

CHAPTER 6

**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION**

GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT

GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

Security Bureau

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

Hong Kong Police Force

**Provision of staff recreation,
catering and welfare services
for the Hong Kong Police Force**

PROVISION OF STAFF RECREATION, CATERING AND WELFARE SERVICES FOR THE HONG KONG POLICE FORCE

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PROVISION OF STAFF RECREATION, CATERING AND WELFARE SERVICES FOR THE HONG KONG POLICE FORCE

Summary and key findings

A. **Introduction.** The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) provides a wide range of recreation, catering and welfare services to its staff and their family members through its Catering, Clubs, Sports and Recreation Group (CCSRG) and Welfare Services Group (WSG). Since 1997, the HKPF has taken initiatives to reduce the operating cost of these two groups. Audit has conducted a review to examine whether there are further areas for improvement in the recreation, catering and welfare services provided by these two groups (paras. 1.1 and 1.5). The audit findings are summarised in paragraphs B to K below.

B. **Recreational facilities.** A space standard for the provision of recreational facilities in police formations was agreed as early as 1988. However, it had not yet been promulgated. Notwithstanding that there was a shortage of office space in most police formations, in more than half of the 61 police formations covered by a HKPF's review, the area of the recreational facilities exceeded the agreed space standard (paras. 2.1 and 2.4).

C. The Police Headquarters Order states that the maximum number of amusement game machines installed in any one recreation room, mess or canteen of a police formation is restricted. However, Audit found that there were four locations where the number of amusement game machines installed exceeded the maximum (paras. 2.9 and 2.10).

D. **Police clubs.** The HKPF had incorrectly assessed the financial viability of contracting out the operations of the Police Officers' Club (POC) and the Police Sports and Recreation Club (PSRC) because it adopted an inappropriate basis for calculating the staff cost of the civil servants working in these two clubs. Audit has estimated that if the operations of the two police clubs are contracted out, the annual savings will be \$3.7 million (para. 3.6).

E. In 1996, an advertising agent approached the POC and proposed to place advertising signs on the premises of the POC. The advice of the HKPF's Planning and Development Branch was that, as the POC was a government property, leasing any part of it for the purpose of advertisement was not permissible. After receiving this advice, the POC did not take any further action on this matter. Audit considers that the advice of the Planning and Development Branch is at variance with the Accommodation Regulations which state that advertising is permitted on government buildings. Audit has estimated that there has been a potential loss of advertising income of about \$4 million a year to the Government (paras. 3.12, 3.15, 3.16 and 3.17).

F. Post-tied quarters in the POC and the PSRC are provided to the managers of the police clubs. Audit has reservations about the need for providing these officers with post-tied quarters (paras. 3.23 and 3.25).

G. **Catering services.** The Internal Service Level Agreement (ISLA) of the HKPF's Personnel Wing specified that the frequency of inspecting each police canteen should be at least twice every month. However, this target has generally not been met. Audit considers that it is doubtful whether the HKPF has achieved its objective of improving the monitoring of catering services (paras. 4.1 and 4.4).

H. According to the Accommodation Regulations, the area of a canteen kitchen should be 48% of that of the dining area of a canteen. However, in 68 of the 70 police canteens examined by Audit, the area of the kitchen did not comply with the space standard (paras. 4.7 and 4.8).

I. Under the Food Business Regulation, all canteens must be licensed unless they are for the exclusive use of the pupils of the school and the persons employed in the workplace. However, Audit has found that: (a) police canteens are not licensed under the Food Business Regulation and (b) police canteens serve not only persons employed by the HKPF but also persons in police custody and witnesses. According to the legal advice obtained by the HKPF, persons in police custody and witnesses, who were not persons employed to work in police buildings, should not be allowed to use police canteens (paras. 4.14, 4.15(a) and (b) and 4.16).

J. **Welfare services.** Notwithstanding that for each regional welfare office (RWO), the HKPF had compiled statistics on the number of welfare cases handled, hospital and home visits made and interviews conducted, the HKPF did not make use of the statistics to establish productivity standards. Moreover, among the RWOs, there were large variations in workload handled by each officer (para. 5.8).

K. **Disciplined officers providing recreational and welfare services.** As the activities of the POC and the PSRC are recreational in nature, Audit considers that: (a) it is unnecessary to deploy police officers, who have constabulary skills, to oversee the operations of the two police clubs after the contracting out of the clubs' operations and (b) after the reorganisation of the Sports and Recreation Division (SRD), it is also unnecessary to retain disciplined officers in the Division. As regards the provision of welfare services, the HKPF informed Audit that it was necessary to retain some disciplined staff in the RWOs. Audit considers that: (a) the welfare service duties performed by the staff of the RWOs are not constabulary duties and (b) although the HKPF may wish to retain some disciplined staff in the RWOs, the number of such staff should be kept to the minimum. Audit has estimated that if the relevant disciplined posts engaged in providing recreational and welfare services are civilianised, there will be a total annual saving in staff cost of about \$4.7 million at 1999-2000 prices (paras. 6.8, 6.9, 6.17(a) and 6.18).

L. **Audit recommendations.** Audit has made the following main recommendations that the Commissioner of Police should:

- (a) promulgate as soon as possible the agreed space standard for the provision of recreational facilities in police formations (para. 2.5(a));
- (b) in those police formations where there is a shortage of office space, convert the space presently occupied by recreational facilities which is in excess of entitlement into office use (para. 2.5(b));

- (c) in assessing the financial viability of contracting out the operations of the POC and the PSRC, calculate the costs of the civil servants working in the two police clubs on the basis of the full cost, in accordance with the Treasury's guidelines (para. 3.7(a));
- (d) take prompt action to contract out the operations of the two police clubs so as to realise the cost savings (para. 3.7(b));
- (e) seek the approval of the Government Property Administrator for placing advertisements on the premises of the POC and then invite advertising agents to submit proposals (para. 3.19(a));
- (f) in conjunction with the Government Property Administrator and other Bureau Secretaries and Heads of Department concerned, take prompt action to reap benefits from the placement of advertising signs on the premises of the POC if proposals submitted by advertising agents are acceptable (para. 3.19(b));
- (g) in order to monitor the level of catering services more effectively, ensure that the Catering Division inspects each police canteen at least twice every month as specified in the ISLA of the HKPF's Personnel Wing (para. 4.5);
- (h) until it is permissible under the Food Business Regulation for police canteens to provide meals to persons in police custody and witnesses, make alternative arrangements for providing such meals (para. 4.18);
- (i) establish productivity standards for the RWOs so that their manpower requirements can be more accurately assessed (para. 5.9(a));
- (j) consider employing civilians to replace:
 - (i) the Superintendent and the Chief Inspector in the core team of the POC and the PSRC after the operations of the clubs have been contracted out; and
 - (ii) the five disciplined officers in the SRD after its reorganisation (para. 6.11); and
- (k) consider replacing the Sergeants in the RWOs by civilians (para. 6.19).

M. **Response from the Administration.** The Administration has generally agreed with the audit recommendations.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) provides a wide range of recreation, catering and welfare services to its staff and their family members through the Catering, Clubs, Sports and Recreation Group (CCSRG) and the Welfare Services Group (WSG) of its Personnel Services Branch (PSB). The objectives of providing these services are:

- (a) to improve staff morale;
- (b) to relieve staff stress;
- (c) to encourage the staff to lead a healthy life style; and
- (d) to provide positive support to the staff and their family members.

The Catering, Clubs, Sports and Recreation Group

1.2 The CCSRG, headed by a Senior Superintendent, is responsible for providing catering services to and organising sporting and recreational activities for the staff of the HKPF. As at 1 July 2000, the CCSRG had an establishment of 170 posts, of which 30 were disciplined posts and 140 were civilian posts. The Group comprises four units, namely, the Catering Division, the Sports and Recreation Division (SRD), the Police Sports and Recreation Club (PSRC) and the Police Officers' Club (POC). The first three units are each headed by a Superintendent and the last unit is headed by a Chief Inspector. The Catering Division is responsible for ensuring that catering services are provided to the staff of the HKPF at an acceptable standard in terms of hygiene, cleanliness and nutrition. The SRD is responsible for organising sporting and recreational activities for the staff of the HKPF. The Division also manages a number of holiday flats and recreation centres for use by the staff of the HKPF. The PSRC and the POC provide various club facilities to their members.

The Welfare Services Group

1.3 The WSG, headed by a Senior Force Welfare Officer of the civilian establishment, is responsible for providing welfare services to the staff of the HKPF. As at 1 July 2000, the WSG had an establishment of 63 posts, of which 23 were disciplined posts and 40 were civilian posts. Some civilian posts of the WSG are staffed by professionally qualified social workers, who are officers of the Force Welfare Officer grade.

