

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON June 18th, 2018</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>PORTABLE HOUSING BENEFIT – SPECIAL PRIORITY POLICY (PHB-SPP) PROGRAM</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, the proposed by-law attached as Appendix “A” be introduced at the Municipal Council meeting to be held on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to:

- a) **authorize** and **approve** an Agreement substantially in the form attached as Schedule 1 to the by-law between The Corporation of the City of London and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario as represented by the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Finance for the purpose of approving a Transfer Payment Agreement for the Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy (PHB-SPP) Program;
- b) **authorize** the Mayor and the City Clerk to execute the Agreement authorized and approved in part a), above and;
- c) **authorize** the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, or delegate, to execute any documents and reports in furtherance of this Agreement as required.

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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- CPSC Report August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 meeting. Approvals of the Service Manager Administration Agreement for the 2016 Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) for Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit Pilot (SDV- PHBP).

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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**Link to Corporate Strategic Plan**

Administering the Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy (PHB-SPP) Program links to the Corporate Strategic Plan’s key area of focus of **Strengthening our Community** and the strategy of providing **Caring and Compassionate Services**, specifically 3C “Reduce and Prevent Homelessness”

**Intent of this Report**

1. Provide background information on the Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy (PHB-SPP) Program;
2. Request approval of the Transfer Payment Agreement between the Corporation of the City of London and the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Finance to administer the Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy (PHB-SPP) Program;
3. Request approval for the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Portable Housing Benefit- Survivors of Domestic Violence Program Transfer Payment Agreement between the City, the Ministry of Housing and The Ministry of Finance; and

4. Request for approval for the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, or delegate, to execute any documents and reports in furtherance of this Agreement as required.

## **Background**

On November 28th, 2017 the Province announced that it would invest \$30 million over the next three years in the Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy (PHB-SPP) Program, which will eventually support up to 3,000 survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking by providing Service Managers with another tool to allow applicants to live in communities and housing that best suits their needs. This program will also assist in providing more affordable housing options to households on the City of London’s waiting list for Rent Geared to Income (RGI) housing. This is a continuation of the Survivors of Domestic Violence – Portable Housing Benefit Pilot Program (SDV- PHB) that began in September, 2016 and had 22 Service Managers participate, including the City of London.

As part of the Province’s Strategy to End Human Trafficking, and as part of the Ontario Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS), the Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy (PHB-SPP) program is intended to provide more affordable housing options of choice to citizens experiencing intimate partner violence and human trafficking.

The specific objectives of the PHB-SPP Program are as follows

- To provide households who qualify for the Special Priority Policy (SPP) category with housing support;
- To decrease wait times for housing assistance; and
- To expand housing choice for households who are eligible for the SPP category.

## **Outcomes**

The PHB-SPP program will deliver meaningful outcomes to recipients over the immediate, short term, and long term, including:

- Receiving housing assistance more quickly than would otherwise be possible while waiting for RGI assistance;
- Having more choice of suitable housing (e.g., housing type, quality, location);
- Having a reduced rent burden (lower percentage of income spent on shelter costs);
- Being less likely to return to an emergency shelter;
- Experiencing improved household financial well-being; and
- Having improved quality of life.

The Ministry of Housing (MHO) has committed to developing an evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the program which is expected to be developed and implemented in the future.

## **Portability**

The PHB-SPP is a monthly subsidy benefit provided to low-income households to assist with housing costs. Unlike other forms of housing assistance, the benefit is tied to a household and not a physical housing unit therefore it is fully portable across Ontario. Participants can continue to receive a monthly benefit even if they move to a rental unit in another Service Manager area however the amount of the monthly benefit may change, based on the new Average Market Rent (AMR) in the new community.

## **Client Eligibility**

All households that participate in the SDV-PHB Pilot program are eligible to transition to the PHB-SPP Program. For new applicants to be eligible for the program they must meet the following criteria:

- Reside in Ontario;
- Be on a social housing waiting list and eligible for the Special Priority Policy (SPP) category (households leaving abusive situations, including survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking) as set out in Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*;
- Not be in receipt of, or part of a household in receipt of RGI assistance or any other government-funded housing benefit, with the exception of social assistance shelter payments; and
- Consent to being removed from the social housing waiting list.

Households in receipt of social housing rent-geared-to-income (RGI) subsidy or payments under any other rent support programs are not eligible.

### **Unit Eligibility**

Units may be in private buildings or in non-profit or co-operative projects and must be modest (at or below average market rent) and in a satisfactory state of repair. However, only market rent units in social housing developments are eligible. Units must meet local occupancy standards.

### **Role of the City of London as Service Manager**

The City of London is designated under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* as the Service Manager for Housing Services for the City of London and the County of Middlesex. The Service Manager is responsible for administering various Housing programs through the Housing Services Act, regulations and Ministry of Housing guidelines.

Service Managers are responsible for the administration of the PHB-SPP program requirements. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Entering into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province;
- Ensuring all eligible SPP applicants receive the option to apply for the portable benefit;
- Assisting applicants with the completion of the application form and the applicable schedules;
- Collecting required information for intake, including calculating and providing applicant income information to the Ministry of Finance (MOF) at the time of initial application, as required.
- Once the MOF approves an applicant for the PHB-SPP program, the Service Manager can provide first and last month's rent to the applicant and must remove the applicant from its social housing waitlist;
- Submitting quarterly reports to MHO ;
- Completing and distributing T5007 tax forms (Statement of Benefits) to participants for first and last month's rent payments delivered directly to households and for any monthly benefits provided to SDV-PHB Pilot households between April 1, 2018 and June 30, 2018;

### **Key Milestones**

Transfer Payment Agreements must be executed by no later than June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in order for the province to begin flowing funds to clients as of July 30<sup>th</sup>. The "Transfer Payment Agreement" has been reviewed by the Corporation of the City of London's Legal Services, as well as Risk Management and Financial and Business Services.

### **Risk Management**

Although Risk Management has identified the indemnity provisions within the Ministry of Housing Transfer Payment Agreement exposes the Corporation to unlimited liability, Risk Management concludes that the indemnity clause should not prevent the City of London from entering in to the Transfer Payment Agreement as the benefit of the funds outweigh the associated risk from the indemnity provision.

More clearly, the City of London will mitigate risks associated with the Transfer Payment Agreement by using the optimum level of oversight and control, enabling the City of London to manage risk and ensure objectives are met. This will be done using clearly defined expectations of the objectives, functions, and eligibility criteria for all activities that are supported by this program.

<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b>
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Funding for the PHB-SPP Program is provided 100% by the Province and is not subject to any cost sharing requirements by the City. The Ministry of Housing will flow funds to the City on a quarterly basis retroactively, in accordance with the quarterly reports submitted.

Service Managers are allocated a one-time payment of \$250 per eligible applicant of funding to assist with the administration cost of the Service Manager's program responsibilities. The annual forecasted amount of administration funding to be received is approximately \$20,000.

<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
<b>TIM SMUCK</b> <b>MANAGER, RENT SUPPLEMENT &amp; TENANT SELECTION</b> <b>HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME</b>	<b>DAVE PURDY</b> <b>MANAGER, HOUSING SERVICES</b> <b>HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>	
<b>SANDRA DATARS BERE</b> <b>MANAGING DIRECTOR, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME</b>	

C: David Munteer, Solicitor II  
 Kyle Murray, Senior Financial Business Administrator  
 Jason Wills, Manager III, Risk Management