

CHAPTER 6

Hong Kong Police Force

Station improvement and amalgamation projects
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Audit Commission
26th floor, Immigration Tower
7 Gloucester Road
Wan Chai
Hong Kong

Tel : (852) 2829 4210
Fax : (852) 2824 2087
E-mail : enquiry@aud.gov.hk

STATION IMPROVEMENT AND AMALGAMATION PROJECTS

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 This PART describes the background to the audit of the station improvement and amalgamation projects of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF).

Background

1.2 The primary responsibilities of the HKPF are the maintenance of law and order and the protection of life and property. In pursuance of the Government's drive to improve services to the community, the HKPF was committed to provide a more user-friendly environment in the report rooms so as to encourage the public to report crime and seek police assistance. Since 1993, the HKPF had drawn up a schedule of the standard facilities to be provided in the report rooms of all new police stations. On completion of a survey of report rooms in June 1994, the HKPF concluded that some 30 report rooms needed improvement so as to meet the standards of the HKPF.

Improvement works of report rooms

1.3 In December 1995, the Alterations, Additions and Improvements Committee (Note 1) of the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) approved the improvement works of 30 report rooms with a funding allocation of \$3.8 million. The following improvement works were completed in March 1997:

- (a) repainting and repartitioning of some of the offices in the report rooms;
- (b) replacement of floor tiles; and
- (c) improvement in front desk design, lighting and ventilation.

Pilot scheme

1.4 After completion of the improvement works to the 30 report rooms, in October 1997 the HKPF commissioned a consultancy support project to examine ways to further improve the quality of services to meet the need and expectation of the public. The North Point Police Station was chosen as the first police station in a pilot scheme to test a number of customer service initiatives with a view to creating a benchmark for the overall service quality standards at all police stations.

Note 1: *The Alterations, Additions and Improvements Committee was renamed as the Minor Building Works Committee in 1996. The Committee is responsible for considering and prioritising the proposed minor building works, and monitoring the patterns of expenditure of the minor building works block vote.*

1.5 Based on the consultancy support project, a service improvement programme incorporating physical modifications as well as the improvement of service attitude and delivery process was drawn up. In October 1998, the Sau Mau Ping Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station were also selected in the pilot scheme to further test the effectiveness of the service improvement programme.

1.6 The HKPF incurred \$32.1 million for making physical improvement works to the three police stations (i.e. the North Point Police Station, the Sau Mau Ping Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station). The average cost of improvement works for a police station was \$10.7 million. Details are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

**Cost incurred for improvement works
of police stations in the pilot scheme**

Improvement areas	North Point Police Station	Sau Mau Ping Police Station	Sha Tin Police Station	Total	Average
	(\$' 000)	(\$' 000)	(\$' 000)	(\$' 000)	(\$' 000)
Temporary report room	577	312	359	1,248	416
Report room	3,638	3,179	3,912	10,729	3,576
Resource centre	712	658	685	2,055	685
Public interface areas (Note)	430	383	423	1,236	412
Changing rooms	4,551	4,778	4,556	13,885	4,629
Station security	927	840	837	2,604	868
Others	221	72	64	357	119
Total	11,056	10,222	10,836	32,114	10,705

Source: ArchSD and HKPF records

Note: Public interface areas include crime duty room, interview rooms, miscellaneous enquiries office and property office.

Station improvement project

1.7 Based on the satisfactory results of the pilot scheme, a station improvement project was drawn up to extend the improvement works to all other police stations and operational facilities. In July 1999, the Finance Committee approved a project “Improvements to police stations and operational facilities” at an estimated cost of \$649.2 million. The improvement project covered the physical improvements and security enhancement to 59 police premises (i.e. 51 police stations, 4 police posts and 4 marine bases). Details are given in Appendix A. The improvement works included:

- (a) a complete remodelling of the report rooms and entrances of individual police premises to provide a user-friendly environment to the public, and to incorporate a barrier-free environment for the disabled. Photographs 1 and 2 show the station lobby of the Sha Tin Police Station before and after the implementation of the station improvement project. Photograph 3 shows the barrier-free entrance to the report room of the Tsing Yi Police Station; and
- (b) the installation of an access control system at all building entrances and exits, and an automated vehicle access/exit control system. Photograph 4 shows the automated vehicular barrier gate of the Tai Po Police Station.

According to the Finance Committee paper, the expected completion date of the station improvement project was June 2002. The project was substantially completed in March 2004 at a cost of \$627.9 million.

Photograph 1

**Station lobby of the Sha Tin Police Station
(before implementation of the station improvement project)**



Source: Photograph provided by the HKPF

Photograph 2

**Station lobby of the Sha Tin Police Station
(after implementation of the station improvement project)**



Source: Photograph provided by the HKPF

Photograph 3

**Barrier-free entrance to
the report room of the Tsing Yi Police Station**



Source: Photograph taken by Audit staff

Photograph 4

Automated vehicular barrier gate of the Tai Po Police Station



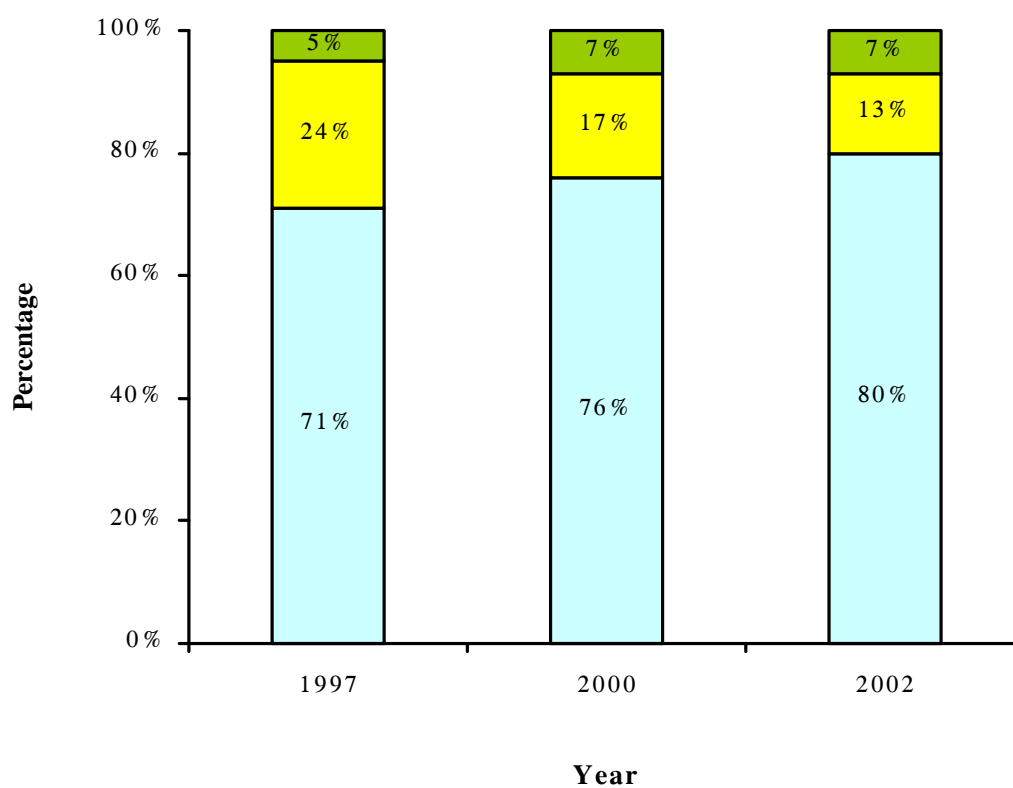
Source: Photograph taken by Audit staff

Customer satisfaction surveys

1.8 In 1997, 2000 and 2002, the Service Quality Wing of the HKPF commissioned consultants to conduct customer satisfaction surveys (Note 2) to measure the requirements and satisfaction level of the public who had direct contact with the HKPF. The results of the three customer satisfaction surveys indicated that the overall satisfaction level of the public with the improvements made to the police premises and the service quality of the HKPF had increased from 71% in 1997 to 80% in 2002. Details are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Results of HKPF customer satisfaction surveys conducted in 1997, 2000 and 2002



Legend:

- Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied
- Half half / do not know
- Satisfied / very satisfied

Source: HKPF records

Note 2: The customer satisfaction surveys involved telephone interviews with members of the public who had direct contacts with the HKPF.

Station amalgamation project

1.9 In June 1999, for more effective deployment of frontline staff and to achieve savings in management costs under the Enhanced Productivity Programme (EPP —Note 3), the HKPF started to implement a station amalgamation project to merge a number of police stations. 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. Details are given in Appendix B. Five police stations in these six districts were released for use by other police formations. Reporting centres in the released police stations are set up.

Audit review

1.10 The Audit Commission (Audit) has recently conducted a review of the station improvement and amalgamation projects of the HKPF. The audit focused on the following areas:

- (a) delay in completion of the station improvement project (PART 2);
- (b) utilisation of spare space (PART 3);
- (c) remodelled report rooms (PART 4);
- (d) information kiosks in report rooms (PART 5);
- (e) resource centres (PART 6);
- (f) automated station security system (PART 7); and
- (g) station amalgamation project (PART 8).

1.11 Audit has found that there are areas where improvements can be made in handling the station improvement and amalgamation projects and has made a number of recommendations to address these issues.

