

LCQ1: Police's work on fostering police-community relations

Following is a question by the Hon Kwong Chun-yu and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (February 26):

Question:

The results of an opinion poll, conducted in November last year on members of the public's satisfaction with the disciplinary forces, have shown that 40 per cent of the respondents gave zero mark when asked to give scores to the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF). On the other hand, it has been reported that in January this year, a large outdoor billboard located next to the Hong Kong Island entrance of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel displayed an advertisement of the Police which invited members of the public to join the Police Force. It is learnt that the relevant advertising costs amounted to as high as several hundred thousand dollars per month. Regarding the advertisements placed by HKPF, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the total expenditure of the aforesaid advertisement, together with a breakdown, including the rent of the advertising station, advertisement design fee, works costs, and (if an advertising agency was engaged) the name of the advertising agency and the fees charged by it;

(2) of the criteria adopted by HKPF for engaging advertising agencies;

(3) of the estimated and actual expenditures spent on publicity and promotion activities by the Police Public Relations Branch in each of the past two financial years; among such expenditures, the amount of those involving advertising, and set out, by name of publicity programme, the theme of the advertisement, the expenditure involved and the name of the advertising agencies engaged (if any); and

(4) whether HKPF has formulated a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of its advertisements; if so, whether HKPF has evaluated if the relevant publicity work in the past 12 months could effectively improve the image of the department?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) attaches great importance to police-community relations and has been adopting a proactive and extensive public relations strategy to strengthen the communication with the media and the general public, so that the public may better understand and support the Police's work.

With regard to the various parts of the question raised by Hon Kwong

Chun-yu, our reply is as follows:

(1) The Police have been adopting a proactive recruitment strategy to attract high calibre candidates who possess the required competencies to serve, including encouraging members of the public to join the Police through multiple advertising channels (e.g. Police webpage, posters, etc.). In respect of the outdoor billboard on the Police's recruitment located at the entrance of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel mentioned in the Member's question, upon the Police's checking of the relevant records, the relevant expenditure was about \$0.45 million. The advertising agency being engaged was the sole supplier in the market that provided advertising service at the tunnels.

(2) The procurement policy of the government is, through clear, open, fair and competitive procedures, to obtain qualifying and competitive tenders from which the most advantageous proposal is selected. As stipulated in the Stores and Procurement Regulations (SPR), government procurement exceeding \$1.4 million (for goods and general services), \$3 million (for consultancy services) and \$7 million (for services for construction and engineering works) in value is normally done by the use of open and competitive tendering procedures so as to obtain the best value for money. Limited tendering (i.e. single or restricted tendering) are, in line with the Agreement on Government Procurement of the World Trade Organization, only permissible under specified exceptional circumstances, for example, on grounds of extreme urgency or security, for protection of patents, copyrights or other exclusive rights or for reasons such as requirements of interchangeability or interoperability with the existing equipment, software, services or installations procured under the initial procurement. Where the nature of the contract (such as a contract that is time critical or one that requires particularly high levels of skills and proven reliability) dictates that tenders have to be invited from qualified suppliers/contractors, selective tendering or prequalified tendering may be used.

The Police will, based on actual needs, engage outsourced advertising agencies in accordance with the government's established procedures and the SPR. According to the SPR, departments will generally adopt the marking scheme approach for the procurement of services contracts (such as advertising services), and award contracts having considered both the technical and fee aspects.

(3) Overall speaking, the main expenditures of the Police Public Relations Branch (PPRB) include the expenses for implementing the Junior Police Call (JPC) and Senior Police Call, operating the JPC Permanent Activity Centre at Pat Heung, developing the social media platforms, coordinating TV and films production, daily administration and other miscellaneous items, etc.

The estimated expenditure and actual expenditure of the PPRB in the 2018-19 financial year were \$56.50 million and \$54.80 million respectively; the estimated expenditure and actual expenditure (as at December 31, 2019) in the 2019-20 financial year were \$69.60 million and \$41.20 million respectively. HKPF does not have the statistics on the detailed breakdown of expenditure items with regard to advertisements.

(4) The Police conduct the Police Service Satisfaction Survey and the Public Opinion Survey roughly every three years to gauge public satisfaction with police service, assess public perception of police officer and the Police, and identify areas of improvement. The surveys are conducted by the Public Opinion Programme, the University of Hong Kong to ensure impartiality, independence and credibility of the surveys. The last surveys were conducted in 2018, where 84 per cent of respondents were either "Very Satisfied" or "Quite Satisfied" with the overall service performance of the Police, and 79 per cent of respondents were either "Very Confident" or "Quite Confident" of the Police, being the highest since the inception of the surveys.

The Police will continue to co-operate with different organisations through various channels as appropriate, making use of different platforms to broaden the engagement with the public, provide the public with the Police's latest information, demonstrate the Police's positive image and strengthen the public's confidence in the Police, with a view to fostering police-community relations.