



EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE

REPORT TO THE EDMONTON POLICE COMMISSION

DATE: 2020 Oct 16

SUBJECT: Gun Crime Violence Reduction Strategy Presentation to EPC

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That the Edmonton Police Commission (EPC) receives this report for information at the next EPC meeting scheduled on November 19, 2020.

INTRODUCTION:

This report provides an update of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Gun Crime Violence Reduction Strategy (GCVRS). The GCVRS is included in the 2019 Annual Policing Plan (APP) as one of five strategic initiatives. Phases of the GCVRS have been implemented in 2020.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

There has been a proliferation of firearm related activity in EPS jurisdiction, with firearms seizures increasing each year from 2017 (1016), 2018 (1030), 2019 (1189), and 2020 had 673 firearms seized to date. In 2020, the EPS has confirmed 106 shooting events (year to date) occurred within the City of Edmonton where 57 individuals suffered from firearms related injuries.

In response to the noticeable uptick of gun violence in 2020, we have modernized current policy and procedures to best position our organization to respond and investigate shooting events.

The GCVRS was developed in 2018 to identify and implement improved evidence collection, forensic analysis, intelligence sharing, investigative techniques and processes to manage gun crime.

In keeping with best practices for the GCVRS, several external stakeholders were identified who had previous and/or current experience in matters relating to gun crime prevention, suppression and intervention. These stakeholders included, but not limited to, were Toronto Police Service, Ottawa Police Service, Ontario Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit, RCMP National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST), Calgary Police Service, ALERT, Canadian Firearms Office and Alberta Special Prosecutions Office.

In September 2019, the EPS partnered with RCMP NWest and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement for a 3-year period to enhance the collaboration between agencies to tackle gun crime within the greater Edmonton area.

This MOU is a first of its kind in Canada and allowed the EPS and RCMP to bring together agency resources for a concentrated effort in reducing gun crime, victimization and increasing public safety.

The combination of the consultation phase and the identified gaps within the EPS led to 4 pillars being identified as the foundation for the GCVRS. The foundational pillars to reducing and solving more gun crime locally, provincially, nationally and internationally include:

- Crime gun evidence collection and sharing through the use of technology
- Training
- Intelligence (strategic and tactical analysis)
- Investigative excellence

GCVRS IMPLEMENTATION:

Operationalizing the GCVRS requires the following implementation plan:

- 1) Phase 1: Acquisition of Technology and Infrastructure
 - a. IBIS-Integrated Ballistic Identification System (purchased)
 - b. Mobile Test Fire Facility (purchase approved, delivery expected mid to late October)
- 2) Phase 2: Develop definitions of Crime Gun and Crime Casings (completed)
- 3) Phase 3: Modernize and develop policies and procedures for the EPS (awaiting approval)
- 4) Phase 4: Training for front line members and specialized investigators (completed in 2019)
- 5) Phase 5: Development of a Firearms Examination Unit (Completed)
- 6) Phase 6: Development of a Guns and Gangs Investigative Team, which has since been rebranded as the Firearms Investigation Unit (FIU). This has been completed and has been operational since September 2019.

Since its inception, FIU has realized the following successes:

- Consulted on 106 shooting events
- Conducted 29 firearms related interviews
- Obtained 67 Judicial Authorizations
- Arrested seven people and laid 36 criminal charges
- Seized 37 firearms
- Seized 4528 round of ammunition
- Recovered 14 trafficked firearms
- Conducted a wiretap investigation involving Firearms
- Completed 15 firearm examinations
 - Test Firing of firearms for court purposes
- 72 firearm examinations assigned, 51 yet to be completed
- Conducted 16 firearms investigations
- Traced 20 Firearms with the assistance of the RCMP and ATF

- Provided assistance on 235-gun crime related inquiries
- Conducted 6 firearms presentations to various law enforcement agencies
- Implemented a tracking system for firearms files with the Provincial and Federal Crown Prosecutors
- Geographical areas for files include the City of Edmonton and surrounding areas

CONCLUSION:

The implementation of the GCVRS has closed some existing gaps within the EPS, allowing for a more concentrated-focused approach to solving and investigating gun crime. Further work is needed to achieve the ultimate goals of having a 360-degree approach, however the pillars are in place which will lend to a solid foundation for the EPS to tackle gun crime for years to come.

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2020-10-06

Approved By: Deputy Chief Kevin BREZINSKI, Intelligence and Investigations Bureau



Chief of Police: _____

Date: Oct 19, 20



EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE

REPORT TO THE EDMONTON POLICE COMMISSION

DATE: 2020 October 19

SUBJECT: Gun Crime Violence Reduction Strategy (the "GCVRS")
Development of a Firearms Examination Unit ("FEU")

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That this report be received for information.

INTRODUCTION:

The Edmonton Police Service ("EPS") GCVRS had proposed a plan with several phases of implementation to better address firearm related crime. One of the phases (i.e., Phase 5) was the development of a FEU. The development of this specialized unit will further the forensic examinations already conducted by the EPS's Crime Scenes Investigation Unit ("CSIU") that it simply does not have the capacity, technology or technical expertise for at the moment. The development of the FEU will also reduce reliance on the RCMP's National Forensic Laboratory Service ("NFLS").