Acknowledgement

1.12 Audit would like to acknowledge with gratitude the full cooperation of the staff of the HKPF during the course of the audit review.

Note 3: *In his 1998 Policy Address on 7 October 1998, the Chief Executive endorsed the launch of an EPP and required government bureaux and departments to deliver productivity gains amounting to 5% of their annual operating expenditure during the years 2000-01 to 2002-03.*

PART 2: DELAY IN COMPLETION OF THE STATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

2.1 The station improvement project consisted of two parts (i.e. the physical improvement works on police premises and the installation of automated station security system). This PART examines the causes of delay in the completion of the physical improvement works on police premises and suggests measures for improvement. The results of audit examination of the installation of the automated station security system are given in PART 7.

Implementation plan of the project

2.2 It was stated in the Finance Committee paper that the project would be implemented by phases from October 1999 to June 2002 (i.e. within a time-span of about 32 months). According to the implementation plan of the project, it took about six months to complete the improvement works on a police premises.

2.3 The ArchSD (i.e. the works agent of the station improvement project) was responsible for issuing works orders to contractors, monitoring the progress of works through site visits, and conducting formal and informal meetings with the contractors. The Planning and Development Branch (P&DB) of the HKPF acted as a liaison party between the formations of the HKPF and the ArchSD. Project teams were set up in the ArchSD and the HKPF to co-ordinate and oversee the station improvement project.

Delays of the project

2.4 The project teams of the ArchSD and the HKPF monitored the progress at various stages of the station improvement project. In early 2000, the project experienced some delays due to the withdrawal of tender by the locker supplier. In mid-2000, both the P&DB and the ArchSD noted the problem of insufficient resource input by the contractors and their sub-contractors.

2.5 At the meeting of the station improvement project held in September 2001 (i.e. 23 months after the commencement of the project in October 1999), the project teams of the ArchSD and the HKPF estimated that only 35% of the improvement works had been completed. Of the 59 police premises, the improvement works on:

- (a) 18 police premises had been completed;
- (b) 33 police premises were in progress; and
- (c) 8 police premises had not commenced.

2.6 The project teams of the ArchSD and the HKPF tried to identify the causes of delay and find means to fast track the project in order to adhere to the original implementation schedule. In September 2001, the P&DB identified 14 police premises with serious delay problems. The ArchSD gave assurance that improvement works on those police premises with delay problems would be accelerated. Thereafter, the progress of the improvement works was closely monitored with completed works handed over in phases. The entire station improvement project was substantially completed in March 2004 after a delay of 21 months.

Audit observations

Poor contractors' performance

2.7 Poor performance of the contractors was one of the major causes of delay of the station improvement project. At a Coordination Meeting of Customer Service Improvement Project (Note 4) held in February 2000, the P&DB reported the unsatisfactory performance of the design teams of one of the contractors, and the contractor had promised to bring in more resources to avoid further delays. Up to July 2000, the project team of the ArchSD had issued more than 40 warning letters and given numerous demerit points (Note 5) to this contractor. The warning letters were issued under the following headings:

- (a) failure to submit design drawings;
- (b) failure to commence site works;
- (c) failure to adhere to programme;
- (d) failure to monitor the progress at work sites; and
- (e) substandard materials and workmanship.

Up to 31 March 2004, liquidated damages of \$3.7 million in respect of delays of the improvement works of 16 police premises were imposed on the contractors.

Note 4: *The purposes of the Coordination Meeting of Customer Service Improvement Project were to co-ordinate efforts of relevant police formations, keep all parties abreast of the progress and confirm respective roles and responsibilities of project members.*

Note 5: *Demerit point is used as an administrative measure to assess contractors' performance. When a contractor fails to perform satisfactorily or commits any defaults or deficiencies, demerit points will be allocated to the contractor together with a warning letter.*

Insufficient internal communication

2.8 Another cause of delay of the station improvement project identified by the project teams of the ArchSD and the HKPF was the inadequacy of internal communication among different formations of the HKPF. At the Coordination Meeting of Customer Service Improvement Project held in February 2000, it was reported that some divisional management of the police premises misunderstood the scope of the station improvement project. Additional time was required at various stages of the project because of:

- (a) the failure of different police formations to reach agreement on the design of some of the police premises;
- (b) the late requests for altering the previously agreed layout drawings made by the formations;
- (c) the late handover of some of the police premises to the contractors to commence the project; and
- (d) the unscheduled suspension of works directed by police formations without consulting the project team of the HKPF.

Extension of time granted

2.9 According to the contracts, extension of time may be granted to the contractors if the ArchSD considers that the causes of delay submitted by the contractors are reasonable and justifiable. Up to 31 March 2004, extension of time was granted to 548 out of the 995 works orders issued under the station improvement project. In addition to unforeseen work site condition and inclement weather affecting outdoor works, Audit noted that extension of time was granted for the following reasons:

- (a) late possession of sites;
- (b) additional instructions and extra work; and
- (c) extra time required for co-ordination between the builder works contractors and the security system contractor.

2.10 As identified by the project teams, extension of time granted to the contractors was partly due to inadequate internal communication among the formations of the HKPF. Before the commencement of the station improvement project in October 1999, the divisional commanders of the affected police premises were not involved in the early design

stage of the improvement works to be carried out in their police premises. In February 2000, the P&DB changed its approach and involved the divisional commanders of the police premises at the early design stage to improve efficiency of the remaining design work under the project.

2.11 Audit noted that during the implementation of the project, the project teams of the ArchSD and the HKPF had endeavoured to overcome the problems and fast track the project to adhere to its original schedule. **Audit considers that for all improvement projects, the HKPF needs to involve the divisional commanders of the affected police premises at the early design stage so that the users' requirements are incorporated into the design drawings. Limitations to the improvement works should be communicated to all parties concerned at an early stage (i.e. before the commencement of project) with a view to minimising interruption and delay to project implementation.**

Management of pilot schemes

2.12 The station improvement project consisted of two parts (i.e. the building improvement works and the installation of the automated station security system) which were tested separately in two pilot schemes before full implementation. The pilot scheme for the installation of the security system was carried out in the Ngau Tau Kok Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station from 1996 to 1997. The pilot scheme for the building improvement works was carried out in the North Point Police Station, the Sau Mau Ping Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station from 1998 to 1999. Close liaison and co-ordination between contractors could minimise the risk of delay in the completion of the project. However, the various aspects of co-ordination between the builder works contractors and the security system contractor had not been tested in the pilot schemes.

2.13 Audit noted that extension of time was granted to the builder works contractors and the security system contractor for co-ordinating the jobs for conduit fabrication and plinth construction. The P&DB considered that the lack of co-ordination between these contractors had wasted a lot of time and effort. The ArchSD commented that the delays and confusions in the provision of the builder's works were probably due to the builder works contractors' and the security system contractor's general lack of experience in co-ordinating the works. **Audit considers that closer co-ordination between the builder works contractors and the security system contractor would have helped ensure on-time completion of the project, and that all major parts of the project should have been included in the same pilot scheme in order to find out whether co-ordination problems existed between the contractors.**

Audit recommendations

2.14 **Audit has *recommended* that in planning all station improvement projects in future, the Commissioner of Police should:**

- (a) **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 (i.e. before the commencement of project); and**
- (b) **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.**

Response from the Administration

2.15 The **Commissioner of Police** has said that, as with all other projects, the HKPF values the experience and lessons learnt from the planning and implementation of this unique project. He has also said that:

- (a) the HKPF is fully aware of the importance in ensuring effective communication with all parties concerned in the delivery of the station improvement project. The following proactive measures were adopted in the implementation of the project:
 - (i) a Customer Service Contract, with emphasis on the importance of team work and co-ordination, was produced in both Chinese and English to inform all parties involved of the scope of works;
 - (ii) an agreement, detailing the scope of works and layout plans, was prepared for each district commander;
 - (iii) a half-day briefing, outlining the background and the scope of works of the project, was given to all divisional commanders before commencement of project;
 - (iv) liaison officers were appointed to work closely with the project team to ensure that users' requirements were taken into account;
 - (v) regional and station representatives were involved at meetings and on-site meetings held with the project team, the ArchSD and the contractors; and

- (vi) the progress of the project was promulgated regularly in a series of Bulletins.

The HKPF had adopted effective measures to ensure that users' requirements were taken into account and all limitations to the improvement works were made known to all parties concerned in the early stage. The HKPF had done much work to ensure effective communication; and

- (b) pilot studies for the automated station security system were first conducted at the Ngau Tau Kok Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station in 1997 to test various options/components of the system. The developments of the pilot scheme were only in a preliminary stage in 1998 when building improvement works were carried out at the North Point Police Station.

2.16 The **Director of Architectural Services** has said that he agrees that there are areas for improvements, especially in the areas of communication and co-ordination amongst all parties. He will take into account the audit recommendations for future projects. The Director of Architectural Services has also said that:

- (a) the station improvement project is a complex project requiring close communication and cooperation of all parties. The difficulties of working in occupied premises have been carefully considered by the ArchSD and the HKPF prior to implementation of the programme. The pilot scheme for the three police stations has enabled all parties to have a much better and deeper understanding of the complex preparatory and co-ordination works involved; and
- (b) throughout the course of the project, the ArchSD and the HKPF have maintained close communication to ensure project progress and quality. Difficulties encountered were resolved as soon as practicable. Nevertheless, as the project involves numerous users and has to be carried out in occupied premises under a phased programme, it is inevitable that the project team has to respond flexibly to limitation due to site constraints, changing programme and operational requirements of the commanders of individual divisional stations.

