

Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

To: Chair and Members, Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee
From: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development
Subject: August Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response
Date: August 16, 2023

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, that the following Actions be taken;

- a) That, the August Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response Report **Be Received** for information;
- b) To **AUTHORIZE and APPROVE** One-time Single Source contract agreement with Ark Aid Mission Services in the total estimated cost of \$130,000. to support:
 - i. Ark Aid Mission Services for continued services at 696 Dundas from 2:30pm-9:30pm daily from August 1, 2023, through September 30, 2023, in the total estimated cost of \$130,000.
- c) To **AUTHORIZE and APPROVE** a one-time contract amendment agreement to Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) at a total estimated cost of \$70,000. to support the Coffee House drop-in program with additional evening hours per day from August 1, 2023, through September 30, 2023;
- d) To **AUTHORIZE and APPROVE** a one-time contract amendment of existing agreements to London Cares for the continuation of service provision in Encampment Service Depots for a six (6)-week extension from August 14, 2023, to September 30, 2023, the total estimated cost of \$52,000,
 - i. for food total estimated cost \$42,000
 - ii. for water total estimated cost \$5,000
 - iii. for comfort stations total estimated cost \$5,000
- e) That, Civic Administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to undertake all administrative acts which are necessary in relation to this project, and;
- f) That, the approval given herein **BE CONDITIONAL** upon the Corporation amending a Purchase of Service Agreement.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made since the last report received at the July 24, 2023, Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee and subsequently the July 25th, 2023, Council meeting related to the endorsed Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response. In the time between the July monthly update and the August monthly update, there have been many key initiatives advanced. At this stage, the Implementation Tables have achieved the following outcomes:

Since the last report, and since the approval of the Hubs Implementation Plan, Civic Administration created and launched a Request for Proposals for the Hubs on August 4th, 2023. In addition to the release of the RFP, there have also been various updates related to advancing the work of the System Response including the Business Reference Table engagement and a plan for ongoing Community Engagement related to the System

Response and the formation of another implementation table focused on System Foundations. This report also seeks Council direction in awarding various contracts and contract amendments for the continued provision of supports and basic needs to those vulnerable Londoners currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The provision of services through what has been called Service Depots for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness will also undertake neighbour engagement measures and will continue to be evaluated as feedback is received, noting service delivery alterations will be made should they be required.

This report also provides a brief update on the ongoing advocacy efforts with other levels of government in an effort to access financial supports to implement the Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

This report aligns with the strategic areas of focus in the 2023-2027 [City of London Strategic Plan](#). The City of London Strategic Plan (2023-2027) identifies housing and homelessness as a key area of focus, and housing and homelessness work is identified throughout the Strategic Plan, impacting all areas of life for Londoners.

Housing and Homelessness

- Increased access to a range of quality, affordable, and supportive housing options that meet the unique needs of Londoners.
- Decreased number of Londoners at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Improved safety in London's shelters system

Wellbeing and Safety

- Londoners have safe access to public spaces, services, and supports that increase wellbeing and quality of life
- Housing in London is affordable and attainable

Links to Community Recovery

The City of London is committed to working in partnership with the community to identify solutions that will drive a strong, deep, and inclusive community recovery for London as we move out of and beyond the global COVID-19 pandemic. This report, and the items within, are linked to supporting Londoners experiencing homelessness to attain and retain permanent housing. This work supports recovery efforts through a coordinated response that will support the transition of individuals and families experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness who have a variety of support needs into permanent housing.

Analysis

● 1.0 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- July Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response (SPPC; July 24, 2023)
- June Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response (SPPC; June 20, 2023)
- May Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response (SPPC; May 09, 2023)
- Update – Whole of Community System Response Implementation (SPPC: April 18, 2023)
- Health and Homelessness Summits – Proposed Whole of Community System Response (SPPC: February 28, 2023)

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Service Depot Update:

The Encampment Implementation Table has continued to focus on the delivery of basic needs to vulnerable individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The group has also begun to move forward with a neighbourhood engagement plan through the use of a third-party resource under contract by one of the lead organizations. This intentional and targeted engagement of immediate neighbours will also be supported by Civic Administration from a communications and neighbourhood engagement perspective. A neighbour engagement survey for those living within 400-500 metres of a depot is nearing completion and will be shared directly with those in that catchment area in August.

The Encampment Implementation Table is recommending a 6-week extension for the ongoing response, from August 14, 2023, through September 30, 2023, for Phase 1 Depots. The Depot Response service locations will remain unchanged at this time, but as has been noted previously, should service alterations including location changes be required, those adjustments would be made and communicated.

