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REVIEW OF THE RCMP'S CRIME REDUCTION-TYPE UNITS

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act
Subsection 45.34(1)

March 31, 2020

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1. The Commission's Mandate

The mandate of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police ("the Commission") with respect to reviewing RCMP activities and reporting its findings and recommendations is set out in Part VI of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act ("the RCMP Act").

Subsection 45.34(1) of the RCMP Act empowers the Commission to conduct a review of "specified activities" of the RCMP. Subsection 45.34(4) of the RCMP Act requires the Commission to include in its report "any findings and recommendations that it sees fit regarding the adequacy, appropriateness, sufficiency or clarity of any policy, procedure or guideline relating to the operation of the Force."¹

The Commission's mandate is remedial in nature and aims to identify possible improvements to existing RCMP policies, procedures and training in order to enhance public confidence in the RCMP.

On April 23, 2018, the Commission initiated a specified activity review of the RCMP's crime reduction-type units, pursuant to subsection 45.34(1) of the RCMP Act.

The Commission undertook to review the following points and report its findings and recommendations:

- the RCMP's accountability frameworks in relation to crime reduction units;
- whether relevant RCMP national and divisional policies and training are adequate, appropriate, sufficient and clear; and
- the measures the RCMP has in place to evaluate the efficacy of crime reduction-type enforcement units.

The Commission is not legislated to review the activities of agencies other than the RCMP. Consequently, during this review the Commission did not consider the RCMP crime reduction activities conducted jointly with other law enforcement agencies.

At the outset of its review, the Commission conducted a preliminary scan to determine which RCMP divisions operated dedicated crime reduction units. New Brunswick ("J" Division), British Columbia ("E" Division), and Alberta ("K" Division) all operate these units and as such, became the focus for this specified activity review.

¹ *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act*, RSC, 1985, c R-10, s 45.34(4).

2. The Commission's Review-Wide Findings

The RCMP's ability to share good practices across Canada

FINDING No. 1: The RCMP lacks a mechanism to share, across divisions, the good practices that have been developed for crime reduction units in some locations.

RECOMMENDATION No. 1: The RCMP should explore the benefits of its crime reduction units exchanging information regarding their good practices.

During the review, the Commission noted that many crime reduction units have developed good practices. These include practices relating to crime reduction strategies, the methodologies used to identify prolific and/or priority offenders, and the means to assess the results achieved by crime reduction units.

The RCMP should explore the benefits of its crime reduction units exchanging information, both within divisions and across the country, regarding their good practices.

The role of the Criminal Intelligence Analyst

FINDING No. 2: The use of criminal intelligence analysts and business analysts in conjunction with crime reduction units varies considerably across divisions and districts.

In some cases, the value added of the criminal intelligence analyst program and business analysts is not leveraged to the extent that it could be.

RECOMMENDATION No. 2: The RCMP should share best practices across divisions and districts about the manner in which criminal intelligence analysts and business analysts are employed in order to more effectively capitalize on a strength of the Crime Reduction Unit program.

The Commission's review determined that the role of the criminal intelligence analysts is an integral part of the RCMP's crime reduction programs and initiatives. These analysts have the skills and experience to convert raw data and information into useable intelligence. The police can then use this intelligence to guide enforcement efforts, and progress investigations and police operations.

The intelligence also enables data based decision-making and assessments of the value of crime reduction programs and initiatives. The Criminal Intelligence Analyst's role is a strength of the RCMP. Through their expertise, these analysts provide significant value added to the RCMP's crime reduction activities.

However, the Commission identified significant variations in the analyst's role across the districts and divisions reviewed. The regular sharing of best practices about how the skills of the analysts are employed would benefit the RCMP and enable it to further capitalize on a strength of the organization.

The RCMP's relationship with partner agencies

FINDING No. 3: The RCMP lacks a systematic approach on the question of effective partnering with non-police organizations to aid in crime reduction initiatives and programs.

RECOMMENDATION No. 3: The RCMP's crime reduction initiatives and programs should explore a more comprehensive approach to coordination and cooperation with external partners.

The Commission observed that many RCMP crime reduction units have developed partnerships with agencies that provide services to assist certain offenders in addressing the underlying causes of their criminal behaviour. Examples of such agencies include local health authorities, hospitals, clinics, addiction treatment centres, and church and school-based support organizations.

However, the Commission found that the RCMP's interest in and effort towards partnering with other agencies varied widely across the divisions, districts and detachments that were reviewed. In general, many RCMP members working in crime reduction units lacked awareness about the external partners in the community or district, the services provided by those partners, and the administrative mechanisms that were in place, or that could be developed, to facilitate working with external partners.

Community-based RCMP crime reduction strategies have had tangible and measurable effects on police resources, public safety, and the well-being of individuals and the community. For example, at the Mission RCMP Detachment, coordination and cooperation with partner agencies significantly lowered calls for police service.

FINDING No. 4: Although there is no national level training, the divisional-level training available to members of crime reduction units is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

Generally, regular RCMP members who work in crime reduction units perform enforcement and investigative duties. They are often expected to be proactive in developing human sources and gathering information related to crime trends and offenders. However, the analytical duties that either drive or support crime reduction units are performed by criminal intelligence analysts—who are either civilian members or public servants—not regular members.

