

Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

To: Chair and Members, Community and Protective Services Committee Meeting
From: Kevin Dickins, Acting Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home
Subject: Coordinated Informed Response (CIR) Spring Update
Date: April 20, 2021

Recommendation

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

Executive Summary

The purpose of this information report is to provide a Spring update on the Coordinated Informed Response (CIR). CIR is unique in that it is a City funded initiative that involves multiple service areas and organizations working together to support and strengthen the community.

- Coordinated Informed Response (CIR) partners include: City of London: Corporate Security, Homeless Prevention, Municipal Law Enforcement, Parks, Roads and Service London. Additional community organizations include Atlohsa Family Healing Services, London Cares, and London Police Services,
- CIR was approved and funded by Municipal Council in the 2020-2023 Multi Year budget as a full time initiative.
- CIR activity is continuously monitored, and responses are adjusted to ensure it is meeting the needs and concerns of the London community.
- Reporting systems such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Homeless Individual and Family Information System "HIFIS" have been utilized to monitor progress of incidents and individuals.
- The broader community can report urban encampments through service@london.ca or 519-661-4570 to initiate a response.

Coordinated Informed Response in 2020

Coordinated Informed Response continues to focus on basic needs and assisting individuals to access resources through the City's coordinated access system to achieve housing stability for individuals urban camping and sleeping rough.

- **14** unique individuals have been housed directly through CIR Outreach interactions in 2020
- **79** unique individuals have been housed who have engaged with CIR outreach

During 2020 the CIR Outreach team produced:

- **6109** independent interactions serving **1267** unique individuals
- **914** of those interactions were within campsites, which supported **325** unique individuals
- **125** of the 325 individuals spent more than 25% of the year in shelter
- **244** of the 325 individuals spent **no** days in shelter

As part of a caring and compassionate response which focused on housing stability, CIR not only helped to house individuals, they provided **5509** referrals to other supports and services to assist with their needs, including:

Referral Type	Number of Referrals
Housing Services	710

Resting Spaces	3008
Emergency Shelter	626
Support Services (social / medical services, etc.)	249
Warm Transfers out of encampment	916
• To housing programs	221
• To shelters	254
• To community meals and services	241

The **6190** primary and secondary service needs that were addressed included:

- **4085** system navigation supports
- **301** incidents of crisis de-escalation
- **853** incidents of providing water and food
- **679** transportation supports
- **142** warm gear provided

Mental Health and Addiction challenges are a reality that affects all areas of our community. CIR continues to support homeless individuals who find themselves in mental or substance use crisis.

Outreach responded to 17 overdoses and 6 cases of escalated aggression in the community.

Resting Spaces responded to 13 overdoses and 22 cases of escalated aggression. 717 Naloxone kits were distributed to community.

The City received 1,779 community-initiated complaint calls / emails for CIR.

The Coordinated Informed Response attended to 4,421 incidents of urban camps and sleeping rough occurrences in this period, and:

- Removed **580** urban camps.
- Reported **30** incidents of pets (24 dogs, 6 cats)
- Tagged and stored **4 bins** of personal items for claiming
- Recovered **5,102** syringes: and,
- Collected over **16,277** bins of garbage.

Covid-19 Response

The City of London has taken many measures to increase social distancing and reduce the risk of outbreak within the homeless community by providing safe spaces for individuals and families to self-isolate. Additionally, the removal of encampments on city owned property was paused to encourage less movement, monitor safe distancing, and reduce risk to both the unsheltered homeless and community. At times, however, the health and safety risk to community was too great to permit larger encampments to remain and these encampments were removed.

One of these encampments in Queens Park was occupied by over 40 individuals. Although approximately 10 of the individuals were already housed, 30 were not and were willing to engage with Outreach to work toward a housing plan. All 30 individuals were provided with transitional housing options. Since then;

- 9 have transitioned into permanent housing
- 8 have disengaged from supports
- 4 are still working with their housing supports and are in line for housing
- 4 reside in shelters
- 2 are transitionally housed in hotels
- 2 are deceased

Wellington Valley Park encampment was occupied by approximately 30 people. The area became increasingly more dangerous for the individuals encamping due to extreme cold

weather, snow accumulating on a flood plain and a pending archeological dig to support the redevelopment of the area for a park. Throughout daily outreach visits, and despite repeated attempts to help, 15 of the 30 individuals did not wish to engage with CIR or system supports and left the park. The CIR outreach team, along with other community support agencies continually engaged with individuals and ultimately worked with the remaining 15 people wanting housing supports and were interested in transitional housing options.

