

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2019
FROM:	SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME
SUBJECT:	REPORT FROM CIVIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE VACANT COMMUNITY HOUSING UNITS AS A RESULT OF OUTSTANDING REPAIRS

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, that the Report From Civic Administration of the Vacant Community Housing Units as a Result of Outstanding Repairs **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

- Homelessness Plan (CPSC: June 17, 2013)
- Housing Services Act (CSC: December 19, 2011)
- City of London Community Housing Strategy 2013 to 2019 (CPSC: June 21, 2010)
- Homeless Prevention And Housing Plan 5 Year Review And Update – Process (CPSC, June 24th, 2019)

BACKGROUND

On June 25, 2019, Municipal Council directed Civic Administration to report back on the backlog of vacant unit repairs within the current community housing stock (also referenced as social housing), with a financial cost and possible sources of funding to complete all repairs prior to the end of the year. Civic administration was directed to report back to the Community and Protective Services Committee on September 10, 2019.

METHODOLOGY

Upon direction from City Council, Civic Administration engaged all 64 community housing providers (which also includes London Middlesex Community Housing) to identify unit(s) in their portfolio that are currently vacant and are waiting to be repaired before being occupied.

In total, 38 housing providers responded with eight housing providers stating that their vacant unit(s) met the criteria, while 30 housing providers reported either no vacancies or their vacant units did not fit the criteria.

The housing providers where asked to provide the following:

- The unit is currently vacant and unoccupied, as of August 28, 2019;
- Confirm that the unit is a rent-geared-to-income unit;
- The unit is in need of significant repair outside of normal wear and tear;
- If insufficient existing capital and replacement reserve funding is preventing the unit from being repaired; and
- The state of disrepair prevents the unit from being occupied in a timely manner.

If a unit met all of the criteria above, civic administration also requested housing providers provider an estimate of the repair costs and timelines of repair throughout the rest of the calendar year, and potentially, into early 2020.

Housing providers were asked to use their best professional judgement when determining an estimated repair cost and timeline and not to obtain competitive quotes. Housing providers were also informed that the information provided to civic administration will support Council discussions related to this matter.

Initially, Civic administration contacted all social housing providers over email to clarify the request and troubleshoot any vacancies that may apply to the criteria. For providers who were non-responsive, additional contact, including direct calls to the organization, were made.

RESULTS

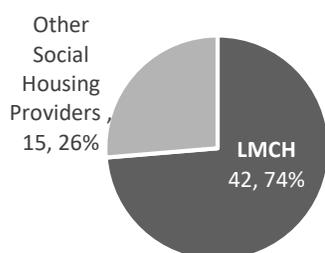
The following provides a summary of the information submitted by the housing providers within London-Middlesex.

Vacant Social Housing Units in Need of Significant Repair			
<i>Dwelling Size</i>	<i>Total Units</i>	<i>Average Repair Cost</i>	<i>Estimated Timeline of Repairs</i>
One Bedroom	27 Units	\$0 - \$5,000	1 – 6 Months
Two Bedroom	11 Units	\$5,000 - \$10,000	1 – 6 Months
Three Bedroom	13 Units	\$0 - \$5,000	0 – 4 Weeks
Four+ Bedroom	6 Units	\$5,001 - \$10,000	1 – 6 Months
Total	57 Units	\$445,000*	

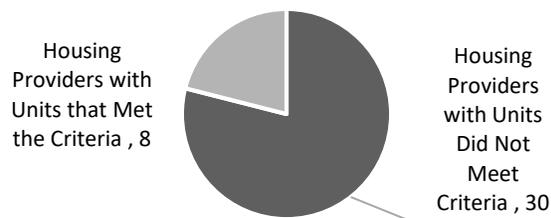
*Total average cost as self-reported by housing providers within London-Middlesex County. These repairs costs are unverified. Housing providers were asked to use their best professional judgment when determining costs and timeline of repair. An official assessment from a third party was not requested.

No bachelor units were reported

Total Units That Met Criteria -
57 Total



Total Providers with 'No Vacancies' or Units Not Meeting Criteria



N: 38 - Total number of housing providers completed the Unit Restoration Tracking Sheet, including London Middlesex Community Housing. This represents an approximate 60% response rate.

Civic Administration contacted all social housing providers through multiple emails and phone calls.

All NIL responses from housing providers were considered as having no current vacancies that meet the criteria.

Civic administration considers these findings appropriate given that housing providers will typically contact the Service Manager if a unit is significantly damaged outside of regular wear and tear.

ANALYSIS

Understanding Vacancies

Civic Administration consulted London Middlesex Community Housing (LMHC) to provide Council additional information on their repair process. It is common for apartment units and town homes within LMCH to become and remain vacant in between tenancies. These units could remain vacant for a variety of reasons. Currently once a tenant vacates their dwelling, a unit is inspected and assessed for repairs. Vacant units can remain vacant for an average of 30 to 60 days in order for maintenance teams to repair the unit caused by normal wear and tear. However, if the unit requires significant repairs, the unit could remain vacant for longer than 60 days and up to 120 days in order for repairs to be completed.

Accountability for Capital Repairs

When a social housing provider requires financial resources to repair or enhance the interior or exterior of their property, this is referred to as capital needs. Social housing providers are responsible for managing their capital needs. The federal, provincial and municipal governments all support social housing providers capital needs through their local Service Manager.

As an outcome of housing, vulnerable members of the community from the social housing registry waitlist, individual(s) may impose damages to their unit beyond regular wear and tear. Significant damages may result from episodes due to significant mental health, addictions and trauma. In these exceptional circumstances, additional funding is required to repair significantly damaged units in a timely manner.

Housing Service Delivery Review Report

On March 6, 2019, Municipal Council put forward and approved a resolution to undertake a review of the delivery of housing programs and services that are specific to the shareholder agreement between the City and London Middlesex Community Housing (LMCH) as well as the City and Housing Development Corporation, London (HDC). On August 26, 2019, City Council received this report at the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee meeting.

It is important to note the data collected for this report is not connected to the vacancies noted in the review of the delivery of housing performed by KPMG.

The service review on the delivery of housing was specific to all vacancies within the LMCH portfolio. The difference in this report, as requested by Council, are vacancies within the social housing stock in London-Middlesex, including LMCH.

The scope of vacancies directed to Council was to focus on including units in need of significant repair outside of normal wear and tear and existing capital funding.

CONCLUSION

Civic administration is committed to continuing to work with all social housing providers to ensure greater access to units through improving the restoration and vacancy process. Through monitoring existing capital funding, civic administration will support social housing providers to fill vacancies in a timely manner.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

LMCH has different access to capital funding which is not available to other social housing providers. Civic administration has identified two possible funding sources which could be allocated to fund unit restoration costs:

LMCH Proposed Funding Source

- LMCH's Annual Capital Allocation

Other Social Housing Providers Proposed Funding Source

- Social Housing Major Repairs, Upgrades and Stabilization Reserve Fund for all social housing providers

The Social Housing Major Repairs, Upgrades and Stabilization Reserve Fund is available to all social housing providers, including LMCH.

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Cc:

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All Social Housing Providers within London and Middlesex County