



Administrative Report

Office of the Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

From: Melissa Ryan, CPA
Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Date: Wednesday, December 20, 2023

Subject: Current Financial Agreements-External Commitments

Report #: 2023-1220-FIN-R24-MR

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide County Council with an overview of all current financial agreements in place where the County allocates budget dollars to external agencies in response to resolution #270-2023, adopted at the County Council meeting on Wednesday, October 4, 2023.

Background

Resolution #270-2023 required a report on all current financial agreements within the County, which includes a listing of cost sharing agreements between the City and the County, and the County and third parties.

The County of Essex has always maintained a strong commitment to developing strategic partnerships within our region and across our various communities. This collaborative approach is evident by our participation in funding external commitments. These external commitments may take various forms, including voluntary contributions and those mandated by established service delivery models and agreements.

Discussion

The County classifies its external commitments into legislated and discretionary categories. Legislated commitments involve funding for shared services encompassing public health, property assessment, social services, and social housing. The County currently supports discretionary commitments associated with hospice services, hospital support, regional

economic development, tourism, connectivity, homelessness and poverty initiatives, and regional tax appeal support.

For a comprehensive overview of the County's 2023 Budget and Projected obligations under legislated and discretionary external commitments, please refer to Appendix A.

Attached as Appendix B is a document titled "Summary of Shared Services/Funding Partner Share (2023 Budget)." This document provides a breakdown of the funding allocation for our County-funded External Commitment stakeholders. It encompasses various types of funding partners receive, along with specifics about their individual funding models.

Legislated Obligations

Within the category of legislated obligations, the following stakeholders are defined: The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), City of Windsor-Social Services, City of Windsor-Social Housing-Operations, City of Windsor-Social Housing-Capital Renewal, Social Housing-Reviewing of Funding Agreement, and Social Housing-Affordable Housing Strategy.

*The **Windsor-Essex County Health Unit***, with other agencies and health providers, seeks to enable all Windsor and Essex County Residents to be as healthy as possible. Public health programs keep our community healthy by promoting improved health, preventing disease and injury, controlling threats to human life and function, and facilitating social conditions to ensure equal opportunity in attaining health for all. In 2023 the County budgeted to contribute \$3,251,900 to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and is projected to fund that exact amount by year end.

The ***Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC)***, is Ontario's property expert. They create and maintain a comprehensive database of information for each of the more than five million properties in Ontario. They are responsible for delivering property values, insights and services to taxpayers, municipalities, governments and businesses. In 2023 the County budgeted to contribute \$2,610,800 to MPAC and is projected to fund that exact amount by year end.

The ***City of Windsor-Social Services, City of Windsor-Social Housing-Operations and City of Windsor-Social Housing-Capital Renewal*** are committed to enhancing the quality of life of individuals and families in Windsor and Essex County. They deliver or partner with community agencies to provide employment, financial and housing supports, and children's services. In 2023 the County budgeted to contribute \$6,820,000 to Social Services, \$11,180,100 to Social Housing- Operations and \$1,508,000 to

Social Housing-Capital. The projected spending in 2023 is \$6,193,670, \$10,932,580 and \$1,246,100 respectively.

The ***Social Housing-Reviewing of Funding Agreement and Social Housing-Affordable Housing Strategy*** were included in the 2023 Budget 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 2023 year on these topics, the \$200,000 in funding budgeted for these initiatives were not spent as additional formal commitments have not been confirmed. Both current projects are proposed to carry over to 2024 and there will be no funds expensed in 2023.

Long-Term Discretionary

Under the Long-Term Discretionary funding category there is funding to ***Hospice- Erie Shores (Leamington)***. This annual \$200,000 commitment will end in 2023, however, there is a request to continue to fund this amount to Erie Shores Health care in 2024 pending a delegation by the hospital.