The Commission's review revealed that the RCMP has not developed specific training for regular members employed in crime reduction units.

Members selected to work in crime reduction units within the RCMP's New Brunswick, Alberta and British Columbia divisions had experience in areas that would normally be acquired while carrying out "typical" policing duties. This includes experience in conducting general investigations, surveillance, interviewing, warrant writing, source development, and source handling.

During the review, RCMP managers indicated that training is available for members who require training in these areas.

The Commission's review found that there was no national-level specialized training for crime reduction units. Nevertheless, the Commission believes that, given the diversity of each program, training at the divisional level is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

3. Context of the Review

Definition of a crime reduction unit

As part of a trend towards evidence-based policing, the RCMP and other police agencies in Canada have created crime reduction policing units.

Generally, there are two approaches used by RCMP crime reduction units. They are person or offender-focused enforcement and place-focused crime reduction.

Person or offender-focused enforcement

Person- or offender-focused enforcement is grounded in research that indicates that a small number of individuals are responsible for committing a large amount of crime.

Therefore, police enforcement activities that centre on those individuals will result in a lower crime rate, fewer calls for police service, and an increase in public safety. These individuals are known as either “prolific offender,” “priority offender,” and/or “social chronic offender.”

Person- or offender-focused enforcement allows for the potential integration of partner agencies to provide “wrap-around” services. “Wrap-around services seek to change underlying conditions, such as homelessness, lack of education, and/or addiction.

What this means is that arresting an individual and placing conditions on their release from custody may not stop their criminal activities because the release conditions do not address the individual's addiction issues or any other realities related to their specific circumstances. These issues are best addressed through wrap-around services.

Place-focused Crime Reduction

Place-focused crime reduction focuses on geographically defined areas, such as particular blocks or residences in a neighborhood, where criminal activity is more prevalent. Police enforcement focused on these “problem” areas will result in fewer calls for police service and an increase in public safety.

The RCMP's crime reduction-type policing units use both offender- and place-focused approaches in an attempt to reduce calls for police service, alleviate police resourcing pressures, and increase public safety.

Research into the practices of crime reduction and targeted enforcement approaches to policing emphasizes that these policing practices must be properly managed and controlled by the chain of command.

In order to effectively apply crime reduction and targeted enforcement approaches, the RCMP must gather information on both the activities undertaken and the results produced by the crime reduction units. It must also possess the institutional capacity to understand the information and use it to make decisions on resourcing, personnel deployment, and accountability. These decisions take into account analytical reports, materials, and other information provided by criminal intelligence analysts.

Why did the Commission review the RCMP's crime reduction units

Ineffective or inappropriate approaches used by the RCMP's crime reduction-type units could result in significant backlash from the involved communities. For example, the operations of the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy ("TAVIS") involved a focused deployment of police resources where certain types of criminal activity were concentrated. Concerns were raised in Toronto communities about the practice of unconstitutional, random stops of people (often referred to as "carding") and other tactics used by TAVIS. Moreover, in Halifax and in the lower mainland of British Columbia, concerns were raised regarding targeted policing tactics used in those jurisdictions.

Police officers have a broad discretionary authority. Areas of policing where police officers exercise their judgment and discretionary authority most frequently are most at risk of being subject to actual bias on the part of the officer, or a public perception of bias. Crime reduction policing is one such area.

To evaluate the RCMP's broader application of its bias-free policing framework, the Commission initiated this review of crime reduction units.

From an accountability perspective, adequate and appropriate management and control systems must be applied to crime reduction-type policing activities. By doing so, individual rights are protected and crime reduction activities do not lead to damaged community-police relationships, or a loss of public confidence in policing.

4. Highlights of RCMP Crime Reduction Unit Successes

Surrey RCMP Detachment

The Surrey RCMP Detachment has several crime reduction units that are supported by a team of analysts. The analytical team supports all of the crime reduction units in the Detachment.

To make sound decisions regarding the operations of the detachment's crime reduction units, the detachment leadership and the managers of the crime reduction branch rely on both data analysis and a robust reporting process that notifies them of the results achieved by these units.

During the Commission's review, the officer responsible for Surrey's crime reduction units explained the importance of accounting for the actions of crime reduction unit members with a defensible methodology for the selection of enforcement targets.

The requirement for a defensible methodology for the selection of enforcement targets has led to a change in the work of crime reduction units. Analytics now drive their work to greater extent. Further, Surrey's crime reduction units rely on the "Weekly Tactical Report" as well as the analysis of the crime and business analysts to determine if each unit's accomplishments are in line with its previously established priorities.

The officer in charge of the detachment's crime reduction units holds weekly crime reduction meetings with criminal intelligence analysts and the unit managers.

These meetings include roundtable discussions to address priorities and determine which units will support other units for various investigations and operations. During these meetings, the criminal intelligence analysts provide an update on current (previous 24 hours) intelligence and data. Additionally, unit leaders commit to undertaking specific actions. The success or failure of actions taken are assessed at the next weekly crime reduction meeting.