Recent cost-saving measures

1.4 Since 1997, the HKPF has revised the structure of the CCSRG and the WSG by civilianisation and deletion of posts and by contracting out some of their services. Consequently, up to March 2000, the HKPF had achieved a total saving of \$25.4 million in staff cost of these two groups. Moreover, the HKPF has implemented various measures under the Enhanced Productivity Programme (EPP) in order to achieve further cost savings. The HKPF estimated that in 2000-2001 and 2001-2002, these measures would achieve an additional total saving of \$1 million in staff cost of these two groups.

Audit review

1.5 Audit has conducted a review on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the recreation, catering and welfare services which the CCSRG and the WSG provide to the staff of the HKPF. As the HKPF has already taken initiatives to reduce the operating cost of the CCSRG and the WSG (see paragraph 1.4 above), the audit aimed to examine whether there are further areas for improvement. The audit focused on, and has identified room for improvement in, the following areas:

- (a) recreational facilities (see Part 2 below);
- (b) police clubs (see Part 3 below);
- (c) catering services (see Part 4 below);
- (d) welfare services (see Part 5 below); and
- (e) disciplined officers providing recreational and welfare services (see Part 6 below).

PART 2: RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Space for recreational facilities

2.1 In many police formations, recreational facilities are provided to the staff of the HKPF. Such facilities include, for example, television rooms, amusement game machine rooms, table tennis rooms and billiard rooms. In May 1988, the then Finance Branch and the then Administrative Services and Information Branch of the Government Secretariat, the Architectural Services Department and the HKPF agreed that the space standard for the provision of recreational facilities in police formations should be set at 1/3 square metre per Junior Police Officer (JPO — Note 1). However, as far as could be ascertained by Audit, the space standard had not yet been promulgated, for example, through the Police Headquarters Order or the Police General Order.

2.2 In March 1999, the HKPF set up a Working Group (Note 2) to review, among others, the space provided for recreational facilities in 61 police formations. In these 61 police formations, there was a total establishment of about 18,300 JPOs and the total area of the recreational facilities was about 6,100 square metres. The review, which was completed in October 1999, found that:

- (a) in 34 police formations, the area of the recreational facilities exceeded their entitlement (see Appendix A). The total space provided for the recreational facilities which was in excess of entitlement was 1,587 square metres. In 21 of these 34 police formations, the area of the recreational facilities exceeded their entitlement by more than 50% (see the last row of Appendix A); and
- (b) in the remaining 27 police formations, the area of the recreational facilities was below their entitlement (see Appendix B). The total shortfall in space provided for the recreational facilities was 1,586 square metres. In 11 of these 27 police formations, the area of the recreational facilities was below their entitlement by more than 50% (see the last row of Appendix B).

2.3 The Working Group considered that:

Note 1: *A Junior Police Officer refers to a police officer of the rank of Station Sergeant, Sergeant, Senior Police Constable or Police Constable.*

Note 2: *The Working Group, which was chaired by the Chief Superintendent of the PSB, was set up by the HKPF to address the issues raised in the Director of Audit's Report No. 31 issued in October 1998 on the provision and operation of police canteens and messes. In addition to police canteens and messes, the Working Group's review also covered recreational facilities in police formations.*

- (a) as most police officers had only two 15-minute breaks and a one-hour meal break during their working hours, they should be busily engaged in their duties. The staff of the HKPF could therefore spare only a short time to use the recreational facilities; and
- (b) the staff of the HKPF had already been provided with a wide range of recreational facilities in the POC and the PSRC.

Noting that, in most police formations, there was a shortage of office space, the Working Group found it difficult to understand why, in some police formations, more space than the entitlement was allocated to the provision of recreational facilities.

Audit observations on space for recreational facilities

2.4 Audit found that:

- (a) **the agreed space standard for the provision of recreational facilities in police formations had not yet been promulgated (see paragraph 2.1 above);**
- (b) **the space provided for the recreational facilities in police formations did not comply with the agreed space standard (see paragraph 2.2(a) and (b) above); and**
- (c) **in most police formations, there was a shortage of office space. However, in more than half of the 61 police formations covered by the Working Group's review, the area of the recreational facilities exceeded the agreed space standard (see paragraphs 2.2(a) and 2.3 above).**

Audit recommendations on space for recreational facilities

2.5 Audit has *recommended* that the Commissioner of Police should:

- (a) **promulgate as soon as possible the agreed space standard for the provision of recreational facilities in police formations;**
- (b) **in those police formations where there is a shortage of office space, convert the space presently occupied by recreational facilities which is in excess of entitlement into office use; and**

- (c) **conduct regular reviews to ensure that the space occupied by recreational facilities in police formations complies with the laid-down standard.**

Response from the Administration

2.6 The **Commissioner of Police** agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) the issue of promulgating the agreed space standard for the provision of recreational facilities in police formations will be further pursued through the HKPF's Working Group on Recreational Space in Police Formations;
- (b) the issue of converting the space presently occupied by recreational facilities which is in excess of entitlement into office use, is dependent on funds being available. As part of the HKPF's Station Improvement Plan, various recreational areas have already been converted into other uses; and
- (c) the issue of conducting regular reviews to ensure that the space occupied by recreational facilities in police formations complies with the laid-down standard will be pursued through the HKPF's Working Group on Recreational Space in Police Formations.

2.7 The **Government Property Administrator** supports the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) the space standard agreed in 1988 (see paragraph 2.1 above) is in use; and
- (b) since May 1999, departments have been given the discretion to convert recreational space into office use.

Number of amusement game machines

2.8 Amusement game machines are provided in police formations for the following reasons:

- (a) police officers work in a stressful environment and some simple facilities should be provided to them so that they can relax during their rest time. Playing amusement game machine is a popular form of entertainment among JPOs; and

- (b) the income collected from the police officers playing the amusement game machines is a major source of fund for providing recreational facilities to and organising welfare activities for the staff of the police formations.

2.9 The Police Headquarters Order states that in order to maintain proper control, the maximum number of amusement game machines installed in any one recreation room, mess or canteen of a police formation is restricted. The maximum number of such machines is specified for each location of a police formation (see Appendix C).

Audit observations on number of amusement game machines

2.10 As at 31 March 2000, the HKPF had a total of 337 amusement game machines installed at 105 locations, including messes, canteens and amusement game machine rooms in various police formations (see Appendix D). **Audit found that, of these 105 locations, there were four locations where the number of amusement game machines installed exceeded the maximum allowed in the Police Headquarters Order. At three locations, the number of amusement game machines exceeded the maximum by two while at one location, the number of amusement game machines exceeded the maximum by one (see Appendix E).**

Audit recommendation on number of amusement game machines

2.11 **Audit has recommended that, in order to maintain proper control, the Commissioner of Police should ensure that the number of amusement game machines installed in any one recreation room, mess or canteen of a police formation does not exceed the maximum specified in the Police Headquarters Order.**

Response from the Administration

2.12 The **Commissioner of Police** agrees with the audit recommendation. He has said that:

- (a) two of the police formations, the New Territories South Operational Base and the Police Mass Transit Railway District Headquarters, are multi-user buildings serving a number of different police formations. They do not fall within the definitions set out in the Police Headquarters Order. This issue will be reviewed to ensure that the number of amusement game machines in each location is properly controlled; and
- (b) the other two police formations, Sheung Shui and Tsing Yi, have already been instructed to arrange the immediate removal of the excess machines.

PART 3: POLICE CLUBS

Locations and operating hours

3.1 Both the POC in Causeway Bay and the PSRC in Mong Kok were opened in April 1986. The POC, which was built by the Government at a total cost of \$40.6 million, has an area of 9,700 square metres. The PSRC, which was built by the Government at a total cost of \$68.4 million, has an area of 14,600 square metres. Both police clubs open 16 hours a day from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. throughout the year except the first two days of the Chinese New Year.

Users of police clubs

3.2 The POC can be used by:

- (a) serving officers of the HKPF and the Auxiliary Police not below the rank of Inspector and serving civilian officers of the HKPF of equivalent rank;
- (b) retired officers of the HKPF not below the rank of Inspector and retired civilian officers of the HKPF of equivalent rank; and
- (c) spouses and unmarried children of serving and retired officers specified in insets (a) and (b) above.

3.3 The PSRC can be used by:

- (a) serving officers of the HKPF and the Auxiliary Police and serving civilian officers of the HKPF;
- (b) retired disciplined officers and retired civilian officers of the HKPF; and
- (c) spouses and unmarried children of serving and retired officers specified in insets (a) and (b) above.

Contracting out of police clubs' operations

3.4 At a Departmental Establishment Committee meeting held in May 1985 to discuss the creation of posts for operating the POC and the PSRC, the Finance Branch informed the HKPF that the Financial Secretary had directed that recreational services should be contracted out as far as possible. This was because additional posts created for such services would increase the size of the civil service and it would be more economical to contract out such services. Subsequently, the HKPF contracted out security, cleansing and lifeguard services of the two police clubs. However, not all services were contracted out. As at 1 July 2000, the two police clubs had a total establishment of 82 civil service posts in addition to ten non-civil service posts.

