

For discussion on
6 May 2008

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON SECURITY

PRISON DEVELOPMENT

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the progress in prison development.

Background

2. At the Panel meeting on 3 April 2007, we briefed Members, vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 1449/06-07 (05), on the occupancy situation in penal institutions and the progress made by the Correctional Services Department (CSD) in its prison development programme to address the problems of outdated facilities and overcrowding in some of the penal institutions. This paper provides an update of the development since April 2007.

Problems

Overcrowding at Some Institutions

3. Overcrowding at the aggregate level improved slightly as compared with last year. As at 21 April 2008, the total penal population was 10 475. With the total number of penal places in all 23 penal institutions currently standing at 10 924, the overall occupancy rate was 96%.

4. Notwithstanding the slight improvement at the aggregate level, there is still a significant shortfall in the number of penal places at maximum security prisons, remand facilities and female institutions. In the case of male institutions, the occupancy rate in remand facilities and maximum security prisons was 106%, representing a shortfall of 213 places¹. Similar to situation in male institutions, overcrowding was more serious in female remand facilities and maximum security prisons, where the occupancy rate was 162%, representing a shortfall of 230 places.

¹ As some remand institutions are also maximum security facilities and vice versa, we are presenting the combined shortfall of these two types of institutions to avoid double counting.

5. Looking ahead, according to CSD's latest projection conducted earlier this year, the penal population is expected to increase to 11 960 by 2010 and to 12 970 by 2015. Taking into account the current certified accommodation of 10 924, the availability of 240 places after the re-opening of Lai King Training Centre (LKTC), the 144 additional places to be provided by Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre (LCKRC) extension project, and the additional places to be provided by redevelopment project of Lo Wu Correctional Institution (LWCI) (1400 places), at the aggregate level there will still be a projected shortfall of 262 places in 2015.

Outdated Penal Facilities

6. Besides overcrowding in some penal institutions, we have to address the problem of outdated facilities – amongst the 23 existing penal institutions, eight of them were converted from buildings previously used for other purposes; and ten of them will be over 40 years old by the year 2010 and the number will increase to 15 by the year 2015. While CSD has so far been able to provide the necessary services to inmates, there is a need to improve some of these older facilities, so as to meet the changing demands in prison management and offender rehabilitation.

Progress in Prison Development

7. In order to relieve the overcrowding in some penal institutions and to upgrade the outdated facilities, CSD has taken steps to launch a series of smaller-scale projects that can be achieved relatively quickly to meet the immediate demand, and continues to explore other options for further development to meet rising demand in the long run. Details of on-going projects and those under active consideration by the Administration are set out below –

(a) Expansion of LCKRC

An extension block is being added to the LCKRC to relieve overcrowding of remand facilities for adult males. Due for completion in May 2008, the extension block will provide 144 additional penal places.

(b) Swapping of the functions of the Lai King Training Centre (LKTC) and the Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution (TGCI)

To alleviate overcrowding in female institutions, and grasp the

opportunity to refurbish the outdated penal facilities, LKTC is being converted into a penal facility for young female offenders to relieve overcrowding at TGCI. Due for completion in May 2008, the conversion project at LKTC will provide 80 additional penal places for female young offenders². Subsequent to the transfer of young female offenders to the newly converted LKTC, works will commence later this year to convert TGCI into a male institution. In the meantime, all young male offenders sentenced to a Training Centre are accommodated at the Cape Collinson Correctional Institution (CCCI).

(c) Redevelopment of LWCI

The redevelopment project of LWCI commenced in April 2007. The project is currently on schedule and the new institutions are expected to commence operation in early 2010. Comprising two medium security and one minimum security institutions, the redeveloped LWCI will provide a total of 1 400 female penal places (or 1 218 additional places as compared with the old LWCI), which will provide substantial relief to the overcrowding situation in female institutions.

Apart from providing more penal places, this redevelopment project has also provided an opportunity for CSD to improve its rehabilitation work. As a purpose-built penal facility, the redeveloped LWCI will be equipped with various rehabilitative facilities, including a multi-media educational centre, vocational training workshops, a parent-inmate centre, recreational facilities, multi-purpose rooms and counselling rooms. With such facilities, the Department could provide better rehabilitative services such as vocational training classes, educational courses and interest classes for inmates.

(d) Redevelopment of the Institutions in Chi Ma Wan

As reported to Members on 3 April 2007, we have identified the existing Chi Ma Wan prison area as our next major redevelopment project after the completion of LWCI. According to the feasibility study conducted by the Architectural Services Department, the proposal of redeveloping Chi Ma Wan prison area into a facility providing around 1 000 penal places is technically

² After the conversion project, LKTC will provide 240 places for young female offenders, which is 80 places more than that currently provided by TGCI.

feasible. At present, an Archaeological Impact Assessment is being carried out to ascertain the archaeological potential of the Chi Ma Wan prison area. Subject to the outcome of the Assessment, we plan to consult the public on the redevelopment proposal in the fourth quarter of 2008. We will revert to the Security Panel with the results of the public consultation and details of the works project before seeking funding approval from the Finance Committee.

(e) Other minor improvement works

CSD has been carrying out upgrading works at existing penal institutions in order to maintain or improve the provision of quality custodial and rehabilitative services, and to achieve higher operational efficiency in prison management by making use of advanced technology.

(i) Improvement to Rehabilitative Services

At the CCCI, CSD has recently added a library-cum-computer room and installed new multi-media equipment in its group counselling room. Works to provide additional counselling and multi-function rooms at the Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre are due to complete by 2008.

(ii) Use of Advanced Technology

An Integrated Security System was installed in LKTC earlier this year, and similar systems will be installed in Shek Pik Prison and TGCI within the next 12 months. A CCTV system was installed in Tai Lam Correctional Institution in early 2008 and the upgrading of the existing CCTV system in Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre and Pik Uk Correctional Institution will commence by end 2008.

(iii) Others

Various minor improvement works projects, such as the upgrading of electricity supply systems, and improvements to ventilation system and workshop facilities, will be carried out in various institutions in the coming year.

Way Forward

8. CSD will continue to explore and implement other measures, and study further options to upgrade the current penal facilities and to address the problems of outdated facilities and overcrowding in some penal institutions, with a view to maintaining our standards in prison management, security and rehabilitation work. We will keep Members informed of the progress.

Security Bureau
May 2008