

Report to:

POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

4 April 2025

Submitted by:

**Executive Director, Ottawa Police Service Board / Directeur Exécutif, Commission
de service de police d'Ottawa**

Contact Person:

**Habib Sayah, Executive Director / Directeur Exécutif
habib.sayah@ottawa.ca**

SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE REVIEW: SCOPE AND APPROACH

OBJET: EXAMEN DE LA GOUVERNANCE : PORTEE ET APPROCHE

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Service Board's Policy and Governance Committee:

- 1. Receive this report for information and discussion.**
- 2. Endorse the attached Calendar of Monitoring Requirements.**
- 3. Consider and provide direction on the preferred scope and priorities for the governance review, including whether to proceed with the minimum or extensive scope outlined in this report.**
- 4. Direct the Executive Director to develop a detailed work plan for the next phase of the governance review, based on the scope confirmed by the Committee.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des politiques et de la gouvernance de la Commission de service de police d'Ottawa:

- 1. Prenne connaissance du présent rapport aux fins d'information et de discussion.**
- 2. Appuie le calendrier des exigences de surveillance ci-joint.**

3. **Examine et fournisse des directives quant à la portée et aux priorités privilégiées pour l'examen de la gouvernance, y compris en ce qui concerne l'option de procéder selon la portée minimale ou étendue présentée dans le rapport.**
4. **Charge le directeur exécutif d'élaborer un plan de travail détaillé pour la prochaine phase de l'examen de la gouvernance, en fonction de la portée confirmée par le Comité.**

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

At its meeting of January 27, 2025, the Ottawa Police Service Board carried the following motion:

WHEREAS the Board requires more time to think through the work of the Committees and the Board, given the new Act, our new strategic plan and dashboard Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed Board meeting schedule, past February's date on the schedule, be referred to the Board's Policy and Governance Committee for review, including an overall governance review.

In response to this direction, the Board office has developed this report to support the Policy and Governance Committee's initial consideration of the governance review's scope and approach.

In parallel, and in collaboration with the Ottawa Police Service's (Service) Directorate of Strategy and Communications, the Board office has already initiated a component of the review: a preliminary analysis and streamlining of the Board's calendar of monitoring requirements.

The next phase of the governance review will be shaped by the Committee's direction regarding scope. At minimum, it is anticipated that this next phase would include a review of Committee mandates, the exploration of consent agendas to increase meeting efficiency, and the adaptation of the calendar of monitoring requirements to download items from full Board meetings.

DISCUSSION

Options for Scope of the Governance Review

To support the Committee in making an informed decision, this section presents two options for the scope of the governance review:

- A minimum scope, achievable in the short-term within existing staff capacity, focus on immediate structural and efficiency improvements; and
- A more extensive scope, aligned with governance best practices, that would address broader structural, strategic, and resourcing issues, and may require additional support or phased implementation.

The Committee is invited to review the proposed options and provide direction on the preferred scope and priorities for the governance review moving forward.

Option 1: Minimum Scope

The minimum scope focuses on essential improvements that can be completed in-house using existing staff capacity, in a timely fashion. It prioritizes structural adjustments and efficiency gains, particularly in relation to meetings, reporting, and committee functions. It also reflects elements that the Board has already signalled as priorities, including the streamlining of the meeting calendar and reporting requirements.

Key components of the minimum scope include:

- Streamlining of the Chief's reporting requirements and rationalization of the Board's calendar;
- Review of Committee mandates to clarify roles, avoid duplication, and improve effectiveness;
- Exploration of consent agendas and related practices to reduce the number and duration of Board meetings;
- Realignment of the Board and Committee meeting calendar with the strategic and business planning cycle;
- Review of a limited number of Board policies and by-law provisions that directly impact monitoring, meeting management, and committee functioning;
- Review of the reporting frequency and structure to ensure alignment with oversight responsibilities under the *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019 (CSPA).

This scope would support near-term operational improvements and position the Board to make more efficient use of its time and resources, while remaining within the current capacity of the Board office.

Option 2: Extensive Scope

The extensive scope reflects a comprehensive governance review, which may be support the continued evolution of the Board's role, priorities, operational needs and expanded statutory responsibilities under the CSPA. It involves a broader examination of structure, information flows, internal capacity, and public accountability. This option would support in transitioning toward a more intentional, strategic, and sustainable governance model.

