delay was the lack of co-ordination between the builder works contractors and security system contractor. The building improvement works and the installation of automated station security system were tested separately in two pilot schemes. *Audit has recommended that in planning all station improvement projects in future, the Commissioner of Police should consider including in the same pilot scheme all major parts of a project so that the level of co-ordination required among all parties concerned can be comprehensively evaluated.*

Utilisation of spare space

4. *Usage of identified spare spaces.* Audit noted that the HKPF had achieved better utilisation of space after the implementation of the station improvement project. However, 1,686 square metres of the identified spare spaces in three police premises had remained unoccupied for more than two years. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should, in consultation with the Government Property Agency (GPA), promptly draw up an implementation plan for the short-term and long-term uses of the identified spare spaces arising from the station improvement project.*

5. ***Additional spare space in the Tsing Yi Police Station.*** Some operational units of the New Territories South Regional Headquarters were occupying part of the second floor of the Tsing Yi Police Station. With the relocation of these operational units to a new complex in Tsuen Wan in mid-2005, there will be more spare space in the Tsing Yi Police Station. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should take into account the space to be released by the operational units of the New Territories South Regional Headquarters in the review of the long-term use of the spare space in the Tsing Yi Police Station.*

6. ***Surplus accommodation.*** Audit noted that the HKPF had not consulted the GPA on the use of the surplus accommodation arising from the improved space utilisation of changing rooms and night duty rooms. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should, in consultation with the GPA, clarify the procedures in the Accommodation Regulations to be followed for handling the surplus accommodation of the HKPF.*

Remodelled report rooms

7. ***Need for reception area and deployment of staff to reception area.*** Audit visited 16 report rooms from July to September 2004. Audit found that the reception areas of 6 out of 9 report rooms were not manned by HKPF staff. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should: (a) critically review the usage of the reception areas in report rooms and the deployment of HKPF staff to man the reception areas; and (b) consider converting the reception areas of report rooms with low public demand for reception service into other more beneficial use.*

8. ***Carpet problem in the “back of house” area.*** The problem of the newly fitted carpet tiles in the “back of house” area was discussed at a number of meetings in 2001. In January 2003, the HKPF agreed with the Architectural Services Department to replace the carpet tiles in the “back of house” area of 48 report rooms with rubberised synthetic tiles at an estimated cost of \$1.7 million. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should, in the implementation stage of station improvement projects in future, seriously consider the users’ feedback and make timely adjustments to the original implementation plan in order to avoid incurring nugatory expenditure.*

Information kiosks in report rooms

9. ***Hardware not in use.*** Audit site visits to the 16 report rooms from July to September 2004 revealed that the hardware (i.e. web cameras, keyboards and speakers) of the information kiosks was not used to provide interactive service to the public. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should examine the use of the hardware and the functions of the information kiosks with a view to improving and expanding the service provided to the public.*

10. ***Usage of information kiosks.*** Audit noted that the usage of information kiosks in individual report rooms varied significantly. From January 2001 to October 2004, one

information kiosk in the Airport Police Station recorded the lowest average usage rate of one hit per day. Another information kiosk in the North Point Police Station recorded the highest average usage rate of 280 hits per day. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should review periodically the usage of information kiosks, ascertain the reasons for the low usage and take appropriate measures to ensure that the information kiosks are used effectively.*

11. ***Alternative use of information kiosks.*** Audit noted that the HKPF used Incident Mapping System (IMS) kiosks for briefing the police officers. The IMS kiosks are touch screen kiosks which enable police officers to access updated crime incident data. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should consider changing the use of the information kiosks to IMS kiosks with a view to utilising the information kiosks more effectively and facilitating convenient access to the IMS by police officers.*

12. ***Information kiosks not functioning properly.*** Audit site visits to the 16 report rooms from July to September 2004 found that some information kiosks were not functioning properly. Non-working information kiosks discourage public use. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should ensure that the information kiosks always function properly.*

Resource centres

13. ***Usage of resource centres.*** Audit noted that the usage of the resource centres by police officers was low. Of the 16 resource centres visited by Audit, 8 resource centres had only a few books and reference materials on the bookshelves. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should: (a) consider conducting a user opinion survey to find out the reasons for the low usage of the resource centres and explore ways to promote usage; and (b) ascertain whether the collection of reference materials in individual resource centres meets the needs of police officers.*

14. ***Resource centres in close proximity.*** Some resource centres provided in police premises are in close proximity to each other. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should critically review the location and usage of all the resource centres, in particular those that are in close proximity to each other, and explore the feasibility of converting the resource centres with low usage to other more beneficial use.*

Automated station security system

15. ***Late involvement of stakeholders.*** There were misunderstandings and confusions in the installation of the automated station security system as a result of the late involvement of stakeholders. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should, in handling technology improvement projects in future, involve and consult all stakeholders at an early stage and ensure that their requirements, concerns and suggestions are taken into account in all stages of project design and implementation.*

Station amalgamation project

16. ***Congested accommodation in merged police stations.*** Modification works were carried out in the Castle Peak Police Station and the Chai Wan Police Station to accommodate additional staff transferred from other police stations. Additional improvement works were carried out to solve the accommodation problems of these two police stations after amalgamation. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should, in planning future amalgamation of police stations, provide sufficient accommodation for the additional staff, records and property in the merged police station and complete the modification works before amalgamation.*

17. ***Efficient use of resources.*** The HKPF has successfully implemented the station amalgamation project to improve efficiency, enhance frontline coverage and achieve savings in management costs. Up to August 2004, the merging of police stations in six districts achieved a saving of \$44.3 million through the deletion of 117 posts. *Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should continue with the good practice of amalgamation of police stations.*

Response from the Administration

18. The Administration generally agrees with the audit recommendations.

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