



Administrative Report

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

From: David Sundin, BA (Hons), LL.B., Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Subject: County Intensive Supportive Housing Program – Addendum Supplementary

Report #: 2025-0115-LLS-R05-DMS -As Amended

Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Report (the "**Report**") is to seek direction from County Council as to whether or not the County should continue to have an Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the County.

Background

As Council is well aware, in the 1990s when the Province downloaded certain provincial responsibilities to municipalities, it appointed the City of Windsor (the "**City**") as the Consolidated Regional Service Manager for social services for both the City and the County of Essex (the "**County**"). Since that appointment as the Consolidated Regional Service Manager, the City has been provided with funding from both the provincial and federal governments to provide social services, including programs related to addressing homelessness in both the City and the County.

For many years, the City has provided the County with an allocation of money that fluctuates slightly from year to year for homelessness initiatives. The funding is currently from a provincial funding source known as the Homelessness Prevention Program ("**HPP**"). The HPP allotment from the provincial funds provided to the County for 2025 is currently set at \$2,491,240.

For a number of years, the County has contributed County municipal tax dollars in the sum of \$448,640 to supplement the amount provided by the Province through the City. Further the County has provided County employees as support staff to oversee/manage the HPP funded programs in the County. Finally, effective April 1, 2024, the City and the County entered

into an agreement to formalize the County overseeing/managing HPP funded programs on behalf of the City in the County (the "**Funding Agreement**").

Traditionally, the HPP funds provided by the Province through the City were used to fund what is now known as "Residential Services Homes", which was formerly known as the "Housing with Supports" Program (the "**Traditional Supportive Housing Program**"). The Traditional Supportive Housing Program has been used to provide permanent housing, food services, supervised care, and other supports, to low income individuals who require some assistance with activities of daily living.

The Funding Agreement now provides the County with a set amount of funds for the Traditional Supportive Housing Program along with the operation of a Homelessness Hub in Leamington, the operation of an Emergency Shelter Program in the County, and a dedicated Homelessness Street Outreach Worker.

In 2022, the County and the City each began operating a supportive housing program that was more intense than the Traditional Supportive Housing Program, in that it provided specialized supports to those individuals experiencing homelessness and that are facing complex medical needs and/or mental health and/or addiction issues (the "**Intensive Supportive Housing Program**").

The City, as the Consolidated Regional Service Manager, has decided to fund the City's Intensive Supportive Housing Program (the "**City's Program**") differently than the County's Intensive Supportive Housing Program (the "**County's Program**"). The difference means that the City's Program receives approximately \$200,000 more per year from provincial funds than the County's Program does. That being said, the City's Program is also being sustained through a substantial contribution from the City's municipal tax base. The County's understanding is that approximately 50% of the cost of the City's Program is funded from the City's municipal taxes. Conversely, to date, the County's Program has not received any support from municipal taxes.

The County's Program is currently set to end on March 31, 2025, and will be unable to continue unless there is a commitment from the County to provide municipal tax dollars to subsidize the County's Program and/or a reconsideration by the City as to the amount allocated from the provincial and federal funds available to the Region to support the County's program.

Discussion

In anticipation of the County's Program ending on March 31, 2025, Administration approached a number of the County's community partners and existing providers of the County's Residential Services Homes Program to obtain some insight on the costs to continue providing the County's Program past March 31, 2025. That approach was made through a process known as a Request for Information ("**RFI**"). The RFI process is used to gain information in a non-binding way. Should County Council wish to further explore continuing the County's Program a formal Request for Quote ("**RFQ**") will be required.

Based on the RFI process, it appears that the County would be required to contribute between \$120,000 a year on the low end and \$390,000 a year on the high end, should County Council wish for the County's Program to continue to operate. The precise amount will not be known unless and until a formal RFQ process is completed.

There is the possibility that the amount required from the County to subsidize the County's Program could be reduced if the City provides the County with a larger amount from the provincial and/or federal funds allotted to the Region as a whole, if another funding source becomes available, or if other service providers with funding from other provincial and/or federal sources can assist with the County's Program. However, that is speculative at this point, with all previous attempts to find alternate funding or supports being unsuccessful.

Direction is required from County Council as to whether it is the desire of Council to continue the operation of the County's Program, or to cease the operation of the County's Program.

Supplementary Information – Addendum

Following this Report being provided to Council, Administration learned that on January 9, 2025, AMO published a Report entitled "Municipalities Under Pressure: The Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis" (the "**AMO Report**"). The AMO Report was conducted by HelpSeeker Technologies, in partnership with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario ("**AMO**"), the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, and the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. On January 9, 2025, AMO provided a [press release](#) regarding the AMO Report along with a link to the full [AMO Report](#). Attached to this Report as **Appendix A** is a copy of the Summary of the AMO Report.

Administration wanted to ensure that the very timely and detailed statistics and information contained in the [AMO Report](#), and the related [press release](#)

and AMO Report Summary, was available to Council prior to Council's discussion regarding the contents of this Report.

Financial Implications

Should Council direct Administration to continue the operation of an Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the County, there will be costs, that, through the RFI process, Administration believes will result in an annual obligation of the County of between approximately \$120,000 and \$390,000. However, the precise amount will not be known until a formal procurement process results in a quote being provided that a Proponent is legally obligated to honour.

Should the County Program be continued, Administration recommends funding any transition costs and any further net operating costs of the County Program in 2025 with excess Safe Restart Funds. However, the County will have to be prepared to support the County Program with levy funds in the future, and likely for an extended period of time. Most service providers will expect a multi-year contract before engaging in offering this type of program.

Should Council direct Administration to cease the operation of an Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the County, there will be costs for that as well. Those costs are more difficult to clearly identify. The costs will not likely have a direct impact on the County's municipal levy (other than through the potential for increased calls to EMS), but there will be costs if the people utilizing the current Intensive Supportive Housing Program are left homeless. Anecdotal evidence suggests that homelessness results in increased costs to the shelter system, to the healthcare system, and to emergency services.

Consultations

In drafting this Report, consultations were held with:

- Jeanie Diamond-Francis, Manager, Community Services
- Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer, and
- Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

Strategic Plan Alignment

Working as Team Essex County	Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence	Building a Regional Powerhouse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County <input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive Report Number 2025-0115-LLS-R05 DMS – County Intensive Supportive Housing Program as information and provide direction to Administration as to whether or not to continue operation of an Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the County by adopting 1 of the following 2 resolutions:

- (1) Essex County Council directs Administration to commence a formal procurement process with respect to an Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the County, report back to Council regarding the outcome of same and for further direction, and continue operating the existing County Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the meantime; or
- (2) Essex County Council directs Administration to wind up the existing Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the County, and to take such steps and expend such monies as are necessary for same.

Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

David M. Sundin

David Sundin, BA (Hons), LL.B., Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

Concurred With,

Sandra Zwiers

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

Appendix	Title
A	Municipalities Under Pressure: The Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis – Report Summary