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Government of Yukon and RCMP advisory committee to be established

WHITEHORSE – Justice Minister Marian C. Horne and Peter Clark, the A/Commanding Officer, "M" Division, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, announced today that they will be establishing an advisory committee, co-chaired by the RCMP's Commanding Officer of "M" Division and Yukon's Deputy Minister of Justice, to review Yukon's police force.

The committee will have the following priorities:

- Consider measures and make recommendations to better ensure Yukon's police force is responsive and accountable to the needs of Yukon citizens;
- Review how public complaints relating to the RCMP in Yukon are currently dealt with and to make recommendations on any required improvements;
- Determine the skills that Yukon officers require in order to provide policing services in Yukon communities and make recommendations to enhance training, including the potential for Yukon-based training;
- Review the services provided by the RCMP to citizens who are in vulnerable positions, including victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as individuals who are arrested and detained in custody;
- Identify and build upon successes and best practices in the delivery of policing services to Yukon; and
- Review and make recommendations on how best to implement in Yukon the existing RCMP policy on external investigations and reviews.

"I am pleased the RCMP will be working in partnership with the Yukon government on a policing review process in Yukon," Horne said. "At a national level, the RCMP have been instilling a new culture of leadership and accountability and a review at this time within the territory is appropriate."

"I pledge our cooperation to this process and look forward to working with the Government of Yukon," Clark said. "I believe that examining the unique challenges of policing in Yukon will provide us all with a deeper understanding and enhanced ability to meet the service expectations of Yukoners."

The advisory committee will comprise representatives from First Nations, municipalities, women's groups, RCMP, Women's Directorate and Community Services, Health and Social Services, and Justice departments.

The co-chairs, through community and targeted consultations, will be asked to provide a written report submitted to Yukon's Minister of Justice no later than September 15.

See backgrounder attached.

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BACKGROUND

Review of Yukon's Police Force Terms of Reference April 19, 2010

Background

Yukon's police force of choice is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (the RCMP). Yukon Government works with the RCMP to ensure local accountability and values are addressed through identified policing priorities.

In order to be effective, all police services must establish and maintain the confidence of those who they police. Public confidence is established in the day to day relationships that police officers develop with citizens as they perform their duties. In order to maintain public confidence, Yukoners must have the assurance their public safety priorities are met.

Policing in the Yukon presents unique challenges to front-line police officers and police management. Yukon's geography, First Nations cultural heritage and its small population create unique policing challenges that are not evident in other parts of Canada. Officers have increased autonomy and profile in isolated, northern communities and they are called upon to provide a wide range of services that require a variety of skills and attributes. By virtue of the authority of their position, officers hold a unique position in their community that requires integration into community life.

From time to time circumstances arise that may compromise the public's confidence in the police. In these circumstances citizens need a process to make their concerns known, and a mechanism that responds while promoting accountability.

It is a priority for Government of Yukon that the significant power and authority vested in police officers is administered in an ethical and fair manner in the provision of service to the public. The RCMP is committed to providing policing services that maintain the ethical standards embodied in their core values and are consistent with the Code of Conduct contained in the RCMP Act.

The Government of Yukon and the RCMP are committed to working in partnership to ensure that Yukoners' expectations of their police service continue to be met.

Terms of Reference

The Minister of Justice and the Commanding Officer, "M" Division, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, agree to conduct a review of policing in Yukon.

- Consider measures and make recommendations to better ensure that Yukon's police force is responsive and accountable to the needs of Yukon citizens;
- Review how public complaints relating to the RCMP in Yukon are currently dealt with and to make recommendations on any required improvements;

- Determine the skills that Yukon officers require in order to provide policing services in Yukon communities and make recommendations to enhance training, including the potential for Yukon-based training;
- Review the services provided by the RCMP to citizens who are in vulnerable positions, including victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as individuals who are arrested and detained in custody;
- Identify and build upon successes and best practices in the delivery of policing services to Yukon; and,
- Review and make recommendations on how best to implement in Yukon the existing RCMP policy on External Investigations and Reviews.

Process and Timelines

An Advisory Committee, co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Justice and the Commanding Officer, "M" Division, RCMP, will be established to support the Review of Yukon's Police Force.

It is proposed that the Advisory Committee be made up of one representative from the following:

- First Nations
- Women's Directorate
- Department of Justice
- Department of Health & Social Services
- Community Services
- RCMP
- Municipalities
- Women's groups

In partnership with the Advisory Committee, the Co-chairs shall undertake a targeted consultation with Yukoners. The Co-Chairs shall submit a written report with recommendations to the Minister no later than September 15, 2010.