

For Information

Legislative Council Panel on Security Replacement of Revolvers by Crime Wing

Purpose

This paper seeks to explain the police plan to replace the Colt .38 revolvers used by crime officers in major operational units with an automatic pistol.

Justifications for Replacement

2. The current model of revolvers for crime officers, i.e. .38 Colt Detective Special (DS), was introduced to the Force in 1976. A total of 4,350 DS revolvers were purchased between 1976 and 1979. The manufacturer stopped the production of .38 Colt Detective Special in 1996 and can no longer guarantee an adequate supply of spare parts to the Force. It is estimated that the current stock of major spare parts maintained by the Force can only last for a further two years. It is therefore necessary to identify a suitable replacement firearm.

Factors Considered in Selection

3. In order to select the most suitable replacement handguns for crime officers, a series of demonstrations and test firing of handguns were conducted in March 2002. A total of 106 officers (89 males and 17 females) from different police crime formations and staff associations participated in the tests. The findings of the tests indicated that the Glock 19 was the preferred choice amongst the pistols tested.

4. Based on the results of the firing tests, it is considered that a pistol has advantages over a revolver in terms of ease of firing, comfort, accuracy, low recoil and the large numbers of rounds it can carry. A pistol is therefore considered to be a more tactically effective weapon than the revolver for major operational units, such as Narcotics Bureau, Organised Crime & Triad Bureau, and the Criminal Investigation Bureau, which frequently operate in tactical situations against criminals with firearms. Pistols are already used by various units within the Hong Kong Police Force such as the Special Duties Unit, Witness Protection Unit, Airport Security Unit and the Small Boat Division. They are also being extensively used by overseas law enforcement agencies.

5. Crime officers receiving the pistols will thereafter return their Colt .38 Detective Special Revolvers in order to augment the available Colt .38 Detective Special Revolvers for the remaining crime officers (i.e. non-major operational crime units). This will extend the current stock of major spare parts for Colt .38 Detective Special Revolvers for a further one to two years.

Schedule of Replacement Exercise

6. As the current stock of major spare parts for Colt .38 Detective Special Revolver can only last for a further two years, it is intended that the replacement handguns should be issued to crime officers in major operational units within the next 12 months following the necessary completion of tendering, procurement and delivery of arms arrangements (that is, in 2003).

7. It should be noted, however, that whilst the Glock 19 was the preferred choice amongst pistols evaluated during the user firing tests

conducted in March 2002, further detailed testing is still required to ensure that the selected firearm meets both operational and investigative needs before proceeding with the final tendering and procurement arrangements. As at early September 2002, the final selection on the preferred firearm is still being considered.

Training Requirements

8. Training to qualify in the use of an automatic pistol requires a trainee to attend a 3-day intensive conversion course. Each officer is also required to fire a minimum of 300 rounds of 9mm ammunition (excluding demonstration rounds and remedial training). The necessary training will commence after delivery of the selected firearm and will proceed in phases.

Financial Implications

9. Although the final firearm selection is still awaited, it is estimated that the financial implications of introducing a pistol for crime officers in major operational units (based on costs for a Glock 19) would involve approximately HK\$2,705,000 with annual recurring costs estimated at about HK\$19,500. Funding for the replacement exercise for crime revolvers has already been allocated for the financial year 2002/03.

**Security Bureau
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