

“From Integration to Organization”

A Renewed Model for Policing
In British Columbia

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Introduction

Police organizations in British Columbia are committed to providing high quality policing to the various communities in which they serve. An important aspect of modern day policing is partnerships. In our province, policing partnerships are commonly referred to as 'integration'. This paper is intended to outline the pros and cons to our current integration model and make suggestions for the future of policing in British Columbia.

This paper proposes that the Province undertake two specific initiatives:

1. Create a single, unified policing organization that encompasses all provincial integrated units under one agency. This unit may be referred to as the British Columbia Specialized Policing Agency.
2. Develop an overall provincial policing model that supports and promotes both the activities of local police agencies and integrated units by coordinating all efforts.

Integrated Policing

Integration is the process by which numerous police agencies come together for a specified policing purpose. For example, the Integrated Border Enforcement Team brings officers together from surrounding police detachments and departments to police border-related crime. Integration is often pursued as an option when the nature of the crime is costly, time consuming and complex to investigate. There is a belief that integration will allow the best resources to come together in coordinated fashion to investigate crime that has an impact all across the Province, not just in one community. Currently most of the integrated units in BC are based out of the lower mainland, primarily with partnership by lower mainland agencies. Some of the current integrated units include:

CFSEU	- Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit
IGTF	- Integrated Gang Task Force
IRSU	- Integrated Road Safety Unit
ICE	- Integrated Child Exploitation Unit
ISPOT	- Integrated Sexual Predator Operational Team
INSET	- Integrated National Security Enforcement Team
IHIT	- Integrated Homicide Investigation Team
IBET	- Integrated Border Enforcement Team
2010 Olympics	- Planning and preparedness for the 2010 Olympics
IMPACT	- Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team
SFTT	- South Fraser Tactical Team
NWEST	- National Weapons Enforcement Support Team
	Integrated Missing Persons Unit
	Waterfront Joint Forces Operation

- consideration is also being given to the integration of local and area K-9 units, emergency response teams, forensic identification sections and marijuana grow-op enforcement.

Local Policing

The RCMP and Municipal Police Departments continue to conduct all local policing initiatives. Local policing combines a mix of models including community-based policing to intelligence-led policing. Community-based policing has a rich history dating back to Sir Robert Peel's Nine Principles:

1. The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.
2. The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependant upon public approval of police actions.
3. Police must secure the willing co-operation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.
4. The degree of co-operation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force.
5. Police seek and preserve public favour not by catering to public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law.
6. Police use physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient.
7. Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.
8. Police should always direct their action strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary.
9. The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.

Community-based policing varies across and around the province of BC. In some areas community-based policing is simplistic and basic. In other communities it is rooted in organizational philosophy. Service delivery models vary dramatically and are not consistent from one local police agency to the next. As a result of the service offered by the local police, citizen expectations may differ from one community to another.

Community-based policing, in its most holistic form, is a partnership of community and police. The community participates in local policing in many ways such as: through volunteering, being encouraged to report crime and contribute to "problem-solving initiatives", acting in an advisory or governance capacity, etc. Furthermore, the police see the community as a partner, treat them with respect, and develop relationships and work collaboratively to deal with crime and related problems. The police do not hold a monopoly on policing, community input and participation is critical. Community-based initiatives are to be done "with" the community, rather than "to" the community. This is the essence of community-based policing.

Intelligence-led policing is a more modern approach which police agencies are beginning to employ. Intelligence-led policing is complex and combines intelligence information, computer-based systems, crime analysis and investigational techniques to map out, predict and combat criminals and crime patterns. Highly evolved police organizations are amalgamating community-based and intelligence-led philosophies in their response to crime.

In considering the rapid growth of integration activities around our province, it is crucial to be mindful of the positive impact of community-based policing. A case study of the cities of New York and Edmonton is relevant. Both cities were experiencing dramatic increases in crime, and clearance rates were declining. To deal with the problem both police departments developed a community-based policing model. The models were aimed at putting more police officers on the street and making police highly visible. The intent was to provide safety and security for the law-abiding citizen and prevent and react to criminals and their activity. The four basic tenets of community-based policing, of which they followed, are:

- Problem solving (eliminating rather than suppressing the problem)
- Community ownership
- Partnerships
- Intelligence-led/Accountability-Driven policing

The results of this change in policing philosophy resulted in dramatically decreased crime rates. These departments reported much higher clearance rates and community satisfaction increased.

Most citizens are primarily concerned about crime in and near their home communities. Literature on the topic of community policing suggests that most communities are more worried about minor theft and community disorder than they are about bank robberies and gang activity.

The Current Challenge

A crucial aspect of our ability to partner for provincial policing issues is the necessity to provide high quality policing in our local communities. Quality policing, of any form, rests on four pillars: *public trust, public confidence, professionalism and public safety*. If we allow any of these pillars to erode we compromise our ability to provide quality policing to the communities we serve.

While we have much to be proud of in British Columbia, we are experiencing challenges in balancing our local and integrated police responses. Given the number of integrated units now in existence, a number of organizational challenges exist for both integrated agencies as well as the local agencies.

Integrated units require experienced, well trained, top level police officers to work in these specialized policing environments. Often times these police officers are pulled from their front-line, local policing duties and seconded to integrated units. This can be problematic for the local police organization. Front-line police resources may become compromised and officer and public safety concerns may develop. Additionally, communities report concerns at developing and training police officers who ultimately end up in integrated units, working elsewhere. In some cases police agencies have withdrawn community services due to a lack of local police resources. This lack of resources has, to some extent, been caused by the need to respond to integrated policing demands.