PART 3: UTILISATION OF SPARE SPACE

3.1 This PART examines the utilisation of spare spaces identified after the implementation of the station improvement project and suggests measures for improvement.

Identified spare spaces

3.2 Before the implementation of the station improvement project, the changing rooms of individual police premises were not well organised. The changing rooms were segregated by ranks and located in different areas and/or on different floors. In addition, the area of night duty rooms provided to police officers was excessive.

3.3 With the implementation of the station improvement project, the changing rooms of different ranks are centralised and more systematically organised, incorporating a more efficient use of space. The area of night duty rooms is also reduced to the required level and reorganised systematically. In these reorganised changing rooms and night duty rooms, lockers are bolted together to align with the air-conditioning, lighting and fire sprinklers system configuration. More space-efficient furniture is used. Better utilisation of space has been achieved. Consequently, spare spaces are identified in some police premises after the implementation of the station improvement project.

Audit observations

Usage of identified spare spaces

3.4 In May 2002, the HKPF identified 7,360 square metres of spare spaces in 12 police premises. Up to October 2004, the HKPF successfully allocated 5,674 square metres of the identified spare spaces for various uses. The other 1,686 square metres of the identified spare spaces had remained unoccupied for more than two years. Details are shown in Table 2. The unoccupied spare spaces are located in the Kwai Chung Police Station, the Tin Shui Wai Police Station and the Tsing Yi Police Station.

Table 2
Usage of identified spare spaces
(October 2004)

	(Square metres)	(Square metres)
Spare spaces identified in May 2002		7,360
Spare spaces utilised		
(a) offices	2,516	
(b) storerooms	1,486	
(c) training facilities	936	
(d) others (e.g. working area for special task force)	736	5,674
	—————	—————
Spare spaces unoccupied		<u>1,686</u>

Source: HKPF records

3.5 In response to Audit enquiries, the HKPF informed Audit in November 2004 that with effect from November 2004, 856 square metres (i.e. 256 square metres in the Tin Shui Wai Police Station and 600 square metres in the Tsing Yi Police Station) of the identified spare spaces had temporarily been used as storerooms. Details are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Usage of 1,686 square metres of identified spare spaces

	Usage in November 2004			Intended long-term use
	Temporary storeroom	Vacant	Total	
	(Square metres)	(Square metres)	(Square metres)	
Kwai Chung Police Station	—	230	230	Fitness Training Room
Tin Shui Wai Police Station	256	—	256	Changing room
Tsing Yi Police Station	600	600	1,200	Under review
Total	<u>856</u>	<u>830</u>	<u>1,686</u>	

Source: HKPF records

Regarding the intended long-term use of the spare spaces of 1,686 square metres, in November 2004 the HKPF informed Audit that:

- (a) 230 square metres of the spare spaces in the Kwai Chung Police Station would be renovated into a Fitness Training Room;
- (b) 256 square metres of the spare spaces in the Tin Shui Wai Police Station would be refurbished into a changing room to accommodate additional staff upon completion of the Shenzhen Western Corridor in June 2006; and
- (c) the HKPF was reviewing the long-term use of the 1,200 square metres spare spaces in the Tsing Yi Police Station in the light of the latest population projection. The Tsing Yi Police Station was originally built as a standard district police station. However, the population in the area had not increased as projected. Thus, the divisional police station could not be developed into a district police station (Note 6).

Note 6: *According to Chapter 3 of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, a district police station is required for every 200,000 to 500,000 persons while a divisional police station is required for every 100,000 to 200,000 persons. The site requirement of a district police station is about 4,650 square metres and that of a divisional police station is about 3,000 square metres.*

3.6 The HKPF also informed Audit that it was mindful of the proper usage of the spare spaces identified after the implementation of the station improvement project. The HKPF always endeavoured to put the identified spare spaces into the most suitable use for both permanent and temporary purposes. Where circumstances permitted, the entire site might be relinquished to the Government Property Agency (GPA) for reallocation. However, the following factors put a limit on the efforts of the HKPF to utilise the identified spare spaces:

- (a) the use of the spare space had to take into account the special nature of the police premises where there were operational and security considerations;
- (b) the accommodation might require conversion works before use but the costs of works were sometimes not immaterial; and
- (c) some spare spaces were required for contingencies and to cater for new activities.

3.7 Audit is concerned that the 1,686 square metres of spare spaces in the three police premises have remained unoccupied for more than two years. **Audit considers that the HKPF needs to promptly draw up an implementation plan for the short-term and long-term uses of its surplus accommodation.**

Additional spare space in the Tsing Yi Police Station

3.8 Audit site visit to the Tsing Yi Police Station in July 2004 revealed that some operational units of the New Territories South Regional Headquarters were occupying part of the second floor of the Tsing Yi Police Station. In 2002, the Finance Committee approved the construction of a new complex in Tsuen Wan to which the New Territories South Regional Headquarters and its operational units (Note 7) would be relocated upon its completion in mid-2005. By that time, there will be more spare space in the Tsing Yi Police Station. **Audit considers that the HKPF needs to take into account the space to be released by the operational units of the New Territories South Regional Headquarters in planning the long-term use of the spare space in the Tsing Yi Police Station.**

Note 7: *The operational units of the New Territories South Regional Headquarters are scattered in police premises in Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi within the New Territories South Region.*

Surplus accommodation

3.9 According to the Accommodation Regulations, Heads of Department should be conscious of the cost (whether actual or notional) of the accommodation they occupy and should ensure that it is put to optimum use for its intended purposes. Departments which have office accommodation surplus to their requirement should give the earliest advance notification to the GPA which will consider and approve an alternative use of the accommodation.

3.10 Audit noted that the HKPF had not promptly reported to the GPA that it had surplus accommodation. In addition, the HKPF had not consulted the GPA before retaining and changing the use of the surplus accommodation arising from the improved space utilisation of the changing rooms and night duty rooms.

3.11 In response to Audit enquiry, the HKPF informed Audit in December 2004 that the spare spaces within the police premises could only be allocated to other police units due to security considerations and the nature of work. It was not possible to allocate spare spaces for use by other government organisations. In addition, spare spaces provided a short-term temporary solution to meet operational needs. It was not uncommon that special task forces and temporary project teams (at Regional/District/Divisional levels on an ad-hoc basis) were created at short notice with redeployment of staff to deal with specific policing problems, large scale investigations or special projects. Using spare spaces for these purposes or for storage were temporary arrangements. As there were no significant changes in the use of the spare spaces, the GPA's approval might not be applicable. However, vacant or surplus buildings no longer required by the HKPF would be relinquished to the GPA.

3.12 In August 2000, the GPA reminded the HKPF that internal reassignment of vacant or surplus accommodation without reference to the GPA was not acceptable. Apparently, the HKPF was required to advise the GPA on surplus accommodation in all cases. **Audit considers that the HKPF should clarify with the GPA about the proper procedures of reporting surplus accommodation of the HKPF.**

Audit recommendations

- 3.13 **Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should:**
- (a) **in consultation with the 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;**
 - (b) **take into account the space to be released by the operational units of the New Territories South Regional Headquarters (i.e. the space on the second floor of the Tsing Yi Police Station) in the review of the long-term use of the spare space in the Tsing Yi Police Station; and**
 - (c) **in consultation with the GPA, clarify the procedures in the Accommodation Regulations to be followed for handling the surplus accommodation of the HKPF.**

Response from the Administration

- 3.14 **The Commissioner of Police has said that:**
- (a) an implementation plan is being drawn up for the short-term and long-term uses of the identified spare spaces arising from the station improvement project;
 - (b) the provision of changing rooms at the Tin Shui Wai Police Station is one of the options for the use of the spare space. The proposal is to provide changing rooms for the 85 additional police officers of the Tin Shui Wai Police Station, who will give policing support for the Shekou Boundary Crossing Facilities upon completion of the Shenzhen Western Corridor in June 2006. Detailed shift patterns for officers reporting on and off duty at the Tin Shui Wai Police Station are yet to be finalised. The proposal, arising from the special operational requirements of the co-location of boundary crossing facilities, requires the provision of changing rooms at the Tin Shui Wai Police Station and the Shekou Boundary Crossing Facilities;
 - (c) the review of the long-term use of the spare space of the Tsing Yi Police Station will take into account the space to be released by the operational units of the New Territories South Regional Headquarters;

- (d) for the use of the spare space requiring minor building works, an application will be sent to the ArchSD for examination and approval. The ArchSD will advise whether prior endorsement from the GPA is needed;
- (e) the HKPF is committed to relinquishing permanently surplus accommodation to the Government. For example, the premises of the Detective Training School at Kwun Tong Road were returned to the GPA in August 2002; and
- (f) police premises are specialist buildings. The GPA has advised the HKPF in December 2004 that the Accommodation Regulations relating to the handling of surplus accommodation does not apply to the HKPF.