In addition to weekly crime reduction meetings, the detachment uses weekly and monthly cycles for formal reporting, including a "Weekly Community Success Report." This report documents and summarizes the enforcement actions of the various units. In order to produce this report, the detachment's analytical team tracks data related to the activities and the results of the detachment's crime reduction units.

Surrey Mobile Street Enforcement Team

The Surrey Detachment's crime reduction units include a Mobile Street Enforcement Team ("MSET"). The MSET is a highly visible uniformed foot and bike patrol crime reduction-type unit. Data drives their activities. Specifically, the detachment identifies the nine most common types of calls for service in Surrey, which account for up to 80 percent of the detachment's total number of calls for service. Criminal intelligence analysts identify a Priority Target Area ("PTA") based mostly on the area where there is a concentration of these types of calls.

The analytical data considered when identifying a PTA includes data regarding areas where there are many calls for police service for nuisance-type offences. The analytical assessment, which is based on a 28-day cycle, provides RCMP managers with a sound basis for deciding where to deploy the MSET members.

The MSET relies on monthly CompStat² reports to track incidents of particular types of criminal activity and to support operational decisions. The data analysis that drives the MSET's operations is reported to the detachment's senior managers during the weekly crime reduction meeting.

Mission RCMP Detachment

Assertive Community Treatment Team

During its review, the Commission learned that the Mission RCMP Detachment's Mental Health Liaison Constable works with social chronic offenders to help stabilize their overall condition and address some of the underlying problems that lead to these individuals generating calls for police service.

The Mental Health Liaison Constable is part of the Assertive Community Treatment ("ACT") team. The ACT team is not a policing organization but rather a group of health, mental health, social support and criminal justice agencies.

The Mission RCMP detachment shares access to the ACT team's resources with the Abbotsford Detachment. The team has 97 clients, and a staff of 18 that work around the clock. Clients of the ACT team have either been apprehended by police five times under the *Mental Health Act* or spent 50 consecutive nights at a hospital.

ACT clients are subject to court supervision orders for mental health reasons and live in the community. Various agencies, including the hospital, the Fraser Health Authority, mental health workers at various social agencies, nurses, police services, and probation officers, monitor ACT clients.

² CompStat is a computerized statistical tool used by police agencies to compile information related to criminal activities and to assist them in making appropriate resource allocations.

As an ACT team member, the Mental Health Liaison Constable attends morning ACT team meetings and then deals with various issues, such as assisting clients with obtaining medication as well as dealing with warrants and court appearances.

When interviewed by the Commission investigator, the Mental Health Liaison Constable explained that having one member focus on ACT team clients and their calls allows general duty members to deal with other calls and files. Moreover, these individuals generate fewer police files after they become ACT team clients.

The constable provided the example of one individual who had previously generated 200 police files but had not generated any such files since becoming a client of the Mental Health Liaison Constable and the ACT team.

Alberta's rural crime reduction program

At the time of the Commission's review, the RCMP's rural crime reduction program was under development in Alberta. However, systems were in place to report the activities and achievements of the crime reduction units to the division's senior managers. These systems provided the officer in charge of the division's crime reduction strategy with the details necessary to make operational decisions regarding the crime reduction units and to provide information to deputy ministers and regional managers of other government agencies.

At the time of the review, the officer in charge of the division's crime reduction strategy informed the Commission that the division had established a partnership with academia to learn how to create appropriate performance metrics for the division's crime reduction program. In the Commission's opinion, given the difficulties associated with measuring the impact of crime reduction policing, the RCMP would benefit from the routine establishment of partnerships of this nature.

Codiac Regional RCMP

The Commission reviewed the reporting materials from the Codiac Regional Crime Reduction Unit. The Commission found that while the reporting on unit activities was robust, there were no explicit attempts to relate the activities of the crime reduction unit to changes in the crime rate or incidents of crime.

Nevertheless, when the activity reports from the crime reduction unit and the information on crime rates and incidents of crime were read together the Codiac chain of command was able to infer the link between the unit's activities and the changes to the crime rate and incidents of crime.

With the addition of formal analysis to explain the relationship between unit operations and changes in crime rates and incidents of crime the Codiac Detachment reporting could be a good practice standard and be considered for adoption by other crime reduction units.

5. Review of the RCMP's Crime Reduction Units in New Brunswick ("J" Division)

"J" Division provides provincial policing as well as policing services to many municipalities. It is organized into three rural districts and the predominately urban Codiac region. Each district operates a full-time crime reduction unit. Each crime reduction unit within the division works with a Criminal Intelligence Analyst, who provides intelligence and other information based on their analysis of the data that is available to them.

The RCMP's New Brunswick Divisional Policy regarding Crime Reduction Units

FINDING No. 5: The "J" Division policy regarding crime reduction type units is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

The divisional *Operational Manual* contains a chapter entitled "Crime Reduction Strategy," which was last amended on September 12, 2012.

The "J" Division policy provides direction with respect to the division's approach to crime reduction and speaks to the concepts of prolific offenders, priority offenders, hot spots, and the underlying causes of crime.

