## **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: October Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of

**Community System Response** 

**Date:** October 31, 2023

#### Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, that the following Actions be taken regarding October Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response report;

- a) That, the October Progress Update Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response Report **BE RECEIVED** for information;
- b) That, One-time grants of \$1,160,000 to Downtown London Business Association and \$500,000 to Old East Village Business Improvement Area (OEV BIA) **BE APPROVED**, with funding to be sourced from the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve from funds set aside to offset the financial impacts of COVID-19;
- c) That, Civic Administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to undertake all the administrative acts that are necessary in connection with b);
- d) That, the approval given, herein, **BE CONDITIONAL** upon the Corporation entering into a formal agreement relating to b) under by-law under s. 22.9 of the Council Procedure by-law;
- e) That, the Deputy City Manager Social and Health development **BE DELEGATED**, or written designate, the authority to approve any grant agreements related to b);
- f) That the London Service Depots Summary Report: Results From the First 60 Days of Implementation BE RECEIVED for information as attached as Appendix A.

#### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made since the last report received at the September 25th, 2023, Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC) and subsequently at the October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Special Council meeting related to the endorsed Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response. Since the end of September, progress has been made on a number of items.

With respect to moving forward with key aspects of the Whole of Community System Response, Civic Administration has worked with community groups from the Strategy and Accountability Table to bring forward recommendations related to measures to help sustain the existing homeless prevention system while the Whole of Community System Response transitions to a network of Hubs and highly supportive housing. Additionally, this report brings forward a set of supports for the London Downtown Business Association and the Old East Village Business Improvement Area that were tabled and endorsed at the Strategy and Accountability Table. These two business areas have been active in the Whole of Community System Response and the recommendations being brought forward reflect the voices of businesses and serve to provide for immediate measures to support businesses alleviate the impact of the health and homelessness crisis.

Across the Whole of Community System Response there have been various updates related to advancing the work of the System Response including the Business Reference Table identifying supports for the business sector as we stand up Hubs and Highly

Supportive Housing. As well, concentrated effort was undertaken to develop the *Community Cold Weather Response Report* presented at the October 31, 2023Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, to support those seeking shelter and those who have identified as self-sheltering this upcoming winter season. Finally, multiple tables met in September to continue advancing work related to key training deliverables for frontline staff associated with Hubs, drafting and refining an evaluation and measurement framework, onboarding a number of post-secondary institutions and research bodies, meeting with funders, and mapping out a detailed housing implementation plan. A housing plan and evaluation framework will be presented to Council in 2023.

## **Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan**

This report aligns with the strategic areas of focus in the 2023-2027 <u>City of London Strategic Plan.</u> 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

- September Progress Update Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response (SPPC, September 25, 2023)
- August Progress Update Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response (SPPC, August 16, 2023)
- 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 Implementation Tables' Progress Updates:

To date, the Business Reference Group, Developers Reference Group, Workforce Development, Encampment Implementation Table, Highly Supportive Housing, Hubs Implementation Table, System Foundations Tables, and most recently the Funders Table 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. At the September 28<sup>th</sup> Strategy and Accountability Table, Diane Silva, Director of Philanthropy at the London Community Foundation was endorsed as the second co-chair of the Funders Reference table, alongside Cheryl Smith who was selected in August. This table brings 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 September 25, 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. At the Municipal Council, meeting held on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 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. Councillor Peloza attended the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Following the Council endorsement of the Hubs Implementation Plan in July 2023, the September 28<sup>th</sup> and October 11<sup>th</sup> Strategy and Accountability meetings continued the critical conversation on how we are continuing to support the stability of the sector while the system transitions to the delivery of Hubs and highly supportive housing.

#### Sustaining the Sector:

Civic Administration is committed to supporting the existing sector of funded agencies in through the transition process as the new system is stood up. Funded agencies have been working to identify ways in which they need support while the system transitions.

