

## Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Community and Protective Services Committee

**From:** Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development

**Subject:** Update on London's Newcomer Strategy: Choose London – Innovative, Vibrant and Global

**Date:** September 21, 2021

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, the following report, Update on London's Newcomer Strategy: Choose London – Innovative, Vibrant and Global, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

## Executive Summary

In response to the direction received from Municipal Council on March 2, 2017, to develop an immigration strategy, a community-led Choose London – Innovative, Vibrant and Global: London's Newcomer Strategy was developed. This five-year strategy was endorsed by Council on June 26, 2018. The mission of the strategy is to successfully attract, integrate and retain Newcomers, in particular international students, skilled workers, and entrepreneurs, to and into the local economy and society. The Newcomer Strategy Advisory Body provided an update to Council on its work on October 8, 2019. The following is a mid-term report.

## Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan and the London Community Recovery Network

London's Newcomer Strategy supports the City of London's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following strategic area of focus: Growing our Economy, with outcome: London will develop a top-quality workforce and strategy: attract retain and integrate international students, and newcomer skilled workers and entrepreneurs.

It also aligns with the work of the London Community Recovery Network's Priority Action Table: Employment and Talent.

## Analysis

### 1.0 Background Information

#### 1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- [Choose London – Innovative, Vibrant and Global: London's Newcomer Strategy – Year One Update](#) (CPSC: October 8, 2019)
- [Choose London – Innovative, Vibrant and Global: London's Newcomer Strategy](#) (CPSC: June 18, 2018)
- [Immigration Strategy Update](#) (CPSC: February 22, 2017)

### 2.0 Discussion and Considerations

#### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this information report is to provide a mid-term update of London's Newcomer Strategy.

## 2.2 Background

The London Newcomer Strategy is a five-year community-led strategy which recognizes and builds on existing programs and services to attract, integrate, and retain international students, skilled workers, and entrepreneurs to and into the city of London. The Advisory Body, formed in November 2018, created a workplan to guide its work, with the following strategic priorities:

- Enhance awareness: Foster greater awareness of the city, the importance of Newcomers to the city, and programs, services, and opportunities aimed at the attraction, integration, and retention of Newcomers.
- Facilitate greater access: Foster greater access to programs, services, and opportunities aimed at the attraction, integration, and retention of Newcomers.
- Active engagement: Foster greater engagement with and/or among Newcomers, local, regional, provincial, and federal stakeholders, and City staff/divisions to achieve a more coordinated and concentrated approach to the attraction, integration, and retention of Newcomers.

## 2.3 Progress to date

The following is a summary of work undertaken since the creation of London's Newcomer Strategy.

### Governance

A community-led Advisory Body was created in November 2018 to facilitate and guide implementation and monitor progress on the execution of the work plan. Co-chaired by Joaquim Ballès and Dev Sainani, the membership of the Advisory Body is broadly based and includes representatives of agencies involved either directly or indirectly in immigration, as well as Newcomer Champions. The Advisory Body is supported by the Manager of Strategic Programs and Partnerships, and the Immigration Specialist (position vacant since February 2020). Terms of reference have been created and were updated in 2020.

Three task forces for Advocacy and Policy Change, Communications and Data were created to focus on implementing specific action items identified in the work plan.

### Projects/Activities

A few examples of completed activities are the creation of a welcome message from Mayor Holder in English and French; the re-design of the London and Middlesex Immigration Portal; the launch of a video to promote Francophone immigration to London, and a statistical review of Newcomers arriving to London, their conversion rates from temporary to permanent status, and related employment fields. Newcomer welcome kiosks with touch screens were also installed on a pilot basis but were put on hold due to the COVID-19. This latter project, which had been gaining interest, will be revisited once the pandemic ends.

Ongoing activities include a City of London internship program for international student graduates to increase their job readiness and marketability and contribute towards their eligibility to apply for permanent residency; an annual Newcomer Day, to celebrate and recognize the contributions of Newcomers to London and to provide them with information on services; and promotion of London at online job fairs directed at Newcomers.

### Advocacy/Policy Change

Within the last year, the Newcomer Strategy Advisory Body and the Advocacy and Policy Change Task Force have been reviewing barriers to increased attraction and retention of immigrants and have examined options for London. Members and City staff of the Newcomer Strategy Advisory Body have undertaken the following: explored a variety of possible pilot programs for permanent residency that could be proposed to the federal government; met with local MPs to explore options for work of the Advisory Body; met with other communities involved in various immigration programs; and conducted research on the immigration activities of other municipalities.

The Advisory Body is preparing for the possible introduction of the Municipal Nominee Program, announced in the mandate letter of the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in December 2019. The Municipal Nominee Program would allow “local communities, chambers of commerce and local labour councils to directly sponsor permanent immigrants. At least 5,000 new spaces (across the country) will be dedicated to this program.” This program would permit Canadian municipalities for the first time to become directly involved in sponsoring permanent immigrants.

Members of the Advisory Body also had discussions with government officials and other stakeholders around creating pathways to permanent residency for entrepreneurs and small business owners, particularly among international students. These policy ideas will continue to be explored as they could have wide-spread impact for newcomers. The Advisory Body will also continue to explore regional cooperation on policy and advocacy work related to immigration.

Should the Municipal Nominee program be launched, and if London applies and is successful in its bid, any resulting agreement will be brought to Municipal Council for approval.

Some activities may have to be adjusted depending on the outcome of federal election and the platform and policies of the elected government.

A summary of completed activities and ongoing initiatives can be found in Appendix A.