Additionally problematic is the reality that integrated units compete for resources and are known to disagree over which unit is more vital than the other. Police executives and government are challenged to determine a distribution of resources, police priorities, etc.

Some Police Chiefs are criticized for adopting a less than contemporary response to integration. It is suggested that some Chiefs are critical of integration because of a desire to protect their jobs. Realistically, most Police Chiefs (and Police Boards, Mayors and Municipal Councils) are highly protective of their local responsibilities, first and foremost. The primary commitment must be to public safety...specifically within their respective communities. Organizations are only able to commit to integrated units once they are assured that it is in the best interest of their community.

When considering integration opportunities, communities in and around the lower mainland must consider the unique challenges that they face locally. They must ask if the integration opportunity is valuable, considering local needs. Each community has its own cultural and crime-related priorities. Perhaps the local police feel it is crucial to participate in one integration opportunity, but inappropriate/unnecessary to participate in another.

In a recent survey conducted in Delta, members of the community indicated that they were satisfied with their police in Delta (97% satisfaction) and they felt safe in their community. These same people did not believe that other communities in the surrounding area were safe. Despite not feeling that surrounding communities were safe, the community listed their top priorities for policing as local traffic enforcement and police visibility.

This is not to suggest that the community fully understands the ramifications of major crime, patterns of criminal activity, the impact that provincial crime has on local areas, etc. Clearly the community is not fully versed on the larger picture that the Province must consider. Having said that, we must attend to the needs and wants of the average citizen. We must not allow ourselves to become entirely caught up in the tide of the day. Doing so may result in a pendulum shift that swings dramatically away from the highly effective community-based policing models throughout our province.

It is clear that the communities want to see more of their police. They do not see the majority of officers who work in integrated units and, in most cases, are not even aware of the work that is being done. It is important that we find the right balance to serve the needs of both the community and the integrated units.

Some of the other important considerations that we must look at relate to the challenges of working within our current model. Currently, while there is intelligence-related communication between agencies, there is not the degree of coordination that is necessary. Not only are the integrated units not working together effectively, but neither are the local and integrated units. It would appear they are all working in silos, contradictory to a model of "integrated and collaborative policing".

Additionally, each integrated agency functions under the direction of a Joint Management Team (JMT). While JMT's have a purpose, there are too many of them and the personnel required to sit on each JMT is cumbersome for local agencies. Integrated units are also seen to be competing for resources where they should be working together in a coordinated fashion. Integrated units are known to experience cost overruns, perhaps more so than larger police organizations that are more accountable, have governance models, etc. Generally speaking, there is inconsistency in the management, investigational techniques and technology used by each of the many integrated units.

It is also important that we consider police officer job satisfaction. Many officers would like the opportunity to work in specialized areas. These assignments are important for their development, for retention and to provide challenging work. A "career streaming" process would allow police officers to decide their career path, whether that be community based, specialized or a combination of both. It is possible that, in many cases, the specialized officers would likely remain in their "stream" for the rest of their careers.

The Answer

It is of paramount importance that we develop a policing model that satisfies all of our policing needs, both local and provincial. Communities need to feel supported and provincial policing issues need appropriate attention. In the future we need to establish a comprehensive and collaborative approach to both local and provincial policing initiatives. Furthermore, we must give better structure to our young and evolving integration model.

Recommendations to the Province:

1. Create a single, unified policing organization that encompasses all provincial integrated units under one agency. This unit may be referred to as the British Columbia Specialized Policing Agency.
 - a. Develop a working committee.
 - b. Commit funding to research and a feasibility analysis of future models.
 - c. Conduct an analysis to determine the effectiveness of the current integrated units.
 - d. Research best practices, intelligence-led policing models, initially - lower mainland scope, etc.
 - e. Consider a Management structure including a Chief, Deputy Chief, and Management Team.
 - f. Implement a Police Board or governance structure designed to replace the multiple integrated JMT's currently in existence.
 - g. Consult BCACP, RCMP, Vancouver Police Association, BC Federation of Police Officers and other stakeholders throughout process.
 - h. Develop a timeline for implementation.

2. Develop an overall provincial policing model that supports and promotes both the activities of local police agencies and integrated units by coordinating all efforts.
 - a. Consider a "career streaming" aspect to the provincial model that meets the needs of police officers and our communities.

- b. Local policing demands and priorities must be considered when determining resources for integrated units.
- c. In concert with the Federal, Provincial and local governments, develop a funding model that will offset the costs for new service delivery.
- d. Develop a recruiting/marketing program designed to entice and promote policing in BC as a career.
- e. Develop a process by which communities can outline their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the established policing models and make recommendations for improvements.

Conclusion

We have a rich history of highly professional policing of which we can be proud of in British Columbia. Our most recent experiences tell us there is a need to enhance the existing integrated policing units working throughout our Province. Yet, enhancements to integration must not come at a cost to the local services and community-based policing efforts. This is an opportunity for us to pull together and develop a consistent, coordinated policing model for the citizens of British Columbia. Most importantly we are in a position to develop a model that will instill trust, confidence and provide a professional policing service that will ultimately make our communities safer.

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