Current Discretionary

Within the existing Discretionary category, you will find a roster of various stakeholders, including Invest WindsorEssex, Tourism Windsor Essex/Pelee Island (TWEPI), MTE-Tax Appeals for Lower Tiers, Windsor Essex County Environmental Committee, Community Safety and Well Being Plan, Leamington Community Hub Pilot Project, The Bridge, SWIFT- WOWC Broadband Initiative/Fibre, ProsperUs, Scottish Regiment, and the Isolation & Recovery Centre.

Invest WindsorEssex is a not-for-profit organization supported by the City of Windsor and County of Essex. They are responsible for advancing economic development to grow and sustain prosperity in the region. The County of Essex funded \$1,122,060 to Invest WindsorEssex in 2023 and is expected to fund that exact amount by year end.

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI) is the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the regional tourism industry. They are a not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to promoting and selling Windsor, Essex and Pelee Island as a remarkable destination for tourist, convention goers and business travelers. In 2023 the County was budgeted to contribute \$782,000 to TWEPI and is expected to fund that exact amount by year end.

Municipal Tax Equity Consultants-Tax Appeals for Lower Tiers is a program funded through reserves and the funds are utilized to hire

consultants to assist in the tax appeal process. In 2023 the County budgeted to spend \$125,000 on this initiative. At this time only \$10,000 is expected to be expensed by year end. The larger annual budgeted amount is expected to materialize when the reassessment of properties occurs. At this time there has been no communication confirming a date for reassessment.

The Windsor Essex Environmental Committee's mission was to protect and enhance the quality of life in Windsor and Essex County by providing advice, guidance, and counsel to City and County Councils on policies and procedures and providing supporting advocacy, community education and outreach programs. In 2023 it was communicated to the County that this committee was not operational as City Council is in the process of re-building Advisory Committees and the application process is pending. The 2023 annual budgeted amount was expected to be \$24,000. No funds will be dispersed in 2023 and no commitment of funding is being included in 2024 budget pending budget deliberations.

The Community Safety and Well Being Plan is a joint initiative with the City of Windsor and other stakeholders. The City of Windsor and the municipalities of the County of Essex, in partnership with agencies and organizations from many sectors, have developed a plan to support the safety and well-being of communities within Windsor and Essex County. The County budgeted spending of \$102,000 on this initiative and it is expected to be paid by year end.

The Leamington Community Hub Pilot Project aims to provide pandemic, health and well-being related support services to the area's vulnerable population. This pilot project that began in 2022 had a two-year commitment, with \$250,000 being committed in 2023 and expected to be paid out by year end. This program is proposed to progress into a regular program starting in April 2024, pending budget deliberations, due to the need from the community and the successful outcomes of the program.

The Bridge Youth Resource Centre is a resource centre, accepting youth as they are, with warmth and empathy. Their mission is to provide youth with hope for their future. This partner receives \$48,000 annually from the County for their regular annual operations as part of a 20 year commitment.

Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) is a nonprofit municipality led broadband expansion project created to improve internet connectivity in underserved communities and rural areas across Southwestern Ontario. In 2023 \$100,000 was budgeted to be spent on this initiative. At year end we are not anticipating spending any of this budget.

Over the past few years, many of Windsor-Essex County's leaders have come together to identify a roadmap for change and make a pledge to the

future of our community. A firm commitment was made to align community resources to ensure that the most vulnerable, and the most promising members of our population – our children and youth – succeed in their education, career and life. This cross-sector, outcome-focused partnership is called **ProsperUs**. The County has previously committed \$50,000 in funding to this stakeholder and in 2023 \$50,000 is expected to be spent as at year end.

A two-year commitment of \$50,000 per year to the **Essex Kent Scottish Regiment and Scottish Borderers Foundation** began in 2022 in support of their fundraising campaign and ends in 2023. The County of Essex will fund the \$50,000 by year end.

