

# Policing in Alberta: A Shared Responsibility



## Policing Committees and Safe Communities

Safe and resilient communities are supported by police and communities working as partners to deliver effective service and oversight of that service.

When members of the community work together as partners in policing they can powerfully influence and support initiatives to prevent crime, enforce the law, support victims, and establish effective policing and trust within the community. Independent oversight is a critical component.

## Policing Oversight



Every community has a role in setting priorities, goals and objectives for policing and ensuring policing is fair, appropriate and effective.

### Independent and Effective

Independent oversight removes both the perception and reality of potential political interference among and between elected officials and the police service.

It ensures priorities, goals, objectives and provision of policing is fair, appropriate and meets the needs of the community and citizens.

Under the *Police Act*, communities with a population over 5,000 may formally establish a policing committee with defined legislative functions, including

the responsibility to work with their police service to identify and set policing priorities, goals and objectives, to ensure that policing is provided consistent with policing standards, and to oversee that adequate and effective policing is provided.

A less formal body may also be established through municipal resolution or bylaw by any community, regardless of size, in order to provide similar policing oversight. These bodies are sometimes referred to as Police Advisory Committees or Community Consultative Groups. Responsibilities of these groups are determined by the municipal body in consultation with the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachment, and their oversight functions ensure policing is adequate and effective and the interests of communities are well represented. Similar to Policing Committees, these advisory groups work collaboratively with the RCMP detachment on Annual Performance Plans and support the provision of policing through collaboration with the municipal officials and the RCMP.

Communities may also wish to explore the formation of regional advisory groups, which may assist in managing the practical challenges that smaller communities face in establishing oversight bodies, such as breadth of experience, time and resources.

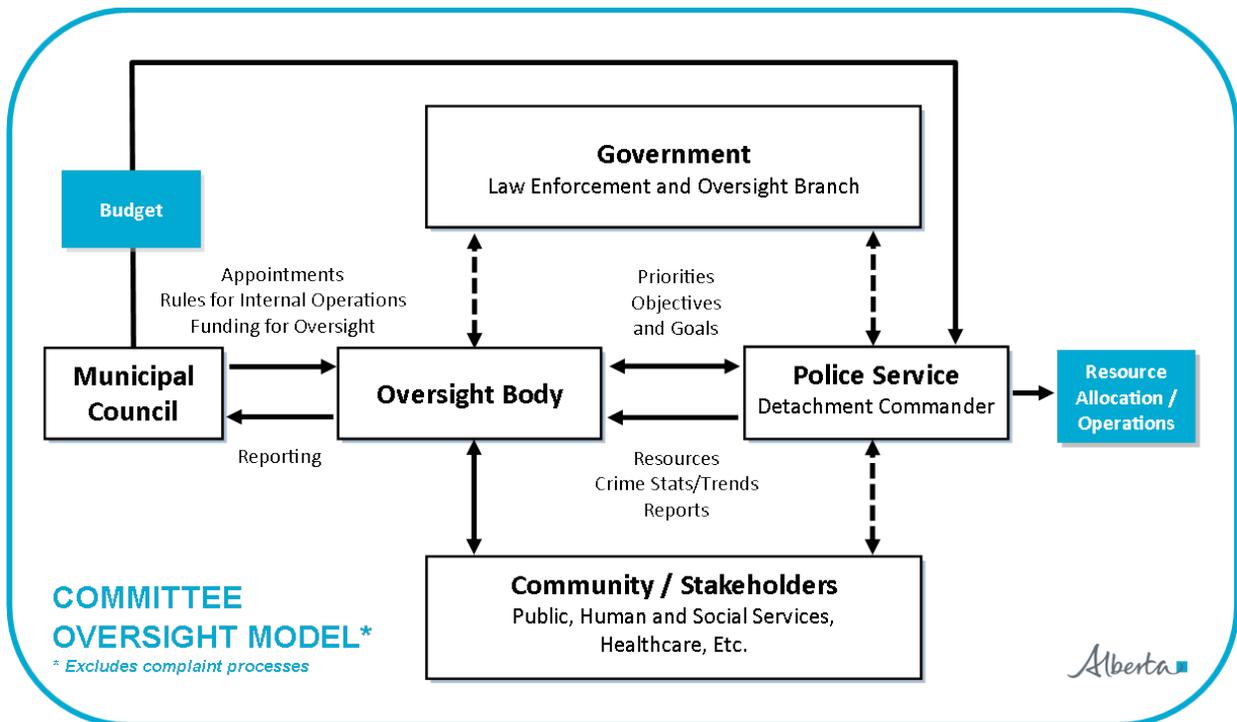
### WHAT DO OVERSIGHT BODIES PROVIDE?

- Act as a liaison and promote open dialogue and good communication between police, municipal leaders and members of the community to ensure issues affecting delivery of law enforcement and citizen safety are anticipated, identified and addressed.



**Meaningful Participation in Public Safety**  
**Respond to Community Needs**  
**Ensure Accountability, Transparency & Public Trust**

- Foster and support collaborative, respectful relationships where priorities, objectives and goals can be determined and met without political interference and with recognition of the distinct roles of governance and operations.
- Represent community interests and concerns, seeking input, consulting, and providing general assistance, education and information on policing and public safety issues.
- Assist police in identifying local policing issues, emerging crime trends, and community safety initiatives.
- Support and foster initiatives related to crime prevention, reduction and community safety through collaboration with the police, the community, and other stakeholders such as health services, social services, and victim services.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For further assistance in establishing and supporting policing oversight in your community, please contact the Law Enforcement and Oversight Branch, Public Security Division, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. You may reach the Branch by phone to Karyn Popplestone, Manager, Policing Oversight and Contract Policing at 780-415-8333 or by email to [karyn.popplestone@gov.ab.ca](mailto:karyn.popplestone@gov.ab.ca).

You may also contact the Alberta Association of Police Governance (AAPG) at 587-892-7874 or by email to [admin@aapg.ca](mailto:admin@aapg.ca). AAPG is an association of police commissions and policing committees created pursuant to Alberta’s Police Act, established to support civilian governance and oversight of police services in Alberta.