What was shared and endorsed at the Strategy and Accountability table included identifying short-term tasks that could support staffing impacts, the easing of funding and service pressures and ways in which organizations and their direct service delivery staff could be a support for each other in the sector.

While transition funding supports for up to a 24-month period were identified, the specifics of each City funded organization will continue to be finalized between the organizations and Civic Administration. These funds will be administered through existing contract and purchasing processes and will come to committee for approval at a future date. Additional sector wide matters were identified that range from how the current workforce can be coordinated and utilized more effectively, workplace wellness initiatives, and pathways for organizations to mutually support one another in a more seamless manner.

These discussions will continue with a meeting between the Strategy and Accountability, Workforce Development and System Foundations co-chairs around some of the proposed solutions.

#### **Hubs Implementation Table:**

Since the last update to Council, the Hubs RFP process closed on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and the recommendations went to SPPC on September 25 where the first three Hubs locations and lead agencies were endorsed. This report went to Council on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, where it was also approved by Council. The first three Hub lead agencies are Canadian Mental Health and Addictions Thames Valley, Atlohsa Family Healing Services and Y.O.U.

The Hubs Implementation table met October 4<sup>th</sup> to start the work on additional operational protocols such as the One Number to call model and referral processes around the Hubs. They also launched the Integrated Lead Agencies and Partners Table to support lead agencies and service providers in preparing for a December 1 launch. This particular table will feed into and be informed by the broader Hubs Implementation Table. The Hubs Implementation Table will be meeting again in November.

#### **Community Engagement Updates:**

Following the July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Council meeting where direction was provided to create additional community engagement opportunities, Civic Administration with support from multiple service areas are continuing engagement opportunities. 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.

Staff and Encampment Table co-chairs supported a community engagement event on Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> for Ward 13. This engagement followed a drop-in format with one-on-one discussions with staff and subject matter experts.

#### **Highly Supportive Housing:**

The Housing Implementation Table has been meeting to focus on the goal of creating 100 highly supportive housing units in 2023 and plan for 600 units in the next three years. This table last met on October 10<sup>th</sup> to further refine their elements of highly supportive housing and to map out content and a process to generate a Highly Supportive Housing plan that can be a guide to advancing highly supportive housing, and something that Civic Administration can bring forward to committee and Council in December 2023. The strategy would outline what Highly Supportive Housing is defined as, the key elements that make up the services, the standards of care or the ways in which those services will operate and to identify what types of spaces are needed, the projected costs, and so on. 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.

The Housing Implementation Table and the broader Whole of Community System Response celebrated the partnership that emerged as part of the Health and Homelessness Summits between London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and London Cares. The two organizations made an announcement of their 25 highly supportive units on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The joint housing project in downtown London at 362 Dundas St. will immediately begin to house individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, many individuals of which have frequent and persistent use of the Emergency Department and hospital care. These units are an exciting step forward towards more housing projects within the community as organizations collectively aim to bring online 600 supportive housing units over the next three years.

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 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to support individuals currently sleeping unsheltered in encampments in four (4) locations adjacent to where encampments already exist.

The Encampment Implementation Table continues to focus on the delivery of basic needs to vulnerable individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The group launched a neighbourhood engagement plan using a third-party resource under contract by one of the lead organizations. This intentional engagement of immediate neighbours surrounding the depots was supported by Civic Administration as a way to engage the community and bring awareness to the services provided, as well as provide a space for those experiencing homelessness to share their input. The results of the neighbourhood engagement survey for those living within 400-500 metres of a depot and those accessing the depots is in draft form and will be shared directly with those in that catchment area. The London Service Depots Summary Report as attached as Appendix A to this report.

The Encampment Service Depots have made 1,027 referrals to additional service across the temporary depots. As the work associated with ramping up a Cold Weather Response, the existing Service Depot work will change, wind-down, and be incorporated into other responses.

