

Street Check Reports

Report back on implementation of consultant’s recommendations

Recommendation

That the November 16, 2020 Edmonton Police Commission report CR_8349 be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the July 6/8, 2020, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

1(c) That Administration:

“Ask the EPS to review the 2018 consultant’s report entitled City of Edmonton Street Checks Policy and Practice Review and report on work or plans to implement the consultant’s recommendations to enhance accountability in regards to the ways Police interact with racialized or vulnerable people, and report back to Council/Committee.”

Executive Summary

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) supports the creation of a standardized and defensible guideline for street checks that assists police in police duties and encourages a positive relationship with the community. The EPS also acknowledges a need and purpose for provincial guidelines respecting street checks and Street Check Reports. The EPS has done considerable work over the past several years related to policy, practices, and training with respect to street checks, which started in 2016, prior to the 2018 Griffiths Report on Street Checks.

In 2016, ten recommendations were made internally by the EPS because it was acknowledged that improvements needed to be made. In 2018, Dr. Griffiths’ released recommendations regarding street check reports. The report confirmed that if properly conducted, street checks can be a valuable component of effective policing and of ensuring community safety and security.

The EPS has conducted Street Check Reviews bi-annually since 2016 and will continue to conduct annual reviews to ensure oversight and maintain public confidence. Currently, the EPS is working with the Province in the development of Provincial Guidelines for street checks.

Report

Background

A street check is a proactive conversation with a person or a group of people. The purpose of a street check is to gather information that may assist police officers in preventing or investigating criminal activity. They are initiated when a police officer sees a person in unusual or unexpected circumstances, or when an officer wants to check on a person’s health and well-being. This engagement consists of police trying to better understand what the individual is doing in that location at that time. The information gathered from a street check can be a critical tool for police in preventing or solving crime. There is no detention authority in a street check, and there is no onus on the individual to provide information to the police.

Any relevant information collected from a street check is recorded onto a ‘Street Check Report’ and stored in the confidential EPS Records Management System. Should a crime take place in the same area, Street Check Reports taken from that same area can be reviewed to determine who was in the area at the time.

2016 EPS Review and Community Engagement

The EPS conducted its own review of Street Check Reports in 2016. The audit discovered some areas that required improvement so, in response, the EPS conducted a comprehensive review on its street check policies, practices, and processes. As a result of this 2016 review, the EPS implemented new policies, procedures, and conducted community engagement and information sessions.

As part of that review, community engagement and information sessions took place with several groups, including the African Youth Dialogue, John Humphrey Centre’s Youth Action Project, Treaty 6 Chiefs and Board members, Boyle Street Community Services, Bissell Centre, iHuman, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. These groups and numerous others provided EPS with a wide range of perspectives. In addition, the Chief’s Advisory Council, a group of citizens that represent religious, cultural and ethnic communities of Edmonton were consulted and provided valuable insight into the development of ten recommendations for the EPS to improve its practices of street checks.

Currently, collaboration is occurring with the Province to determine an appropriate retention schedule and strategy. Extensive training has been developed for recruits and patrol members, and the EPS implemented a bi-annual auditing process to identify opportunities for improvement and are continuing with an annual process of regular reporting to the Edmonton Police Commission.

While this 2016 review was underway and changes were being made, the Government of Alberta announced that it would be reviewing street checks and making its own set

of guidelines. Several months later, the Edmonton Police Commission announced that they too would be conducting a review. The report was concluded in 2018 and is commonly referred to as the Griffiths Report.

2018 – Edmonton Police Commission – Griffiths Report Recommendations

In 2018, the EPC engaged an external consultant to conduct a further review and audit designed to examine the use of Street Checks by the EPS amidst concerns of biased policing. It is important to note that the above listed recommendations from 2016 were in the process of being implemented at the time of the Griffiths Report.

The Griffiths Report resulted in 17 recommendations focused on specific Street Check processes as well as broader suggestions such as increasing the diversity of EPS. Attached as “Attachment 1” is a detailed listing of the recommendations and the associated updates.

2020

The EPS is currently working with the Province towards provincial guidelines for street checks in Alberta that reflect the findings of the Edmonton Police Commission Street Check Review (2018), Ontario’s review of their Collection of Identifying Information in Certain Circumstances Regulation (2017) and various current law enforcement street check policies. A letter from Chief McFee to Honourable Madu, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General of Alberta, is attached as “Attachment 2”.

Conclusion

EPS has done considerable work over the past several years to develop a framework of policy, training and procedures around Street Checks that ensure that existing best practices are continued. This framework ensures a level of transparency around the organization’s operations, to maintain the trust of the public. The EPS will continue to collaborate with the Province to ensure that adherence with the guidelines, once in place, will be met.

Public Engagement

In 2015, community engagement and information sessions were held with several social sector groups as well as the Chief’s Advisory Council at the time that represent religious, cultural and ethnic communities of Edmonton.

The EPS is currently conducting a *Commitment to Action* to engage with 50 of the city’s Black, Indigenous, racialized, and underserved communities in reimagining policing, community safety and well-being. The new strategy acknowledges current community concerns and calls for change, addresses racial injustice, and advocates

for the need to work collectively to build, strengthen and repair police-community relationships.

This will be part of 3 streams of engagement to better understand the role of police in the context of public safety. This public engagement approach will help the service evolve and understand what safety means to the community as well as to modernize the EPS in it’s overall policing roll. This work is aligned in our Strategic Plan and will help inform success towards achieving our goals.

The 3 streams are:

- 1) Community Engagement with Black, Indigenous, Racialized and Underserved Communities
- 2) Business, social agency and key stakeholder engagement
- 3) Broad Public Engagement

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is a safe city			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Citizens are satisfied and confident in community safety service provided by Edmonton Police Service	Public perceptions of police performance	Source: 2018 Citizen Survey, administered through open link	Increase from previous results
	• Ensuring safety of citizens	• 83%, average or good job	
	• Enforcing the laws	• 85%, average or good job	
	• Treating people fairly	• 70%, average or good job	
	• Being approachable	• 79%, average or good job	
	• Confidence with the EPS	• 72%, somewhat or strongly agreeing	
	• Overall Satisfaction	• 67%, rating as average or excellent	
• Officer Competency	• 74%, somewhat or strongly agreeing		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate Service Levels to Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 58%, somewhat or strongly agreeing	
--	---	--	--

Attachments

1. 2018 Recommendation results by EPS
2. Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police letter to Minister Madu

Others Reviewing this Report

- Edmonton Police Service Chief’s Committee