Glasgow City Council Internal Audit Section
Committee Summary
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration, and Sustainability – Alarm Receiving Centre: 2023/24 Reviews

Item 4(i)

24th January 2024

1 Introduction

1.1 As part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan, we have carried out a review of the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) operated by Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability (NRS).

1.2 The ARC is responsible for monitoring fire and intruder alarms at over 1,100 sites and deals with over 14,000 alarm activations each year. The ARC is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The ARC is accredited by the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) as a GOLD standard ARC. To maintain this accreditation, the ARC must meet the requirements of British Standards (BS) 5979:2007, 7858:2019, 8484:2016 Clause 7 and BS EN ISO9001:2015.

1.3 The purpose of the audit was to provide an assessment of the ARC's compliance with the standards noted and to gain assurance that, for a sample of the BS requirements, ARC management can provide evidence of compliance.

1.4 Internal Audit currently review the ARC's compliance with the requirements of the BS' twice per annum. The scope of these reviews included:

- BS5979: Section 5 – Construction and Facilities.
- BS5979: Section 6 – Operation of an ARC.
- BS5979: Section 7 – Records.
- BS5979: Section 8 – Contingency Plan.
- BS7858: Screening of individuals working in a secure environment.
- BS EN ISO9001:2015 - Quality Management Systems.
- Ensuring that any outstanding audit recommendations have been implemented.

1.5 This report outlines the findings from both reviews.

2 Audit Opinion

2.1 Based on the audit work carried out in relation to compliance with the requirements of the British Standards, a reasonable level of assurance can be placed upon the control environment. We have made two recommendations for improvement.

3 Main Findings

3.1 ARC management was able to provide satisfactory evidence of compliance with the sample of BS requirements for BS5979:

- Section 5: Construction and Facilities
- Section 6: Operation of an ARC
- Section 7: Records
- Section 8: Contingency Plan

3.2 Compliance was also confirmed in all sampled areas of BS EN ISO9001:2015: Quality Management Systems.

3.3 ARC management was able to provide satisfactory evidence of compliance with the sample of BS7858:2019 requirement in all but one area. The BS requires that anyone undertaking the Screening Controller role be successfully screened in accordance with the standard. This requirement has not been fully met.

3.4 We confirmed that all Internal Audit recommendations have been fully implemented and there are no outstanding NSI improvement actions.

3.5 However, during the June 2022 NSI visit, ARC management received an ‘audit note’ advising that they should ensure maintenance providers are providing specific verifications on plant/equipment to ensure ongoing compliance with part of Section 5 of BS5979. Work is still ongoing with contractors to arrange the required maintenance checks. These must be in place in advance of the Summer 2024 NSI visit to avoid an NSI improvement notice which will then require the Council to have these arrangements in place within 28 days or risk losing its GOLD standard accreditation.

3.6 An action plan is provided at section four outlining our observations, risks, and recommendations. We have made two recommendations for improvement. The priority of each recommendation is:

Priority	Definition	Total
High	Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.	1
Medium	Less critically important controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	1
Low	Lower-level controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	0
Service Improvement	Opportunities for business improvement and/or efficiencies have been identified.	0

3.7 The audit has been undertaken in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

3.8 We would like to thank officers involved in this audit for their cooperation and assistance.

3.9 It is recommended that the Head of Audit and Inspection submits a further report to Committee on the implementation of the actions contained in the attached Action Plan.

4 Action Plan

No.	Observation and Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response
Key Control: Arrangements are in place to ensure that ARC management and staff comply with the requirements of BS7858:2019.				
1	BS7858:2019 Screening of individuals working in a secure environment, requires those undertaking the Screening Controller role to be screened in accordance with the requirements of BS7858. The Screening Controller ensures that all ARC staff are also screened to this standard when commencing employment at the ARC. The current arrangements at the ARC do not fully meet this requirement.	Senior management should ensure that action is taken to ensure full compliance with the requirements of BS7858:2019 Screening of Individuals.	**Medium**	**Response:** Accepted. **Officer Responsible for Implementation:** Operations Manager - Alarm Receiving Centre **Timescales for Implementation:** 31 March 2024

No.	Observation and Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response
Key Control: Arrangements are in place to ensure that ARC management and staff comply with the requirements of BS7858:2007.				
2	The ARC is required to ensure maintenance providers are providing specific verifications on plant/equipment in order to comply with BS5979 (Section 5). Work is still ongoing with contractors to arrange some of the required maintenance checks. These must be in place in advance of the Summer 2024 NSI visit to avoid an NSI improvement notice, which will then require the Council to have these arrangements in place within 28 days or risk losing its GOLD standard accreditation Failure to have the appropriate maintenance in place and/or failing to maintain a record of completed maintenance increased the risk of harm to staff and/or loss of essential ARC accreditations.	Senior management should ensure that the required checks are completed as soon as possible, any remedial action identified is taken promptly, and a documented record of the maintenance and any subsequent work is retained and accessible. This must be in place prior to the next NSI visit in Summer 2024.	**High**	**Response:** Accepted. **Officer Responsible for Implementation:** Operations Manager – Alarm Receiving Centre **Timescales for Implementation:** 31 May 2024