The FEU will be a unit within the Forensic Identification Services Section ("FISS") within the EPS's "new" Forensic Sciences Branch. The FEU is an important component of FISS's future and steps have already been taken to establish the Unit so it can begin immediately providing critical in-house investigative support once a base staff complement is in place. Further, as part of a provincial initiative, funding assistance from the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team is being explored for some resources and equipment. FEU development is well under way and includes the addition of new technology such as a Modular Test Fire facility and an Integrated Ballistics Identification System ("IBIS") instrument for direct acquisition of firearm cartridge casings for upload to and analysis within the RCMP Canadian Integrated Ballistics Identification Network ("CIBIN").

The FEU is a critical component of the GCVRS. It is anticipated that this "new" process will lead to more timely investigative leads and, accordingly, more timely, comprehensive and effective investigations. The FEU also includes office and lab space to conduct firearm examinations including certification thereby meeting a key legal requirement for the prosecution of firearm related criminal charges.

COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:

Effective gun violence strategies require the EPS to conduct fulsome forensic examinations of all firearm related exhibits. This will be achieved through the implementation and operation of a “new” FEU within FISS. FISS operates using scientifically recognized best practices and the alignment of FEU within FISS will ensure consistent, best practices within the larger scientific community and adherence to national quality assurance in firearm examinations are maintained.

Currently CSIU does examine most firearm related evidence however, with the RCMP National Forensic Laboratory Services (NFLS) submission criteria, not all evidence can be forwarded for a full forensic examination. The creation of the FEU within FISS allows for increased independence from the RCMP NFLS while also increasing the potential intelligence available from firearm exhibits and the speed in which it can be provided to investigators. Cartridge casing evidence can be analyzed in-house using IBIS and submitted to CIBIN remotely for timely analysis. The RCMP NFLS will still be utilized for major, complex criminal charge files. In addition, the FEU will test fire and certify all seized firearms to ensure that all legal requirements for prosecution are satisfied.

Insight from other agencies and from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) have assisted in the development of a best practice workflow model. The FEU will be the front line, initial point of contact for firearm related exhibits. The FEU will have the core function of examining all firearm related evidence to collect all available forensic evidence, such as fingerprints, DNA and cartridge casing imaging through the EPS BrassTrax IBIS instrument. The examination culminates with thorough, succinct documentation for dissemination to investigators and for criminal charges before the Court.

The staffing of FEU with one sergeant for 2020 has allowed for a consistent focus on this important initiative and provided the opportunity to conduct small scale workflow procedure testing and enhancement. This will continue through the remainder of the year providing insight into process testing and effective daily operation for the FEU. This will also provide cartridge casings from EPS seized firearms for IBIS acquisition upon completion of final quality assurance from the RCMP CIBIN Program.

To summarize, in 2020 the development of the FEU has included:

- NWEST sponsored firearm examiner training for 6 CSIU and other EPS employees.
- The development of an interim solution to address outstanding firearm examinations for those weapons associated to a prosecution(s).
- Identified and resolved network issues allowing for communication between the EPS and to Shared Services Canada (i.e., the RCMP’s CIBIN database).
- Identified and secured new office space to house future FEU equipment and employees.
- Installed the BrassTrax HD3D IBIS instrument and completed remote training for two IBIS operators.

- Successfully resolved a long-standing building permit issue and initiated the preparation work (e.g., electrical, foundation etc.) for the EPS's Modular Test Fire facility.
- Developed, tested and refined a daily FEU workflow.
- Participate in discussions related to future FEU enhancements and expansion as a potential regional or provincial forensic support service.
- Resolved a long-standing certification issue regarding the Modular Test Fire facility paving the way for acceptable vendor modifications and shipping to Canada.

The anticipated additional activity includes:

- The delivery and installation of the Modular Test Fire facility.
- Continued workflow testing and processing timeline establishment and refinement.
- Review of the Property and Exhibit Unit firearm exhibit inventory to address court forfeitures and disposals.
- Addition of two CSIU constable positions
- Continued consideration and likely development of 3 civilian positions to support a Provincial solution.
- The development of a FEU lab area where examinations and specialized techniques (e.g., serial number restoration) can be done.
- Training for firearm serial number restoration.
- Continue consultation with internal and external stakeholders

CONCLUSION:

The FEU is an extension of FISS and the EPS's Forensic Sciences Branch. The available knowledge base and best practice approach is essential to maintaining an integral, unbiased scientific process for objective evidence examination and processing. The FEU and CSIU will continue to work with the RCMP National Forensic Laboratory Service to provide these essential forensic services. Despite some challenges throughout 2020, the development of the FEU is continuing to establish and test the most efficient operating processes in order to provide a first-class standard for both criminal investigations and prosecution in Edmonton and throughout Alberta. Material steps have been taken regarding the development and operation of the EPS's FEU such that this key investigative support service should be available with a base level of staff early in the new year.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ATTACHED:

N/A

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Approved By: Deputy Chief Kevin BREZINSKI, Investigations and Support Services
Bureau

Chief of Police:  _____

Date: 04/19/20