3.5 As one of the measures for implementing the EPP, the HKPF has been considering ways to contract out the operations of the POC and the PSRC by stages from 2001 to 2003. In March 1999, the HKPF estimated that contracting out the operations of the two police clubs would achieve an annual saving of \$6 million. However, in February 2000, the HKPF informed Audit that contracting out the operations of the two police clubs would not achieve any cost savings. According to the HKPF's assessment:

- (a) the annual cost of operating the two police clubs was \$17.2 million, comprising the staff cost of \$16 million for 85 civil servants (Note 3) and the cost of \$1.2 million for hiring ten employees on non-civil service terms (see paragraph 3.4 above); and
- (b) the estimated annual cost of contracting out the operations of the two police clubs was \$20.6 million, comprising the contract fee of \$18 million and the staff cost of \$2.6 million for a core team of six civil servants who would be responsible for overseeing the operations of the two police clubs after the contracting-out exercise (see paragraph 6.7 below).

As the estimated cost of \$20.6 million for contracting out the operations of the two police clubs would exceed the current operating cost of \$17.2 million by \$3.4 million annually, the HKPF considered that such contracting out was not financially viable. However, Audit found that the HKPF's assessment was not entirely satisfactory. The HKPF's assessment, together with Audit's assessment, is shown in Table 1 below.

Note 3: *The HKPF calculated the annual staff cost of \$16 million based on the two clubs' total establishment of 85 civil service posts as at 1 December 1999.*

Table 1

**HKPF's and Audit's assessments of the financial consequence
of contracting out the operations of the POC and the PSRC at 1999-2000 prices**

		HKPF's assessment (Note 1)	Audit's assessment (Note 2)
		(\$ million)	(\$ million)
Annual cost if operations are not contracted out			
Staff cost of civil servants	(a)	16.0	24.8
Cost of hiring employees on non-civil service terms	(b)	1.2	1.2
		—	—
Total cost	(c) = (a) + (b)	17.2	26.0
		—	—
Estimated annual cost if operations are contracted out			
Contract fee	(d)	18.0	18.0
Staff cost of core team (Note 3)	(e)	2.6	4.3
		—	—
Total cost	(f) = (d) + (e)	20.6	22.3
		—	—
(Extra cost) / Savings	(g) = (c) - (f)	(3.4)	3.7
		—	—

Source: HKPF's records and Audit's computation

Note 1: The HKPF calculated the annual staff cost of the civil servants based on the Notional Annual Mid-point Salary.

Note 2: Audit calculated the annual full staff cost of the civil servants.

Note 3: The core team consists of six civil servants.

Audit observations on contracting out of police clubs' operations

3.6 **Audit has the following observations on the HKPF's assessment:**

- (a) in its analysis, the HKPF calculated the annual staff cost (i.e. \$16 million) of the 85 civil servants (see paragraph 3.5(a) above) solely based on the Notional Annual Mid-point Salary (NAMS — Note 4), which does not include fringe benefits (such as housing and education allowances and medical benefits). However, according to the departmental costing guidelines issued by the Treasury, the staff cost should be calculated on the basis of the full cost which would include all the fringe benefits. Using the full cost as the basis of calculation, the annual staff cost of the 85 civil servants working in the two police clubs should be \$24.8 million and the annual staff cost of the six civil servants of the core team (see paragraph 3.5(b) above) should be \$4.3 million (see Table 1 above); and
- (b) the annual cost of operating the two police clubs should be \$26 million (i.e. civil service staff cost of \$24.8 million plus non-civil service staff cost of \$1.2 million — see paragraphs 3.6(a) and 3.5(a) above). The annual cost of contracting out the operations of the two police clubs should be \$22.3 million (i.e. contract fee of \$18 million plus civil service staff cost of \$4.3 million — see paragraphs 3.5(b) and 3.6(a) above).

Therefore, if the operations of the two police clubs are contracted out, the annual savings will be \$3.7 million, instead of incurring an annual loss of \$3.4 million (see Table 1 above). Audit considers that the HKPF had made an incorrect assessment of the financial viability of contracting out the operations of the two police clubs because it adopted an inappropriate basis for calculating the staff cost of the civil servants.

Audit recommendations on contracting out of police clubs' operations

3.7 **Audit has *recommended* that the Commissioner of Police should:**

- (a) in assessing the financial viability of contracting out the operations of the POC and the PSRC, calculate the costs of the civil servants working in the two police clubs on the basis of the full cost, in accordance with the Treasury's guidelines;

Note 4: *Notional Annual Mid-point Salary refers to the mid-point of the basic salary scale of a rank or a grade.*

- (b) **take prompt action to contract out the operations of the two police clubs so as to realise the cost savings; and**
- (c) **in conjunction with the Secretary for the Civil Service, plan ahead the redeployment of the civil servants presently working in the two police clubs so as to ensure that the operations of the clubs can be contracted out smoothly.**

Response from the Administration

3.8 The **Commissioner of Police** has said that:

- (a) regarding the audit recommendation on calculating the government staff cost of the POC and the PSRC at full cost, it is accepted that when considering the full amount of savings to be achieved, the Full Annual Staff Cost At Mid-point should be used. However, in considering the financial viability of actually contracting out the operations of the two police clubs, it is also necessary to consider the NAMS because this is the actual amount of money which will be available to the HKPF in acquiring any services;
- (b) he agrees in principle with the audit recommendation to take prompt action to contract out the operations of the two police clubs so as to realise the cost savings. However, no firm plans have been made as to the way forward. It is pertinent to note that:
 - (i) presently, there are no other clubs in Hong Kong of the size, type and complexity of the police clubs operated under a management contract. The HKPF has no clear knowledge as to whether there are any private companies which have the expertise to undertake this task; and
 - (ii) the new Disciplined Services Sports and Recreation Club in So Kon Po will be contracted out to a management company. The success of this venture will have a major impact on any decision of contracting out the operations of the police clubs. Even if a suitable management company can be identified, it will still be necessary to manage the contract and oversee the operations of the clubs; and
- (c) he agrees with the audit recommendation that he should, in conjunction with the Secretary for the Civil Service, plan ahead the redeployment of the civil servants presently working in the two police clubs so as to ensure that the operations of the clubs can be contracted out smoothly. It is worth noting that:

- (i) there are 76 pensionable staff in the police clubs. Their retirement dates range from 2002 to 2037. The Government has announced as a matter of policy that there will be no staff redundancies as a result of the contracting out of government services. It will be necessary to work out a programme for either the transfer or retirement of these officers. Priority will be accorded to the replacement of disciplined staff; and
- (ii) it is proposed as an interim step that as staff are transferred or retire, they should be replaced by non-civil service contract staff until such time when the HKPF is able to finally contract out the operations of the police clubs. This may be a lengthy programme.

3.9 The **Secretary for Security** has said that:

- (a) the proposal of contracting out the operations of the police clubs is considered agreeable because an annual saving of \$3.7 million can be achieved. However, a prudent approach to its implementation is required, especially in the placement of existing staff; and
- (b) the HKPF should also recalculate the staff cost in accordance with the departmental costing guidelines issued by the Treasury.

3.10 The **Secretary for the Treasury** has said that:

- (a) she agrees with the audit recommendation that full staff cost instead of NAMS should be used in assessing the financial viability of contracting out the operations of the two police clubs;
- (b) in the light of Audit's assessment that savings could be achieved by implementing the contracting-out proposal, the Finance Bureau supports the proposal of re-examining the possibility of outsourcing because:
 - (i) it is in line with the initiative to contain the size of the civil service; and
 - (ii) it can release police officers to perform other operational front-line duties; and
- (c) to address the problem of possible surplus staff, the Finance Bureau suggests that the HKPF should take a critical look at the staffing situation arising from the implementation of the proposal and, if any problems are envisaged, discuss with the Civil Service Bureau as soon as possible.

3.11 The **Secretary for the Civil Service** has said that he has taken note of the audit recommendation to plan ahead the redeployment of the civil servants working in the two police clubs to ensure that the operations of the two police clubs can be contracted out smoothly.

Advertising opportunities

3.12 In mid-1996, an advertising agent approached the POC and proposed to place advertising signs on the premises of the POC. In the agent's view, as the entrance of the Cross Harbour Tunnel on the Hong Kong side beside which the POC was situated was a busy traffic spot, the POC was one of the most prominent locations for outdoor advertising. The agent considered that on the premises of the POC, there were three to four spaces suitable for outdoor advertising because they were highly visible from the traffic of different directions.

3.13 The advertising agent proposed that initially, one advertising sign could be placed on the west-facing exterior wall atop the club building because this space could easily be seen by all vehicles entering the Cross Harbour Tunnel. The agent stated that it was structurally feasible to place an advertising sign on the wall. The agent also estimated that one advertising sign could generate advertising income of \$1.2 million a year.

3.14 After receiving the advertising agent's proposal, in September 1996, the POC sought the Government Property Agency's advice on the feasibility of placing advertising signs on the POC. In mid-December 1996, the Government Property Agency (GPA) requested the Lands Department to provide it with a copy of the engineering conditions and a land allocation plan for considering the POC's request. The Lands Department advised the GPA to consult other government departments concerned because amendments to the engineering conditions of the POC might be necessary for placing advertising signs on the premises.

