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Item No. 7.2
Board of Police Commissioners
March 8, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Police Commissioners

- Original Signed -

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Chief Dan Kinsella, Halifax Regional Police

DATE: March 8, 2021

SUBJECT: **Background Information on Policing Surveys in HRM**

ORIGINS

At its meeting of January 18, 2021, Board of Police Commissioners put and passed the following motion:

That the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners defer item 7.3 to the March 8, 2021 meeting pending receipt of a supplemental report detailing the background of the Community Survey, specifically the Survey's original goals and a list of items that Halifax Regional Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police require direction from the Board of Police Commissioners.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Police Act, 2004, c. 55, section (3), states:

- (3) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), a board shall...
- (c) ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing priorities, objectives, goals, programs and strategies;
 - (d) ensure that police services are delivered in a manner consistent with community values, needs and expectations;
 - (e) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers;

Section 8 (2) (h), (i), (j) and (k) of By-law P-100, which provides:

8 (2) The Board in accordance with the *Police Act* and HRM Bylaws may carry out any of the following roles and responsibilities: ...

- (h) carry out any studies or investigations respecting its civilian governance responsibilities;
- (i) monitor gender, ethnic and minority group issues and making recommendations concerning these matters to the Chief of Police;
- (j) ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing goals and methods;
- (k) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Police Commissioners request that a proposal for an HRM Policing Community Survey be developed based on discussions at the March 8, 2021 Board of Police Commissioners meeting and that Halifax Regional Police return to a future Board of Police Commissioners meeting with a proposal.

BACKGROUND

In his report on Halifax Police Street Checks issued in March 2019, Dr. Scot Wortley highlighted the importance of receiving community feedback through regular community surveys. Police-specific surveys have been implemented and discussed in different forms for a number of years prior to that in HRM. Recently, following the appointment of new commissioners, the Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC) requested an information note on the history of police surveys in HRM, details of the more recent discussions related to the next survey to ensure BoPC members have a shared understanding of these discussions up until now in order to provide appropriate direction to staff on next steps.

DISCUSSION

Until 2012, HRP annually collected a small number of measures related to public satisfaction with the police by placing questions within a local omnibus survey (The Urban Report through Corporate Research Associates, now called Narrative Research). This survey was discontinued in 2012.

Alongside this survey, measures of public attitudes toward police and crime were also captured from time to time through the overall HRM Citizen Survey. The last two of these were 2014 and 2018.

In April 2015, the Board of Police Commissioners passed a motion directing HRP to provide a staff report on the involvement of the Board in the development of a Citizen Satisfaction Survey. The development of this report was delayed due to capacity gaps at the time to move ahead.

In fall 2016, after HRP hired a Research Coordinator, it prepared a staff report on the development of a citizen survey. This was considered at the February 27, 2017 meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners, where HRP was directed to establish a quarterly survey based on a plan set out in that report. The first part of this plan was to work with other national partners to align HRP's survey indicators with other surveys elsewhere in the country.

As a result of this motion, HRP representatives worked with the CACP's POLIS committee, Public Safety Canada, and several other police services to develop a common data standard for surveys of public attitudes toward police in Canada. The data standard was endorsed by CACP in 2018 and the main report on this common data standard was released in 2019.

In a November 2019 CBC story that reported on the above survey prototype, some community members expressed concerns about HRP's adoption of this survey model, citing a lack of community feedback in the creation of the survey questions. At the time, the BoPC initiated a discussion with staff on taking into account this community feedback and bring forward a new proposal.

HRP and RCMP, along with then BoPC Chair Natalie Borden, engaged Narrative Research at the time in the development of a new proposal that would be more responsive to community concerns. Representatives from Narrative Research provided presentations to BoPC to incorporate additional feedback. Overall, the BoPC members expressed support for the model that was proposed at the time, although the number and scale of community engagement sessions was yet to be finalized. HRP and RCMP also noted that a discussion would be required to ensure we had an appropriate amount of allocated budget before the proposal was finalized.

In 2020, while still in the process of developing the proposal, it was learned that HRP's standing offer with Narrative Research had expired, necessitating a new RFP process. In September 2020 the process concluded and MQO Research was selected for the standing offer to conduct policing surveys in HRM.

Goals of Community Survey Exercise:

In designing the RFP and in choosing MQO Research, the following principles and goals were emphasized as per the most recent discussions with the BoPC at the time (the following is excerpted directly from the RFP document):

HRM police services seek a standing offer for a suite of services, which cumulatively will allow HRP and Halifax District RCMP to establish an ongoing program of measurement of quality of policing services, citizen satisfaction and public confidence in policing in Halifax in a cost-effective manner. The desired services are as follows:

- **Public engagement sessions:** *Before launching the initial survey, the provider should conduct public engagement with Halifax residents to support survey design and receive input on a preliminary set of themes and/or questions for measurement. These could involve a combination of in-person sessions or other methods (e.g. online) to allow community input into identifying the appropriate balance of questions and areas of focus for the initial survey. The session design and questions will need to clearly link to the quantitative portion of the survey.*
- **Initial survey design and delivery (Core quantitative survey):** *The provider should propose an approach to design and delivery of a population-representative survey of Halifax residents. Design should involve development of indicators that emerge from the findings from the public engagement sessions, as well as inclusion of validated survey indicators from similar surveys locally or in other Canadian jurisdictions. The provider may propose any combination of telephone (landline, cell phone and/or smartphone-based), paper, online, and/or other survey strategies, so long as these are appropriate to creating a population-representative sample.*
- **Proposal of options for surveying diverse communities:** *The provider should propose one or more options for ensuring the views of diverse communities (for example African Nova Scotian, newcomer, LGBTQ2S+, youth, etc.) are included in the surveying and measurement strategy, especially where the views of these communities may not be adequately captured by a population-representative survey. These could involve targeted oversampling, additional in-person (location-based) surveys, open online surveys, respondent-driven (e.g. 'snowball' sample) surveys, or other strategies as appropriate.*
- **Ongoing surveying/measurement strategies:** *The provider should propose one or more options to (a) identify the most important ('key') indicators from the population-representative survey and the surveys of diverse communities, and (b) engage in ongoing measurement of trust and confidence after the initial survey has been designed and delivered.*
- **Reporting:** *The provider should indicate how they would report on each of the above-listed components including expectations for standard reporting and expected processes whereby police services may request additional reporting and data analysis based on the collected data (outside of standard reporting).*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

The cost of the project is dependent on the overall design of the survey and the number of community engagement sessions. Due to the lack of certainty of the timeline for the community survey, there is no specific allocation in the 2021/22 budget for a police survey.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required for the purposes of creating this background report.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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