3.15 The **Government Property Administrator** has said that she is prepared to advise and assist the HKPF to deal with its surplus buildings and accommodation as necessary. She has also said that:

- (a) the space entitlement of a civil servant in a general office accommodation is the same as that in a departmental specialist accommodation. The GPA is aware that, as a result of the need to down-size and the need of financial savings, many departments redeployed accommodation and often forgot to inform the GPA in accordance with the Accommodation Regulations. In reality, even if departments advised the GPA that accommodation within their departmental specialist buildings was no longer required, the GPA's experience and assessment is that alternative uses by other departments would not be possible. For example, it is certainly impossible for the GPA to allocate surplus space within a police station to any other departments for operational and security reasons;
- (b) if the user department wishes to surrender the whole departmental specialist building, early advance notice to the GPA is required in order to facilitate consideration from the site utilisation angle. The department may be required to review its decision to surrender the whole building if it does not appear to be fully justified; and
- (c) the GPA will consider reviewing the relevant Accommodation Regulations where appropriate.

PART 4: REMODELLED REPORT ROOMS

4.1 This PART examines the usage of the remodelled report rooms and suggests measures for improvement.

Functions of report rooms

4.2 The report room in a police premises is normally the first contact point of the public and the HKPF. It serves as an administrative centre for processing all the cases and acts as a co-ordination point for station security, armoury and transport. A Duty Officer (Note 8) is in charge of the report room. He may be assisted by an Assistant Duty Officer and Police Constables.

4.3 Before the implementation of the station improvement project, the HKPF was committed to provide a more welcoming and user-friendly environment in the report rooms so as to encourage the public to report crime and to seek police assistance. After discussing with the Fight Crime Committee on the improvements to report rooms, in 1995 the HKPF initiated a report room refurbishment programme to upgrade the physical standard of the report rooms. The refurbishment programme was completed in March 1997 at a cost of about \$3.8 million.

4.4 In October 1997, the HKPF commissioned a consultancy support project to examine ways to further improve the quality of services provided to the public. The North Point Police Station, the Sau Mau Ping Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station were selected in the pilot scheme. Under this scheme, the report rooms of the police stations were completely remodelled.

4.5 Based on the satisfactory results of the pilot scheme, the complete remodelling of report rooms was extended to the other 56 police premises under the station improvement project. The facilities in a remodelled report room normally include:

- (a) a reception area near the entrance of the report room for handling general enquiries and prioritising cases for processing;

Note 8: *The rank of a Duty Officer in charge of a report room ranges from Sergeant to Senior Inspector of Police.*

- (b) reporting counters with partitions to protect the privacy of those using the service;
- (c) a public information area provided with an information kiosk (touch screen computer), a telephone for public use, leaflets and application forms;
- (d) a “back of house” area (see para. 4.11); and
- (e) separate interview rooms for conducting enquiries/interviews.

Photographs 5 and 6 show the reception area and reporting counters of the report room of the Yau Ma Tei Police Station before and after the implementation of the station improvement project. Photograph 7 shows the public information area of the Tai Po Police Station.

Photograph 5

Report room of the Yau Ma Tei Police Station (before implementation of the station improvement project)



Source: Photograph provided by the HKPF

Photograph 6

**Report room of the Yau Ma Tei Police Station
(after implementation of the station improvement project)**



Source: Photograph provided by the HKPF

Photograph 7

Public information area of the Tai Po Police Station



Source: Photograph taken by Audit staff

Audit observations

Need for reception area and deployment of staff to reception area

4.6 One of the improvement works of the station improvement project is the provision of reception areas in the report rooms. In a reception area, normally a writing desk, chairs, a computer and a telephone are provided. It is designed to handle general enquiries and prioritise cases so that reports or enquiries can be handled in an efficient manner.

4.7 Among the 16 report rooms (out of 59 police premises) visited by Audit from July to September 2004, 9 report rooms had reception areas. Audit found that the reception areas of only 3 report rooms were manned by HKPF staff. The reception areas of the other 6 report rooms were not manned.

4.8 ***Rough indicator of workload.*** Audit analysed the number of reports handled by the 16 police premises for the period from January 1999 to October 2004. During this period, the daily average number of reports handled in a police premises was 57. Details are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

**Daily average number of reports handled by 16 police premises
(January 1999 to October 2004)**

Police premises	Daily average number of reports						Overall
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 (up to October)	
(a) With reception area but not manned by HKPF staff							
1. Mong Kok Police Station	173	164	173	183	180	180	176
2. Cheung Sha Wan Police Station	60	57	56	59	60	72	61
3. Sau Mau Ping Police Station	56	55	57	58	61	60	58
4. Chai Wan Police Station	55	57	54	56	60	62	57
5. Tsing Yi Police Station	47	47	45	44	45	46	46
6. Ngau Tau Kok Police Station	46	47	45	46	43	41	45
(b) With reception area manned by HKPF staff							
7. Tai Po Police Station	88	89	91	95	106	108	96
8. North Point Police Station	75	78	73	75	82	84	78
9. Kwun Tong Police Station	79	71	75	78	80	80	77
(c) Without reception area							
10. Sham Shui Po Police Station	70	69	77	98	103	109	88
11. Shau Kei Wan Police Station	50	50	50	49	49	49	50
12. Shek Kip Mei Police Station	34	33	31	31	35	10	29
13. Lo Wu Border Crossing Post (Note)	34	22	22	23	21	19	24
14. Man Kam To Border Crossing Post (Note)							
15. Lok Ma Chau Police Station	19	14	14	15	19	23	17
16. Marine Harbour Police Station	6	8	7	6	5	5	6
Overall	56	54	54	57	59	59	57

Source: HKPF records

Note: The number of reports handled by the Lo Wu Border Crossing Post and the Man Kam To Border Crossing Post were grouped together with that of the Ta Kwu Ling Police Station.

4.9 The Mong Kok Police Station had the highest average number of reports handled per day and could be considered as a busy one as it handled an average of 176 reports each day (i.e. three times the overall daily average number of reports handled by the police stations in Table 4). However, its reception area was not manned. The police officers of the Mong Kok Police Station explained to Audit during the site visit that due to heavy workload of the police station, no HKPF staff could be deployed to man the reception area. Similarly, in the Cheung Sha Wan Police Station, the Sau Mau Ping Police Station and the Chai Wan Police Station, the reception areas in the report rooms were not manned. Furthermore, in the Cheung Sha Wan Police Station and the Tsing Yi Police Station, some facilities (such as computer and telephone) had been removed from the reception areas.

4.10 **Audit considers that the HKPF needs to review the demand for reception service in the report rooms of police stations and the deployment of staff to man the reception areas. The HKPF also needs to look into the feasibility of converting the reception areas with low public demand for reception service into other more beneficial use. In the planning of station improvement projects in future, the HKPF should apply flexibly its provision standard of facilities so as to cater for the specific needs of individual police stations.**

Carpet problem in the “back of house” area

4.11 “Back of house” area refers to the staff working area behind the reporting counters. The facilities provided in the staff working area include temporary holding area for the suspects, search rooms and control panels for station security (such as light controls, closed circuit televisions and cell intercom). One of the improvement works of the “back of house” area was the fitting of carpet tiles. After the completion of the improvement works of the report rooms of the Mong Kok Police Station in June 2000 and the Tsim Sha Tsui Police Station in February 2001, the staff of these two police stations found it difficult to keep the carpet tiles clean as the “back of house” area was heavily used.

4.12 In 2001, the carpet problem was discussed at a number of Coordination Meetings of Customer Service Improvement Project. The views of the P&DB of the HKPF, being the project co-ordinator of the station improvement project, were that carpet tiles not only provided the most durable and hard-wearing flooring but also maintained a quality and friendly-look finish for the public. The P&DB considered that regular cleaning could keep the carpet tiles clean and bug-free, and that a force-wide adoption of a non-absorbent hard-floor surface in the “back of house” area was not necessary.

4.13 At the Coordination Meeting of Customer Service Improvement Project held in July 2001, the Service Quality Wing of the HKPF supported the replacement of the carpet tiles with more cleanable and functional materials. The Service Quality Wing also reminded the divisional commanders of the police stations which had not commenced the station improvement project to discuss with the P&DB on the proper materials to be used.

4.14 In November 2001, the HKPF agreed with the ArchSD to replace the newly fitted carpet tiles with rubberised synthetic tiles in the Mong Kok Police Station and the Tsim Sha Tsui Police Station. For the improvement works of 26 report rooms which were still in progress, they would not be provided with rubberised synthetic tiles in the “back of house” area.

4.15 At the Coordination Meeting of Customer Service Improvement Project held in April 2002, the P&DB stated that the carpet tiles had a lifespan of ten years and there was no plan to replace them. The P&DB also expressed the view that the replacement of carpet tiles by rubberised synthetic tiles in the Mong Kok Police Station and the Tsim Sha Tsui Police Station was a one-off exercise, and not intended to be implemented elsewhere.