The policy focuses on prolific offenders, priority offenders, the monitoring of court-imposed conditions, street checks, intelligence sharing, and youth diversion.

The policy sets out, in very broad terms, the appropriate circumstances that warrant application of crime reduction approaches. In addition, the policy focuses on the different roles and responsibilities within each district, as well as the reporting and flow of information as they pertain to crime reduction units within the division.

The policy that defines the RCMP's crime reduction strategy is set out in chapter 16, sections 1.1., 1.2., and 1.3., of the divisional *Operational Manual*.

These policy sections describe intelligence gathering, analysis, directed enforcement tactics, and youth initiatives and accountability as being key elements of the crime reduction strategy.

The policy reads as follows:

1.1. Crime reduction is a consultative, research-based approach to reducing crime by directing police actions toward high-volume offenders, known crime hot spots and the underlying causes of crime.

It places a high priority on the demographics of crime, introducing initiatives to combat crime, reducing victimization and enhancing public safety. Intelligence gathering, analysis, directed enforcement and tactics, youth initiatives, together with accountability for those actions, are key for crime reduction.

1.2. The Crime Reduction Policy provides directives on how to reduce crime and victimization by implementing pro active policing initiatives. These include focusing on Prolific and Priority Offenders, monitoring of Court Imposed Conditions, Street Checks, Intelligence sharing and Youth Diversion and Intervention.

1.3. Prolific and priority offenders are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime in a given geographic area. Many variables influence an offender's level of activity (employment, lodging, mental health, drug addiction, incarceration, etc.). These offenders usually commit crime to support certain lifestyles. Crime Reduction Strategies put emphasis on these types of offenders.

The definitions of prolific and priority offenders are adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

Furthermore, members of the division's crime reduction units who were interviewed as part of the Commission's review indicated that they understood the definitions of prolific offender and priority offender, and that they made operational decisions accordingly.

Sections 2.4. and 2.5. in chapter 16.101 of “J” Division's *Operational Manual* define prolific offenders and priority offenders in the following terms:

2. 4. Prolific Offender is a repeat offender who is involved in a disproportional number of crimes and exhibits a persistent criminal behaviour. The individual's current number of police contacts and historic criminal involvement is evaluated and, through an analysis, is determined a prolific offender in a specific geographical area.

2. 5. Priority Offender is an individual who is currently criminally active, has a persistent criminal behaviour and has been able to evade police detection.

A priority offender is an individual who has not been identified as a prolific offender but based on police intelligence and other data, merits focused enforcement by police. Priority offenders may be organized and have a good understanding of the legal system and are able to minimize the risk of getting apprehended by having others take the risk for them.

The J Division policies include a protocol for dealing with prolific offenders. These sections also set out the need for the Division Crime Analysis Section (“DCAS”) to develop and apply research methodologies to identify prolific offenders.

Further, the policies describe the types of police techniques that should be used during investigations and clearly stipulate that a file must be created for each prolific offender in the Police Reporting and Occurrence System (“PROS”).

The policy also makes clear that the DCAS is responsible for developing the research methods required for the identification of prolific offenders.

The policy reads as follows:

3. General

3. 1. Prolific Offender (PO) – Protocol

3. 1. 1. To ensure that the most active offenders are targeted, a list of prolific offenders is created and updated on a regular basis in each district. The Division Crime Analysis Section (DCAS) is responsible for developing the research methods required for the identification of prolific offenders and disseminating the findings.

3.1.2. Once prolific offenders have been identified, they become subject to a number of initiatives which involve the police, prosecutors, justice and probation/parole officers. Members will initiate such police techniques as surveillance, curfew checks and street checks, as well as strictly enforce any judicial or court imposed conditions for release.

3.1.3. Prolific offenders identified by any districts are to be dealt with in the same manner regardless of where they are arrested.

3.1.4. A PROS file for each prolific offender will be created in accordance with PROS case management policy.

Section 3.1.2. guides members with respect to the initiatives and police techniques that are used when dealing with prolific offenders.

The Commission concludes that section 3. of the policy is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

The following sections of the divisional policy set out the requirement to have briefings and reporting on crime reduction activities:

6.1. A Crime Reduction briefing will be held in the district based on operational requirement to review the status of crime reduction as it relates to operations in the district. The briefing will provide an opportunity to review the actions and tasks assigned during the previous briefings and to plan for further action or task.

6.2. The briefings will be held regularly and in a consistent manner.

6.3. All Members on duty will participate, including the District Commander, OPS NCO/Crime Reduction Coordinator and Team Leaders.

Sections 6.1. and 6.2. stipulate that district crime reduction briefings will occur when there is an operational requirement to review the status of crime reduction as it relates to operations in the district. During interviews, members stated that the timing cycle of these meetings varies depending on the district and operational needs.

The Commission concludes that sections 6.1., 6.2. and 6.3. are adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

MEASURES IN PLACE TO EVALUATE THE EFFICACY OF THE RCMP'S CRIME REDUCTION UNITS IN NEW BRUNSWICK

FINDING No. 6: The means in place to measure the efficacy of "J" Division's crime reduction-type enforcement units are adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

In J division, the crime reduction unit reporting did not include an analysis that specifically linked the operations of crime reduction units with changes in the crime rate or incidents of crime. However, establishing a reliable link between crime reduction policing activities and the rate of crime can be difficult³.