The Encampment Implementation Table has also been working on their cold weather and extreme weather response plans, as individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness face a number of harsh environmental conditions, which certainly include the cold, but also wet and flooding conditions and extreme heat. The table continues to formulate a needs assessment, a service delivery plan, and resourcing requirements for any upcoming cold weather responses. These plans will be brought forward to the Strategy and Accountability table for discussion at the end of August and expect to be presented to Council in September.

The work of this table is to try and address the most basic needs of individuals right now, in a way that is safe and helps to reduce the precarity and desperation that currently exists. While delivering these basic needs through Service Depots, the table can begin to link the wind down of Service Depots to any cold weather community response and build in the linkage to the Whole of Community System Response through the creation of highly supportive housing and 24/7 Hubs this year.

2.2 Community Engagement Updates:

Following the July 25, 2023, Council meeting where direction was provided to create additional community engagement opportunities, Civic Administration with support from multiple service areas have developed a plan for a series of engagement sessions. These have been created to ensure that moving forward there is a continuous feedback loop between the Whole of Community System Response and community members.

The additional community engagements are scheduled for the end of August and early September at locations throughout the city as follows:

- North
Thursday, Aug 31 – Medway Community Centre

- South
Wednesday, Aug 30 – South London Community Centre

- West
Tues, Sept 5 – Byron Community Centre

- East
Wednesday, Sept 6 – East Lions Community Centre

- Central
Thursday, Sept 7 – Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre

These will follow a presentation and Q&A format, followed by one-on-one discussions. Working with business associations and the London Chamber of Commerce, two business-focused sessions are being scheduled.

In addition to the in-person events that promote education and awareness opportunities related to the Whole of Community System Response, a new tab on the Get Involved website has been created to allow ongoing feedback to be submitted by residents at their convenience. The information gathered throughout these events and online will be brought forward to Council as part of the reporting back process related to the Hubs RFP in September.

2.3 Implementation Progress Updates:

To date, the Business Reference Group, Developers Reference Group, Workforce Development, Encampment Implementation Table, Highly Supportive Housing, and Hubs Implementation Tables have all been meeting. The work of these tables has been guided by the Strategy and Accountability Table that continues to provide support and direction to the work of the various implementation tables. New to be launched in August is the System Foundations Table, which has been established and initial meetings are scheduled for later in the month. This table will work through the process of designing a proposed evaluation framework that will be reported back to Council. The evaluation framework will be aided by the partnership that is forming with the Centre for Research on Health Equity and Inclusion (CRHESI) as additional scope is defined related to research and reporting. Additionally, recognizing that the Hubs Implementation Plan has been approved, the Backbone Team is preparing to launch the Funders Reference Table, to bring together a number of funding bodies including Provincial and Federal funding partners to seek opportunities for priority alignment and funding related to the Hubs and Highly Supportive Housing.

*Below in **Figure 1** is an overview of where the system development efforts currently are, in relation to where it started with the Health and Homelessness Summits.*



Figure 1 System Development Overview

The following details provide a monthly update on activities and recommendations that have moved forward between the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC) meeting held on July 24, 2023, and the time of submission of this report.

Strategy and Accountability Table:

The Strategy and Accountability table has responsibility for guiding the overall implementation of the Whole of Community System Response and is populated by leaders from all organizations who are collaborating on system implementation. The Strategy and Accountability at the August 2, 2023, meeting welcomed a new member in

Budget Chair, Councilor Elizabeth Pelozo. At the Municipal Council, meeting held on July 25, 2023, it was resolved that the Mayor and the Budget Chair BE APPOINTED to represent the Municipal Council at the Strategy and Accountability table, for the Whole of Community System response, with the Deputy Mayor to serve as an alternate for either, if required.

Following the Council endorsement of the Hubs Implementation Plan, the August 2nd Strategy and Accountability meeting gave an opportunity for a fulsome discussion on lead agency criteria and preparation for the upcoming procurement process to secure lead agencies for Hubs. Additionally, this meeting initiated a critical conversation on how we are continuing to support the stability of the sector while Hubs are being stood up. This will be an ongoing conversation throughout the Whole of Community System Response and will be revisited again at the meeting at the end of August as it touches on work being done in the Workforce Development table around staff and management support, as well as System Foundations in how to we measure what's working and what's not in this sector.

The next meeting of the Strategy and Accountability table will focus on ways to ensure stability in the current system, review and discussion of plans related to Service Depots, Cold Weather/Extreme Weather Response, and updates from the various tables including updates stemming from the recent Business Reference Table meeting and System Foundations Table.

Finally, The Strategy and Accountability Table approved co-chairs for all five implementation tables and is also working to solidify the detailed definitions of principles and values.

