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Panel on Security

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 7 February 2014**

Tai Lam Centre for Women

Purpose

This paper summarizes past discussions by the Panel on Security ("the Panel") on the partial redevelopment of Tai Lam Centre for Women ("TLCW").

Background

2. The Correctional Services Department ("CSD") administers 29 correctional facilities, including 16 correctional institutions, three drug addiction treatment centres, one psychiatric centre, four rehabilitation centres, three halfway houses and two custodial wards in public hospitals. Among these, TLCW is a maximum security institution providing 263 penal places for female adult offenders of all categories, including convicted prisoners of all security grading, remands, appellants and inmates of drug addiction treatment centres.

3. In 2011, the Administration proposed an in-situ partial redevelopment of TLCW to increase and enhance its facilities. Under the proposal, the number of penal places of TLCW would be increased to about 360 upon completion of the redevelopment. Six other existing blocks, including one administration block, three dormitory blocks and two operational blocks, would be retained. TLCW would operate as usual during the redevelopment period. The redevelopment project was expected to commence in phases. Phase 1 was expected to commence in August 2012 and be completed by the end of 2014. Phase 2 would start after Phase 1 for completion in November 2016.

4. Following endorsement of the partial redevelopment proposal by the Public Works Subcommittee on 13 June 2012, the Finance Committee approved on 13 July 2012 a commitment of \$946.6 million for the proposal.

Deliberations of the Panel

5. The Administration briefed the Panel on its proposal to redevelop TLCW in June 2011. The deliberations are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Provision of penal places

6. Noting that TLCW had a long standing problem of overcrowding and the number of penal places in TLCW would only be increased to about 360 upon completion of the redevelopment project, members sought information on whether the redeveloped TLCW would provide adequate penal places.

7. According to the Administration, the proposal involved an in-situ partial redevelopment of TLCW that would provide optimum penal capacity. Although the average daily penal population of TLCW in the five years preceding 2011 was 464, the penal population in 2011 was below 400. With the full operation of the redeveloped Lo Wu Correctional Institution ("LWCI"), some extra 30 to 40 female prisoners would be transferred from TLCW to LWCI. Thus, the redeveloped TLCW, which could accommodate some 360 female prisoners, should be adequate.

Updating of facilities

8. Noting that most of TLCW's core facilities were outdated, members had enquired whether the redevelopment project included updating of facilities. According to the Administration, more facilities such as computers, a multi-media training room and a religious service room would be provided in the redeveloped TLCW.

9. Noting that there was a lack of sufficient activity rooms, library, computer rooms and classrooms in TLCW, members were concerned whether the Administration had any plan to improve the facilities at TLCW.

10. According to the Administration, remands and prisoners who required maximum security had to be housed and managed separately. Due to space limitation, facilities such as the dining hall were currently used by these two groups of persons in custody at different time slots. After the redevelopment of

TLCW, these two groups of persons in custody would be housed in separate complexes. More rehabilitation facilities would be provided.

Security concerns

11. Noting that there were Category A prisoners who required maximum security in TLCW, members were concerned whether issues relating to security would be addressed during the construction period.

12. According to the Administration, there would be a considerable distance between the construction site and persons in custody. CSD did not expect any security problem during the construction period.

13. Noting that the redeveloped TLCW included a five to six-storey complex, members had enquired whether the Administration had considered the security of such a high-rise complex. The Administration advised that consideration had been given to security needs in the design of the multi-storey complex.

Latest development

14. The Administration will brief the Panel on the funding proposal to install electric locks security system at TLCW at the meeting on 7 February 2014.

Relevant papers

15. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Appendix

Relevant papers on Tai Lam Centre for Women

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Security	7.6.2011 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u> <u>CB(2)2112/11-12(01)</u>
Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee	13.6.2012 (Item No. 1)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u> <u>PWSC(2012-13)28</u>
Finance Committee	13.7.2012 (Item No. 3)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u> <u>FCR(2012-13)52</u>

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