



# External Commitments

## Service Delivery Promise

The County of Essex is committed to developing strategic partnerships within our region and across our communities to address issues that impact all County residents. At times these issues fall outside the legislated mandate of the upper tier government but are assessed to be important initiatives that warrant County involvement and contribution. In other instances, contributions are mandatory as part of established service delivery models and agreements. The County of Essex remains vigilant in identifying and responding to these external commitments for the betterment of all County residents.

## External Commitments



### Level of Service Statement

The County's external commitments are categorized as either legislated or discretionary. Legislated commitments include funding for shared services relating to public health, property assessment, social services and social housing. Currently, the County supports discretionary commitments related to hospice services, hospital support, regional economic development, tourism, physician recruitment, connectivity, homelessness and poverty and regional tax appeal support.

### 2022 Achievements and Challenges

The 2022 Budget included funds to review the existing Social Housing Funding Agreement with the City of Windsor as well as explore the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy. While discussions with the City occurred throughout the year on these topics, formal reviews were not initiated. Both projects are proposed to carry over to 2023.

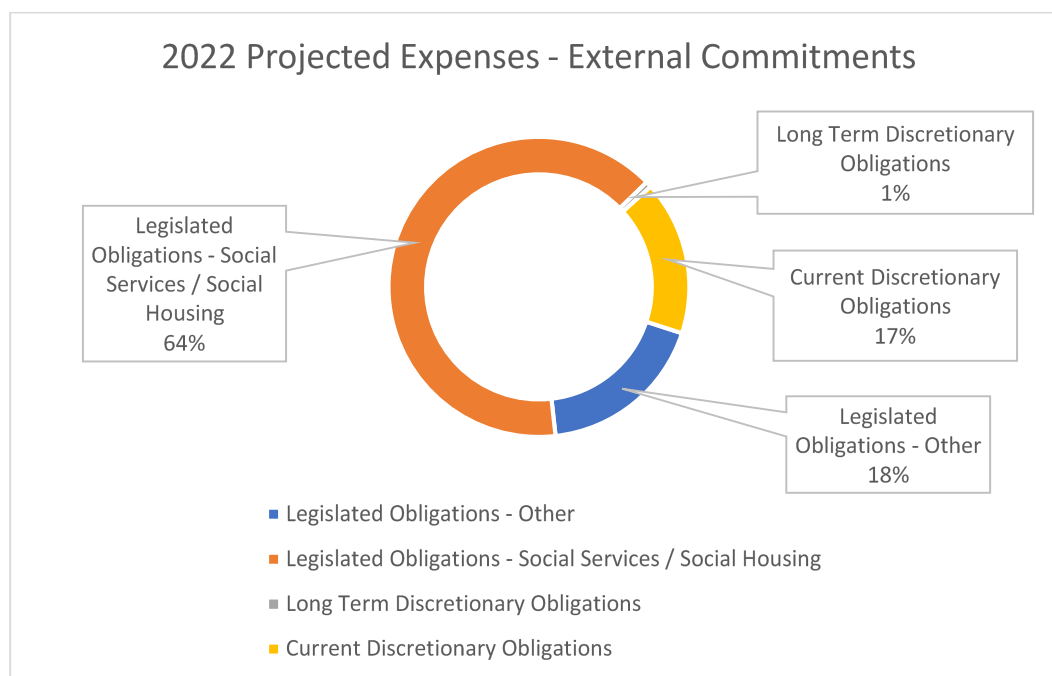
County Council approved financial support for a number of new initiatives in 2022. A two-year commitment, funded from the Rate Stabilization Reserve, to the Essex Kent Scottish Regiment and Scottish Borderers Foundation began in 2022 with the first of two \$50,000 payments being made during the year. The 2023 Budget includes the second and final payment in support

of their fundraising campaign. A pilot project to establish a Community Hub program in Leamington, funded by the Safe Restart Reserve, aims to provide pandemic, health and well-being related support services to the area's vulnerable population. This pilot project has a two-year commitment. The Corporation also agreed to take on the oversight and operation of the region's Isolation and Recovery Centre (IRC) from the City of Windsor. Fully funded by the federal government (PHAC), the IRC provides isolation and recovery services to the agri-farm worker population impacted by COVID-19. The IRC is approved to operate through to March 31, 2023.

The Corporation continued its financial funding strategy to contribute to reserve to prepare for major capital repair and maintenance of the existing social housing stock. The City of Windsor, as the regional service provider, is responsible for establishing and executing the capital maintenance plan. The County is financially prepared to contribute its share of the capital cost as the City initiates repairs.

The Corporation also maintained its commitment to the New Windsor Essex Hospital System during 2022 by contributing \$6,360,000 to reserve.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of spending in External Commitments for this past year (projected to December 31, 2022).



