

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1453/13-14(11)

Ref : CB2/PL/SE

Panel on Security

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 13 May 2014**

Replacement of Police launches

Purpose

This paper summarizes past discussions by the Panel on Security ("the Panel") on the replacement of Police launches.

Background

2. The Marine Police is responsible for maintaining the integrity of 191 kilometres of the sea boundary, 1 651 square kilometres of coastal and port area, and 262 islands within the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It performs a wide range of duties, which include maintaining law and order at sea, patrolling the sea boundary, and assisting in the enforcement of immigration control, maritime safety, search and rescue operations.

3. In 1999, the Police introduced a Launch Replacement Programme ("LRP") which aimed to ultimately replace 35 marine patrol launches that reached their life expectancy, in a phased manner over a period of 17 years.

4. According to the Administration, an alternative approach, the Versatile Maritime Policing Response Strategy ("VMPR"), was identified in the course of the review of LRP. VMPR comprised two major components, viz. a central command system ("CCS") and a fleet of smaller and more versatile marine craft. The Administration considered that VMPR would be more cost-effective than LRP and at the same time better meet the operational needs of the Marine Police in discharging its duties. The funding approval of the Finance Committee for

replacement of marine craft for VMPR was obtained in June 2005. The replacement schedule of the craft involved and the changes of the Marine Police fleet upon implementation of VMPR is in **Appendix I**.

Deliberations of the Panel

5. The replacement of Police launches had been discussed at meetings of the Panel in March 1999 and April 2005. The deliberations are summarized in the following paragraphs.

6. Members noted that the replacement Police launches would have enhanced speed and be equipped with advanced technological facilities. Information was sought on whether the enhanced speed of replacement launches could facilitate the discharge of Marine Police's duty against illegal immigration.

7. According to the Police, a small vessel which was carried on board a Police launch could be used for fast-speed pursuit. Other measures to combat illegal immigration included maintaining close liaison with the Mainland authorities in a bid to tighten frontier patrol and beat patrol. Besides anti-illegal immigration, the replacement Police launches would be used for other duties of the Marine Police such as maritime safety, conservancy and maritime law enforcement.

8. Information was sought on the performance of the marine craft to be procured under VMPR, such as whether they would be able to intercept high speed launches engaged in smuggling activities. Members were advised that with CCS and a more versatile fleet in place under VMPR, the Marine Police would be able to mount a co-ordinated response by swiftly and flexibly deploying the new fleet of smaller craft to carry out operations. The craft to be procured under VMPR would be able to travel as fast as 45 to 50 knots against the 25 knots for the large craft in use. They would be equipped with advanced technological systems, such as differential global positioning system, automatic vessel location equipment and thermal imager system, to meet the Marine Police's operational needs. The capability of the Marine Police in coping with criminal activities and other incidents such as emergencies and maritime accidents would be much enhanced.

9. Some members expressed concern whether measures would be adopted to safeguard Police officers from hazards associated with the increased speed of Police launches and craft. The Administration advised that a working group had been formed within the Marine Police to identify training needs and improvements needed for Police launches and craft. The working group had made recommendations on the use of seats with safety design. Crew members

were required to wear helmets, goggles and life jackets when performing their duties.

10. Concern was raised as to whether the Administration had compared the manpower and fleet proposed under VMPR with those deployed in neighbouring places, such as Mainland cities, Taiwan and Singapore. According to the Administration, the Police had conducted studies on the manpower and fleet deployment of other places, including Singapore. The Marine Department and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department were content with VMPR strategy from the point of view of launch and technical design respectively. The Standing Committee of Government Craft also supported the replacement of craft under VMPR. The relevant advisory bodies, including the Port Area Security Advisory Committee, Provisional Local Vessel Advisory Committee and Maritime Industry Council, were all supportive of VMPR.

11. Information was sought on whether the Administration had compared the prices of various craft and launches available in the market. According to the Administration, the marine craft would be procured by open tender and subject to the principles of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement. Members were advised that after the full implementation of VMPR in 2010, the overall fleet size of the Marine Police would be reduced from 147 craft to 121 craft, among which 31 would be Police launches. Rather than relying on a fleet of large launches, VMPR would allow a centralized command to coordinate the operations and deploy the launches in a speedy, flexible and efficient manner and thus enhance the efficiency of the Marine Police.

Latest development

12. The Administration will brief the Panel on its proposal to replace 18 Police launches at the meeting on 13 May 2014.

Relevant papers

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

Marine Police Fleet
Changes on full implementation of VMPR

Type of craft	Existing	2009/10	Changes
Divisional Patrol Launches	26	12	-14
Harbour Patrol Launches	7	-	-7
Inshore Patrol Craft	30	24	-6
Launch / Barge Tenders	67	26	-41
Barge Operating Platforms	2	4	+2
Medium Patrol Launches	-	17	+17
Divisional Fast Patrol Craft	-	23	+23
High Speed Interceptors / Fast Pursuit Craft	13	13	-
Training Launches	2	2	-
Total	147	121	-26

**Relevant papers on
replacement of police launches**

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Security	4.3.1999 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Finance Committee	23.4.1999 (Item No. 3)	Agenda Minutes FCR(1999-2000)2
Panel on Security	15.4.2005 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Finance Committee	10.6.2005 (Item No. 4)	Agenda Minutes FCR(2005-06)15

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
 7 May 2014