

Minister's Office  
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

April 29, 2019

Brad Cathers  
Yukon Party Caucus Critic for Justice  
Yukon Legislative Assembly  
PO Box 2703  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

Dear Mr. Cathers,

**RE: Policing Priorities**

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Further to your motion on April 24, 2019 for the production of records, please find enclosed a copy of the letter I wrote to Chief Superintendent Scott Sheppard dated March 5, 2019, regarding Yukon's Policing Priorities 2019-2020.

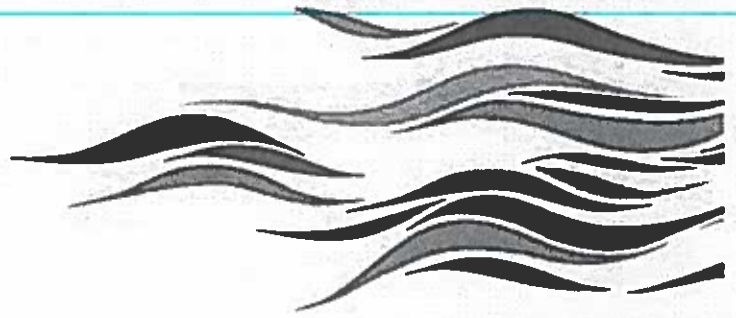
I would have been pleased to provide this information to you sooner, had you contacted me. I will of course table this correspondence in the Legislative Assembly at my earliest opportunity.

I trust this meets your request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy-Anne McPhee".

Tracy-Anne McPhee  
Minister of Justice



**Justice**  
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

March 5, 2019

Chief Superintendent Scott Sheppard  
Commanding Officer  
RCMP "M" Division  
4100 – 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Y1A 1H5

Dear Chief Superintendent Sheppard,

**RE: YUKON'S POLICING PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2020**

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I am pleased to communicate Yukon's Policing Priorities for 2019-2020.

The Policing Priorities, goals and objectives set the stage for our government's strategic vision in regards to the territorial police service. This strategic vision is derived from Yukon's unique history and culture, the evolving nature of crime trends in the territory, and the specific requirements of policing in our jurisdiction.

Flowing from the Yukon Police Council's recommendation, the Policing Priorities this year are presented in a new and unique manner encompassing a holistic way of policing philosophy that includes context, intent, and values which guide the implementation of the priorities.

In terms of this year's policing priorities, the value-driven concept encompasses, in the Council's words, a "way of being" as an overarching principle to guide the conduct of police members and to provide a foundation for effective policing across the territory. There are certain values and behaviours that foster and support positive and effective community policing such as honesty, integrity, professionalism, compassion, respect and accountability. I believe that these core values, consistent with those of the RCMP, pave the way for effective policing, which, even in times of crisis and emergency, is done with empathy and respect.

The Council's recommendations, along with analysis of emerging policing and community safety issues by the Department of Justice, inform the priorities set by the Minister of Justice.

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This year with the work of Justice Communications, Yukon Bureau of Statistics and Engage Yukon, we sought public feedback through a survey launched through social media outlets. The survey was a success and we ended up with 674 completed surveys, which reached all across Yukon. In addition, the Police Council continued to engage citizens where they live by travelling to Old Crow and Dawson City as well as by facilitating a strategic engagement session hosted in Whitehorse.

Yet another unique element featured in this year's policing priorities is that this year, we asked participants to not simply identify priorities but to score their importance. This allowed us the opportunity to understand not only the priority itself but to recognize the complexity of commitment and demand fueling each chosen priority.

In terms of prevention, investigation and enforcement activities related to violence against women, it is crucial that continued training is provided to police members in order to ensure compassionate, diligent and thorough investigations of sexual assault and domestic violence. The support and engagement from the RCMP for the Sexual Assault Response Team is instrumental as a means to improve victim experiences, increase prosecution, and reduce the prevalence of sexual assault. This focus, along with the approach of police investigators towards missing person's cases, is an area where we believe improvement of policies and practice are vital. In this manner, I support a stronger emphasis on such training in the RCMP strategic training plan.

