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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON MAY 20, 2015
FROM:	SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME
SUBJECT:	IMMIGRANTS AND THE LABOUR MARKET: A LONDON PERSPECTIVE

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, the following report **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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BACKGROUND

The attached report, *Immigrants and the Labour Market: A London Perspective* (Appendix A) has been developed at the request of City Council, who at the February 27, 2014 meeting moved that:

“the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to dedicate the resources of a single internship placement in 2014, to work in conjunction with the Managing Director Housing, Social Services and the Dearness Home, to explore mechanisms to reduce or eliminate barriers experienced by newcomers in accessing employment and employment-related services in London”

A multi-faceted approach was used to develop the report including the hiring of a recent immigrant through the City's Paid Internship program and extensive support by the City's Policy & Planning Support unit. Consultations were held with ethno-cultural organizations, employment and settlement providers, and Social Services Employment staff. A review of best practices and of local research & planning documents was also undertaken. Key system partners provided review and guidance throughout the process.

London has a robust system of services and supports for immigrants. Our local organizations and approaches have been recognized provincially and nationally for their creativity and impact. However, some immigrants are having difficulty attaching to the labour market or they are not able to achieve full economic success. The purpose of the report was to examine what is working well for immigrant employment and to identify opportunities to address barriers that are experienced by immigrants with respect to employment supports and services.

Research on labour market integration indicates that that the employment outcomes of immigrants and specifically recent immigrants have been declining. Many immigrants are having difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment that is commensurate with their skills, education and experience. A variety of factors contribute to poor labour market outcomes including lack of foreign credential recognition, lack of Canadian work experience, unfamiliarity with Canadian workplace culture, limited social networks, changes in the Canadian labour market and the changing characteristics of immigrants (country of origin, visible minority status, language ability etc.).

Employment opportunities for immigrants and specifically recent immigrants are important for several reasons. Firstly, employment represents the primary source of income through which most individuals meet their basic needs such as housing and food. Secondly, many skilled workers come to Canada with the expectation that they will be able to obtain employment

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commensurate with their education and work experience. When these expectations are not met, incentives to remain in Canada are reduced. Thirdly, the prospect of a stagnant domestic labour pool combined with an increasing demand for skilled workers in our knowledge-based economy enhances the need to integrate immigrants into the Canadian labour market in a timely fashion.

Moving Forward

This report, which addresses a key area identified in the City’s 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, provides an overview of what is working well along with gaps that remain and opportunities to move forward. It will be widely disseminated and will be used to:

- Inform the Strengthening our Community priority in City’s 2015-2019 Strategic Plan to “support immigrants and newcomers to be successful as they settle in our community”
- Inform the strategic planning work that is just commencing to develop the London & Middlesex Immigration Partnership 2016 – 2019 Strategic Plan
- Support other immigration work that is happening in our community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the work of our Intern for this project, Rahnuma Afroz, and also Randy MacTaggart , Community Planning & Research Associate for the extensive work they did in developing the *Immigrants and the Labour Market: A London Perspective* report .

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