

For discussion on
7 February 2014

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Installation of electric locks security system at Tai Lam Centre for Women

PURPOSE

This paper consults the Panel on the proposal to install the electric locks security system (ELSS) at the Tai Lam Centre for Women (TLCW).

BACKGROUND

2. The Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to providing a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy environment for persons in custody. Most of the facilities of the correctional institutions in Hong Kong have been in use for many years or are converted from buildings used for other purposes originally. Currently, the gates used in many penal institutions and facilities are still installed with manually operated mechanical locks, meaning that those gates have to be locked or unlocked by keys manually. These involve complicated and extensive procedures of keeping, collection, return and distribution of keys. Moreover, the manual locking or unlocking processes are relatively time-consuming.

3. To address the problems associated with the locking/unlocking process of the old system of manually operated mechanical locks, CSD completed a study in 2012 and decided to replace the existing locks with ELSS in various institutions by phases in accordance with the respective security and operational need.

4. ELSS is an electro-mechanical locking system operating in conjunction with the closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, intercom and call button. Upon the pressing of the call button by CSD staff to request for the unlocking of a gate operated under ELSS, visual and audio signals will be transmitted to the control room immediately. Having acknowledged the receipt of such a request, the staff in the control room will unlock the relevant gate by remote control after verifying the identity of the requesting staff through the intercom and CCTV system.

PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF ELSS

5. The Administration proposes to install ELSS in the passageways, cells and facilities etc. in some of the buildings of TLCW (including the Administration Block, 3 dormitories, and 2 operational buildings¹ which provide a kitchen, a laundry workshop and dining halls) in order to enhance the security and operational efficiency of the penal institution. The installation work will be carried out by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund (EMSTF) under the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. The project will involve the installation of about 90 gates with electric locks, electro-mechanical locking devices, server and associated parts, around 130 CCTV cameras, uninterrupted power supply and charging devices, etc.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR INSTALLING THE PROPOSED ELSS

6. Based on the following justifications, CSD proposes to install ELSS at TLCW to replace the old system of manually operated locks –

(i) Speeding up emergency support

For security reason, all keys of the gates with mechanical locks are kept in specific locations which are relatively far away from the custodial areas of persons in custody. In case of emergency (particularly during the night time as persons in custody are more likely to attempt self-harm at those hours), it takes a relatively longer time for CSD staff to collect the keys from the concerned locations and then hurry off to the scene to unlock the gates.

If ELSS is adopted, the locking/unlocking of gates will be centrally processed and controlled from the control room. The staff at the scene will only have to press the call button and the staff at the control room will unlock the gates accordingly, which can save the time required to collect the keys and will shorten the time required to get to the scene in emergency, and will hence allow prompt assistance and rescue actions.

(ii) Strengthening institutional security

Upon implementation of ELSS, the staff at the control room will

¹ As regards the other buildings of TLCW (including the hospital, facilities for Category A persons in custody and rehabilitation facilities), ELSS replacement work has been included in the scope for the Tai Lam Centre for Women Redevelopment Project which was endorsed by the Finance Committee in July 2012.

unlock the gates only after verifying the identity of the requesting staff. The security system will keep records of each and every locking/unlocking time automatically. Therefore, the system can help prevent any improper or unauthorised unlocking of gates more effectively and can further enhance institutional security. The information generated from the system can also facilitate the evaluation or review of the operation of the institution and improve operational efficiency. As TLCW is a maximum security prison, CSD considers that there are more pressing operational needs for TLCW to be installed with ELSS.

(iii) Enhancing operational efficiency

Upon installation of ELSS, procedures can be streamlined by removing the need to keep, collect or return keys. The operational efficiency of institutions will thus be enhanced.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. The estimated total non-recurrent cost of installing ELSS is \$25 million. The detailed breakdown is as follows –

	\$ million
(a) Electrical and other building services installation	0.75
(b) Security System ²	14.54
(c) Construction Work (including installation of relevant gates)	6.19
(d) EMSTF project management services ³	2.45

² The security system includes electric locks, electro-mechanical locking system installation, server and associated parts, CCTV camera, uninterrupted power supply and charging devices.

³ The EMSTF project management services include preparation of tender documents, tender evaluation, approval of contractor's design submissions, monitoring of contractor's installation, acceptance tests, and co-ordination with various government departments and the contractors.

(e) Contingencies	1.07
Total	<hr/> 25.00 (in money-of-the-day prices)

8. We estimate that the annual recurrent cost after implementing ELSS, including expenses on corrective maintenance, equipment spare parts, etc. will be \$2.7 million.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

9. Subject to Members' comments on the proposal, we plan to seek funding approval from the Finance Committee in May 2014. If the funding approval is granted, we expect that the implementation timetable will be as follows–

Activity	Expected Completion Date
(a) Project planning, system design/tender preparation	December 2014
(b) Tendering and award of contract	June 2015
(c) Approval of system design	August 2015
(d) Equipment manufacturing, delivery and site work preparation	November 2015
(e) Installation and building services works	March 2018
(f) Acceptance test and training	April 2018
(g) System commissioning	May 2018

10. We have made reference to past experience and advice from EMSTF in devising the timetable above. Since the project has to be conducted at TLCW which has 44 years of history, it will involve extensive structural builders' work. To accommodate the normal operation of the institution and the works of the redevelopment project, CSD can only conduct installation work on a small

number of gates every time. In view of the complications mentioned above, more time is need for the installation works.

Advice Sought

11. Members are invited to comment on the proposal.

**Security Bureau
Correctional Services Department
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