The Encampment Implementation Table has also worked alongside service delivery organizations to develop the 2023 Cold Weather Response Plan. The plan is a two-step process by which we will move forward with items that are in place at this time, and plan to bring back some additional details and spaces in November to committee and Council.

The encampment response group continues to focus on maintaining the existing services to support individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and winding down these services down as they work to stand up the Cold Weather Response alongside the initial Hubs.

#### **Workforce Development Implementation Table:**

The Workforce Development Table met in September to support the broader conversation at Strategy and Accountability on sector stability by facilitating three conversations with frontline staff, frontline managers and system partners, and all sector leaders on safety within the sector. They will be working with the co-chairs of Strategy and Accountability to identify short-term actions the sector can take around safety and staffing impacts.

In addition to the work on safety, the Workforce Development Table led a session specifically on training priorities. The purpose of this exercise is that Hubs lead agencies will all be pursuing the same training from the same sources for consistency and accountability. The table is identifying who is currently offering what training, and what makes sense for the sector to pursue from a cost and time perspective.

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:**

The Business Reference Table has worked to identify key action items that can immediately support the business community while the system works to stand up Hubs and Highly Supportive Housing. Through the Strategy and Accountability table, the supports for businesses were endorsed which focus on two key aspects of acute recovery from the impacts in the core area from the impacts of the health and homelessness crisis. These supports will be issued through grants to the Old East Village (OEV) Business Improvement Area and the Downtown London Business Association. Each organization will administer the grants themselves and focus efforts towards:

- Direct Business Support Funding which will support enhanced street cleaning, facade, and safety improvement grants, etc.
- More Feet on the Street Funding which will support events, activations, security, etc.

Civic Administration is bringing forward the recommendation that Old East Village (OEV BIA) enter into a granting agreement for a period ending December 31, 2024, for an amount of \$500,000 and Downtown London BIA enter into a grant agreement for the same period in the amount of \$1.16M. The respective business association will administer and oversee the grants with their membership and report back to Civic Administration on the use of the funds on a schedule set out in the granting agreement. These supports for businesses are directly linked to the work of the Whole of Community System Response and have been developed through the Business Reference Table with support from Civic Administration and endorsed by the Strategy and Accountability Table. These requests are distinct and apart from any previous or future asks that may be linked to City of London funding requests or business cases being brought forward either by the associations themselves or Civic Administration. Please see Sect. 3.0 for Financial Impacts/Considerations for more information.

#### **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

September saw intensive efforts from the City of London and our partners in pressing the case for all-of-government funding for the Whole of Community System Response. Dialogue with provincial and federal officials continued in full, with numerous engagements taking place over the month. Civic Administration pressed forward with the implementation of London's allocation of the federal Housing Accelerator Fund, which includes significant support for the System Response. Building off of the momentum from London's advocacy efforts during the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference, Civic Administration, the Mayor's Office and members of Council have been tenacious in pursuing any and all opportunities to leverage time with provincial and federal officials to further the case for partnership in support of the System Response.

Throughout September, Civic Administration reached out with information to senior officials within the Ministries of Health, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Finance, and the Premier's Office. These efforts have opened up new lines of communication with centres of decision-making throughout the provincial and federal public service and the official's level. On October 18, Civic Administration undertook a significant briefing to senior provincial officials from the ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing as well as Health, strengthening the buy-in within the provincial government. Sustained engagements with provincial and federal officials throughout the month of September and October have leveraged further conversations.

The Ontario Minister of Finance has announced he will release Ontario's Fall Economic Statement on Thursday, November 2, 2023. The Fall Economic Statement represents an important opportunity for the Province to deliver key funding decisions on strategic files. London's advocacy efforts over the coming weeks will be dedicated to pressing for the inclusion of provincial support immediately. The City is deeply thankful to our community partners who have demonstrated unprecedented alignment toward this objective and the opportunity the Fall Economic Statement represents.