4.16 In January 2003, after the completion of the improvement works of 57 report rooms, the HKPF agreed with the ArchSD to replace the carpet tiles in the “back of house” area of 48 report rooms (Note 9) with rubberised synthetic tiles at an estimated cost of \$1.7 million. **Had the HKPF extended the use of rubberised synthetic tiles to these 48 report rooms before the completion of their improvement works (i.e. when it was decided to replace the carpet tiles in the Mong Kok Police Station and the Tsim Sha Tsui Police Station in November 2001), the nugatory expenditure on the fitting of carpet tiles to some of the report rooms could have been avoided.**

Note 9: *Under the station improvement project, 48 out of the 59 police premises were included in the replacement exercise. Six police premises chose to use other tiles. The following five police premises were excluded from this replacement exercise because:*

- (a) the Mong Kok Police Station and the Tsim Sha Tsui Police Station had already replaced their newly fitted carpet tiles with rubberised synthetic tiles;*
- (b) the Central Police Station and the Lo Wu Border Crossing Post had not started the works for the flooring under the station improvement project; and*
- (c) the Lok Ma Chau Border Crossing Post, as a graded historical building, had to use red ceramic tiles.*

Audit recommendations

- 4.17 **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;**
 - (b) **consider converting the reception areas of report rooms with low public demand for reception service into other more beneficial use;**
 - (c) **in the planning of station improvement projects in future, apply with flexibility the provision standard of facilities in order to meet the specific needs of individual police stations; and**
 - (d) **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.**

Response from the Administration

- 4.18 The **Commissioner of Police** has said that:
- (a) the reception areas are not fully staffed because of reduction in establishment under the EPP and the Efficiency Savings Exercise. Officers manning the front desks are responsible for ensuring reportees are accorded the appropriate priority. When manpower permits or when the demand for reception service is high in the report room, extra staff will be deployed to man the reception areas to optimise the quality of service;
 - (b) a flexible approach is adopted in police station whereby the reception area is manned during busy periods. In the interim, the equipment at some reception areas have been reallocated to workstations so that they can be better utilised. For example, the computer equipment at the reception area of the Cheung Sha Wan Police Station was relocated to the “back of house” area for inputting detention and property records;

- (c) the HKPF applies flexibility in addressing the specific needs of individual police stations. Through the active liaison between the project team and divisional representatives, only police stations with practical need for reception areas were provided with one;

- (d) in the project planning stage, it is the HKPF's usual practice to thoroughly consult the users to ensure that the facilities to be provided will best meet the actual operational requirements. Once a project has commenced, changes will be kept to a minimum to avoid causing delays and incurring nugatory expenditure. In implementing projects in future, the HKPF shall continue to take into account the users' feedback and make adjustments to the original project plan when necessary; and

- (e) no adverse comment was received during pilot stage when carpet tiles were used at "back of house" area. Modifications should only be made after careful examination and supported with strong justification. Consistent standards were adopted in all report rooms to achieve the desired corporate image. Nevertheless, in early 2003, more and more requests for replacing the carpet tiles were received. Based on the positive feedback from stations which had replaced carpet tiles with rubberised synthetic tiles, the HKPF, after serious consideration, agreed with the ArchSD that there was a genuine need to extend the use of rubberised synthetic tiles to all report rooms. The replacement of tiles was considered reasonable and justified.

PART 5: INFORMATION KIOSKS IN REPORT ROOMS

5.1 This PART examines the configuration and usage of information kiosks in the report rooms of police premises and suggests measures for improvement.

Provision of information kiosks

5.2 Under the station improvement project, information kiosks equipped with touch screen computers are provided in report rooms of police premises to facilitate access to information by the public. In 1999, five information kiosks were installed in the report rooms of three police stations in the pilot scheme (i.e. the North Point Police Station, the Sau Mau Ping Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station) to gather usage data and canvass opinion on the effectiveness of the kiosks so as to determine the need for installation of additional kiosks. At the Coordination Meeting of Customer Service Improvement Project held in December 1999, it was reported that the policy was to provide at least one kiosk to each police station.

5.3 From 1999 to 2004, the HKPF purchased in four phases 67 information kiosks and software at a cost of \$2.6 million. In October 2004, the distribution of these 67 information kiosks was as follows:

- (a) 58 information kiosks were installed in the report rooms (Note 10);
- (b) 5 information kiosks (installed in the three police stations in the pilot scheme in 1999) were beyond repair and disposed of; and
- (c) 4 information kiosks were kept as spares.

Note 10: *In October 2004, there were 2 information kiosks in the report room of the Airport Police Station, 2 information kiosks in the report room of the Mong Kok Police Station and 3 information kiosks in the report room of the North Point Police Station. The remaining 51 information kiosks were allocated to 47 report rooms, 3 police posts and the Closed Area Permit Office in Sheung Shui.*

Audit observations

Configuration of information kiosks

5.4 A standard information kiosk in use in a report room consists of a personal computer, a touch screen Liquid Crystal Display monitor, a standard personal computer keyboard and a kiosk wooden case installed with speakers. Out of the 67 information kiosks, 31 information kiosks were provided with this standard configuration. The other 36 information kiosks were provided with additional hardware (such as web cameras and spill-proof programmable keyboards).

Hardware not in use

5.5 Audit site visits to 16 report rooms from July to September 2004 revealed that, of the 19 information kiosks installed in these report rooms:

- (a) 7 information kiosks were installed with web cameras. However, these web cameras were not configured for use by the public or used to serve any interactive function of the information kiosks;
- (b) the keyboards were locked away; and
- (c) the speakers were not used to provide any sound effect.

5.6 According to the tender documents of the information kiosks, the specifications of the information kiosks have provisions for expansion of service at a later stage for the public to make reports via keyboard or touch screen interface. After the introduction of the information kiosks in the report rooms in 1999, the additional hardware (i.e. web cameras, spill-proof programmable keyboards and speakers) acquired for the information kiosks was not used to provide interactive service to the public. **Audit considers that the HKPF needs to 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 through the information kiosks.**

Availability of Police General Orders through information kiosks

5.7 In January 1997, in response to the enquiry of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Security, the Secretary for Security agreed to make the Police General Orders

(PGO — Note 11) available in report rooms of individual police premises for access by the public. Hardcopies of the PGO were then displayed in report rooms for public access. In 2000, after reviewing the need of displaying the PGO in report rooms under the station improvement project, the HKPF discontinued displaying the PGO in report rooms for public access.

5.8 In November 2002, the LegCo Panel on Security raised concern about the discontinuation of displaying the PGO in report rooms. After discussions, the HKPF agreed to reinstate the provision of direct public access to the PGO, except for those parts the disclosure of which might prejudice the prevention, investigation and detection of crime and offences, or the efficient conduct of its operation. The HKPF planned to provide the public with access to the PGO electronically through the information kiosks in report rooms.

5.9 In April 2003, the HKPF reported to the LegCo Panel on Security that action had been taken to upload the PGO onto the information kiosks. The HKPF undertook to report to the LegCo Panel on Security on completion of the uploading work. In the event that the work could not be completed within three months, the HKPF would report the progress, with an explanation as to the difficulties encountered and the expected completion date.

5.10 The Secretary for Security reported the completion of the uploading of the PGO to the LegCo Panel on Security in July 2003. At present, the public is provided with access to the PGO electronically through the Internet Police Homepage and the information kiosks.

Usage of information kiosks

5.11 In 2001, the HKPF installed a counting software to collect user statistics of the information kiosks. From January 2001 to October 2004, the average usage rate of an information kiosk was 82 hits (i.e. mouse clicks for browsing the home web page of the HKPF) a day. Details are shown in Table 5.

Note 11: *The PGO is a set of internal orders to be complied with by all police officers in carrying out their duties.*

Table 5
Usage of information kiosks
(January 2001 to October 2004)

Year	Number of information kiosks in use	Number of hits	
		Total	Per kiosk per day
2001	28	539,695	87
2002	51	1,278,585	85
2003	55	1,767,344	89
2004 (up to October)	58	1,204,738	70
	Overall	<u>4,790,362</u>	82

Source: HKPF records

5.12 Audit noted that the usage of information kiosks in individual report rooms varied significantly. Details are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Usage of individual information kiosks
(January 2001 to October 2004)

Number of hits per kiosk per day	Number of information kiosks	Percentage
1	1	2%
2 to 19	17	29%
20 to 49	10	17%
50 to 99	9	16%
100 to 199	17	29%
200 to 260	3	5%
280	1	2%
Overall	<u>58</u>	<u>100%</u>

Source: HKPF records

From January 2001 to October 2004, of the 58 information kiosks in use:

- (a) one information kiosk in the report room of the Airport Police Station recorded the lowest average usage rate of one hit per day. Another information kiosk in the same report room recorded an average usage rate of 15 hits per day; and
- (b) one of the information kiosks of the report room of the North Point Police Station recorded the highest average usage rate of 280 hits per day.

5.13 The information kiosk of the Ngau Tau Kok Police Station has been in use since October 2001. The average usage rate of the information kiosk for the three months in 2001 was 67 hits per day. In February 2002, the HKPF examined the reasons for the low usage of this information kiosk. The HKPF found that:

- (a) the public attendance rate of the report room of the Ngau Tau Kok Police Station was low; and

- (b) as the Ngau Tau Kok Division covered a large industrial area, the public visiting the police station were mainly from the business sector. They preferred a speedy businessman's approach to making reports and would be less interested in using the information kiosk.