3.15 In late December 1996, in response to the POC's enquiry about other advertising signs which had already been erected adjacent to the POC, the HKPF's Planning and Development Branch, which was responsible for overseeing property usage and development of the HKPF, informed the POC that:

“As the POC is a **government property**, the question of leasing any part of it for the purpose of advertisement is totally out of the question under whatever circumstances.” (Audit's emphasis)

After receiving the advice of the Planning and Development Branch, the POC did not take any further action on this matter.

Audit observations on advertising opportunities

3.16 According to the Accommodation Regulations:

- (a) advertising is permitted on government buildings; and
- (b) the GPA is the delegated authority for advertising on government buildings.

As the premises of the POC is a government property, Audit considers that the advice of the HKPF's Planning and Development Branch that advertising on the premises of the POC is not permitted (see paragraph 3.15 above) is at variance with the Accommodation Regulations.

3.17 The success and impact of an advertising sign is governed by its location, visibility, aspect and prominence. **In Audit's view, as the POC in Causeway Bay is situated at a prime waterfront location adjacent to busy traffic flow, it is an attractive location for placing advertising signs. As the advertising agent had advised the HKPF that there were three to four spaces on the premises of the POC suitable for outdoor advertising (see paragraph 3.12 above) and that one advertising sign could generate advertising income of \$1.2 million a year (see paragraph 3.13 above), Audit has estimated that there has been a potential loss of advertising income of about \$4 million a year to the Government.**

3.18 In response to Audit's enquiry, the HKPF informed Audit that while, in principle, the HKPF did not disagree on placing advertising signs on the premises of the POC, due care had to be exercised on selecting suitable advertisements because the HKPF's image might be tarnished or it might feel embarrassed. In this regard, Audit considers that the HKPF's concern can be addressed by including appropriate provisions in the contract between the Government and the advertising agent on the contents of the advertisements to be placed on the premises of the POC.

Audit recommendations on advertising opportunities

3.19 **Audit has *recommended* that the Commissioner of Police should:**

- (a) **seek the approval of the Government Property Administrator for placing advertisements on the premises of the POC and then invite advertising agents to submit proposals;**
- (b) **in conjunction with the Government Property Administrator and other Bureau Secretaries and Heads of Department concerned, take prompt action to reap benefits from the placement of advertising signs on the premises of the POC if proposals submitted by advertising agents are acceptable; and**

- (c) **in order to avoid the possibility of tarnishing the image of the HKPF or causing embarrassment to the HKPF, ensure that in the contract between the Government and the advertising agent, it is clearly stated that the advertisements and their contents, before being placed on the premises of the POC, have to be vetted and endorsed by the Commissioner of Police.**

Response from the Administration

3.20 The **Commissioner of Police** agrees in principle with the audit recommendations. He has said that the HKPF, in conjunction with the GPA, is prepared to consider opportunities for placing advertisements on the premises of the POC, provided that the nature and contents of the advertisements are not incompatible with the role of the HKPF as a law enforcement agency and the values it is promoting.

3.21 The **Secretary for Security** has said that:

- (a) the proposal of placing advertisements on the premises of the POC is administratively feasible and will bring additional revenue to the Government. However, there are some political risks and undesirable side effects. The following issues will need to be addressed:
 - (i) it will be politically embarrassing to the HKPF if advertisements are placed by a company or an owner with dubious or criminal background;
 - (ii) the HKPF may come under political insinuation, should it appear to treat favourably an advertiser who has become the subject of an investigation; and
 - (iii) the placement of advertisements on a building identified with the HKPF may also alter the public's perception of the HKPF's image;
- (b) if the proposal is to be implemented, the HKPF must have adequate safeguards against the above possible consequences and should have the right to turn down any advertisement; and
- (c) the HKPF's endorsement of the source of the advertisement should also be included in the contract.

3.22 The **Government Property Administrator** has said that the GPA is prepared to explore, in conjunction with the HKPF, the feasibility of placing advertisements on the premises of the POC and to reap benefits from the placement of such advertisements if proposals submitted by advertising agents are found to be acceptable.

Post-tied quarters

3.23 Post-tied quarters in the POC are provided to the Manager of the POC while post-tied quarters in the PSRC are provided to the General Manager and the Deputy General Manager of the PSRC. However, according to the Accommodation Regulations, with the approval of the GPA, post-tied quarters are only designated by a department for occupation by holders of specific posts who are required to live at or very close to their places of work.

3.24 In April 1997, the CCSRG informed the Quartering Division of the HKPF that it was necessary to review the justifications for providing post-tied quarters in the POC and the PSRC because:

- (a) with improvements in transport and communications over the years, the need for post-tied quarters in the POC and the PSRC had been greatly reduced;
- (b) when the managers of the police clubs were absent, there was always a supervisor of the rank of Sergeant to assume command of the clubs; and
- (c) the contracting out of the catering facilities of both police clubs alleviated the necessity for the club managers to be physically in attendance all the time.

Since then, the HKPF had not taken further action on this matter. At the time of completion of this audit in July 2000, the HKPF was still providing post-tied quarters to the managers of both police clubs.

Audit observations on post-tied quarters

3.25 Audit has noted that:

- (a) both the POC and the PSRC are closed from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. on the following day;

- (b) the POC in Causeway Bay and the PSRC in Mong Kok are situated at convenient locations with good public transport links. The club managers can have easy and quick access to the clubs if they need to return there outside their office hours; and
- (c) as security guards are employed to provide 24-hour security service in both police clubs, the need for overnight attendance of the club managers is reduced.

Audit therefore has reservations about the need for providing post-tied quarters in the POC and the PSRC.

Audit recommendations on post-tied quarters

3.26 **Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should:**

- (a) **critically review the need for providing post-tied quarters to the managers of the POC and the PSRC; and**
- (b) **convert the post-tied quarters in the POC and the PSRC into other uses if the previous justifications for providing such quarters no longer exist.**

Response from the Administration

3.27 The **Commissioner of Police** agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that he will review the need for providing post-tied quarters to the managers of the POC and the PSRC.

3.28 The **Government Property Administrator** shares Audit's reservations about the need for providing post-tied quarters in the POC and the PSRC. He has said that:

- (a) the GPA will, in conjunction with the HKPF, review the justifications for retaining the post-tied quarters for the managers of the POC and the PSRC; and
- (b) subject to the outcome of the review, the GPA will explore alternative uses of the quarters, including the possibility of converting them into departmental quarters.

PART 4: CATERING SERVICES

Inspection of police canteens

4.1 Before January 1999, the Internal Service Level Agreement (ISLA) of the HKPF's Personnel Wing specified that regarding catering services, the Catering Division should make at least one inspection of each police canteen every month to ensure that good quality meals were provided to officers and that the hygiene standards were maintained at a high level. At a HKPF Service Quality Steering Committee meeting held in October 1998, it was decided that, in order to monitor the level of catering services more effectively, the frequency of making inspections of each police canteen should be increased to at least twice every month. **Consequently, in late 1998, the ISLA was amended to provide that with effect from January 1999, each police canteen would be inspected at least twice every month.**

4.2 During the period June 1999 to May 2000, there were about 70 police canteens (Note 5) to be inspected by the Catering Division. However, Audit found that on average, 41 (58%) of the 70 canteens were not inspected at least twice every month as required by the ISLA. As indicated in Appendix F, during this period:

- (a) 24 to 58 canteens were not inspected at least twice every month; and
- (b) except for the months of November 1999 and May 2000, 1 to 15 canteens were not inspected at all in the other months.

Audit observations on inspection of police canteens

4.3 Audit has noted that most of the police canteens are operated by family-style caterers whose knowledge of hygiene standards of the canteens may not be high. Audit has also noted that:

- (a) during the period June 1999 to May 2000, the police canteen of the Police Training School was inspected twice only in the month of October 1999. In the other eleven months, it was only inspected once every month; and
- (b) in July 2000, a suspected food poisoning incident occurred in the police canteen of the Police Training School. In this incident, about 90 persons were sick after taking dinner in the canteen.

Note 5: *During this period, the number of police canteens decreased from 71 to 69.*

4.4 The target of inspecting every police canteen at least twice every month as specified in the ISLA (see paragraph 4.2 above) has generally not been met. Audit considers that it is doubtful whether the HKPF has achieved its objective of monitoring the level of catering services more effectively (see paragraph 4.1 above).

Audit recommendation on inspection of police canteens

4.5 Audit has *recommended* that, in order to monitor the level of catering services more effectively, the Commissioner of Police should ensure that the Catering Division inspects each police canteen at least twice every month as specified in the ISLA of the HKPF's Personnel Wing.

Response from the Administration

4.6 The Commissioner of Police agrees with the audit recommendation. He has said that each police canteen will be inspected twice every month subject to other demands for emergency and operational catering.

