

**COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC COMPLAINTS
AGAINST THE RCMP**

NOVEMBER 2006

STRATEGIC PLAN

Message from the Chair

The Commission provides an important function in society: civilian review of the RCMP's activities so as to hold the RCMP accountable to the public. With this in mind, the Commission has recently taken many initiatives to enhance its service, one being the creation and implementation of our Strategic Plan. This plan is not only the foundation of our business, but it also communicates our priorities and objectives. It provides both us and our stakeholders with a clear view of our direction over the next three to five years.

In the ever-evolving environment of policing, the Commission must be able to adapt to change. In an effort to ensure that the Commission's work remains relevant and valuable, the Strategic Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and adjusted as necessary.

This document should serve as an on-going point of reference and provide the intended direction of the Commission as it moves into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul E. Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'K'.

Paul E. Kennedy
Chair

Catalogue NO.: PS78-2/2007E-PDF
ISBN: 978-0-662-45826-5

Introduction

Our strategic plan is the foundation for our organization's business. It serves as the fulcrum on which our operations are aligned, priorities balanced and resources leveraged to achieve long-term objectives. Our strategic plan communicates these objectives and priorities both within and outside the organization, building support and knowledge among our staff and stakeholders, focusing attention and efforts in a common direction. It builds awareness of what the CPC does and where we are going.

This document lays out our direction over the next three to five years and considers the nature of the organization and its environment. To ensure its ongoing value and relevance, the plan will be regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect our organization's evolving environment and changing needs.

The strategic plan is part of our integrated, continuous business planning and performance management process.

In any element of the business planning cycle, be it the business plan or a performance agreement for an individual staff member, we build links not only to the strategic plan but also to how the government's direction is translated into results for Canadians.

Background

The CPC performs a vital role in Canadian society. Its fundamental role is to provide civilian review of the conduct of RCMP members in carrying out their policing duties thereby holding the RCMP accountable to the public. This public accountability is not only an essential part in helping ensure that police officers exercise their considerable authority legally and appropriately but also a key element in the checks and balances required to tackle crime in Canada.

Vision: Excellence in policing through accountability.

Mission: To provide civilian review of RCMP members' conduct in performing their policing duties so as to hold the RCMP accountable to the public.

Mandate: The mandate of the CPC is set out in Part VII of the *RCMP Act* and can be summarized as follows:

- Receive complaints from the public about the conduct of RCMP members;
- Conduct reviews when complainants are not satisfied with the RCMP's handling of their complaints;
- Hold hearings and conduct investigations; and
- Report findings and make recommendations.

Please note: The term "Members" as used in this document includes all persons appointed under the *RCMP Act*, i.e. both regular and civilian members of the RCMP.

Where We Are Today

The Commission's powers which were established in 1988 have led to a federal oversight model that is primarily complaints driven. The 2005–2006 Annual Report notes that during that year the Commission responded to 979 enquiries from the public seeking information on a range of matters, including the complaints process, the RCMP, government social services and crisis hotlines. The Commission also received 738 complaints that required action by Commission staff and were sent to the RCMP for investigation. The report also notes the growing success the CPC has achieved in the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

The CPC has also been successful in addressing a number of operational challenges including significantly reducing the inventory of files and taking steps to institute a standard turnaround time for the handling of reviews. As well, the CPC has instituted more vigorous internal governance and responded thoroughly and responsibly to a number of audits

and reviews of its corporate management. In short, much excellent work has been and is being done.

Where We Are Headed

The CPC has continually adapted to the changes that have occurred in the environment within which the police and the CPC operate. Increasingly, however, the Commission's ability to continue to adapt is diminished. There is a need for the legislative framework and the resource levels of the CPC to be updated in order to position the Commission to respond to its evolving environment and steps are being taken towards this goal.¹ Since the results of these efforts will not be known for some time, our strategic plan must be based on an assessment of our current environment and the challenges it presents.

¹ For more information on this question, go to http://www.cpc-cpp.gc.ca/DefaultSite/Whatsnew/index_e.aspx?ArticleID=1266#model where you can find the proposed model legislation.

CPC's Environment

In planning for the longer term, strategies must take into account the context within which the organization operates and the current challenges and risks it faces. Some of the key factors that will influence the direction of the CPC in the next few years and which were considered in the development of the strategic plan are outlined in this section. It is important to recognize that these factors are complex and that many are linked.

1. External Context

Our clients are increasingly diverse in terms of their cultures, beliefs, values, attitudes and language. In addition to cultural diversity, there is also an urban-rural divide characterized by distinctly different beliefs, values and attitudes. It would also appear that ethnic groups are fragmented and it can be difficult to identify community leaders and spokespeople. It is a challenge for a small organization with offices in Surrey

and Ottawa to influence and understand diverse communities locally and across the country.

The degree to which Canadians understand the rule of law varies widely and there is a troublingly high level of illiteracy. The RCMP Environmental Scan notes that Canada has “a working population with the highest proportion of college and university graduates in the world, yet almost twenty-percent of Canadians do not have requisite skills to deal with most of the printed material encountered in everyday life.”