In light of violent incidents and illicit drug activity and seizures over the past year, continued efforts are needed by the RCMP and partners to ensure an effective response to crime and emerging public safety issues. The Yukon government is supportive of collaborative efforts to achieve stronger results in this area. These may include more integrated approaches with the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods unit (SCAN) as well as initiatives supported under the new federal Gun and Gang Violence Action Fund. Working in partnership with multi-agency groups and collaborative initiatives helps to expand Yukon's collective resources and aids in information sharing across agencies. These relationships, continued target setting and coordination of intelligence, particularly for any threats across provincial and territorial borders, will be of increased importance in working toward public safety and crime reduction.

Yukon citizens desire an assurance of safety, particularly with the rise of homicides in the territory. As such, there is an increased need to investigate historical homicides and unsolved cases of missing and murdered indigenous women. The full staffing of the Historical Case Unit is welcome and their focused investigations will aid in meeting this objective.

The RCMP's work with children and youth at risk remains a critical priority. The means of which meaningful engagement is sought is paramount to building trust with our young citizens. Working and engaging with youth in a manner that creates trust and respect will help reduce barriers and open the lines of communication.

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Efforts that support reconciliation and renewing relationships between the RCMP and First Nations continues to be a priority. The way in which we engage with our First Nations needs to be based on recognition, respect, co-operation, partnership and support of their right to self-determination. A true partnership and relationship needs to be based on equality and must reflect the overarching principles of respect, integrity and trust. Together with First Nations partners, we continue to be innovative and culturally relevant in the approach to reducing crime, creating healthy and sustainable communities, and fostering reconciliation. In this regard, the RCMP's ongoing efforts to maintain constructive and respectful relations with First Nations are paramount for effective communication, positive relations, and increased cultural awareness. The cultural orientation processes for new members and mentoring by First Nations elders are excellent examples of how the RCMP have responded to this priority as well as the work of the First Nations Policing Program members providing dedicated, enhanced, and culturally relevant services to the First Nations.

With the legalization of cannabis, enforcement to ensure measures are in place to support public safety and as it relates to alcohol and drug impaired driving continues to be a high priority. The focus on continuing to combat alcohol and drug-impaired driving is imperative to ensure public safety and diligence in keeping Yukon roads safe. Moreover, traffic safety and the enforcement of safe driving measures continue to be of great importance to many Yukoners. Although traffic enforcement is not identified as a Yukon policing priority, it is essential to continue to address emerging issues related to speeding and distracted driving, and to reduce vehicle infractions in school zones. Our government has raised fines for these offences as high as possible under our current legislation. Review of our Motor Vehicles Act will be consider all tools to help enhance road safety.

As Minister responsible for policing in Yukon, I am cognizant of the operational demands of the RCMP including financial pressures, vacancies, and the regular exposure to violence, disorder, emergencies, and situations of family and personal trauma. I believe the RCMP's ongoing efforts to provide support for members is critical. In order for the RCMP to strive for excellence it is imperative that each and every member is taking steps to ensure their own health and well-being are looked after. This reflects the idea that healthy, resilient and supported police members make for an effective police service. The RCMP are able to access health and wellness programs through the Mental Health and Wellness strategy, which focuses on early awareness and interventions, mental health issues, healthy respectful workplace training, early prevention, and reducing psychological risks.

In terms of implementation of the policing priorities, I would encourage your public information efforts to speak to these priorities as a guiding principle and "way of being" in taking on these priorities along with the yearly public reporting.

There are five strategic priorities identified below along with accompanying objectives. These priorities are meant to be understood as a "way of being" or policing philosophy meant to guide and strengthen policing in 2019-2020. Yukon's Policing Priorities are as follows:

**Priority 1 - Create the foundation for effective policing in Yukon**



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Yukon government and the Yukon Police Council continue to support reconciliation and the value of relationships to create the base foundation for effective policing. The reconciliatory value supports building bridges and growing relationships between RCMP and Yukon citizens and are believed to provide for behaviours that are more meaningful. This priority is quintessential as it lays the foundation for the other four priorities. It is meant to be an overarching principle to guide and direct all core policing functions. The concept is that the base foundation is made up of characteristics and values that harness empathy, respect, professionalism and trust in order to lead to healthy and positive relationships. Part of this encompasses translating the essential positive core values of the RCMP into every day interactions, but also includes member self-care and support in order to support healthy members who can sustain a positive approach to their work.