5.14 Audit noted that, at the Coordination Meeting of Customer Service Improvement Project held in December 1999, the chairman said that the actual number of information kiosks to be installed at a police station depended on the anticipated demand by the public. **In view of the low usage of information kiosks in some of the report rooms and the identified causes of the low usage of the information kiosk of the Ngau Tau Kok Police Station, Audit considers that the HKPF needs to review periodically the usage of information kiosks and ascertain the reasons for the low usage. The HKPF also needs to consider the feasibility of relocating the information kiosks from report rooms with low public demand to other locations in the police premises or other government premises where public demand for access to information is expected to be higher.**

Alternative use of information kiosks

5.15 During the site visits to 16 report rooms from July to September 2004, Audit noted that the HKPF used Incident Mapping System (IMS) kiosks for briefing the police officers. The IMS kiosks are touch screen kiosks. They enable police officers to access updated crime incident data transferred electronically from the Communal Information System of the HKPF three times a day to the IMS. **Audit considers that the HKPF should study the feasibility of changing those information kiosks in report rooms with low demand to IMS kiosks. This would improve the utilisation of the information kiosks and facilitate convenient access to the IMS by police officers.**

Information kiosks not functioning properly

5.16 Audit site visits to 16 report rooms from July to September 2004 found that of the 19 information kiosks in these report rooms:

- (a) the public did not make use of the information kiosks in the report rooms at the time of Audit visits (Note 12); and

Note 12: *On average, Audit site visit to each report room lasted for about 30 minutes.*

- (b) only 3 information kiosks functioned properly and 5 information kiosks were labelled as out of order. The remaining 11 information kiosks located in 10 report rooms did not respond to tests by Audit. However, the police officers of these premises were not aware that their information kiosks were not functioning properly.

Non-working information kiosks discourage public use. **The HKPF needs to ensure that the information kiosks in use are properly maintained.**

Audit recommendations

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

- (a) **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;**
- (b) **review periodically the usage of information kiosks, ascertain the reasons for the low usage of information kiosks and take appropriate measures to ensure that the information kiosks are used effectively;**
- (c) **consider relocating the information kiosks from report rooms with low public demand to other locations in the police premises or other government premises where public demand for access to information is expected to be higher;**
- (d) **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; and**
- (e) **ensure that the information kiosks always function properly.**

Response from the Administration

5.18 The **Commissioner of Police** has said that when replacement of aged information kiosks is considered, the total number of kiosks will be adjusted to fit the changing public demand and the Internet adoption in the community. He has also said that:

- (a) the provision of interactive functions for the public in the information kiosks has been held in abeyance due to other priorities and changes brought about by the Efficiency Savings Exercise and the station amalgamation projects. The HKPF is considering the seeking of funds for expanding interactive service through e-report room services in the Internet Police Homepage;

- (b) the usage rate of each information kiosk is expected to be affected by factors including different waiting times, number of reports made to the police station, the location of the police station, as well as the number of community and school visits to the police station. Information kiosks are provided to supplement the service provided by the report room staff when they are busy. The HKPF's customer service training requires its staff to attend to a member of the public personally as far as possible. Therefore, a low usage rate of the information kiosk is not necessarily an indication of a problem;
- (c) kiosks provide easy access to information for a victim or witness in a police station. Moving kiosks is expensive and may not justify the cost of doing so. The HKPF will keep this under review;
- (d) the deployment of kiosks is aligned with station amalgamation projects and the need to provide a standardised service to all police stations. Under the current system, any surplus computers will be returned to a central pool for reallocation; and
- (e) a system with a maintenance contractor and help desk service is in place to arrange repair of any malfunctioned equipment in police stations. Staff in a report room can adequately handle public enquiries when the kiosks are temporarily out of order.

PART 6: RESOURCE CENTRES

6.1 This PART examines the functions and usage of resource centres and suggests measures for improvement.

Functions of resource centres

6.2 A major component of the station improvement project was the setting up of resource centres to meet the police officers' need for access to information and for self-improvement studies. With the provision of resource centres, it was expected that the police officers' professional knowledge and capability would be improved. According to the conceptual brief of the service improvement project (Note 13), a resource centre would serve the functions of:

- (a) a point of information access via printed or electronic media (including Internet and Intranet) so that users could gain access to information to update their professional knowledge and to facilitate self-improvement studies;
- (b) a comfortable and quiet venue for processing official papers or documents and for leisure reading; and
- (c) a multi-purpose function room where syndicated work or group discussion could be held.

6.3 Since 1998, one resource centre had been set up in each of the police stations in the pilot scheme (i.e. the North Point Police Station, the Sau Mau Ping Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station). The average cost of setting up a resource centre, including all the fitting-out works, furniture and equipment, is about \$0.7 million. Details are shown in Table 7.

Note 13: *The conceptual brief, prepared by the HKPF in January 1998, listed out all the conceptual ideas of the proposed tangible changes to be made under the service improvement project.*

Table 7
Cost of setting up resource centres
in the police stations in the pilot scheme

	Amount (\$' 000)
North Point Police Station	712
Sau Mau Ping Police Station	659
Sha Tin Police Station	685

Total	<u>2,056</u>
Average	685
	(Say \$0.7 million)

Source: ArchSD and HKPF records

6.4 Under the station improvement project, 56 resource centres have been set up in individual police premises. A standard resource centre has the following facilities:

- (a) built-in bookshelves for keeping reference materials (such as Force Procedures Manual, PGO, Force Manuals, Offbeats, administrative and operational reports, directives, manuals and orders);
- (b) a computer corner with five desktop computers, computer tables and proper furnishing; and
- (c) an enclosed room separated by sound proofing folding partitions and furnished with tables and chairs for group discussion.

Audit observations

Usage of resource centres

6.5 From July to September 2004, Audit visited 16 (Note 14) out of the 56 resource centres set up under the station improvement project. The resource centres are accessible round the clock by police officers. After office hours, staff can use the resource centres by obtaining the keys kept by the Duty Officers. During the site visits, Audit noted that among the 16 resource centres:

- (a) there were police officers using the facilities of 5 resource centres. The remaining 11 resource centres were not in use;
- (b) the bookshelves of 8 resource centres were filled with books and reference materials. The other 8 resource centres had only a few books and reference materials;
- (c) only 9 resource centres kept Occurrence Book to record usage. Police officers had to sign the Occurrence Book when they used the resource centres; and
- (d) the Occurrence Book of one of the 9 resource centres (Note 15) showed that there were only 32 visits by the police officers to the resource centre for the 7 months from February to August 2004.

6.6 In response to Audit enquiry, in December 2004 the HKPF informed Audit that the provision and availability, rather than the degree of attendance, of the resource centres were its prime concern. The Occurrence Books maintained by some of the resource centres for reasons such as security purposes and the collection of staff opinion were not necessarily for recording the usage. The HKPF did not acknowledge the Occurrence Books as official records for the use of the resource centres.

Note 14: *Audit visited 4 resource centres located on Hong Kong Island, 7 resource centres located in Kowloon and 5 resource centres located in the New Territories. On average, Audit site visit to each resource centre lasted for about 15 minutes.*

Note 15: *Up to 28 February 2005, the Occurrence Books of the other eight resource centres were not available for audit examination.*

6.7 Audit notes that the keeping of Occurrence Book is not a mandatory requirement. The Occurrence Book kept by the nine resource centres may not be a reliable and representative record of the usage of these resource centres. **Audit considers that the HKPF needs to keep records of the use of individual resource centres for monitoring their usage. In view of the low usage of the resource centres recorded in the Occurrence Book and noted during Audit site visits, the HKPF also needs to examine the underlying reasons for the low usage of resource centres and explore ways to promote usage.**

6.8 Bookshelves are provided in the resource centres for keeping reference materials for police officers' self-development. However, 8 out of the 16 resource centres visited by Audit had only a few books on their bookshelves. A resource centre cannot function effectively without sufficient reference materials. The absence or inadequacy of reference materials in a resource centre may discourage police officers from using it. **Audit considers that the HKPF needs to ensure that the collection of reference materials in individual resource centres is sufficient to meet the needs of police officers.**

Resource centres in close proximity

6.9 ***New Territories North Regional Headquarters.*** In July 2004, Audit site visit to the New Territories North Regional Headquarters found that the resource centre was closed and locked during office hours. The New Territories North Regional Headquarters is located next to the Tai Po Police Station. Despite their close proximity, the New Territories North Regional Headquarters and the Tai Po Police Station have their own resource centre. Verbal enquiry with the police officers of the New Territories North Regional Headquarters revealed that their resource centre was only used as a conference room. Therefore, there were only a small number of books on the bookshelves and the resource centre did not have a computer workstation.

6.10 ***Kowloon West Regional Headquarters.*** Apart from the 56 resource centres set up under the station improvement project, the Kowloon West Regional Headquarters has a resource centre funded by the minor building works project under the control of the ArchSD. Both the Kowloon City Police Station and the Kowloon West Regional Headquarters are in the Argyle Street and have their own resource centre.