There is increasing imbalance both within Canada and globally in terms of growing economic disparity. There are also a disproportionate number of aboriginal people involved in the justice system and being targeted by organized crime.

The public’s expectations regarding policing and public security are changing as evidenced by an apparent willingness to give up personal liberties to fight terrorism. Expectations are also evolving regarding what police

oversight should be and how oversight bodies should behave. It continues to be a challenge to manage and respond to varying and sometimes conflicting expectations.

Provincial policing oversight organizations have differing powers and resource levels than the CPC and, in general, have more up-to-date legislative frameworks.

2. Policing

Crime and criminals are continuing to grow in sophistication and criminal activity has become more global in nature. Policing technologies and techniques have evolved as well and police are required to interact with an expanding network of police forces worldwide. As well, there is an increasing range of police conduct not subject to review with the advent of new legislation and police practices.

Within the police community, there are varying levels of awareness of diversity issues and varying levels of skill in dealing with them.

In terms of the CPC's relationship with the RCMP, areas where there are shared interests may be under-exploited and there may be greater opportunities for sharing information and research resources.

The complexity and size of the RCMP's organization and the frequent changes among operational staff mean that it is often a challenge to identify the appropriate contacts.

3. Government

The government's priorities include a continued emphasis on safety and security and, at the same time, the government is continuing to work towards funding the Budget commitments causing shifts in departments' structures and resources. This will continue to present a challenge to the CPC and to the government with respect to finding a balance between the level of policing and the level of oversight in terms of both resources and powers.

The government is introducing a new expenditure management framework and has placed renewed emphasis on value for money. Increased government accountability will continue to drive more frequent audits and reviews across departments.

There is a shift in how the government views the accountability of ministers and heads of agencies and a shift towards greater levels of authority for parliamentary committees and Parliament itself.

Changing the fiscal balance within Canada and renewing federalism are also on the government's agenda. This may result in greater powers and resources for provinces, territories and municipalities.

Other events having an impact on the CPC include the government's response to the results of the Arar Commission's review and the Air India Inquiry.

4. Context within the CPC

The CPC's governing legislation is out of step both with the current policing environment and with the frameworks in place at the provincial level. As well, the Commission's resource base is out of balance with that of the RCMP's which has grown substantially over the past several years. Ongoing operational improvements such as reducing the inventory of files and risk management help us make the best use of the resources available and efforts are progressing to obtain additional funding.

The scope of the Commission's mandate has been limited by court decisions while the scope of the RCMP's activities has grown.

At present, the CPC does not have information regarding the ultimate impact of its recommendations making it difficult to assess how they are changing policing. Identifying and managing access to relevant information (how do we get

what we need) and obtaining comprehensive policing data are challenges that will need to be addressed.

As a small organization with staff in two distant locations, ongoing vigilance and focused efforts are required to ensure the right people with the relevant skills are in the right places and that the workforce is balanced with respect to diversity and language.

CPC Strategic Objectives

The CPC's strategic outcome is the long-term result we are aiming towards and the basis against which we will measure our progress. To achieve this result, it must be reflected in our daily business activities and initiatives. The CPC's strategic outcome is as follows:

Ensure that complaints made by the public about the conduct of members of the RCMP² are examined fairly and impartially, in a timely manner, and help ensure that the RCMP provides the best policing service possible. Identify problem trends in policing and make recommendations for changes in national policing policy.

Considering the environment within which the Commission operates and the trends over the next few years, we have identified three strategic objectives which we will pursue in all aspects of our business to move us towards achieving our strategic outcome.

Under each strategic objective is a list of examples of activities that align to and support the objective. It will be in the Business Plan that we will identify and describe all the tasks and deliverables associated with each of the strategic objectives.

² Ibid, page 1.

1. Improve access to and openness of the public complaints process

- Enhance the public's awareness of the CPC
- Collaborate more closely with the provinces, the RCMP and stakeholders on common interests
- Simplify the intake processes for complaints and reviews
- Make review reports more readily available to the public
- Expand the Commission's capacity to deal with diverse communities

2. Strengthen the complaints and review processes

- Establish service standards
- Identify new types of recommendations
- Respond to the recommendations of Justice O'Connor (Arar Commission)
- Identify problem trends in policing and make recommendations for changes in national policing policy

- Establish a follow-up process to track actions taken on recommendations
- Bring the CPC's resource base into better balance with the policing resource base
- Institute performance management
- Innovate IM/IT practices
- Ensure the appropriate and effective long-term management of the case inventory

3. Create and maintain a workplace of choice

- Ensure a modern human resources management regime is in place
- Support effective labour-management relations
- Establish an appropriate rewards and recognition program
- Provide opportunities for professional and leadership development

The Way Forward

The Strategic Plan is intended to be a blueprint that will guide the CPC's activities and focus its resources over the next three to five years. It will serve as the basis for our detailed business plans and evolve as our environment changes.