Area of canteen kitchens

4.7 According to the Accommodation Regulations, the area of a canteen kitchen (Note 6) should be 48% of that of the dining area of a canteen. Based on the HKPF's records, Audit examined the floor area of 70 police canteens to ascertain whether the area of the kitchen complied with the space standard specified in the Accommodation Regulations.

Audit observations on area of canteen kitchens

4.8 Audit found that in 68 (97%) of the 70 police canteens, the area of the kitchen did not comply with the space standard specified in the Accommodation Regulations (see Appendix G). In 37 canteens, the area of the kitchen exceeded 48% of that of the dining area (see the last three rows in Appendix G). In these 37 canteens, the sum of the areas of the kitchens which exceeded the standard space provision was about 1,000 square metres.

4.9 In 31 canteens, the area of the kitchen was less than 48% of that of the dining area (see the first two rows in Appendix G). Of these 31 canteens, there were eight canteens where the area of the kitchen was less than 31% of that of the dining area. The small area of the kitchen in these 31 canteens is a matter of concern because it might cause fire safety, hygiene and ventilation problems.

Note 6: *Canteen kitchen refers to both the preparation and cooking area of the canteen and the kitchen store.*

Audit recommendations on area of canteen kitchens

4.10 **Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should:**

- (a) **for the 31 police canteens where the area of the kitchen was less than 48% of that of the dining area, critically examine whether the inadequacy in the kitchen area might cause fire safety, hygiene and ventilation problems and, if so, take prompt action to expand the kitchen area so as to remove the potential hazards associated with these problems;**
- (b) **for police canteens where the kitchen area has exceeded the space standard specified in the Accommodation Regulations, reduce the kitchen area at an appropriate opportunity such as at the time of its refurbishment; and**
- (c) **ensure compliance with the Accommodation Regulations when allocating space for kitchen and dining area in new police canteens.**

Response from the Administration

4.11 **The Commissioner of Police has said that:**

- (a) he agrees with the audit recommendation in respect of the 31 police canteens where the area of the kitchen was less than 48% of that of the dining area. Fire safety, hygiene and ventilation are items already considered during the regular inspection of canteens by catering staff of the HKPF. The Catering Division will review the 31 canteens involved and, in conjunction with the Planning and Development Branch, draw up a priority list for those kitchens which require immediate and urgent work. The speed at which any improvements can be achieved will be dependent on funding being available;
- (b) he agrees with the audit recommendation in respect of those police canteens where the kitchen area has exceeded the space standard specified in the Accommodation Regulations; and
- (c) he agrees in principle with the audit recommendation on ensuring compliance with the Accommodation Regulations in allocating space for kitchen and dining area in new police canteens. Each police canteen will, however, need to be considered on a case-to-case basis in conjunction with the GPA in terms of expected usage and the physical constraints of the site.

4.12 **The Government Property Administrator generally supports Audit's recommendations.**

Provision of meals to persons in police custody and witnesses

4.13 The Police Headquarters Order specifies that the HKPF is responsible for providing meals to persons in police custody and witnesses. Meals for persons in police custody and witnesses at police stations are provided by the JPO canteen of the police stations concerned. Meals for persons in police custody at magistracies are provided by either nearby police canteens or canteens at magistracies. The HKPF estimated that in 1998-99, it provided 284,000 meals to persons in police custody at a total cost of \$4.3 million. Data on the number of meals provided to witnesses were, however, not available from the HKPF's records.

4.14 Under the Food Business Regulation (Note 7) made under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), all canteens must be licensed unless they are eligible for exemption from licensing under the Food Business Regulation. To qualify for an exemption, a canteen must be **“for the use exclusively of the pupils of the school and the persons employed in the workplace”**.

Audit observations on provision of meals

4.15 **Audit has found that:**

- (a) **police canteens are not licensed under the Food Business Regulation;**
- (b) **police canteens serve not only persons employed by the HKPF but also persons in police custody and witnesses (see paragraph 4.13 above);**
- (c) **since August 1998, the HKPF had asked the operators of a number of police canteens to apply to the then Provisional Urban Council and the then Provisional Regional Council for food business licences. However, all the applications failed because the design of the police canteens could not meet the health, building, ventilation, fire services, electrical and mechanical requirements; and**
- (d) **because of the substantial costs involved, the Architectural Services Department declined to make alterations to the existing police canteens to meet the licensing requirements.**

4.16 In December 1998, the HKPF sought legal advice as to whether, under the Food Business Regulation, police canteens could provide meals to persons in police custody and witnesses. **The legal advice was that on a strict interpretation of the Food Business Regulation:**

Note 7: *The Food Business By-laws was renamed the Food Business Regulation with effect from 1 January 2000.*

- (a) **only those canteens which were used exclusively by persons employed in the relevant workplace were exempted from the licensing requirement;**
- (b) **persons in police custody and witnesses, who were not persons employed to work in police buildings, should not be allowed to use police canteens; and**
- (c) **it was not permissible for police officers to buy meals from police canteens and to offer such meals to persons in police custody and witnesses.**

4.17 Audit has noted that the Security Bureau and the HKPF have been considering to make amendment to the Food Business Regulation so as to enable the police canteens to provide meals to persons in police custody and witnesses. In June 2000, the Security Bureau advised the HKPF that:

- (a) if the current practice of providing meals to persons in police custody and witnesses was found inconsistent with the law, the HKPF had the obligation to rectify it immediately;
- (b) amendment of the Food Business Regulation to enable the police canteens to provide meals to persons in police custody and witnesses could not be completed within a short time; and
- (c) meanwhile, the Security Bureau and the HKPF had to devise a contingency plan to handle the problem.

Audit recommendation on provision of meals

4.18 **Audit has *recommended* that the Commissioner of Police should, until it is permissible under the Food Business Regulation for police canteens to provide meals to persons in police custody and witnesses, make alternative arrangements for providing such meals.**

Response from the Administration

4.19 The **Commissioner of Police** has said that:

- (a) instructions have already been issued to police formations reminding them that in accordance with the legal advice, the canteens may only be used by persons “employed in the workplace”;
- (b) apparently, there are a number of grey areas in the current legislation. Based on the Department of Justice’s advice, in November 1999, the Secretary for Security was

requested on behalf of the HKPF to pursue legislative changes to the Food Business Regulation to clarify this issue; and

- (c) the HKPF has a duty to provide meals to persons in police custody and witnesses. For a number of reasons including difficulties in obtaining suitable meals, manpower resources and additional costs, it is considered that the present method whereby meals are provided by police canteens to persons in police custody and witnesses is the only practical solution until the necessary legislative changes are made. A further study will, however, be undertaken by the HKPF to examine other possible alternatives.

4.20 The **Secretary for Security** has said that:

- (a) it is apparent that the ultimate solution is amending the Food Business Regulation;
- (b) in the meantime, it is advisable for the HKPF to make alternative arrangements as far as possible and practicable; and
- (c) it is understood that the HKPF has difficulties in making alternative arrangements for providing meals to persons in police custody and witnesses in certain remote police stations where the delivery service of meals is not available in the vicinity. Perhaps, the HKPF can start to make alternative arrangements in police stations where the delivery service is more readily available.

4.21 The **Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene** has said that:

- (a) section 31 of the Food Business Regulation provides that all food businesses must be licensed unless they are eligible for exemption;
- (b) if a police canteen provides meals to detainees in the police station, it will be caught by the definition of “food business” provided under the Food Business Regulation because sale of meals to outsiders is involved. It must be covered by a food business licence; and
- (c) she has separately received the Secretary for Security’s proposal of exempting police canteens providing meals to detainees in police stations from licensing control by amending the Food Business Regulation. While the proposal is being considered, she concurs with the audit recommendation that, unless and until it is permissible under the Food Business Regulation for police canteens to provide meals to detainees and witnesses in police stations, the Commissioner of Police should make alternative arrangements for providing such meals (say, by buying from outside licensed sources).

PART 5: WELFARE SERVICES

Regional Welfare Offices

5.1 The WSG provides welfare services to the staff of the HKPF through its six regional welfare offices (RWOs), namely, Hong Kong Island RWO (Note 8), Marine RWO, Kowloon East RWO, Kowloon West RWO, New Territories North RWO and New Territories South RWO. Each RWO is staffed by officers of the ranks of Force Welfare Officer, Assistant Force Welfare Officer, Sergeant and Police Constable and officers of the clerical grade. The work of the RWOs mainly includes:

- (a) handling welfare cases of officers (e.g. officers' sickness and health-impaired cases, officers' personal problems and funeral services for deceased officers);
- (b) visiting sick officers in hospital or at home; and
- (c) conducting interviews with officers on welfare matters.

Review on merging of RWOs

5.2 In January 1999, the HKPF reviewed the feasibility of merging the Marine RWO with the Hong Kong Island RWO, the Kowloon East RWO with the Kowloon West RWO, and the New Territories North RWO with the New Territories South RWO. In the review, the HKPF examined:

- (a) the possible savings arising from the reduction in staff posts and the pooling of equipment and transport facilities; and
- (b) the accommodation requirements and locations of the new RWOs.