The primary objectives include the following.

- RCMP members are visible and approachable to the public.
- Information on the positive work of the police service as well as current issues enriches the public's understanding of policing in Yukon, and fosters public trust in the RCMP.
- Collaboration with partner agencies and First Nations results in meaningful engagement focused on the needs of all Yukoners.
- A trauma-informed focus supports unbiased, respectful and culturally sensitive/aware policing responses.
- The RCMP continue to train members to ensure a compassionate, respectful and appropriate response to all situations, with specific focus on sexualized assault, domestic violence and sexual exploitation.
- Efforts are made to recruit police officers who are a good fit for each community.
- As police are exposed to some of the most challenging and traumatic events through the course of their work, support and focus on self-care and mental health is essential for all members of the RCMP.

#### **Priority 2 - Enhance prevention, investigation and enforcement activities related to violence against women**

Violence against women continues to be a crucial issue and it is imperative that sexual assault, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation investigations are diligent, thorough and in alignment with current best practices. There is a need to increase strength and partnerships and address all violence related to race, religion, sexuality and gender.

The primary objectives include the following.

- The investigative response to all cases of sexualized assault and violence is empathetic, compassionate and carried out to a high standard.

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- The Specialized Response Unit will continue to support, provide advice and lead investigations where appropriate while working collaboratively with other agencies.
  - Supporting the development and effective implementation of the Sexual Assault Response Team.

### **Priority 3 - Proactively respond to serious and organized crime**

Yukon has seen an unprecedented number of homicides in the territory in recent years and there is a high likelihood of a growth in organized crime related to the illicit drug market. There is an increase of serious violence connected with criminal groups, including assaults related to drug debts and seeking control of the illicit drug market. These trends necessitate an effective, integrated and specialized response.

The primary objectives include the following.

- Respond to emerging crime trends through proactive and intelligence-led policing.
- Drug investigations and enforcement are focused on all levels of the drug trade throughout the territory.
- Continue to focus on enhancing the response to and investigations of violent crimes in the territory connected with the drug trade and criminal groups.
- The Historical Case Unit will investigate the unsolved homicides in Yukon.

### **Priority 4 - Engage with and support children and youth**

Children and youth are considered some of our most vulnerable population and it is essential for RCMP to continue to build relationships and trust with children and youth in order to address ongoing issues and to reduce barriers to communication.

The primary objectives are as follows.

- Build trusting relationships with children and youth in collaboration with other service providers.
- Enhance community policing presence, engagement and programming within the education system.
- Work collaboratively with partners to recognize and work with at-risk youth who may be vulnerable to the influence of the drug trade and other serious crime.

### **Priority 5 – Foster meaningful relationships within First Nations and throughout the communities**

Continuing to develop and nurture mutual relationships with First Nations and communities throughout the territory is paramount to successful policing in Yukon. Relationships forged create trust

in policing, and the most meaningful are accomplished when members find ways to immerse themselves and participate in the community. It is important to continue to strengthen these relationships through understanding, respect and community policing and working on community-led policing priorities such as leadership involvement in the hiring of detachment commanders, engagement in community events, and overall involvement with the people who call our communities home.

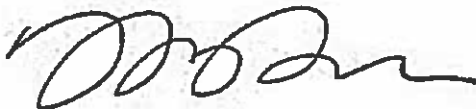
The primary objectives are as follows.

- Lines of communication between the First Nations, communities and the Yukon RCMP continue to be strengthened.
- Constructive dialogue and relationship building remains a priority of all detachments.
- Local orientation of new police officers is consistently carried out in close coordination with First Nations, community leaders and other stakeholders.
- Creation of Community Tripartite Agreements and Letter of Expectations for First Nations Communities.

The new shift from action-based priorities to value-driven priorities as seen in this year's Yukon Police Council letter creates a unique opportunity for us to strive for further excellence in creating trust and building relationships across the Yukon.

Thank you for your dedication and service to our Yukon community as our police service, enforcing the law and supporting community safety. I look forward to our continued work together.

Yours truly,



Tracy-Anne McPhee  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General