Hubs Implementation Table:

Since the last update to Council, the Hubs Implementation Plan has been endorsed by Council and a procurement process has been initiated through the creation and launch of a Request for Proposals (RFP) through the Bids and Tenders portal on August 4th. The RFP seeks to secure lead agencies and locations for the first three to five Hubs. This process aims to have proponents selected ahead of the September SPPC and Council meetings for Council consideration.

Outside of the procurement process, members from this table will be conducting additional community engagement sessions the last week of August and first week of September across the city. There are two business-focused sessions also being stood up to ensure all community members get a chance to be updated on the Hubs process and be able to provide feedback ahead of those September committee and Council meetings.

Additionally, the Hubs table will begin to reconvene to start the work on additional operational protocols such as the One Number to call model and linking into the work of the Workforce Development table and Highly Supportive Housing.

Highly Supportive Housing:

The Housing Implementation Table has been meeting to focus on the goal of creating 100 highly supportive housing units in 2023. This table last met on July 31 and will be meeting again in August. This table has identified the elements of highly supportive housing and is beginning work on defining the Standards of Care of those elements (similar to the process conducted in the Hubs Implementation Table). Being able to clearly define what Highly Supportive Housing is, who is being supported in those models, the ways in which those services will operate is important work to be able to identify what types of spaces are needed, available, and easily aligned to this work. The Housing Implementation Table is also continuing to identify projects in the housing pipeline to find opportunities to meet the 100 units by the end of 2023.

Currently a number of projects have been identified and tabled as prospective projects, recognizing some are in differing stages of development and more costing and financing work needs to occur respectively for most of those identified.

As a glimpse into the opportunities being brought forward by various organizations as either planned projects or project ideas, the following was shared at the August 2nd, 2023, Strategy and Accountability Table:

Organization Name	Project Identifier	Number of Potential Units
Indwell	Various 4 Year Project Plans	239
Ark Aid	Upper Level Ark	10-12
Ark Aid	Two Houses	5 Bedrooms
Ark Aid	Modular Units	To be determined
CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health	Karen's Place	5
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Joan's Place	36
London Cares/London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC)	Mixed Residential/Medical Support Housing	50
City of London	Sylvan Street	42

The Housing Implementation Table has also created a draft working document that will be vetted through the Developers Reference Group to seek input and feedback for seeking out housing options including different purpose-built options, different size of potential housing projects, and feedback on conversion of commercial space to residential usage. This document outlines suggestions around exterior/communal space elements, service/amenity recommendations, safety supports, interior elements such as storage, individual unit layouts and furnishings.

The Housing Implementation Table has benefitted from input and participation from nearly 40 individuals representing multiple industries including the development community, healthcare, housing service providers, architects, frontline staff, mental health and addictions, youth services, developmental services sector, and Civic Administration.

Encampment Response:

The Encampment Response table launched temporary measures on July 4th, 2023, to support individuals currently sleeping unsheltered in encampments in four (4) locations adjacent to where encampments already exist. As noted previously in this report, the Encampment Implementation Table is actively finalizing a neighbourhood engagement survey for direct distribution to those in close proximity to the existing depots.

Since the launch of these temporary services, the following engagements and service levels have been recorded:

Number of Unique Individuals Engaged With: 445

Materials and Supplies Distributed:

- *Fire Safety Gear: 11*
- *Harm Reduction Equipment: 78*
- *Hygiene Supplies: 147*
- *Meal Kits: 1299*
- *Personal Supplies: 479*

Services Provided:

- *Addiction Support Services: 7*
- *Fire Prevention Education and Monitoring: 3*
- *Garbage and Site Clean Up: 88*
- *Harm Reduction Support: 20*
- *Housing Support: 12*
- *Hygiene and Sanitation Facility Access: 34*
- *System Navigation - Healthcare System: 26*
- *System Navigation - Social Service System: 38*
- *Transportation Assistance: 7*
- *Referrals: 27*

Additionally, beyond the services provided in the temporary service depot, ongoing engagement and interactions between service delivery organizations and members of the public took place at the depot locations. There have been many interactions with surrounding community members where agencies were able to answer questions and Concerns.

To date there have been 99 interactions with the public across the depot locations. Those engagements have been categorized as follows:

- *Education and awareness provided: 25*
- *Reporting of an incident: 3*
- *Feedback regarding concerns: 4*
- *Positive feedback provided: 30*
- *Supporting participants: 37*

The encampment response group continues to focus on maintaining the existing services to support individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and at this time, any plans for expansion to additional temporary locations are only in the discussion phase and require more details before being presented at the Strategy and Accountability Table and ultimately to Council in September. As previously noted, the service depots are aligned to the beginning of both Hubs and any interim or additional cold weather response.

