

City of Victoria asks B.C. to set up a regional police force

Bill Cleverley / Times Colonist

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Coun. Jeremy Loveday proposed the motion with councillors Ben Isitt, Sharmarke Dubow and Sarah Potts.
Photograph By ADRIAN LAM, TIMES COLONIST

Victoria is calling on the province to establish a single regional police force for the entire capital region.

Councillors unanimously endorsed a resolution Thursday calling for the province to establish a regional force “with funding allocated according to established funding formula among CRD member local governments.”

“I think that regional policing and the establishment of regional police services will help improve efficiency of service delivery, improve collaboration between departments and in the end will make our communities safer and potentially save us money,” said Coun. Jeremy Loveday, who proposed the motion with councillors Ben Isitt, Sharmarke Dubow and Sarah Potts.

Isitt called the proposal “good policy” that would ensure costs are share equitably.

“Clearly, at this stage it’s probably not a policy shared unanimously around the region but I think the more we look at the unsustainability of the current financial model for VicPD, I think the stronger the rationale will be for the province, which has responsibility for ensuring proper policing in local areas, to make the change,” Isitt said.

“Problems associated with policing don’t know borders. People all around the region have challenges but those challenges often become concentrated in the core area and I think it’s unfair for Esquimalt to currently bear that regional responsibility alone,” he said.

Mayor Lisa Helps noted Victoria has long been on record supporting regional policing.

“I think this motion is a little bit different in that it calls on the province to take action,” Helps said.

“The fact that the province has expressed interest in integration means that once they see the information and potential benefits of integration, they may look even more seriously at the motion that we’re bringing forward today,” Helps said.

“This will need to be done in consultation and collaboration with municipalities throughout the region.”

There are four municipal forces within the 13 municipalities of the CRD — Victoria-Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and Central Saanich — while the remaining nine municipalities and three electoral areas are policed by RCMP.

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