The Commission's review revealed that, throughout this division, the crime reduction unit reporting mechanisms were well understood by RCMP managers and provided sufficient information to allow for informed operational decisions. Moreover, members throughout the chain of command were able to infer a link between CRU operations and the extent of criminal activity.

The Commission examined whether "J" Division has the necessary mechanisms to report crime reduction unit results to the command structure. The Commission also examined whether "J" Division understands the relationship between the operations of crime reduction units and changes to public safety.

An adequate reporting mechanism should provide RCMP managers with the crime-related statistics, intelligence, and other relevant data required to make informed decisions regarding the operations of crime reduction units. Relevant data may include:

- changes in the level of criminal activity;
- the number of prolific offenders taken into custody;
- the number of arrests;
- the number of criminal and provincial charges;
- the number of contraband seizures;
- recovered stolen property;
- the number of offenders taken into custody for violating parole or release conditions;
- police response times;
- the number of calls for police service; and
- information from stakeholders regarding the impacts of enforcement activities in any specific geographical area.

³ Establishing *causality* between a policing operation and a change in crime rate is all but impossible due to the number of intervening and confounding variables inherent in the analysis. Establishing the statistical *relationship* between a policing operation and a change in crime rate is possible but challenging.

J" Division has adequate means in place to measure the efficacy of its crime reduction-type enforcement units.

*THE RCMP'S ACCOUNTABILITY
FRAMEWORK - CRIME REDUCTION UNITS
IN NEW BRUNSWICK*

FINDING No. 7: The accountability framework for "J" Division's crime reduction units is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

Based on its review of the available information, the Commission concludes that the accountability framework with respect to the RCMP's crime reduction units in New Brunswick is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

"J" Division's records management systems and document retention practices facilitated this external review.

The crime reduction units have a reporting line directly from the Crime Reduction Unit Sergeant to the District Operations Officer, as appropriate. The direct reporting line from the unit sergeant to the District Operations Officer is a sufficient and adequate reporting structure for the purposes of passing on information about the crime reduction unit's activities to the chain of command.

All district detachment and unit commanders attend operational briefings on a regular (generally monthly) basis. During these meetings, crime reduction unit sergeants are tasked with "commitments" to undertake actions that address specific trends in crime and concerns raised by municipal officials.

During these meetings, information regarding the operations of the crime reduction units as well as crime trends and statistics within the district is provided. The information shared during these meetings allows RCMP managers to review accomplishments of the crime reduction units and set reasonable goals.

Through its examination of relevant briefing materials, analytical/intelligence reports, and summary occurrence reports, the Commission established that each crime reduction unit had adequate mechanisms to convey information to their respective district operations officers.

As the provider of provincial policing services in New Brunswick, the RCMP is accountable for the provision of these services to the provincial authority. The RCMP publishes an annual report on its policing activities in New Brunswick, which includes information about the activities of its crime reduction units. In addition, "J" Division regularly posts statistical information regarding its policing activities on its website.

Furthermore, pursuant to the Codiac Regional Police Service Agreement, the Codiac Regional RCMP and the Codiac Regional Policing Authority are accountable to the local municipalities for crime reduction unit policing. To this end, the RCMP and the Codiac Regional Policing Authority hold regular public meetings and publish reports outlining the Codiac RCMP's Annual Performance Plan ("APP")⁴ and crime-related data.

⁴ The Annual Performance Plan (APP) sets priorities and goals for outward facing service provided to the community and for inward facing programming and governance. Annual Performance Plans typically include specific measures of progress and success. These measures can help RCMP leadership at all levels to track progress on goals and priorities.

6. Review of the RCMP's Crime Reduction Units in Alberta ("K" Division)

The four rural crime reduction units are part of "K" Division's overall crime reduction strategy. This strategy focuses on enforcement as well as on reducing the underlying causes of criminal activity. The division's overall crime reduction strategy also includes some collaboration with the provincial agencies responsible for health, housing, addictions and human services both at the working and senior levels, including the provincial deputy minister level.

Under the Alberta rural crime reduction model, the police act as a participant in the interagency approach, but do not necessarily fill a leadership role. This helps situate the enforcement aspect of the crime reduction strategy within a much broader approach that seeks to address the root causes of crime.

The Commission's review of "K" Division's crime reduction units took place in September 2018. At that time, the Alberta rural crime reduction program was still being implemented and some aspects of the program were under development.

ADEQUACY, APPROPRIATENESS, SUFFICIENCY, AND CLARITY OF THE RCMP'S DIVISIONAL POLICIES IN ALBERTA REGARDING CRIME REDUCTION UNITS

FINDING No. 8: At the time of review, "K" Division policies regarding crime reduction units were under development.

At the time of the review, the RCMP's relevant divisional policies were being developed.

