

9-1-1 CALL CENTRE AUDIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City Auditor's Office issued the 9-1-1 Call Centre Audit Report to Administration on September 6, 2017. The report includes Administration's response to four recommendations raised by the City Auditor's Office to further enhance the controls that facilitate the achievement of call handling key performance indicators (KPIs) and mitigates the risks of delays or problems in the call handling process. Administration accepted all recommendations and has committed to the implementation of action plans no later than June 28, 2019. The City Auditor's Office will track the implementation of these commitments as part of our on-going follow-up process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Audit Committee receive this report for information; and
2. That Audit Committee recommend that Council receive this report for information.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

Bylaw 30M2004 (as amended) established the position of City Auditor and the powers, duties and functions of the position. Under the City Auditor's Office Charter, the City Auditor presents an annual risk-based audit plan to Audit Committee for approval. The City Auditor's Office 2017/2018 Annual Audit Plan was approved on November 10, 2016. The City Auditor is accountable to Council and subject to the oversight of Audit Committee under Bylaw 48M2012 (as amended).

BACKGROUND

This audit was undertaken as part of the approved City Auditor's Office 2017/2018 Annual Audit Plan. The objective of this audit was to evaluate the effectiveness of controls in place to support the achievement of call-handling KPIs. The audit assessed KPIs, and the design and operation of associated key controls to mitigate the risk of delays or problems in the call handling process for Police 9-1-1 calls, up to the point the call was passed over for dispatch.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Calgary 9-1-1 (C9-1-1) is the 9-1-1 call center for the City of Calgary, acting as the first point of contact for citizens in need of emergency assistance. C9-1-1 answers and evaluates 9-1-1 emergency and non-emergency calls, and dispatches the appropriate agencies to respond: Police, Fire or Emergency Medical Services (EMS). C9-1-1 tracks and monitors KPIs to evaluate operational performance and through follow up actions mitigate risk to citizens of delays or errors in the call handling process.

Based on the audit procedures completed, we concluded that the design of C9-1-1's key controls support the achievement of call-handling KPIs and mitigate the risk of delays or problems in the call handling process. However, as call duration has increased, C9-1-1 is challenged to do "more" with existing resources, and continue to mitigate risks while being as efficient as possible. C9-1-1 has not met their KPI target of answering 95% of the Police 911 calls within 15 seconds in either 2015 or 2016, and based on the results of this audit may be similarly challenged to meet their KPI target in 2017. C9-1-1 acknowledges the risk exposure to Calgarians represented by these missed targets, and continue to apply and develop additional

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mitigating strategies, including development of a revised staffing plan and investigating options to reconfigure the call answering process.

Accordingly, we recommended that in addition to on-going long term mitigation strategies, C9-1-1 should investigate additional short term initiatives to minimize the risk of continued missed Police 9-1-1 KPI targets, such as additional workforce wellness initiatives; cross training additional staff; and process changes to reduce Police 9-1-1 call duration. The audit also raised a further recommendation to establish a process to ensure that all abandoned calls receive call back within an appropriate time frame, and raised two recommendations regarding Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to maximize the efficiency of SOPs review process, and to enhance the value of the SOPs as a training tool.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

This audit was conducted with C9-1-1 acting as the principal audit contact within Administration.

Strategic Alignment

Audit reports assist Council in its oversight of the City Manager's administration and accountability for stewardship over public funds and achievement on value for money in City operations.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

N/A

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

N/A

Current and Future Capital Budget:

N/A

Risk Assessment

The activities of the City Auditor's Office serve to promote accountability, mitigate risk, and support an effective governance structure.

Quality and promptness of the call handling process are critical factors to ensure successful and efficient emergency responses. Potential delays and errors in call response, evaluation, and dispatch in 9-1-1 call handling pose a critical risk to public health and safety. The audit assessed the design and operation of the key controls to mitigate the risk of delays or problems in the call answering process for Police 9-1-1 calls. Strengthening 9-1-1 call centre controls will enhance the effectiveness of the call answering process to support timely emergency assistance for citizens.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Bylaw 48M2012 (as amended) states: "Audit Committee receives directly from the City Auditor any individual Audit Report and forwards these to Council for information."

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ATTACHMENT

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