5.3 The review indicated that:

- (a) one RWO should be established in each police operational region according to the policy of the HKPF; and

Note 8: *The Hong Kong Island RWO also provides welfare services to the officers of the Police Headquarters.*

- (b) as there was demand for better welfare services, there was little scope for reducing the manpower of the RWOs.

5.4 The HKPF considered that while merging two RWOs into one would result in minor savings in office rent, it would not bring about manpower savings because most of the welfare services were labour-intensive personal services. Furthermore, the HKPF considered that merging the RWOs would cause the following problems:

- (a) as staff had to travel a longer distance to receive welfare services, they had to spend more time and money on transport. They might consider this a reduction in the quality of welfare services;
- (b) the need for the RWOs' staff to spend more time to travel to their places of work would affect the efficiency of welfare services, particularly in dealing with emergency cases. This might also result in higher demand for transport facilities provided by the HKPF; and
- (c) a reduction in the number of RWOs would affect the morale of the RWOs' staff.

5.5 In the event, the HKPF agreed that it was reasonable to merge the Yuen Long Welfare Sub-office with the New Territories North RWO and the Shatin Welfare Sub-office with the New Territories South RWO because this was in line with the policy that one RWO should be established in each police operational region (see paragraph 5.3(a) above). In July 1999, these offices were merged.

Workload of RWOs

5.6 The workload of each RWO is handled by the Force Welfare Officer, the Assistant Force Welfare Officers and disciplined officers (i.e. Sergeants and Police Constables). As at 1 July 2000, the strength of these officers in each of the six RWOs ranged from five to nine. The average monthly workload of these officers during the period June 1999 to May 2000 is summarised in Appendix H.

Audit observations on workload of RWOs

5.7 In order to analyse the workload of the six RWOs in the provision of welfare services for the period June 1999 to May 2000, Audit expressed the workload of the other five RWOs as a percentage of that of the New Territories South RWO, which on the whole had the highest workload. Audit's analysis as shown in Appendix I indicated that:

- (a) the number of welfare cases handled by each officer of the New Territories South RWO was the same as that of the Marine RWO and the Kowloon East RWO. The workload, in terms of the number of visits paid and the number of interviews conducted, of the New Territories South RWO was higher than that of the Marine RWO and the Kowloon East RWO;
- (b) the workload, in terms of the number of welfare cases handled and the number of interviews conducted, of the New Territories South RWO was higher than that of the Hong Kong Island RWO and the Kowloon West RWO. However, the number of visits paid by each officer of the New Territories South RWO was lower than that of the Hong Kong Island RWO and the Kowloon West RWO; and
- (c) the number of visits paid by each officer of the New Territories South RWO was the same as that of the New Territories North RWO. However, while the number of welfare cases handled by each officer of the New Territories South RWO was higher than that of the New Territories North RWO, the number of interviews conducted by each officer of the New Territories South RWO was lower than that of the New Territories North RWO.

As far as could be ascertained by Audit, the HKPF did not keep records of the time spent by each officer of the RWOs on handling a welfare case, making a visit and conducting an interview. Therefore, Audit cannot conclude whether the workload per officer of the Hong Kong Island RWO, the Kowloon West RWO and the New Territories North RWO were each lower than that of the New Territories South RWO.

5.8 **Audit found that:**

- (a) **for each RWO, the HKPF had compiled statistics on the number of welfare cases handled, visits made and interviews conducted. However, the HKPF did not make use of the statistics to establish productivity standards (e.g. the expected numbers of welfare cases handled, visits made and interviews conducted by each responsible officer of the RWOs during a period); and**
- (b) **based on the analysis in paragraph 5.7 above, among the RWOs, there were large variations in workload handled by each officer.**

In Audit's view, the HKPF should establish productivity standards for the RWOs and redeploy the staff among the RWOs to ensure maximum utilisation of their manpower resources.

Audit recommendations on workload of RWOs

5.9 **Audit has *recommended* that the Commissioner of Police should:**

- (a) **establish productivity standards for the RWOs so that their manpower requirements can be more accurately assessed;**
- (b) **having regard to the established productivity standards, take prompt action to revise the establishment of the RWOs so as to ensure maximum utilisation of their manpower resources; and**
- (c) **conduct regular reviews to ascertain whether there are any changes in the workload of the RWOs and, if so, revise their establishment accordingly.**

Response from the Administration

5.10 The **Commissioner of Police** agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that a review will be undertaken with a view to establishing productivity standards for the RWOs.

PART 6: DISCIPLINED OFFICERS PROVIDING RECREATIONAL AND WELFARE SERVICES

Characteristics of disciplined services

6.1 The disciplined services have unique roles to play in the civil service. Compared with the rest of the civil service, much of the work of the disciplined services involves, to a greater extent, the following elements:

- (a) exposure to potential danger and injury, and to unpleasant working conditions;
- (b) a degree of personal restriction, long and irregular hours of work, and heavy on-call duties;
- (c) the requirement, under discipline, to obey orders and regulations;
- (d) the possibility of job-related stress; and
- (e) the exposure to public complaints and formal investigation.

Possibility of civilianisation

6.2 Not every aspect of the work in the disciplined services has the characteristics mentioned in paragraph 6.1 above. For many posts in the disciplined services, the duties can be discharged equally effectively and efficiently by a civilian. It requires careful consideration of whether the work of a particular post really requires the holder to be a member of disciplined staff.

6.3 There is a large cost difference between employing a disciplined officer and employing a civilian. Civilianisation enables disciplined officers to be deployed to perform those duties where their training, skills and experience can be used to the best effect. Radical re-examination of the roles of disciplined officers and civilians can lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness quite independently of any direct cost savings. Appropriate civilianisation therefore improves the operational efficiency and staff morale of the HKPF.

HKPF's policy and views on civilianisation

6.4 It is the HKPF's policy to deploy civilians to replace police officers who are not performing constabulary duties, wherever possible, so that as many police officers as possible are

released to undertake police duties. This enables police officers to be deployed to those duties where their training, skills and experience can be best used.

6.5 In response to the Chief Force Welfare Officer's enquiry about the civilianisation of disciplined posts in the CCSRG and the WSG, in March 1990, the Senior Force Welfare Officer (Administration and Development) expressed his view that:

- (a) a number of disciplined posts could be civilianised because the holders of these posts were not required to undertake any constabulary duties or to possess the knowledge and skills of a police officer to perform their duties;
- (b) all disciplined posts in the two police clubs and the SRD could be civilianised; and
- (c) the posts of Sergeants and Police Constables in the RWOs could also be civilianised.

6.6 In commenting on a paper prepared by the Planning and Development Branch of the HKPF on the provision of recreational services in the HKPF, in February 1997, the Assistant Commissioner of Police (Personnel) expressed his view that:

- (a) as a matter of principle, disciplined officers should not be deployed to provide staff recreational services; and
- (b) civilian posts should be established for providing staff recreational services.

Disciplined officers providing recreational services

6.7 As at 1 July 2000, the establishment of the POC and the PSRC included a total of 12 disciplined posts and the establishment of the SRD included 6 disciplined posts. As mentioned in paragraph 3.5 above, for the purpose of implementing the EPP to achieve cost savings, the HKPF has been considering ways to contract out the operations of the POC and the PSRC by stages from 2001 to 2003. The HKPF has planned to retain a core team for overseeing the operations of the clubs after their operations have been contracted out and for liaising with other government departments on matters such as repair and maintenance of and improvement to the club facilities. The core team will consist of six staff including two disciplined officers, namely, one Superintendent and one Chief Inspector. For implementing the EPP, the HKPF has also planned to reorganise the SRD. After the reorganisation, the Division will consist of ten staff including five disciplined officers, namely, one Chief Inspector, one Inspector, one Sergeant and two Police Constables.