MEASURES IN PLACE TO EVALUATE THE EFFICACY OF THE RCMP'S CRIME REDUCTION-TYPE UNITS IN ALBERTA

FINDING No. 9: Although the crime reduction strategy in "K" Division was under development at the time of review, the means that were in place to measure the efficacy of its crime reduction units were adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

The Commission's review revealed that the intelligence products created for the crime reduction units in "K" Division were focused on the identification of prolific offenders.

At the time of review, the reporting materials provided sufficient information for RCMP managers in Alberta to measure the efficacy of crime reduction units and make informed decisions regarding the operations of these units.

"K" Division's Supervising Analyst and officer in charge of the crime reduction strategy indicated that the crime reduction unit reporting system was still at the development stage.

As stated earlier in this report, during the Commission's review, the officer in charge of the division's crime reduction strategy informed the Commission investigator that "K" Division had established a partnership with academia to learn how to create appropriate performance metrics for the division's crime reduction program.

Although the reporting system was still under development, the reporting conducted by analysts in "K" Division consisted of the creation and dissemination of usable intelligence products. These products were designed for crime reduction unit members, the district operations officers, the District Command and the officer in charge of the division's crime reduction strategy.

The reporting also included statistics on the numbers of arrests, criminal charges and contraband seizures generated by the members of crime reduction units. Each of the four rural crime reduction units had a dedicated full-time Criminal Intelligence Analyst supporting the unit.

THE RCMP'S ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK WITH RESPECT TO CRIME REDUCTION UNITS IN ALBERTA

FINDING No. 10: At the time of review, the accountability framework with respect to crime reduction units in "K" Division was adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

At the time of the Commission's review, the crime reduction unit accountability framework in "K" Division, including relevant reporting structures and policies, was being developed.

Even though the model was still evolving at the time of the Commission's review, the reporting lines established in the division with respect to crime reduction units as well as the flow of information regarding the results achieved by these units contributed to a sound accountability framework.

In the Commission's opinion, the reporting in "K" Division is robust; individual suspects and criminals are identified as prolific offenders. Furthermore, although the model was under development at the time of the review, there were mechanisms in place to identify offenders and to make informed decisions with respect to the operations of crime reduction units.

While the accountability framework with respect to crime reduction units was at the development stage, the Commission concludes that it was adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

The officer in charge of “K” Division’s crime reduction strategy is required to maintain situational awareness of the operations of the division’s crime reduction units in order to provide appropriate support. The officer meets with the crime reduction unit sergeants on a weekly basis and reports directly to the division’s Criminal Operations Officer. There is ongoing informal communication between the two officers, as well as formal weekly briefings.

In addition, the officer in charge of the division’s crime reduction strategy liaises with the heads, deputy ministers and regional managers of other government agencies to find ways of collaborating to reduce crime, with the aim of having much of the non-enforcement work of crime reduction carried out by agencies other than the police. The officer in charge provides biweekly reports about crime reduction activities to provincial officials. This reporting includes in-person briefings and formal written reports.

The Commission examined a number of these formal reports and found them to be detailed and comprehensive. In addition, the Commission analyzed relevant briefing materials, intelligence products and summary occurrence reports and determined that the volume and quality of the information provided to senior managers was sufficient to permit decision-making with respect to crime reduction units.

7. Review of the RCMP's Crime Reduction Units in British Columbia ("E" Division)

ADEQUACY, APPROPRIATENESS, SUFFICIENCY, AND CLARITY OF THE RCMP'S DIVISIONAL POLICIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA REGARDING CRIME REDUCTION UNITS

FINDING No. 11: "E" Division policies relating to crime reduction units are adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

"E" Division policies are consistent with good crime reduction practices, in that they require the RCMP to measure and assess the efficacy of crime reduction strategies within a reasonable amount of time after implementation.

"E" Division policy addresses the importance of crime reduction strategies that respond to the circumstances of each community. The policy considers the underlying causes of crime and balances police enforcement with prevention efforts. In the Commission's opinion, these policy sections are adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

"E" Division's policies on prolific offenders and crime reduction initiatives address other areas of focus, such as monitoring court-imposed conditions on offenders and intelligence sharing. The relevant policy sections provide guidelines for applying this enforcement focus.

The policy sections also set out appropriate circumstances for using crime reduction approaches. Furthermore, the divisional policies provide direction with respect to the different roles, the reporting, and the flow of information as it relates to the operations of crime reduction units.

The Commission concludes that "E" Division's policies regarding crime reduction units are adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

"E" Division has policies in its *Operational Manual* that relate directly to activities undertaken by crime reduction-type units: chapter 16.101 "Prolific Offenders" and chapter 16.100 "Crime Reduction Initiative." Collectively, the policies identify the following areas of focus within the strategy: prolific offenders, priority offenders, the monitoring of court-imposed conditions, street checks, intelligence sharing, and youth diversion.

The policies set out the appropriate circumstances for the application of crime reduction approaches. Moreover, they identify the responsibilities for the different roles within each district and speak to the reporting and the flow of information about crime reduction units.

Chapter 16.101 "Prolific Offenders" defines a prolific offender in the following terms:

1. Definitions

1.1. Prolific Offender (PO) - an adult or youth offender with an established pattern of persistent Criminal Code and/or Controlled Drugs and Substances Act offences; who is identified by current intelligence to be criminally active; and assessed by police and partner agencies as medium to high risk to re-offend.

