The Department of Public Safety is currently undertaking a review of policing in New Brunswick to ensure adequate and sustainable police remain in place to respond to the needs of New Brunswickers and to enhance public safety across the province. A critical part of that review is to engage community stakeholders, who represent the majority users and funders of policing services.

We are holding sessions with community members in each Regional Service Commission. All communities are to be invited to the discussion to share views and provide us with important input. I am hoping that we would be able to leverage your email contact list to facilitate the distribution of information (in addition to the meeting, there will be a discussion document that will provide background and questions for discussion).

The session will be 2 hours and we are hoping to complete the review between May 21 and June 13, 2019. If there is a date and time that works best for all community members, please let me know.

Thank you for your assistance with this initiative. It is important to us that the communities that receive and pay for policing services are part of the discussions as this review progresses. Please see below for information regarding the police review.

Regards,

Emilie Hanlon

**Background Information**

The Department of Public Safety is responsible for promoting efficient and effective policing.

Municipal police forces are in place in Edmundston, Grand Falls, Woodstock, Fredericton, Saint John, Miramichi and Bathurst. Two regional police forces are also in place, which include the Kennebecasis Valley Regional Police serving Quispamsis and Rothesay, and the BNPP Regional Police Force serving Beresford, Nigadoo, Petit-Rocher and Pointe-Verte.

Municipal and regional police service agreements are in place with Canada for the use of RCMP policing for nine other municipalities.

In other areas of the province, including 76 municipalities and all Local Service Districts, local policing is provided by the Provincial Police Service. New Brunswick currently contracts with Canada for the use of the RCMP as the Provincial Police Service under the Provincial Policing Services Agreement (PPSA).

There has been a trend in recent years of communities participating in amalgamations that are leading to the creation of new municipalities. One of the driving forces behind this is an effort to create a critical mass to support adequate provision of municipal services at a savings to the communities. This trend has also led to the examination of opportunities to provide some services on a regional basis.

There are indications that a number of municipalities are exploring the potential for regionalization of services or contracting services from existing regional or municipal police forces, as well as with the Provincial Police Service.

Two municipalities currently served by the Provincial Police Service have requests with the Department to allow them to contract services from an existing municipal police force. The Rural Community of Saint-André has asked for policing to be done by the municipal police service from neighbouring Grand Falls. The Grand Falls municipal police service also currently provides police services in the nearby village of Drummond. The Saint-André municipal council has been vocal about its efforts. Responses to media inquiries in December indicated that the Province would be responding to the Rural Community in the New Year.

The village of Belledune is exploring the option of having its municipality serviced by the municipal police force from the City of Bathurst. Other examinations are underway, including the potential for creating a regional police service in the Chaleur region that would provide police services in the jurisdictions of the Bathurst and BNPP police forces as well as a number of surrounding communities. Similarly, there is discussion of having municipal police services provide services in outlying areas of Edmundston and Woodstock that are currently serviced by the Provincial Police Service. It is the sense that the option of regionalization would be more cost effective and provide a similar level or service.

Currently, the RCMP serve as the Provincial Police Service, and through the terms of the Provincial Police Service Agreement between the province and Canada, are also able to draw on the expertise of members who are assigned to municipal, federal or other policing functions to deal with major situations. Those may include a municipal police force that needs to call on specialized service like a tactical unit or a major crimes investigation team.

Most local police forces in New Brunswick would be unable to cover the cost of providing highly specialized services on their own. Currently, if a municipality cannot provide a specialized service, they need to purchase that service from a police service that has the ability to deliver it. DPS’ role is to ensure the level of service. DPS sets the standard and reviews whether standards are being met.

In the past, through its role as the Provincial Police Service, the RCMP has handled specialized investigations and provided specialized services for municipalities through the PPSA. In many cases, major costs have not been passed on to municipalities because they were absorbed through the PPSA.

An erosion in the number of communities participating in the Provincial Policing Services contract would – at some point – lead to the loss of critical mass required for the provincial police force to respond to catastrophic, large scale and emergency events. A reduction in the number of communities participating in policing contracts through the PPS could further impact invoicing to service users to ensure there is no imbalance in costs.

This review will help determine whether there is an appropriate distribution of policing services. The review will also examine the level of service, the requirements for specialized services and the requirements necessary to maintain a level of expertise to adequately provide those specialized services.

**Areas of particular focus in the review, and for which community input is requested includes:**

Core policing functions

* What are the main policing challenges facing communities today?
* What role should communities play in identifying policing priorities?
* What functions should be considered core to police services?
* Are there functions that should be enhanced or introduced to police services?
* Are there functions that police are called on that could better be delivered by another service provider (be it for reasons of mandate, efficiency or cost effectiveness)? What are some examples and how could these be reassigned to another agency?
* What should the joint roles of police and community be in identifying priorities and responses?
* What should the joint roles of police and community be in fostering community safety and crime reduction?

Policing arrangements

* Considering current policing arrangements, what is working well and what could be improved?
* What benefits or detriments might exist in collaboration or integration between police services?
* What opportunities might exist for regionalized services?
* Is there duplication of serivces which could be reduced for cost savings or reallocation of budget to other priorities?

Sustainability

* What is your understanding of how policing services at the local and provincial level are funded?
* What challenges do you see in this area?