Audit observations on disciplined officers providing recreational services

6.8 As the activities of the POC and the PSRC are recreational in nature, Audit considers that it is unnecessary to deploy police officers, who have constabulary skills, to oversee the operations of the two clubs. **After the operations of the clubs have been contracted out, it is not justified to retain a Superintendent and a Chief Inspector in the core team. After the reorganisation of the SRD, it is also unnecessary to retain the five disciplined officers in the Division (see paragraph 6.7 above).**

6.9 **In Audit's view, the seven disciplined officers mentioned in paragraph 6.8 above can be replaced by civilians with professional knowledge in sports and recreation. This will enable the CCSRG to be provided with the necessary expertise to oversee the operations of the two police clubs and to improve the quality of sporting and recreational services to the staff of the HKPF. Audit has estimated that if all these seven posts are civilianised, say, by filling these posts by staff of the Recreation and Sport Officer grade and the Amenities Assistant grade, there will be an annual saving in full staff cost of \$2.1 million at 1999-2000 prices (see Appendix J).**

6.10 **In response to Audit's enquiry on the replacement of the seven disciplined officers by civilians:**

(a) **the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services has said that:**

- (i) **in line with the Government's policy on containing the size of the civil service, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department is seeking opportunities to contract out its services; and**
- (ii) **it will be counter to this general direction if the Leisure and Cultural Services Department is to consider staffing the two police clubs with Recreation and Sport Officers and Amenities Assistants; and**

(b) **the Commissioner of Police has said that:**

- (i) **the PSRC is the largest club in Hong Kong in terms of membership and daily attendance. The qualifications and experience required for performing the duties of Recreation and Sport Officers do not qualify staff of this grade to manage such a large club as the PSRC; and**

- (ii) **the duties of the staff of the Recreation and Sport Officer and Amenities Assistant grades are very different from the duties required to be performed by the staff of the SRD. The HKPF considers that the creation of posts in another grade, or the secondment of staff from another department, would cause considerable administrative and operational difficulties.**

Audit recommendations on disciplined officers providing recreational services

6.11 **Audit has *recommended* that in order to make the best use of the skills and experience of police officers and improve the quality of sporting and recreational services to the staff of the HKPF, the Commissioner of Police should consider employing outside civilians with professional knowledge in sports and recreation to replace:**

- (a) **the Superintendent and the Chief Inspector in the core team of the POC and the PSRC after the operations of the clubs have been contracted out; and**
- (b) **the Chief Inspector, the Inspector, the Sergeant and the two Police Constables in the SRD after its reorganisation.**

Response from the Administration

6.12 **Regarding the audit recommendations on the replacement of the Superintendent and the Chief Inspector in the core team and the Chief Inspector in the SRD, the Commissioner of Police has said that consideration will be given to civilianising these three posts when the incumbents retire. He has also said that:**

- (a) **the General Manager of the PSRC is a specialist officer recruited from outside the HKPF because she has the expertise in sport and recreational management. She was appointed as a Superintendent to manage the PSRC for historical reasons;**
- (b) **the Deputy General Manager of the PSRC and the Manager of the POC were promoted on specialist terms to the present posts of Chief Inspector. These two officers have since obtained professional qualifications in sport and recreational management;**
- (c) **if the proposal of setting up a core team for overseeing the operations of the two police clubs is approved, the Superintendent of the PSRC, together with the Chief Inspector of the PSRC or the Chief Inspector of the POC, will be deployed to serve in the core team. The remaining Chief Inspector will be deployed to work in the SRD; and**

- (d) as these three officers cannot be redeployed to undertake constabulary duties, they will need to remain in the CCSRG until their retirement in 2003, 2011 and 2012 respectively.

6.13 Regarding the audit recommendation on the replacement of the Inspector, the Sergeant and the two Police Constables in the SRD, the **Commissioner of Police** has said that in the third year of the EPP (i.e. 2002-2003), the HKPF proposed to delete one Inspector, one Sergeant and two Police Constable posts in the SRD and to replace them with civilians recruited from the private sector on non-civil service terms.

6.14 The **Secretary for the Civil Service** has said that:

- (a) with reference to the audit recommendations mentioned in paragraph 6.11 above, it should be noted that the employment of non-civil service contract staff should normally be used as a stop-gap measure to meet short-term or fluctuating service needs or interim arrangements tiding over longer-term plans; and
- (b) in view of the fact that there is a continued need for the posts concerned in the CCSRG, it may not be appropriate to fill such posts by non-civil service contract staff.

Disciplined officers providing welfare services

6.15 The RWOs of the WSG are each headed by a Force Welfare Officer who is a civilian. In each RWO, the Force Welfare Officer is assisted by disciplined officers for providing welfare services to the staff of the HKPF. In line with the HKPF's policy of civilianisation, since 1997, the PSB has progressively replaced all the posts of Inspector in the RWOs with posts of Assistant Force Welfare Officer. As at 1 July 2000, there were still 21 disciplined posts in the RWOs, namely, 15 Sergeants and 6 Police Constables. The main duties of these Sergeants and Police Constables include:

- (a) assisting families of deceased officers in funeral arrangements and probate matters;
- (b) visiting sick officers and compiling sick officers' reports;
- (c) arranging comfort gifts and welfare equipment for sick officers;
- (d) processing Police Welfare Fund loan and grant applications; and
- (e) assisting in welfare projects and welfare case investigations.

6.16 As at 1 July 2000, the Resettlement Services Unit (RSU) of the WSG had an establishment of one Chief Inspector post and one Sergeant post. The work of the RSU mainly includes:

- (a) organising retirement preparation courses for the staff of the HKPF;
- (b) providing pre-retirement counselling service to the staff of the HKPF; and
- (c) assisting the staff of the HKPF to find new jobs after their retirement from the civil service.

In order to identify savings for the EPP, the HKPF has planned to downgrade the Chief Inspector post of the RSU to a Senior Inspector post or to replace it by an Assistant Force Welfare Officer post.

Audit observations on disciplined officers providing welfare services

6.17 **In response to Audit's enquiry, the Commissioner of Police said that:**

- (a) **it was necessary to retain some disciplined staff in the RWOs for providing welfare services to the staff of the HKPF because:**
 - (i) **about 80% of the clientele of the RWOs were disciplined staff;**
 - (ii) **disciplined staff in the RWOs had better knowledge of the culture and thinking of police officers. Therefore, they could understand better the problems faced by the police officers. With the increasing number of non-civil service contract staff being employed at the Assistant Force Welfare Officer level, there is a need for someone to advise and provide guidance on the culture of the HKPF; and**
 - (iii) **disciplined staff in the RWOs can help to maintain a link between social work professionals and disciplined staff of the HKPF; and**

- (b) **the Chief Inspector in charge of the RSU has to advise retiring officers on their benefits and the problems they are likely to face and to assist them in seeking further employment. In dealing with problems raised by particular retiring officers, he also has to liaise with other staff of the HKPF who are responsible for handling matters concerning conditions of service and quartering and welfare services. It is considered essential that this post should be filled by someone with knowledge and experience of police problems and procedures of the HKPF. In the third year of the EPP (i.e. 2002-2003), it is proposed to downgrade this post to a Senior Inspector post.**

6.18 **Audit considers that:**

- (a) **the welfare service duties performed by the staff of the RWOs mentioned in paragraph 6.15 above are not constabulary duties; and**
- (b) **although the HKPF may wish to retain some disciplined staff in the RWOs, the number of such staff should be kept to the minimum.**

In Audit's view, the 15 Sergeants of the RWOs should be replaced by civilians with knowledge and experience in welfare services. This will enable the RWOs to realise savings and improve the standard of welfare services to the staff of the HKPF. Audit has estimated that if all these 15 disciplined posts are civilianised, say, by filling these civilian posts by 15 Social Work Assistants, there will be an annual saving in staff cost of about \$2.6 million at 1999-2000 prices (see Appendix K).

Audit recommendation on disciplined officers providing welfare services

6.19 **Audit has *recommended* that in order to make the best use of the skills and experience of police officers and improve the standard of welfare services to the staff of the HKPF, the Commissioner of Police should consider employing civilians with knowledge and experience in welfare services to replace the Sergeants.**

Response from the Administration

6.20 **The Commissioner of Police has said that consideration would be given to establishing a new rank of Assistant Force Welfare Officer II at social work graduate level to replace the Sergeants in the RWOs. He has also said that the new rank of Assistant Force Welfare Officer II will provide a promotion structure of Assistant Force Welfare Officer II, Assistant Force Welfare Officer I, Force Welfare Officer and Senior Force Welfare Officer.**

Appendix A
(paragraph 2.2(a) refers)

Police formations with recreational area exceeding entitlement

Recreational area exceeding entitlement by	Number of police formations
1% — 10%	1
11% — 30%	8
31% — 50%	4
More than 50%	21
Total	<u>34</u>

Source: HKPF's records and Audit's computation

Appendix B
(paragraph 2.2(b) refers)

Police formations with recreational area below entitlement

Recreational area below entitlement by	Number of police formations
1% — 10%	6
11% — 30%	7
31% — 50%	3
More than 50%	11
Total	<u><u>27</u></u>

Source: HKPF's records and Audit's computation

Appendix C
(paragraph 2.9 refers)

**Maximum number of
amusement game machines allowed in police formations**

Police formation	Maximum number of amusement game machines allowed in each location
Police Headquarters	8
Regional Headquarters and District Headquarters combined with a Division	6
Regional Headquarters and District Headquarters	6
Regional Headquarters combined with a Division	6
District Headquarters combined with a Division	6
Regional Headquarters, District Headquarters or a Division	4

Source: HKPF's records

Appendix D
(paragraph 2.10 refers)

**Number of amusement game machines
installed in police formations as at 31 March 2000**

Number of amusement game machines installed at each location	Number of locations	Total number of amusement game machines installed
(a)	(b)	(c) = (a) × (b)
1	14	14
2	37	74
3	9	27
4	24	96
5	2	10
6	18	108
8	1	8
Total	<u>105</u>	<u>337</u>