#### 3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

The Business Reference Table is putting forward two requests for financial support of the business community: \$500,000 for the Old East Village BIA and \$1.16M for the Downtown London Business Association to implement immediate supports to help businesses address the impacts of the Health and Homelessness crisis in those two catchment areas. These funds were set aside in the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve to mitigate potential impacts of COVID-19 and are considered an appropriate source of financing for this purpose. The remaining funds in this reserve pending Council's approval will be approximately,\$8.7M.

Additional supports for sustaining the sector will be finalized between Civic Administration and City funded agencies with applicable reporting back to Council for approvals as required.

**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

# London Service Depots Summary Report

Results From the First 60 Days of Implementation

July 4, 2023 - September 4, 2023

Prepared by



In collaboration with





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#### Section 1.0

# Introduction

## **Service Depots in London**

#### What Are Service Depots?

On July 4, 2023, Service Depots began operation in Ann Street Park, Cavendish Park, Wellington Valley Park, and Watson Street Park, bringing basic services like food, drinking water, washrooms, and garbage cleanups directly to people living in encampments.

#### What Is the Difference Between Hubs and Service Depots?

Service Depots are daily services that are set up for roughly 90 minutes per day in specific areas as an emergency response providing basic needs to individuals. They are a temporary crisis solution to help people already living unsheltered.

Hubs will be uniquely purpose-designed physical spaces across London that can provide a range of services under one roof. Hubs do not currently exist in London, but are being developed as part of London's Whole of Community System Response.

# **Methodology**

To better understand the impacts of Service Depots, three methods were used to gather data:

- **Service Delivery Statistics:** Using a mobile app, staff entered information about the services they delivered daily at Service Depots. The data in this report represents the timeframe of July 4, 2023 to September 4, 2023.
- Service Depot Participant Survey: Between August 21, 2023 and September 1, 2023, individuals accessing the Service Depots were asked to share their experiences through a survey. Surveys were provided in paper and electronic format. In total, 75 participants completed the survey.
- **Neighbourhood Resident Survey:** Residents who live within 500 metres of Service Depots received a postcard in the mail inviting them to participate in an electronic survey between August 21, 2023 and September 3, 2023. The survey was also available on the GetInvolved.London.ca website. In total, 215 individuals completed the survey.

# **Purpose of This Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the results from the first 60 days of Service Depot implementation. The time period covered includes July 4, 2023 to September 4, 2023. Results will be used to enhance Service Depots and inform the design of future initiatives, including a winter response.

#### Section 2.0

# Results

The following outlines the key findings derived from the service delivery statistics, Service Depot participant survey, and neighbourhood resident survey.

# **Key Finding**

Service Depots provided an immediate, multi-sectoral response to individuals living unsheltered.

**1,059** unique individuals have been served through the Service Depots

**5** organizations have been involved in providing Service Depot services

"Always good people and big smiles."

~ Participant

# **Key Finding**

Service Depots are addressing the acute health and safety needs of individuals living unsheltered.



## **Materials and Supplies Provided**

Water Bottles	13,798
Meal Kits	3,513
Personal Supplies	1,476
Hygiene Supplies	591
Harm Reduction Equipment	169
Fire Safety Gear	48

Total Materials and Supplies Provided 19,595

#### **Services Provided**

Garbage and Site Cleanup	148
System Navigation - Social Services	122
Hygiene and Sanitation Facilities Access	103
Referrals	82
System Navigation - Healthcare	58
Harm Reduction Support	52
Housing Support	33
Transportation Assistance	24
Addiction Services Support	16
Harm Reduction Equipment Disposal	10
Fire Prevention Education and Monitoring	4



Total Services Provided 652

"I'd be dead without you."

~ Participant

# As a result of the Service Depots, participants were more likely to have access to:

Meals/Food	97%
Drinking Water	97%
Personal Supplies	93%
Hygiene Supplies	88%
Harm Reduction Equipment	81%
Shower and Washroom Facilities	80%
Referrals to Social and Health Services	<b>75</b> %
Fire Safety Gear	68%

"I would not eat most days if this was not around."

