

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: November Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response
Date: November 21, 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 November Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response Report **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
- b) That, a one-time allocation up to the amount of \$251,000 **BE APPROVED** for Ark Aid's meal Invoice program from July to March 31, 2024.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made since the last report received at the October 31st, 2023, Special Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC) and subsequently at the November 7th, 2023 Council meeting related to the endorsed Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response. Since the end of October, 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 continues to make progress on implementation aspects of the Hubs including setting up an Integrated Partners and Lead Agencies table as lead agencies prepare to open Hubs; preparing a training plan for Hubs to be endorsed at Strategy and Accountability, and setting up an interim One Number solution to support Hubs when they open while the Hubs Implementation Table works on the formal One Number.

Multiple tables met in October to continue advancing work related to the evaluation framework for Hubs and the Whole of Community System response, safety baselines for frontline staff in Hubs and the broader sector and working on the details of a highly supportive 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 [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

- October Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response (SPPC, October 31, 2023)
- 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.

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 October 31, 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 25th, 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 in July 2023, the October 11th Strategy and Accountability meetings continued the critical conversation on how we are continuing to support the stability of the sector while the system begins to transition to the delivery of Hubs and Highly Supportive Housing. The November meetings will include review of the Hubs training plan, the progress update on the interim One Number Solution, the Integrated Lead Agencies and Partners Terms of Reference for Hubs Lead Agencies and service delivery partners providing services in the Hubs, and a progress update on housing projects, the evaluation framework, and additional backbone support services.

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 continue between the Strategy and Accountability, Workforce Development and System Foundations co-chairs around some of the proposed solutions, with recommendations being brought to Strategy and Accountability at the end of the month.

Hubs Implementation Table:

Since the last update to Council, the Hubs RFP process closed on September 5th, 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 5th, 2023, where it was also approved by Council.

The Integrated Lead Agencies and Partners Table continues to support lead agencies and service providers in preparing for a December 1 Hubs launch. This particular table will feed into and be informed by the broader Hubs Implementation Table. The Hubs Implementation Table meets again in November. Since the last monthly update, CMHA informed Civic Administration that they are unable to proceed with their Hub proposal. More details can be found in the RFP report on the change.

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 meets on November 13th to finalize the elements of highly supportive housing and to continue work on the Highly Supportive Housing Strategy going 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 continues 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 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.

The Encampment Implementation Table continues to focus on the delivery of basic needs to vulnerable individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

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 stand up the Cold Weather Response alongside the initial Hubs. The Encampment Table's Cold Weather Response was approved by Council on November 7, 2023. Please see the subsequent report on Cold Weather Response overnight offerings.

Ark Aid Street Mission (The Ark) has been providing meals as part of the encampment response since July, 2023. Civic Administration is recommending approval to extend meal provision provided through The Ark to March 31, 2024 at an estimated total cost of \$251,000 for the August 2023 to March 31, 2024 time period.

Previously, Ark Aid Street Mission was funded through London Cares as part of the 2022-23 Winter Response. As the agreement between The Ark and London Cares has expired, and food services remain a priority for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, The Ark will continue to provide this service as part of the Encampment Response and invoice the City monthly. The initial approval for meals was provided for in the June 13, 2023 CPSC "Encampment Response Update" report to a total of \$42,000. As the need for meals increased to support the response, Council approval is being sought to ensure consistency, transparency and proper approvals are in place to support this need. The need for additional council approval was identified when Civic administration was processing the September invoice. Payment of this invoice is pending Committee and Council endorsement.

Meals provided by the ark cost \$3.00/meal with 3 meals provided per day per individual. The initial estimate was to provide meals for approximately 80 individuals to utilize the \$42,000 approved in the June report to the end of September. This quickly increased to 100 individuals a day as the depots were quite busy and also being frequented by housed individuals. The number of individuals was again increased to 120 meals per day in mid august and has maintained that level since.

Workforce Development Implementation Table:

The Workforce Development Table is bringing various recommendations to the Strategy and Accountability Table in November for endorsement, including the Hubs training plan, recommendations around workforce wellness and an audit of 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.

System Foundation Table:

The System Foundation Table is taking a three-pronged approach to the evaluation frameworks of the Whole of Community System Response using the following: (1) Quintuple Aim (population outcomes, population experience, provider experience, total cost of care, health equity); (2) Structure, Process, Outcomes: We will consider each of these domains in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the system; (3) Now, Next, Later: evaluation will be considered within each of these three timelines. A mixed methods approach will be used to honor different forms of data collection and expression.

Working with academic research experts, staff from local organizations and system partners, the table is looking at various framework components such as outcomes and experiences of people with complex needs experiencing homelessness; outcomes and experiences of others experiencing housing precarity; experiences of those providing care to these groups; outcomes and experiences at the business and community levels; health equity considerations; costs, processes and structures of care; and an overall review of the Whole of Community System Response project. The Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion (CRHESI) has agreed to play a primary coordination and facilitation role among the multiple community partners who are participating in evaluation/research development, implementation and knowledge mobilization.

Business Reference Table:

Civic Administration brought 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. These recommendations were approved by

Committee and Council in November 2023. Additionally, the Hamilton Road BIA, Argyle BIA and Hyde Park BIA will be included within the existing Business Reference Table for future meetings.

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.

3.0 Funding Impacts

The total amount of funding recommended for approval through this report is \$251,000. Ark Aid Street Mission (The Ark) has been providing meals as part of the encampment response since July, 2023. Civic Administration is recommending approval to extend meal provision provided through The Ark to March 31, 2024 at an estimated total cost of \$251,000 for the August 2023 to March 31, 2024 time period. Previously, Ark Aid Street Mission was funded through London Cares as part of the 2022-23 Winter Response. As the agreement between The Ark and London Cares has expired, and food services remain a priority for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, The Ark will continue to provide this service as part of the Encampment Response with the source of funding through the Housing Stability Services 2023-24 budget.

4.0 Conclusion

The many aspects of the Whole of Community System Response continue to advance, which includes the continued development of the Evaluation and Measurement framework by the System Foundations Table in partnership with the Centre for Research on Health Equity and Inclusion (CRHESI) and post-secondary institutional partners.

The work to land a comprehensive Supportive Housing Plan is advancing at a rapid pace to be able to bring back a plan for Council review in December. Work to advance training components and solidifying Hubs operational plans also continue along with work to stand up an encampment strategy, cold weather response, and supporting the delivery of basic needs to vulnerable individuals that are experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Further updates on housing projects and detailed plans that outline the pathway for the work still to come as part of the Whole of Community System Response will be provided to Council as they become available.

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

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