Key components of the extensive scope include all elements of the minimum scope, as well as:

- Review of Board structure, roles, responsibilities and linkages (Board, Chair, Committees, Executive Director, Chief);
- Evaluation of delegations of authority, succession planning, onboarding, and Board self-assessment tools and processes;
- Full review of reporting and internal information flows, including templates, briefings, dashboards, and internal decision-making supports;
- Review of the Board's governance policies (GA, BC, CR series);
- Assessment of the Board Office's mandate, staffing strategy, tools, internal systems;
- Review of the Board's public and stakeholder engagement tools, including community feedback mechanisms, communication processes, and relationship with City Council;
- Review of training and development policies for both Board members and staff;
- Development of a risk oversight model, including a risk register and related tracking and assessment tools.

Due to its scope and complexity, this option may require additional capacity and/or a lengthier, phased delivery. However, it would provide the Board with a strong foundation for effective, transparent, and accountable oversight in the years ahead.

While the extensive scope is more ambitious, it is not being proposed as a consultant-led process. Rather, its recommended that the review be internally led, with the potential use of targeted and time-limited external technical support for specific components – such as policy analysis, governance benchmarking, and drafting of revised frameworks. This

hybrid approach would ensure that the review remains Board-driven and contextually grounded, while allowing access to specialized expertise where needed to supplement the Board office and Committee's capacities.

A fully consultant-led approach is not recommended, both in light of cost considerations and the Board's expressed preference for maintaining internal ownership of the governance review process.

Proposed Revised Calendar of Monitoring Requirements

As an initial step in the governance review, the Board office, in collaboration with the Service's Directorate of Strategy and Communications, undertook a review and streamlining of the Calendar of Monitoring Requirements.

The preliminary work involved:

- Reviewing the full list of reports submitted to the Board by the Chief, including their frequency, the origin of the requirement (e.g. legislative, policy-based, or Board-directed), and strategic relevance;
- Identifying opportunities to consolidate reports, reduce duplication, and adjust reporting frequency where appropriate, while ensuring continued compliance with statutory obligations under the CSPA and relevant Board policies.

The proposed revised calendar is intended to support more focused and strategic oversight at the Board level, improve alignment with the Board's business and strategic planning cycles, and enable more efficient use of Board and Committee time. It will also form part of the foundation for further review of Committee mandates.

Through the review, an opportunity was identified to remove three regular Board meetings, reducing the total number from eleven –the most common number of regular meetings among the Big 12 police services boards – to eight. Although section 43 of the CSPA only requires boards to meet a minimum of four times per year, it was assessed that the Board would be unable to fully discharge its responsibilities if it were to meet solely at this statutory minimum. In practice, a higher meeting frequency is required to address non-routine and time-sensitive matters that arise throughout the year. This is particularly true for the *in camera* portions of public meetings, which often involve discussions or decisions that, in the absence of delegated authority to Board Committees, must be considered by the full Board.

A draft of the revised calendar has been prepared and is attached to this report.

While opportunities to download certain reports from Board meetings to the Committee level have been identified, a Committee-level Calendar of Monitoring Requirements has

yet to be fully developed. This work will follow a review of Committee mandates and the decision-making processes that govern interactions between Committees and the full Board.

CONSULTATION

To date, internal consultations have included discussions with the Service's Directorate of Strategy and Communications, focused on the review and streamlining of the Calendar of Monitoring Requirements. Preliminary informal discussions have also taken place with several Board members to identify key gaps and areas of opportunity in the Board's current governance practices.

Additional consultations may be required depending on the scope of the governance review as determined by the Committee. These may include:

- Committee Chairs, to assess current mandates, workloads;
- The City Clerk's Office, to support benchmarking against municipal governance practices and identify relevant tools or models;
- Other police service boards, to draw on comparative research and governance best practices from other jurisdictions.

These consultations would support a more informed and context-sensitive approach to the governance review and help ensure that any proposed changes are grounded in practical experience and aligned with sector standards.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with proceeding under the minimum scope, as the identified activities can be carried out using existing Board resources, in collaboration with the Service where appropriate.

Should the Committee opt to pursue the extensive scope, financial resources may be required to engage targeted external technical support. This could include assistance with policy analysis, comparative research, governance benchmarking, or drafting of revised frameworks and tools. Any such engagement would be time-limited and focused on specific components of the review to ensure efficient use of funds while maintaining internal leadership of the process.

The cost associated with any external support would be drawn from the Board's existing Professional Services budget.

CONCLUSION

This report presents two options for the scope of the Board's governance review for the Committee's consideration. The Committee's direction will guide the next phase of work and ensure that the review is appropriately scoped to meet the Board's evolving governance needs under the CSPA.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – Appendix A: Comparison of Minimum and Extensive Scope Options for the Governance Review

Document 2 – Appendix B: Revised Calendar of Monitoring Requirements