~ Participant

# **Key Finding**

Service Depots are addressing the increased desperation due to lack of access to basic needs. **88%** of participants reported that if the Service Depots did not exist, it would negatively affect them

#### Without Service Depots, participants reported they would be:

1.	Hungry and thirsty
2.	Without basic supplies, washrooms, and showers
3.	More likely to engage in criminal behaviour to meet their basic needs
4.	Experiencing more life challenges
5.	Lonelier

# "I would have problems getting food without breaking the law."

~ Participant

## What Has Been the Most Helpful at the Service Depots

1.	Food
2.	Water
3.	Staff
4.	Hygiene
5.	Community
6.	Clothing

Safety and Security Reports	Yes	No
Depot Capacity	19	312
Fire	6	325
Underaged Individuals	3	328
Human Trafficking	1	330
Aggression or Threats	1	330
Violence	0	331
Weapons	0	331
Total	30	2,287

Of the total 2,317 safety and security reports submitted by staff, 98.7% (n=30) did not have any safety or security concerns identified.

# **Key Finding**

Service Depots are effectively implementing a human rights approach to support the needs of individuals living unsheltered.



99% of participants reported they were satisfied with the Service Depots.
96% of participants reported Service Depots have been helpful to them.
96% of participants reported that staff treated them with respect.
95% of participants reported they were comfortable accessing Service Depots.

"I would go hungry and freeze."

~ Participant

# **Key Finding**

Service Depots have demonstrated positive results in neighbourhoods, and opportunities for enhancement exist.

## Impact of the Service Depots on Neighbourhoods According to Residents

40%	Negative Impact
35%	No Impact
13%	Positive Impact
12%	Both Positive and Negative Impact

Respondents who indicated a 'negative impact' primarily discussed encampments rather than Service Depots. Respondents who reported 'no impact' noted they were not aware Service Depots or encampments existed.

"The unsheltered individuals in my area are less hostile and less impactful on the neighbourhood. It's clear that many of their challenging actions before the arrival of the Service Depots were cries for help."

~ Neighbourhood Resident

#### **Type of Impact Reported**



- 1. Increased basic needs being met
- 2. Decreased disruption and anti-social behaviour
- 3. Increased cleanliness



- 1. Increased garbage and debris
- 2. Decreased safety and security
- 3. Increased disruption
- 4. Increased crime
- 5. Increased number of individuals experiencing homelessness

# "Significant decrease in street violence and harassment."

~ Neighbourhood Resident

# What Has Gone Well With Service Depot Implementation

- 1. There is better waste management.
- 2. Basic needs are being met.
- 3. People are being treated with dignity and respect.
- **4.** Service Depots are positive and provide the support needed.
- 5. Portable washrooms have been positive; there is less human waste on the streets.

## **How Service Depots Could Be Improved**

- 1. Install public washrooms and showers, drinking fountains, and garbage cans permanently to address the demand until individuals are housed.
- 2. Provide wraparound, acute care for individuals who have serious mental health and physical health challenges.
- 3. Implement solutions to address the safety of individuals accessing Service Depots and neighbourhood residents.
- 4. Expand service time beyond the current 90 minutes daily.

#### Section 3.0

# Conclusion

Results from the initial 60 days of implementation demonstrate that Service Depots are:

- providing an immediate, multi-sectoral response to individuals living unsheltered.
- addressing the acute health and safety needs of individuals living unsheltered.
- addressing the increased desperation due to lack of access to basic needs.
- effectively implementing a human rights approach to support the needs of individuals living unsheltered.
- demonstrating positive results in neighbourhoods, and there are opportunities to enhance Service Depots.

The results from the first 60 days of Service Depot implementation will guide the operations of the four existing Service Depots and inform the design and launch of a winter response.