6.11 **Audit considers that the HKPF needs to critically review the location and usage of all the resource centres, in particular those that are in close proximity to each other. The HKPF also needs to examine the feasibility of converting the resource centres with low usage to other more beneficial use.**

Audit recommendations

- 6.12 **Audit has recommended that the Commissioner of Police should:**
- (a) **maintain proper records of the usage of the resource centres for monitoring purposes;**
 - (b) **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;**
 - (c) **ascertain whether the collection of reference materials in individual resource centres meets the needs of police officers; and**
 - (d) **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.**

Response from the Administration

6.13 The **Commissioner of Police** has said that the HKPF shall remind formations to provide sufficient reference materials in the bookshelves of resource centres to meet the needs of police officers. The HKPF will review the locations of resource centres in the light of changing circumstances, especially in the amalgamation of police stations. The Commissioner of Police has also said that:

- (a) the policy of providing resource centres in police stations under the station improvement project was to prepare for the launching of on-line services for the staff. The resource centres are built for multi-purpose use and there is no need for computer rooms to provide on-line services. The HKPF does not see the need to maintain records of usage of resource centres and is unable to spare resources to accord priority to maintain records of the usage of the resource centres for monitoring purposes;
- (b) over half of the 25,000 Junior Police Officers do not have a designated working desk and access to a computer or computer network. The provision and availability are the main concern. Where there is a sizable population of potential “customers”, provision of a resource centre is needed. With the launch of more on-line services, the HKPF expects the utilisation of resource centres will increase;

- (c) each police station has about 4 to 6 computers in a resource centre. Having regard to the anticipated demand by staff requiring access to on-line services, the office accommodation and computer equipment provided can hardly be deemed excessive. In addition, given their intended purpose, resource centres have to be conveniently located to serve officers working in that location. The HKPF thinks each formation needs a resource centre of its own;

- (d) due to insufficient funding, the resource centre at the New Territories North Regional Headquarters was not set up as a fully fledged resource centre with computer terminals, library books and resource materials. It was used as a multi-purpose/conference room to support various regional units and use annually for the staff promotion exercise. To rectify the misnomer and to avoid any future misunderstanding, the title of the resource centre will be changed to that of a multi-purpose room; and

- (e) although the Kowloon West Regional Headquarters Resource Centre (serving 622 disciplined and civilian officers) and the Kowloon City Police Station Resource Centre (serving 300 disciplined and civilian officers) are located in the same street, they are 200 metres apart and separated by a busy road junction. Each of the resource centres actually has its own “clientele” of considerable size.

PART 7: AUTOMATED STATION SECURITY SYSTEM

7.1 This PART examines the installation of the automated station security system and suggests measures for improvement.

Implementation of the automated station security system

7.2 One of the major objectives of the station improvement project is to enhance the security of police premises by installing the automated station security system to monitor and control pedestrian and vehicular access to the premises. The system has two integral parts as follows:

- (a) automated vehicular barrier gates at the entrances to the compound of the police premises. Tags are issued to vehicles authorised to enter the compounds (Note 16); and
- (b) smart card readers and smart cards for entering the police premises. The only uncontrolled access point of a police premises is the public entrance of its report room (Note 17).

7.3 Before the implementation of the station improvement project, station security duty was undertaken by Station Guards (i.e. Police Constables). In 1997, pilot schemes for replacing the Station Guards with the automated station security system were introduced in the Ngau Tau Kok Police Station and the Sha Tin Police Station. Results of the pilot schemes revealed that the system could generate staff savings and strengthen the security of the police premises. As part of the station improvement project, a term-contract for the installation of the system was awarded in March 2001.

7.4 In November 2001, the Directorate Officers of the HKPF reached a Smart Warrant Card Stakeholders Agreement (Stakeholders Agreement — Note 18) to ensure that every party involved would have a full understanding of their commitment to the project.

Note 16: *Vehicles without the tags have to use the video-phone link in front of the barrier gate to obtain entry permission from the Duty Officer.*

Note 17: *Person without smart card and seeking access to the police premises other than via the report room must use the video-phone link at the entrance of the police premises to obtain entry permission from the Duty Officer.*

Note 18: *The Stakeholders Agreement was reached by the Directorate Officers of the Administration Wing, the Crime Wing, the Finance Wing, the Information Systems Wing, the Operations Wing, the Personnel Wing, the Support Wing, the Training Wing and the P&DB.*

7.5 According to the Stakeholders Agreement, the P&DB was responsible for the physical installation of the automated station security system, the associated building works, the software applications and programme development for operating the system. Upon the full implementation of the system, the Support Wing of the HKPF would become its owner and would be responsible for its management.

7.6 In late 2003, the installation of the automated station security system was substantially completed. As a result of the implementation of the system, an annual recurrent saving of \$21 million was achieved through the deletion of 94 Station Guard posts. The saving was offset by an annual recurrent cost of \$20.7 million of the station improvement project, including \$12.9 million for the upgrading of facilities and \$7.8 million for the system.

Audit observations

Late involvement of stakeholders

7.7 In December 2002, the Support Wing raised its concern with the P&DB that the Transport Division, responsible for managing some 2,500 police vehicles, was not consulted on the implementation of the automated station security system until November 2001 (i.e. eight months after the award of security system term-contract). Thereafter, the Transport Division, after identifying a number of problems relating to vehicle management, had:

- (a) to enhance the Transport Management Information System at a cost of \$60,000 for managing vehicles with vehicle tags because such functions were not included in the system; and
- (b) to design and manufacture new vehicle tag holders for small motorcycles at a cost of \$260,000 because the original design of mounting the tags to the panniers of the motorcycles did not work.

7.8 In response to the Support Wing's concern, the P&DB commented that there were misunderstandings and confusions on the following matters:

- (a) at the preliminary planning stage of the automated station security system, the P&DB had to wait for the contractor's specifications and finalised plans. It was not in a position to pass details of the system (e.g. details of vehicle tagging) to the Transport Division until October/November 2001; and
- (b) the P&DB was not informed of the idea of enhancing the Transport Management Information System and the manufacture of new vehicle tag holders for small motorcycles. The original plan of using plastic cuffs to hold the vehicle tags was successful in the pilot scheme conducted in the Ngau Tau Kok Police Station.

7.9 Audit noted that at a meeting of stakeholders held in January 2001, the Information Systems Wing raised the issue of having the Stakeholders Agreement to avoid any misunderstanding. However, the Stakeholders Agreement was not finalised until November 2001 (i.e. eight months after the award of the security system term-contract in March 2001). In this connection, Audit noted that no stakeholders agreement was prepared for the automated station security system as a whole.

7.10 To avoid misunderstandings and confusions in handling station improvement projects, Audit considers that there is a need for the P&DB to involve and consult all the stakeholders at an early stage. The stakeholders' concerns and requirements should be taken into account in all stages of the design and implementation of the projects.

Malfunctioned smart cards

7.11 According to the Stakeholders Agreement, the Identification Bureau of the HKPF was responsible for the issue of smart cards. The exercise for the issue of smart cards started in March 2002. Individual police stations were responsible for reporting the number of malfunctioned smart cards to the P&DB. The ArchSD, based on the information supplied by the P&DB, was responsible for monitoring the performance of the security system contractor.

7.12 In January 2003, the ArchSD noticed an increase in the number of malfunctioned smart cards and raised the issue with the security system contractor. The contractor advised that the malfunction of smart cards could be attributed to bending of the Integrated Circuit Chip embedded in the cards, and suggested the use of plastic card holders to protect the smart cards.

7.13 In June 2003, the P&DB tried the use of strong plastic card holders for one month in three police premises (i.e. Traffic Hong Kong Island, Tsuen Wan Division and Wong Tai Sin Division). In September 2003, the P&DB said that there was a noticeable decrease in the number of malfunctioned smart cards in the three police premises. However, it was only in November 2003 that the P&DB informed the Police Stores to procure the strong plastic card holders. In early 2004, 55,000 strong plastic card holders purchased at a cost of \$59,500 were distributed to police officers and civilian staff.

7.14 Despite the use of the strong plastic card holders since January 2004, the number of malfunctioned smart cards had not decreased significantly. Details are shown in Table 8.

Table 8**Number of malfunctioned smart cards
(December 2003 to November 2004)**

Month	Number
December 2003 (Note 1)	587
January 2004	321
February 2004	432
March 2004	525
April 2004	358
May 2004	406
June 2004	355
July 2004	498
August 2004	655
September 2004 (Note 2)	1,180
October 2004	560
November 2004	368
	Total
	6,245

Source: HKPF records

Note 1: Monthly statistics prior to December 2003 were not available. Up to November 2003, there were 2,333 malfunctioned smart cards.

Note 2: The staff of the HKPF started to occupy the new Police Headquarters in August 2004.

Thicker smart cards

7.15 In late 2003, the Identification Bureau took the initiative to test the durability and reliability of a thicker smart card (Note 19). After the test, the Identification Bureau purchased 9,750 thicker smart cards at a cost of \$292,500 in April and August 2004, and issued these thicker smart cards as replacement cards. Up to November 2004, 3,176 thicker smart cards were issued and no malfunction was reported.

7.16 **In view of the satisfactory result of using the thicker smart cards, the HKPF should consider the use of the thicker smart cards to replace all the malfunctioned smart cards.**

Audit recommendations

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

- (a) **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; and**
- (b) **consider using the thicker smart cards to replace all the malfunctioned smart cards.**

Response from the Administration

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

- (a) the HKPF fully appreciates that teamwork and co-ordination of all stakeholders was very important for the successful implementation of this very difficult and challenging project. Similarly, the need to address their requirements and suggestions were equally important. The HKPF is always aiming for continuous improvement in delivering the services to both external and internal customers. The experience learnt from the planning and implementation of this unique major capital works project would certainly be most beneficial in handling any future improvement project. All stakeholders will be properly consulted prior to the project implementation; and
- (b) a policy of using thicker smart cards for card replacement and renewal is already in force.