The Winter Response was introduced to provide space for unsheltered and marginalized individuals of London to safely come indoors during the extreme cold of winter. All 15 individuals chose to move into the Winter Response day and overnight space and stayed for its duration. Many are currently in the process of moving into housing.

Comfort Stations (portable washrooms with sanitizer) were introduced during the pandemic throughout the community to support marginalized individuals with a much-needed basic need due to many businesses and facilities being closed to public use because of the pandemic restrictions.

Resting Spaces

A barrier to engagement with individuals who are living unsheltered is locating individuals when they move locations throughout the day. Resting spaces provide a location where housing focused engagement can take place between individuals and service providers.

Effective September 16, 2019, Resting Spaces were expanded in the community to include daytime hours to further support the efforts of the Coordinated Informed Response. Resting Spaces provide programming designed specifically for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, urban camping or sleeping rough. Individuals can meet basic needs such as rest, sleep, food, showers, and doing laundry. Individuals are referred to Resting Space by CIR in the day, to have their immediate basic needs and more extensive engagement needs met. Resting spaces are low barrier; individuals who may be demonstrating “in-the-moment” unpredictable and disruptive behaviours and may otherwise not be eligible to receive services can come to Resting Spaces. With a low barrier model, individuals are permitted to have restrictions elsewhere, bring and store belongings, present with a partner or pet and still will be able to access Resting Spaces.

As of February 2020, and additional ten (10) Resting Spaces were added to the system. Coordinated Informed Response, therefore, was able to access 15 daytime and 15 night-time Resting Spaces, 7 days a week, to assist with the needs of 30 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness daily during early days of the pandemic. These beds are accessed through a referral from the CIR team.

Resting spaces provided **9,408** stays in 2020.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

2019-2023 Strategic Plan for the City of London

The City of London identifies ‘Strengthening Our Community’ and ‘Building a Sustainable City’ as strategic areas of focus.

- Londoners have access to the supports they need to be successful.
- Londoners have access to the services and supports that promote well-being, health, and safety in their neighbourhoods and across the city.

Housing Stability for All: The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London (2019-2024)

London’s Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan, Housing Stability for All: The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London (Housing Stability for All Plan), is the approved guiding document for homeless prevention and housing in the City of London, and was developed in consultation with Londoners.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- Core Area Informed Response (SPPC: September 17, 2018)
- Core Area Informed Response – Pilot Update Report (SPPC: March 4, 2019)
- Core Area Informed Response and Resting Space – Update (CPSC: October 8, 2019)
- Coordinated Informed Response Update (CPSC: February 19, 2020)

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this information report is to provide a Year-end update on the Coordinated Informed Response, Resting Spaces and Covid-19 Response for 2020.

2.2 Background

Like many other communities across Canada, London is continuing to see an increase in street-involved activity including unpredictable and disruptive behaviours, disruption to businesses, trespassing, urban camps, rough sleeping, vandalism, and excessive garbage.

These challenges are related, in part, to the increased risks from substance use, mental health illness, homelessness, and pressures on social supports, access to treatment, and lack of available affordable housing stock with supports.

In addition, 2020 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This brought unique challenges to our community's most vulnerable population who struggled to have basic needs met.

London's Coordinated Informed Response (CIR) works together with multiple service areas and organizations. It is a caring and compassionate response that aims to support individuals who are experiencing, both sheltered and unsheltered, homelessness by finding safe alternative solutions focused on housing.

This collaborative response links to the City of London's Strategic Plan, the London Plan, the Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan, and the Mental Health and Addiction Strategy. Links to community plans and initiatives include the Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy and other multi service activities such as the Core Area Action Plan initiative.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

3.1 Funding

Permanent funding for the Coordinated Informed Response initiative was secured as part of the 2020-2023 Multi-Year Budget.

Resting Spaces are funded 100% by the Province of Ontario through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). There was no net financial impact on the City's approved 2020-2023 Operating Budget.

Conclusion

For 2021, the Coordinated Informed Response program will continue to have a coordinated cross-functional team in place to provide a caring and compassionate response to support individuals that are sleeping rough and urban camping. The knowledge gained through the Coordinated Informed Response will continue to be applied so strategies and actions can be incorporated to strengthen our community with a focus on building a better London for all.

Prepared by: Debbie Kramers, Manager Homeless Prevention
Submitted by: Craig Cooper, Manager Homeless Prevention
Recommended by: Kevin Dickins, Acting Director Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home