

**For discussion on
12 April 2011**

**Legislative Council Panel on Security
Manpower Situation in respect of Crime Officers of the
Hong Kong Police Force**

Purpose

This paper provides information on the manpower situation of crime officers of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF).

Current Figures on Crime Officers

2. As at end 2010, the establishment and strength of crime officers of HKPF were 5 524 and 5 470 respectively. The remaining 54 vacancies were arisen from various reasons including promotion, retirement and transfer. The less than 1% vacancy rate of crime officers is similar to the overall vacancy rate of police officers.

Challenges for Police Officers

3. Both uniform police officers and crime officers have been facing various new challenges in recent years. These include new and more complicated types of crimes and modus operandi, such as technology crime and cross-border deceptions, brought by the advancement of technology and knowledge. In addition, there are new legislation and case-handling procedures. For example, the Domestic Violence Ordinance (Cap. 189) has been amended to extend the scope of protection to include non-married couples. To correspond with the amendments, HKPF had to enhance measures and arrangements on the handling of domestic violence cases.

Changes in Lifestyle of Police Officers

4. Such new challenges in recent years have resulted in a constant increase in the workload of police officers, in particular for crime officers who have to investigate crime cases and follow up court proceedings. Some police officers have to work irregular hours for a prolonged period of time. In response to the change in work culture in the society, HKPF plays an active role in promoting healthy lifestyles. Police officers also expect to have reasonable private time and family life. In this

connection, HKPF's management has continued to review and explore feasible ways to improve the work condition of crime officers.

Review of Criminal Investigation Units

5. HKPF all along works out the staff establishment of various criminal investigation units in accordance with their work demand. It also examines and reviews the establishment of these units having regard to changes in the work situation and demand. Such studies and reviews are on-going exercises that aim to keep in line with the development of HKPF and changes in the society. The last study on the workload and personnel distribution of the criminal investigation teams in various police districts was completed in 2010.

6. Moreover, HKPF established a study team chaired by an officer at the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police in June 2010 to expedite the study on improving the work environment of crime officers in police districts. The study covers an extensive review of such areas as working hours, rest days, welfare and training. It also examines ways to provide support to crime officers so as to reduce their workload and to make criminal investigation work more effective and attractive.

7. To this end, HKPF has, taking into account the findings of the above review, re-distributed the manpower ratio of crime officers in the light of changes in workload of some police districts. HKPF will also adopt measures to solve the problem, including implementation of the system of "Criminal Investigation Unit" (see paragraph 8 below), offering more opportunities for upward mobility to crime officers and dealing with the problem of working overtime.

"Criminal Investigation Unit" System

8. In order to improve the persistent situation of working overtime of crime officers, HKPF has implemented a new system of "Criminal Investigation Unit" in all police districts since April 2011. There are a total of eight Criminal Investigation Teams working on four shifts in each police district. There are two teams on each shift, one works on new cases and the other continues with old cases. The two teams are complementary to each other.

Greater Chance of Moving Upward

9. Furthermore, HKPF has considered ways to increase opportunities for upward mobility for crime officers. At present, frontline work is undertaken by Criminal Investigation Teams of various police districts. District crime squads and regional crime units work at their respective levels while different investigation units such as the Organized Crime and Triad Bureau and the Narcotics Bureau operate at the Crime Wing Headquarters. The HKPF management will consider increasing the upward mobility for crime officers to provide ample room for their development by taking up criminal investigation work and to increase their job satisfaction and promotion edge.

Improving the Problem of Working Overtime

10. HKPF will ensure that crime officers could obtain reasonable overtime compensation, such as time-off, under the existing system.

Way Forward

11. HKPF has in place a sound mechanism to continuously review and plan for their manpower arrangements. HKPF will continue to listen to the aspirations and opinions of staff at different levels through various channels and means in order to formulate the most appropriate measures, to make policing work more attractive and allow officers to have more development opportunities.

Hong Kong Police Force
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