Note 19: *The thickness of the smart card of the automated station security system was 0.84 mm and the thickness of the smart card used by the Identification Bureau for testing was 1 mm.*

PART 8: STATION AMALGAMATION PROJECT

8.1 This PART examines the implementation of the station amalgamation project and suggests measures for improvement.

Implementation of the station amalgamation project

8.2 In October 1998, the Government launched the EPP to improve productivity and efficiency across the Government with a view to releasing resources from the baseline to fund new initiatives and achieving lasting and sustainable improvements in the public service. In June 1999, under the EPP, the HKPF initiated a scheme of merging a number of police stations under the station amalgamation project.

8.3 The station amalgamation project aimed to enhance the flexibility of frontline deployment and achieve savings in management costs through resources reallocation. Up to August 2004, the merging of police stations in six districts (i.e. Eastern, Kowloon City, Sha Tin, Sham Shui Po, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long) achieved a saving of \$44.3 million through the deletion of 117 posts and released five police stations (i.e. the Shau Kei Wan Police Station, the Hung Hom Police Station, the Siu Lek Yuen Police Station, the Shek Kip Mei Police Station and the Tai Hing Police Station) for use by other police formations. Details are given in Appendix B. Reporting centres in the released police stations are set up to receive reports from the public.

8.4 The HKPF was aware that the implementation period of the station amalgamation project coincided with that of the station improvement project, and there was a need to ensure that the implementation of the station improvement project would take into account the plans of station amalgamation. The Steering Committee on Station Amalgamations, at the meeting held in March 2000, restated that the design of police premises under the station improvement project would meet the requirements of the station amalgamation project to avoid nugatory expenditure.

Audit observations

Congested accommodation in merged police stations

8.5 Under the station amalgamation project, modification works were carried out in some of the police stations so as to accommodate additional staff to be transferred from other police stations. For example, modification works were carried out in the Castle Peak Police Station and the Chai Wan Police Station to provide accommodation and facilities to house additional staff transferred from other police stations. These two police stations faced

extra demand for office and storage accommodation after the amalgamation, and additional works had to be carried out to resolve the problems. In June 2002, a space utilisation study of the two police stations was conducted. The study made a number of recommendations for improving the congested situation in the Castle Peak Police Station and the Chai Wan Police Station.

Castle Peak Police Station

8.6 The station amalgamation project was first implemented in the Tuen Mun district. The modification works for the amalgamation of the Castle Peak Police Station, the Tuen Mun Police Station and the Tai Hing Police Station were completed in April 2000. With the transfer of about one hundred staff from the former Tai Hing Police Station to the Castle Peak Police Station, the number of staff working in the Castle Peak Police Station increased by 50% from 200 to 300.

8.7 In August 2000, the HKPF found that the Castle Peak Police Station had accommodation problem for the additional armoury, internal security stores and property taken over from the Tai Hing Police Station. The HKPF advanced the commencement date of the station improvement project of the Castle Peak Police Station from February 2001 to September 2000 in order to address the accommodation problem. The improvement works of the Castle Peak Police Station were completed at the end of 2002.

8.8 The space utilisation study conducted in June 2002 revealed that office accommodation at the Castle Peak Police Station would not be a major problem after the completion of the station improvement project. However, the station faced the following problems:

- (a) the filing storage space in the general registry was not sufficient;
- (b) the size of the storerooms of the property office was too small;
- (c) the briefing room was too small to conduct briefing sessions for the Patrol Sub-unit team of 180 members, an increase of 110 members after the amalgamation; and
- (d) the accommodation for the Administration Support Sub-unit team was rather congested.

8.9 To tackle the problems, the HKPF constructed a new briefing room at the covered compound of the police station and converted a storeroom into a larger office for the Administration Support Sub-unit team.

Chai Wan Police Station

8.10 The Eastern district was the fourth district which implemented the station amalgamation project. The modification works for the amalgamation of the Chai Wan Police Station and the Shau Kei Wan Police Station were completed in September 2001. With the transfer of about two hundred staff from the Shau Kei Wan Police Station to the Chai Wan Police Station, the number of staff working in the Chai Wan Police Station increased by 109% from 188 to 393. The space utilisation study conducted in June 2002 revealed that, after the amalgamation, the Chai Wan Police Station had “dire” accommodation problems as follows:

- (a) the storage space in the general registry was not sufficient;
- (b) the office space of the property office was cramped;
- (c) the storage space of the property office was seriously inadequate; and
- (d) the Miscellaneous Enquiries Sub-unit office was very congested.

8.11 To solve the problems, the HKPF replaced the standard furniture with custom-made workstation, replaced the four-drawer filing cabinets with lockable cupboards and converted a refuse hut and its adjacent parking spaces into property office and storeroom.

8.12 The station amalgamation project was first implemented in the Castle Peak Police Station. The implementation of station amalgamation project in the Chai Wan Police Station was carried out one and a half years after the Castle Peak Police Station. **Audit considers that in planning the amalgamation of police stations, modification works for the merged police station should be completed to accommodate additional staff, records and property, before releasing the premises for other use. This would minimise interruption to the operation of the merged police station.**

Efficient use of resources

8.13 The HKPF has successfully implemented the station amalgamation project in six districts. The implementation of the station amalgamation project improves efficiency, enhances frontline coverage and achieves savings in management costs. In response to Audit enquiry, in September 2004 the HKPF informed Audit that it would continue with the implementation of the station amalgamation project and regularly review the allocation of resources to districts so as to ensure that:

- (a) the highest standard of service is provided to the public;
- (b) existing services are further improved; and
- (c) new services are provided without incurring additional cost.

Audit considers that the HKPF should continue with its good practice to explore improvement opportunities.

Audit recommendations

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

- (a) **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; and**
- (b) **continue with the good practice of amalgamation of police stations.**

Response from the Administration

8.15 The **Commissioner of Police** has said that the HKPF is pleased to learn that the station amalgamation project is a good practice and one which the HKPF should continue to pursue. He has also said that the congestion problems highlighted occurred in only two out of the six station amalgamation projects. The HKPF conducted space utilisation studies which provided innovative solutions to the identified accommodation problems. Overall, the planning processes of station amalgamation were overwhelmingly successful.

59 police premises in the station improvement project

Police Station

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Aberdeen | 14. Kwun Tong | 27. Sha Tau Kok | 40. Tseung Kwan O |
| 2. Airport | 15. Lantau North | 28. Sha Tin | 41. Tsim Sha Tsui |
| 3. Border | 16. Lantau South | 29. Sham Shui Po | 42. Tsing Yi |
| 4. Castle Peak | 17. Lei Muk Shue | 30. Shau Kei Wan | 43. Tsuen Wan |
| 5. Central | 18. Lok Ma Chau | 31. Shek Kip Mei | 44. Tuen Mun |
| 6. Chai Wan | 19. Ma On Shan | 32. Sheung Shui | 45. Tze Wan Shan |
| 7. Cheung Chau | 20. Marine Harbour | 33. Siu Lek Yuen | 46. Wan Chai |
| 8. Cheung Sha Wan | 21. Mong Kok | 34. Stanley | 47. Waterfront |
| 9. Happy Valley | 22. Ngau Tau Kok | 35. Ta Kwu Ling | 48. Western |
| 10. Ho Man Tin | 23. North Point | 36. Tai Hing | 49. Wong Tai Sin |
| 11. Hung Hom | 24. Pat Heung | 37. Tai Po | 50. Yau Ma Tei |
| 12. Kowloon City | 25. Sai Kung | 38. Tin Shui Wai | 51. Yuen Long |
| 13. Kwai Chung | 26. Sau Mau Ping | 39. Tin Sum | |

Police Post

- 52. Lamma Island Police Post
- 53. Lo Wu Border Crossing Post
- 54. Lok Ma Chau Border Crossing Post
- 55. Man Kam To Border Crossing Post

Marine Base

- 56. Marine East
- 57. Marine South
- 58. Marine West
- 59. Marine North

Source: HKPF records

**Implementation of the station amalgamation project
(31 August 2004)**

District	Police stations prior to amalgamation		Police stations released for other uses	Year of completion	Net number of posts deleted	Savings achieved (\$ million)
	No.	Location				
Eastern	2	Chai Wan and Shau Kei Wan	Shau Kei Wan	September 2001	18	8.0
Kowloon City	3	Ho Man Tin, Hung Hom and Kowloon City	Hung Hom	December 2000	40	11.7
Sha Tin	4	Tin Sum, Sha Tin, Siu Lek Yuen and Ma On Shan	Siu Lek Yuen	December 2001	12	6.8
Sham Shui Po	3	Cheung Sha Wan, Sham Shui Po and Shek Kip Mei	Shek Kip Mei	April 2004	24	9.4
Tuen Mun	3	Castle Peak, Tuen Mun and Tai Hing	Tai Hing	April 2000	21	8.2
Yuen Long	2	Lau Fau Shan and Tin Shui Wai	Nil (Note)	May 2000	2	0.2
Total	17				117	44.3

Source: HKPF records

Note: Up to December 2002, the Lau Fau Shan Police Station was retained for reporting crime. Since then, the station had remained vacant pending handover to the Government.

Appendix C

Acronyms and abbreviations

ArchSD	Architectural Services Department
Audit	Audit Commission
EPP	Enhanced Productivity Programme
GPA	Government Property Agency
HKPF	Hong Kong Police Force
IMS	Incident Mapping System
LegCo	Legislative Council
P&DB	Planning and Development Branch
PGO	Police General Orders