## Opportunities and Challenges for 2023

Economic concerns, prolonged high inflation and COVID-19 continue to dominate the landscape for 2023. Offsetting these challenges are major industrial development announcements for the region including the construction of an electric vehicle battery plant. Homelessness, mental health and addiction are real concerns for the region and put pressure on already taxed social services and housing programs. Strong collaboration and cooperation will be key to the region's success in overcoming these chronic issues.

## Proposed 2023 Budget Plan

Dialogue will continue at the local, regional, provincial and federal levels of government focusing on modernization, efficiencies and collaborative solutions to regional issues.

The 2023 proposed budget includes an increase in the Corporation's share of the Windsor Essex County Health Unit. Not yet included in the health unit budget are costs to address the Windsor Office Redevelopment Project.

As approved by Council in 2021, year two of a 20-year commitment to The Bridge to support Affordable Housing Units in Leamington has been included in the 2023 Budget. Also included are allocations (funded by reserve) to review the regional funding agreement for Social Housing (with a focus on how new units might be funded) as well as the development of a Regional Affordable Housing Strategy. The 2023 Budget increases the 2022 level of funding for social housing stock renewal from \$1,650,000 to \$1,850,000 based on updated draft capital renewal plans provided by the City. As Social Housing capital requests are received from our service partner, the City of Windsor, withdrawals from the reserve will be made.

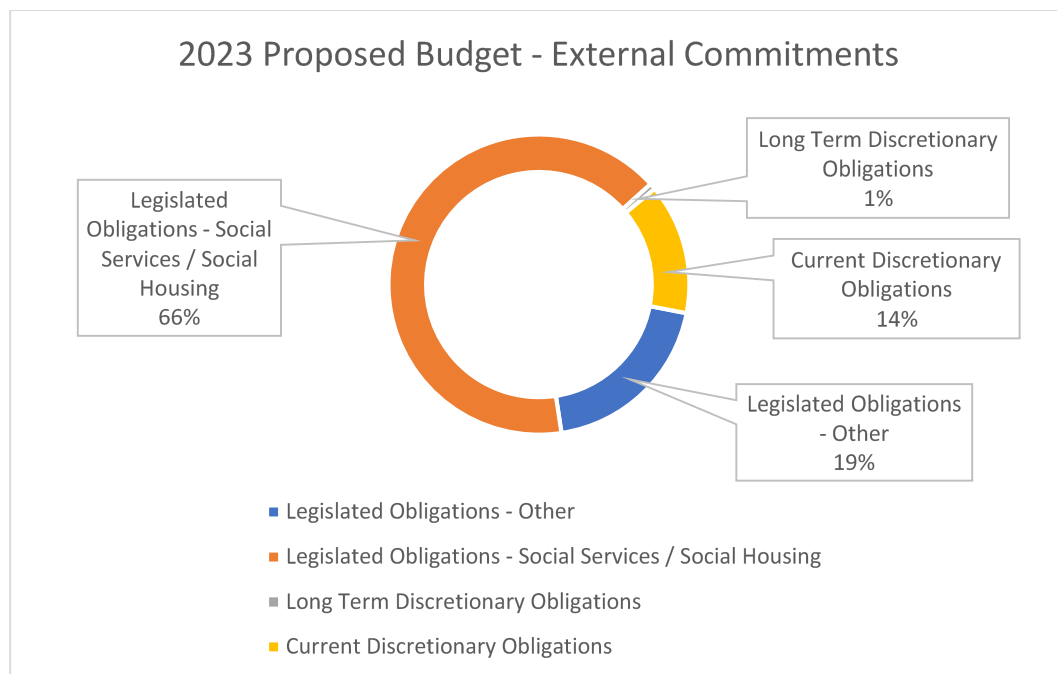
The 2023 Budget proposes a contribution to the New Windsor Essex Hospitals System Reserve in the amount of \$6,940,000. The amount is in keeping with the funding model presented to Council at the initiation of the project and represents an annual increase in contribution of approximately 0.5% of the total levy.

Other initiatives include:

- Modest savings as Physician Recruitment work is planned to remain operating under a work-from-home model when re-initiated;
- Community Safety and Well Being Plan co-ordinator and an allocation for implementation initiatives to continue in 2023;

- Commitments to SWIFT initiatives is continued at 2022 funding levels. Due to uncertainty regarding our financial obligation to future projects, the 2023 SWIFT commitment will be funded from the Rate Stabilization reserve;
- Final installment of the financial support for the Essex Kent Scottish Regiment;
- Full year of pilot program support for the Homelessness Hub in Leamington; and
- Fully funded IRC costs to operate the isolation and recovery centre to the end of March 2023.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of proposed 2023 Budget spending in External Commitments.



Overall, the 2023 Budget for External Commitments, net of recoveries, totals \$35,072,060 (an increase of \$523,990 (1.52%) over the 2022 Budget of \$34,548,070).