Workforce Development Implementation Table:

The Workforce Development Table last met on July 26 to explore currently existing roles within this sector, their associated skill sets and spent time matching those skills with the functions of the Hubs. Once that was established, the table then identified the top 10 training priorities for the Hubs workforce. The next step for this table will be to identify where this training is offered, how can those resources be connected into the work of opening the first three to five Hubs and then to the broader sector so all organizations can have access to similar training in a timely manner. Additionally, this table is seeking ways to explore how its workforce and leadership, can heal and grow through listening, sharing and developing solutions to help improve the culture broadly across the sector.

The Workforce Development table is a valuable resource to support the many aspects of curating a sustainable and highly functioning workforce at the Hubs and the rest of the system. Throughout the summit process frontline workers across sectors shared their lived experience of losing those they had been trying to support to this healthcare and housing crisis. The moral distress, burnout, and inequity in pay are focal points that the table continues to hold as matters to address.

These processes will help inform discussions within the broader workforce on where there can be improvements to staff and leadership supports like critical incident debriefing, mental health supports, training opportunities, and so on.

Business Reference Table:

A business reference table meeting was held August 3 with members of the London Chamber of Commerce, Downtown London BIA, and Old East Village BIA. The table had a comprehensive discussion on ways in which the business sector could be better supported as Hubs are stood up around the community. Members of Civic Administration, including from Planning and Economic Development helped facilitate the conversations to support the direct sharing of ideas. These ideas, as generated by the Business Reference Table will continue to be developed and as soon as the group has landed on identifiable items that require new investments, they will be brought back to Council for consideration.

Also coming out of this meeting was a discussion on the two business-focused engagement sessions – with one scheduled for end of August and one in early September – to ensure the business community has a chance to stay engaged in this work and continue to provide valuable feedback as they have throughout this process.

Indigenous Led Response

To ensure a culturally safe response that is appropriate for Indigenous community members, we will follow the lead of Indigenous colleagues and support an Indigenous-led system response, which is not designed in a colonial way and respects the deep knowledge and consultation already inherent in the Giwetashkad Strategy, and the intention to honour all relations in defining next steps.

There is a commitment to Indigenous representation in overall system governance and implementation co-design, and a commitment to recognizing that the definition of Indigenous homelessness is separate and distinct from the common colonialist definition of homelessness.

2.4 Government Relations and Strategic Advocacy Efforts

Following the endorsement of the Hubs Implementation Plan in July, Civic Administration has held several technical briefings with local MPs, MPPs and federal and provincial officials. The Government and External Relations Division has worked to ensure that federal and provincial partners are kept informed on the status of the Whole of Community System Response.

On July 26, 2023, the Prime Minister of Canada announced a significant Cabinet Shuffle, with 30 of the 36 of the federal portfolios seeing new leadership. Of note, the Honourable Sean Fraser (Central Nova, NS) was named Minister of the newly combined Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. Furthermore, the Honourable Mark Holland (Ajax, ON) was appointed as Canada's Minister of Health and the Honourable Ya'ara Saks (York Centre) was named Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. The City of London maintains excellent working relationships with federal Ministries and set to work immediately alongside our local Members of Parliament to establish introductory briefings with these new Ministers and their officials on the Whole of Community System Response.

London is set to welcome more than 1,400 delegates from across Ontario's municipal sector to London as part of the 2023 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference. Members of the Executive Council of Ontario (Cabinet) will be attending as well. London has worked over the last month to seek delegations with key provincial officials to continue the discussions of provincial support for the Whole of Community System Response. AMO 2023 represents a significant opportunity for thoughtful discussion, idea sharing, and advocacy with Ontario's municipal sector and the Government of Ontario.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

This report seeks Council approval for contract amendments to existing London Cares and CMHA contracts in the total amount \$200,000, and One-time Single Source contract agreement with Ark Aid Mission Services in the total estimated cost of \$130,000, the selection process was undertaken in accordance with the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy and will be funded through existing Housing Stability Services budget.

There are no additional funding asks at this time related to the monthly System Response Update.

Recommended by: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager Social Health Development

Cc:

Lynne Livingstone,	City Manager
Scott Mathers,	Deputy City Manager, Planning & Economic Development
Kelly Scherr,	Deputy City Manager, Environment, and Infrastructure
Anna Lisa Barbon,	Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports
Barry Card,	Deputy City Manager, Legal Services
Cheryl Smith,	Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services
John Paradis,	Deputy City Manager, Enterprise Supports