Source: HKPF's records

Appendix E
(paragraph 2.10 refers)

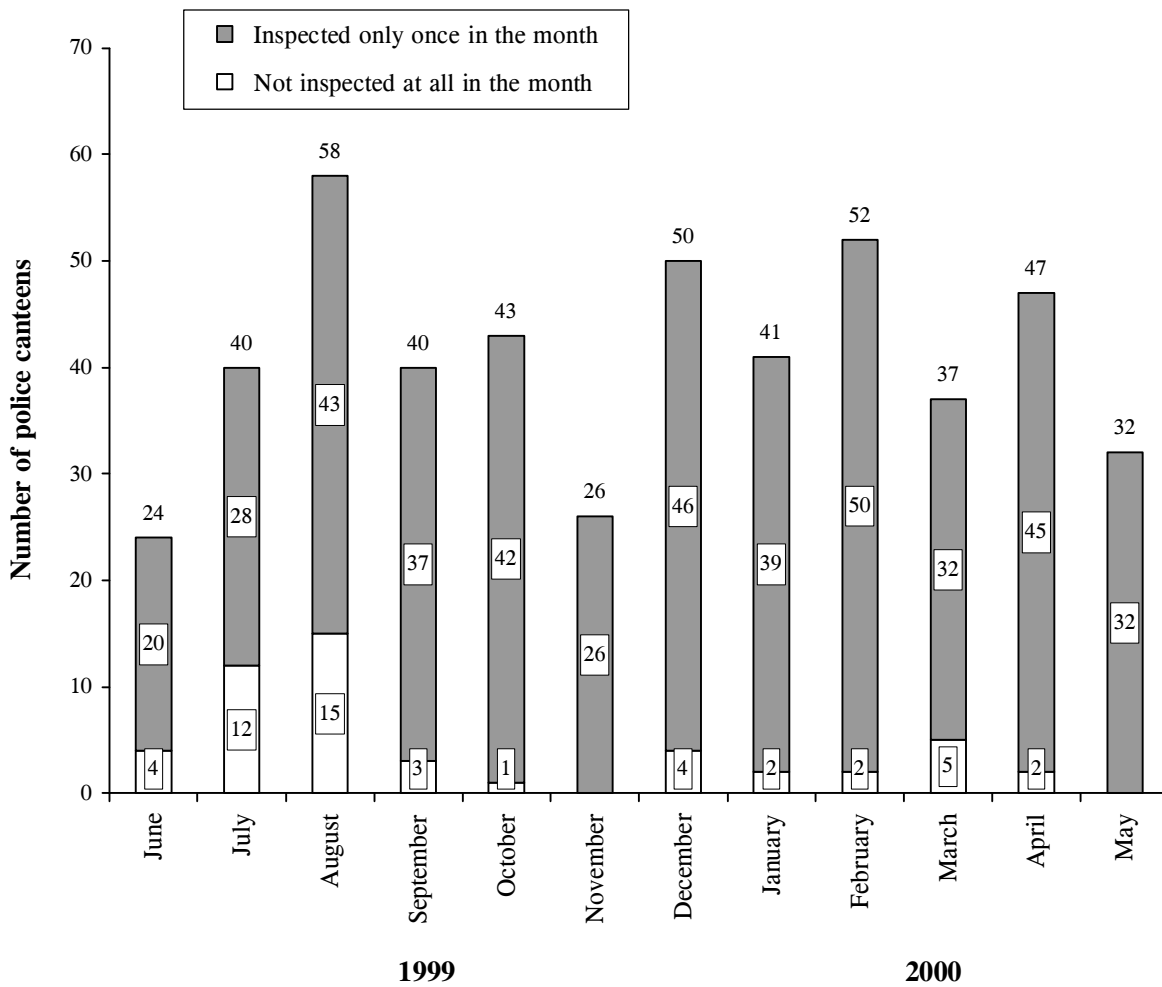
**Police formations where the number of amusement
game machines exceeded the maximum allowed as at 31 March 2000**

Location of amusement game machines	Number of machines installed	Maximum number of machines allowed	Excess number of machines installed
	(a)	(b)	(c) = (a) - (b)
New Territories South Operational Base Recreation Room (equivalent to a District Headquarters combined with a Division)	8	6	2
Police Mass Transit Railway District Headquarters JPO Recreation Room (i.e. a District Headquarters)	6	4	2
Sheung Shui Division Amusement Game Machine Room (i.e. a Division)	5	4	1
Tsing Yi Division JPO Recreation Room (i.e. a Division)	6	4	2

Source: HKPF's records

Appendix F
(paragraph 4.2 refers)

Number of police canteens not inspected at least twice every month during the period June 1999 to May 2000



Source: HKPF's records and Audit's computation

Note: According to the HKPF's ISLA, each police canteen should be inspected at least twice every month.

Appendix G
(paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9 refer)

Kitchen area in police canteens

Kitchen area as a percentage of that of dining area	Number of police canteens
Less than 31%	8
31% to 47%	23
48% (i.e. complying with the standard)	2
49% to 70%	19
71% to 90%	13
Over 90%	5
Total	<u>70</u>

Source: HKPF's records and Audit's computation

Appendix H
(paragraph 5.6 refers)

**Average monthly workload of RWOs
during the period June 1999 to May 2000**

Average monthly workload handled by each officer (Note)

RWO	Number of welfare cases	Number of visits	Number of interviews
Hong Kong Island	18	19	9
Marine	25	8	8
Kowloon East	25	5	6
Kowloon West	22	18	5
New Territories North	22	12	12
New Territories South	25	12	11

Source: HKPF's records and Audit's computation

Note: These include Force Welfare Officers, Assistant Force Welfare Officers, Sergeants and Police Constables.

Appendix I
(paragraph 5.7 refers)

**Audit's analysis of average monthly workload
of RWOs during the period June 1999 to May 2000**

**Average monthly workload handled by each officer (Note 1)
as a percentage of that of the New Territories South RWO (Note 2)**

RWO	Welfare cases	Visits	Interviews
Hong Kong Island	72%	158%	82%
Marine	100%	67%	73%
Kowloon East	100%	42%	55%
Kowloon West	88%	150%	45%
New Territories North	88%	100%	109%

Source: HKPF's records and Audit's computation

Note 1: These include Force Welfare Officers, Assistant Force Welfare Officers, Sergeants and Police Constables.

Note 2: The average monthly figures of welfare cases handled, visits made and interviews conducted by each officer of the New Territories South RWO are each taken as 100%. The workload of the other five RWOs is expressed each as a percentage of the corresponding workload of the New Territories South RWO.

Appendix J
(paragraph 6.9 refers)

**Estimated annual saving in staff cost
at 1999-2000 prices resulting from civilianisation of
disciplined posts engaged in organising sporting and recreational activities**

Disciplined posts		If replaced by civilian posts specialised in sports and recreation		
Posts	Annual staff cost (Note)	Posts	Annual staff cost (Note)	Annual saving in staff cost
	(a)		(b)	(c) = (a) - (b)
	(\$)		(\$)	(\$)
1 Superintendent	1,699,680	1 Senior Recreation and Sport Officer	1,154,640	545,040
2 Chief Inspectors	2,748,624	2 Recreation and Sport Officers	1,676,664	1,071,960
1 Inspector	763,992	1 Assistant Recreation and Sport Officer I	577,536	186,456
1 Sergeant	543,912	1 Assistant Recreation and Sport Officer II	352,296	191,616
2 Police Constables	764,784	2 Amenities Assistants II	639,120	125,664
Total	<u>6,520,992</u>		<u>4,400,256</u>	<u>2,120,736</u>

Source: HKPF's records

Note: The annual staff cost is based on the full cost as stated in the Staff Cost Ready Reckoner No. 99/1 issued by the Treasury in September 1999.

Appendix K
(paragraph 6.18 refers)

**Estimated annual saving
in staff cost at 1999-2000 prices resulting
from civilianisation of disciplined posts in RWOs**

		Annual staff cost (Note)
		(\$)
Existing disciplined posts		
15 Sergeants	(a)	8,158,680
If replaced by civilian posts specialised in welfare services		
15 Social Work Assistants	(b)	5,597,100
Estimated annual saving in staff cost	(c) = (a) - (b)	<u>2,561,580</u>

Source: HKPF's records

Note: The annual staff cost is based on the full cost as stated in the Staff Cost Ready Reckoner No. 99/1 issued by the Treasury in September 1999.

Appendix L

Acronyms and abbreviations

CCSRG	Catering, Clubs, Sports and Recreation Group
EPP	Enhanced Productivity Programme
GPA	Government Property Agency
HKPF	Hong Kong Police Force
ISLA	Internal Service Level Agreement
JPO	Junior Police Officer
POC	Police Officers' Club
PSB	Personnel Services Branch
PSRC	Police Sports and Recreation Club
RSU	Resettlement Services Unit
RWO	Regional Welfare Office
SRD	Sports and Recreation Division
WSG	Welfare Services Group