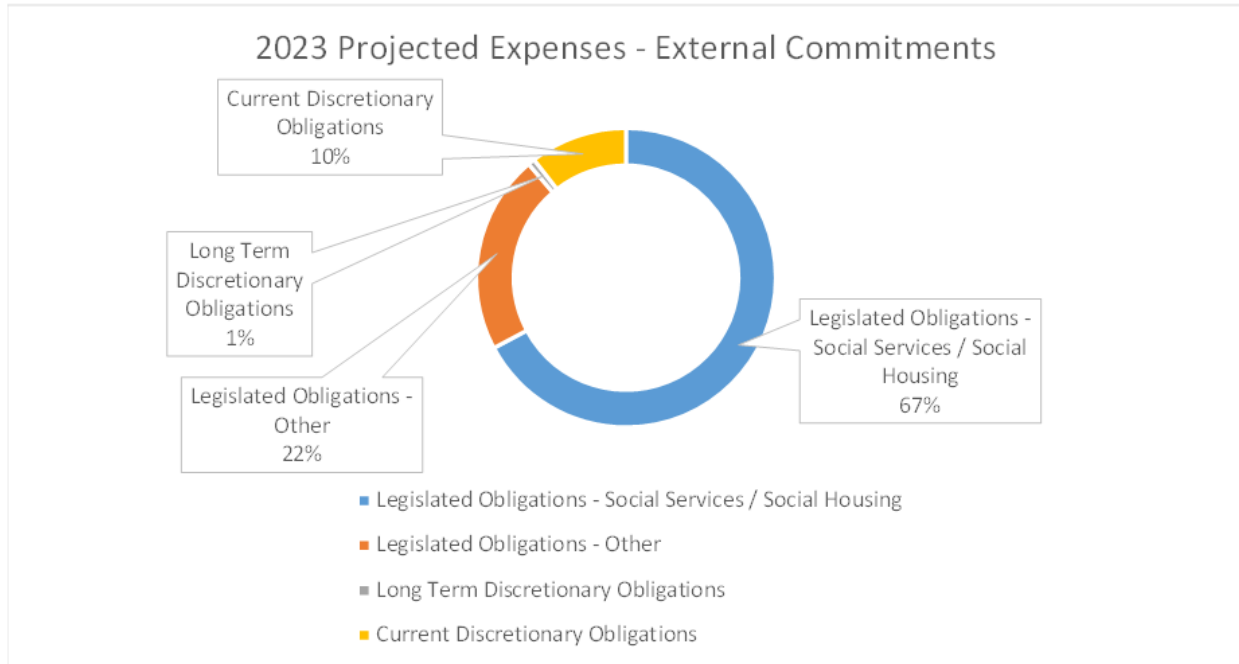
The Corporation agreed to take on the oversight and operation of the region's **Isolation and Recovery Centre (IRC)** from the City of Windsor. Fully funded by the federal government (PHAC), the IRC provides isolation and recovery services to the agri-farm worker population impacted by COVID-19. The IRC operated until March 31, 2023 and \$416,520 was spent in 2023 out of the \$1,415,400 originally budgeted.

Throughout 2023, the Corporation has upheld its dedication to the **New Windsor Essex Hospital System**, channeling \$6,360,000 into reserves. The County remains steadfast in its commitment to offer support of up to \$100 million for this initiative, with these yearly contributions serving as a sustainable funding source, with the intention to negate the necessity to take on debt for this project.

Discretionary Grants

The only funding partner under this category is **The University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus**. Ridgetown campus is an institution strongly focused on teaching, research and technology transfer. This \$500 bursary is annually presented to the top Essex County student at the Ridgetown campus. The full \$500 will be spend by year end.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of spending in External Commitments for this past year (projected to December 31, 2023).



Financial Implications

Funding for external commitments will form part of the 2024 budget deliberations.

Consultations

Kelly Robinson, Financial Analyst

Heidi McLeod, Manager Accounting/Deputy Treasurer

Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive the report, Current Financial Agreements-External Commitments for information purposes.

Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Ryan

Melissa Ryan, CPA, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Concurred With,

Sandra Zwiers

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix	Title
Appendix A	External Commitment Details
Appendix B	Summary of Shared Services/Funding Partner Share