The definition of a prolific offender is readily apparent in this policy. This definition is also appropriate, sufficient, and clear. The Commission's review revealed that members of "E" Division who took part in crime reduction activities understood the definition of a prolific offender and made decisions regarding investigations and operations accordingly.

The policy also sets out the process for the selection of a prolific offender:

3. PO Selection Criteria

3.1. The selection process may include the use of police and corrections information database systems and other tools that allow the identification of the highest crime-causing offenders.

3.1.1. All available police information systems (e.g., PRIME, PROS, CPIC, NCDB, INFOPOL, etc.) should be utilized to gather intelligence during the PO selection process.

3.2. Select a PO based on the following criteria:

3.2.1. The individual's history and frequency of offending.

3.2.2. The individual's history of noncompliance with conditions of court orders, or offending while under conviction (e.g., on probation, parole or bail.)

3.2.3. The seriousness of the crimes that the individual is committing and the impact on public safety and the community.

3.2.4. Current intelligence indicates that the individual is currently active or has been criminally active in the past year.

3.2.5. The individual is considered medium or high risk of re-offending, based on risk assessments from CSC, BC Corrections, or other agencies where available.

3.2.6. The individual is responsible for multiple calls for police service and service from other agencies in the health and social service sectors.

3.3. POs must be identified in a manner which is:

3.3.1. consistent and based on a methodology which is easily explained, replicated and understood by a variety of internal and external partners (e.g., police officers, the courts, media, offenders, etc.); and

3.3.2. transparent, fair and good faith process of categorizing offenders.

3.4. Partner Agencies should have input.

Chapter 16.100 “Crime Reduction Initiative” makes it clear that in “E” Division, crime reduction initiatives should be grounded in evidence-based policing, crime trends, crime data and research findings; the assessment of effectiveness by measuring the impact of the initiatives on crime; and partnerships with non-policing agencies.

The policy regarding the principles of crime reduction initiatives is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear:

2.2. The Crime Reduction Initiative is built on three key principles:

2.2.1. Evidence-based policing, which requires enforcement strategies to be assessed for effectiveness through crime data, crime trends and research findings;

2.2.2. Results oriented accountability, in which the effectiveness of policing approaches are measured by the impact on crime and form the basis of progress discussions with Partner Agencies; and

2.2.3. Partnerships with Partner Agencies, which recognize that good police practices and effective criminal justice are key components of community safety and that enforcement and prevention are equally important contributors in reducing crime.

The policy sets out the type of crime that a crime reduction initiative should focus on:

2.6. The Crime Reduction Initiative incorporates measures to allow detachments/units to assess and refine detachment/unit strategies over the year and report these outcomes in their APP.

2.7. Each detachment will tailor their APP to address the crime types, crime hot spots and crime causation in their respective community.

2.7.1. The focus must be on crime hot spots and high crime areas.

2.7.2. Police resources, both enforcement and prevention efforts, should focus on areas that have been identified as problem locations.

2.7.3. The primary crime type may not be property offences and may be other identified crime types, such as drug cultivation, drug trafficking or domestic violence.

MEASURES IN PLACE TO EVALUATE THE EFFICACY OF THE RCMP'S CRIME REDUCTION-TYPE UNITS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

FINDING No. 12: The means of evaluating the efficacy of crime reduction-type units in "E" Division are adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

The crime reduction-type units located within the nine detachments reviewed by the Commission rely on the CompStat reporting process, which enables decision-makers to make informed decisions about the operations of crime reduction-type enforcement units.

Furthermore, the CompStat process provides decision-makers with sufficient data to establish operational goals and measure results.

The Commission's review revealed that the reporting materials from the nine RCMP detachments in "E" Division do not explicitly indicate the relationship between the operations of crime reduction-type enforcement units and changes in the crime rate or incidents of crime. Nevertheless, much of the reporting that exists is based on data or an analysis of data that could allow senior members to make sound decisions about the operations of crime reduction units.

Moreover, in the Commission's opinion, the data and reports that are prepared by analysts allow for a reasonable evaluation of the efficacy of crime reduction unit enforcement activities.

Based on its review of the available information, the Commission concludes that the RCMP has adequate means of evaluating the efficacy of its crime reduction-type enforcement units in British Columbia.

CompStat uses statistical data on crime rates and incidents of crime, broken down by crime type. Analysts flag emerging crime trends and crime series according to information based on the data collected over the previous years.

This information is presented to crime reduction unit members as well as detachment managers during regularly scheduled meetings. These meetings are held more frequently at larger detachments. The information presented during these meetings allows RCMP managers to make informed decisions regarding resource allocation.

Managers are also able to establish enforcement goals and assign tasks to crime reduction units, as well as follow up on previously assigned tasks. CompStat reporting allows RCMP managers to understand how crime trends and crime series have changed over time. The CompStat reporting highlights the impact of resource allocation and the results achieved by the crime reduction units.

