

For information
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Legislative Council Panel on Security

Police's Efforts in Engaging the District Community in Crime Prevention

Introduction

This paper provides information to Members on the Police Force's efforts in crime prevention by enhancing co-operation with community groups and engaging the district community.

Strategic Actions

2. The overall law and order situation in Hong Kong saw a further improvement in 2013. The overall crime figure registered a continual decrease to 72 911, a drop of four per cent when compared to that in 2012. Burglary and violent crime hit a record low in the past decade, with 3 573 and 12 153 cases recorded in 2013 respectively. To maintain law and order and to ensure that Hong Kong remains one of the safest cities in the world, apart from the vigorous efforts of the Police and other law enforcement agencies, co-operation between the public, community groups/organisations and the Police plays a crucial role in the prevention of crime and protection of public safety.

3. The Police always disseminate and promote anti-crime messages through district activities in various police districts. District Commanders take heed of and respond to community views through District Councils, District Fight Crime Committees (DFCCs) and the police community relations network, while promoting different activities to garner support from the community for the fight crime initiatives of the Police. Moreover, in the light of the needs of different community groups, the Police Force specifically organises activities suitable for the youth, the elderly and non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) communities with a view to preventing and combating crime.

The Youth

4. Young people are one of the target groups in the Police's liaison effort. The Police maintain close liaison with schools through School Liaison Officers (SLOs) as a joint effort to combat and prevent juvenile delinquency, as well as

to instill a sense of discipline and correct values into the students. The Police appointed a total of 97 SLOs to render services to over 1 100 primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. In 2013, the SLOs paid more than 19 000 visits to schools and engaged in direct exchange with over 1 100 students in a bid to strengthen communication with them as well as to promote anti-crime messages. In the same year, about 60 community education programmes were held through inter-departmental collaboration in various police districts, with a view to augmenting crime prevention awareness of the youth. Through the enhancement of various types of Junior Police Call (JPC) activities, the Police continue to formulate and offer diversified training in physical fitness, discipline and team building for young people, as a means to boost their confidence and develop their leadership skills, self-discipline, sense of responsibility and the spirit of serving the community.

The Elderly

5. In view of the growing elderly population, the Police consider it necessary to take the initiative to strengthen communication with the elderly with a view to heightening their crime prevention awareness, so that their risks of falling victim to crimes can be reduced. Launched by the Police in early 2014, the Senior Police Call (SPC) Scheme provides an effective platform for enhancing the communication between the Police and the elderly, through which anti-crime partnership is formed to propagate crime prevention messages and raise the awareness of road safety among the elderly. Currently, the SPC Scheme is implemented in 20 police districts with more than 2 300 participants. On top of large-scale anti-deception seminars at Headquarters level, different police districts, in collaboration with the DFCCs, Area Committees, etc, organise events and seminars to promote anti-crime awareness. For instance, officers of the Sham Shui Po Police District, representatives of the DFCC and elderly anti-deception ambassadors are making concerted efforts in the dissemination of anti-crime messages, whereas the elderly in the Tuen Mun Police District Senior Police Call staged anti-deception drama shows to remind the elderly of the importance of household security.

Liaison with the NEC Communities

6. The Police Force attaches great importance in assisting the integration of the NEC communities into society. Various kinds of activities for NEC communities have been organised by a number of police districts. At present, NEC are engaged as Police Community Liaison Assistants in 14 police districts, as an effort of the Police to strengthen their liaison with the NEC communities and promote police services/fight crime initiatives to them. Currently, there are more than 1 900 NEC JPC members. The Police will further encourage

NEC youth to participate in the JPC, with a view to increasing the number of NEC JPC members to 2 500 in five years.

Multi-agency co-operation

7. The Crime Prevention Bureau of the Police Force and Regional Crime Prevention Offices provide security advice to relevant government departments, property management companies and security guards for the purpose of preventing and reducing the chances exploited by the criminals for committing crimes. The Police also maintain close liaison with community organisations and the banking sector in an effort to promote measures against “quick cash” crimes. For instance, upon discovering that an elderly suddenly takes out a large amount of money, and if there are reasons to suspect that the elderly is being cheated, the bank staff will inform the District Response Team for follow-up and investigation to prevent the elderly from being deceived. Vigorous publicity and education efforts against telephone deception are also made by the Police, which include holding anti-deception seminars and disseminating anti-deception messages via TV and radio broadcasting, telecommunications media, etc to raise public awareness and vigilance of crime prevention. Furthermore, the Police adopt a multi-agency co-operation approach to strengthen their liaison with other monitoring bodies, community organisations, academic bodies, financial services sector, private institutions, law enforcement agencies on the Mainland, etc as a means to formulate more effective anti-deception strategies.

Social media

8. On another front, the Police are taking a more active role in examining the use of social media in order to further expand their existing public communication channels. As the first stage of such an effort, a mobile application called “Hong Kong Police Mobile Application” was rolled out on 18 July 2012 for public access to latest information of the Police, including crime prevention information, anytime and anywhere. In the second stage, a “Hong Kong Police Youtube Channel” was launched on 26 March 2013 to facilitate public understanding of the Force and police duties. The Police will continue to actively make use of the web-based and social media platforms, as well as different community channels, to encourage the public to make greater use of police information, so as to enhance communication between the Police and the public.

The former “Household Policing” Plan

9. To tie in with the Police’s strategic direction on “Engaging the Community”, the Tin Shui Wai Division, with funds granted by the Yuen Long District Fight Crime Committee (YL DFCC), launched the local “Household Policing” Plan for 11 public housing estates in the Division between 3 June and 8 September 2010, during which police officers, together with the YL DFCC members, mutual aid committee members and volunteers of public housing estates, paid visits to tenants from a total of 10 015 households in 91 public housing estate blocks for direct dialogue with the public. A close partnership had also been formed with various government departments and relevant organisations as a joint effort to fight crime. At its meeting on 9 November 2010, the Policing Activities Promotion Group under the YL DFCC reported that the plan had ended on 8 September 2010. The Yuen Long Police District subsequently incorporated the experience and insights gained from the plan into the daily policing work of divisional officers and, through different modes of co-operation, such as co-operation with other departments and cross-sector collaboration, continued to provide assistance to and maintain communication with the public, so as to establish a positive interactive relationship and engage the community in a concerted effort to combat crimes.

Conclusion

10. Engaging the community is one of the strategic directions of the Police, which is not only supported by the public but also of paramount importance to maintain Hong Kong as one of the safest cities in the world. Under the guidance of the strategic directions, the Police will continue to solicit support from different strata and groups of the society, as well as implement relevant schemes in various districts, having regard to the community feature and population distribution.

**Security Bureau
Hong Kong Police Force
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