The Commission's review revealed that the "smaller" detachments selected for this review in "E" Division (Houston, Smithers, Terrace and Prince Rupert) have no formal nexus of analysis, information sharing, decision-making, and commitment to action. In addition, the CompStat cycle of meetings is less frequent and the managers at these detachments rely more heavily on direct communication with crime reduction members.

In the Commission's opinion, this direct communication is an adequate mechanism to convey information about the results achieved by crime reduction units, as the operational decision-makers are required to be conversant with far less information than at larger detachments.

The Commission noted that members at these smaller detachments record their crime reduction activities in the Annual Performance Plan and document specific actions (arrests, tickets, mental health apprehensions, etc.) by creating files on the PRIME records management system.

*THE RCMP'S ACCOUNTABILITY
FRAMEWORK IN PLACE WITH RESPECT TO
CRIME REDUCTION UNITS IN BRITISH
COLUMBIA*

FINDING No. 13: The accountability framework with respect to crime reduction units in "E" Division is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

Based on its review of the available information, the Commission concludes that the accountability framework with respect to the RCMP's crime reduction units in British Columbia is adequate, appropriate, sufficient, and clear.

"E" Division's records management systems and document retention practices facilitated this external review.

In the Commission's opinion, the "E" Division relevant divisional policies about crime reduction contribute significantly to the accountability framework of the crime reduction units. As outlined below, other factors that contribute to the framework include appropriate lines of responsibilities within the internal chain of command, informed decision-making, measuring achievements against predetermined goals, and the requirement to report on crime reduction unit activities to different levels of government and the public.

During interviews with the Commission investigator, the supervisors of "E" Division's crime reduction units indicated that they informed their respective in-line supervisors of their unit's activities by phone calls and emails on an ongoing basis. They also stated that there is a cycle of recurring meetings during which the Detachment Commander and/or other senior officers are informed of crime reduction unit activities and operations.

During the review, the Commission determined that in each of the nine selected detachments in British Columbia, senior officers relied on reporting mechanisms to make operational decisions regarding the activities of crime reduction units. The reporting was more frequent at larger detachments, where it sometimes occurred on a daily basis, but it generally took place on a weekly, bi-weekly and monthly basis.

Moreover, during crime reduction unit meetings and briefings at larger detachments, analysts presented reports and briefings that were more complex than those presented at smaller detachments.

The Commission determined that the reports, data, and operational decisions were properly documented.

The CompStat program is used by the RCMP throughout British Columbia. Generally, during CompStat meetings, RCMP managers are provided with reporting produced by the criminal intelligence analysts. Managers are then able to make operational decisions that are informed by data and intelligence. The frequency of CompStat meetings/cycles varies from one detachment to another. During these meetings, tasks are assigned to members of crime reduction units and follow-ups are conducted on previously assigned tasks. Members are accountable for their actions through the chain of command.

The Commission's review revealed that, at the smaller detachments, the cycle of formal meetings and reporting was less critical for the reporting of information to the chain of command. Information about crime reduction enforcement activities was conveyed to senior managers on a more informal basis.

The APP is used in "E" Division, at the detachment and district levels. The detachment APP is a subset of the district-level plan and it puts into place the focus and goals of the district as they relate to the specific detachment. The detachment APP is updated on an ongoing basis, as goals and initiatives are completed, and formally updated once a quarter.

The detachments and districts also participate in district management meetings on a regular basis. According to the APP framework, detachment managers are responsible for setting goals and accountable for the results.

An important part of the accountability framework for crime reduction units across the various RCMP Detachments is the elected community leadership. The RCMP is contracted to police Canadian communities. Community leaders are responsible to citizens for how public monies are spent and what effect those expenditures achieve.

During interviews with the Commission investigator, detachment commanders and other RCMP managers spoke about the reality of appearing before the mayor and city council regularly and accounting for the work of the detachment, including the work performed by members of crime reduction units. This direct accountability to the community being policed is an important component of the RCMP's overall accountability framework.

8. RCMP National Policy

FINDING No. 14: At the time of the review, the RCMP did not have a national policy relating to the operations of crime reduction units.

RECOMMENDATION No. 4: The RCMP should develop a national policy regarding the operations of its crime reduction units.

The Commission's review revealed that at the time of the review, the RCMP did not have a national policy relating to the operations of crime reduction units.

The Commission acknowledges that the RCMP's divisional policies must address the community needs and circumstances that are specific to each division. However, the RCMP's divisional policies are meant to supplement its national policies. Therefore, it is the Commission's opinion that it would be beneficial to create a national policy relating to the operations of RCMP crime reduction units.

The national policy should be based on good practices and include direction that results in the use of consistent and appropriate methodologies to identify prolific and priority offenders.

Moreover, it should provide direction on the means to evaluate the efficacy of crime reduction units through the use of databased analysis and other established methods.

"E" Division's policies would serve as a model for creating the RCMP's national crime reduction unit policy.

Subsequent to the CRCC's review, the RCMP implemented a national Crime Reduction Policy. Please see the RCMP Commissioner's Response on the CRCC website for more information.

The Commission respectfully submits this report pursuant to subsection 45.34(1) of the RCMP Act.

Micheline Lahaie

Chairperson