## **2.4 Measures and evaluation framework**

London’s Newcomer Strategy has created a set of targeted outcomes to measure its progress in achieving its objectives. The outcomes are based on a desired population growth of at least 1% to maintain and support economic growth, the majority of which is composed of newcomers. In 2016, London’s natural increase accounted for only 17.5% of the total net population gain in the London Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). In setting the target of 1% growth rate for London, the Advisory Body has met with the Director of Planning and Development to ensure alignment with the City’s goals and objectives, as well as capacity in infrastructure and services. It is expected that these discussions will continue, and it is possible that the Newcomer Strategy will set a desired growth rate of slightly higher than 1%.

London is one of the few municipalities in the country with an immigration strategy that has created a measurement and evaluation framework.

The targeted outcomes, calculated in July 2021, reflect inflow of Newcomers to London, including a minimum of prime working age, a minimum retention level of Newcomers, a minimum attraction level of international students and an average employment rate for Newcomers. In all cases the targeted outcomes were achieved.

The outcomes are measured using administration immigration data from Statistics Canada and tax filer information through the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB). Many of the targets were set without having the benefit of baseline data. This is due to the complexity of mixing data sets, the delay in the release of some data sets (in some cases two years) and the paucity of data in measuring some areas at the local level. The impact of COVID-19 has significantly delayed the release of data.

The Data Work Group has advocated with the federal government to obtain more timely and relevant local data. It has and will continue to investigate options for obtaining these data such as linkage to provincial Medicare Client Registries as has been done in other jurisdictions. Improved access to data will better inform the as well as the direction of the London Newcomer Strategy in attracting, integrating, and retaining Newcomers in our community.

The Data Work Group of the Newcomer Strategy is also looking at partnerships to improve the ability to track, update, and adjust the targets and the Advisory Body will review the outcomes to discuss whether the targets should be amended.

A summary of the measures and available metrics is attached in Appendix B.

## **2.5 Future work**

Future work could include the promotion of the London & Middlesex Immigration Portal; preparing for a role in the Municipal Nominee Program and/or other pathways to permanent residency; promoting opportunities for Francophone immigrants; and creating opportunities to welcome and support international students. It will continue to work with other relevant strategies and initiatives, such as the London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership, the Réseau en immigration francophone du centre-sud ouest (Francophone immigration network), the Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and City of London human resources. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Newcomer Strategy has already acted as a catalyst for change in these strategies and in local educational institutions.

## **2.6 Challenges**

The COVID-19 pandemic and resultant border closures have negatively impacted the City of London's ability to attract immigrants since March 2020. The pandemic has also prevented the hosting of in-person events and projects. The release of data collected by Statistics Canada has been delayed affecting the ability to measure outcomes. The collection of timely and relevant data pertaining to immigration retention and the labour market is challenging. Finally, the inability to staff the Immigration Specialist position since February 2020 has further impacted the work.

## **3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations**

### **3.1 Funding**

Council directed the creation of a base operating budget of \$100,000 in 2019. There is no additional financial impact projected at this time.

## **Conclusion**

As the London Newcomer Strategy continues to attract, integrate, and retain Newcomers to the community, it will remain flexible and ready to adapt to the changing environment that may arise due to changes in government priorities and the impact of the pandemic.

The Advisory Body will continue to push for clarity on how much the City would like to grow, and the implications of that growth.

Visitor data from the re-designed London & Middlesex Immigration Portal will be used to update and promote information on the website.

The Newcomer Strategy will continue to make a conscious effort to link with local and regional strategies and networks, and to be a catalyst for other stakeholders.

**Submitted by:** Jill Tansley, Manager, Strategic Programs and Partnerships

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

**Appendix A**  
**Newcomer Strategy Activities accomplished or in progress - November 2018 to April 2021**

**Strategic Priority 1 : Enhance Awareness**

<b>High-level Activity</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Completion Date and Details</b>
1.1 Welcome Message	Create, disseminate, and maintain a City of London branded Welcome Message aimed at all Newcomers.	Message completed July 2019 and shared with local partners. A French version has also been made available and shared with local partners. Letter has been uploaded to the City's Immigration Portal, and the London Economic Development Corporation's websites.
1.2 Digital Strategies	Update, improve and maintain current digital platforms, such as London & Middlesex's Immigration Portal. Review of current Immigration Portal and streamline of information.	Review and streamlining of Immigration Portal completed May 2019 internally through City of London Intern working with City Staff.
1.2 Digital Strategies	Creation and hosting of the new revised Immigration Portal website on London.ca	Newly redesigned Immigration Portal launched October 2020. <a href="http://www.london.ca/immigration">www.london.ca/immigration</a>
1.3 Welcome centre for Newcomers	Pilot Welcome Centre at an existing high traffic and accessible location(s) in London.	Launched Newcomer Welcome Kiosk in August 2019, in Bostwick Community Centre (Service London), and in City Hall (Business London Counter).  Bostwick Kiosk moved to higher-traffic Social Services office at Westmount Mall February 2020.  New accessibility features to be installed Winter 2020 (Q1-Q2) were suspended due to pandemic.  Plan to launch kiosks at all Social Services counters of City of London suspended due to pandemic.
1.5 Work with community stakeholders to coordinate and build Newcomer employment components into existing events and activities	Work with community stakeholders to coordinate and build Newcomer employment components into existing events and activities This also responds to Action 2.2: Actively participate in the planning and implementation of activities by internal City divisions and external stakeholders that will have an impact on Newcomers.	London's first Newcomer Day - October 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2019, in partnership with the London Public Library's Central Branch.  London Newcomer Day 2020 suspended due to pandemic  London Newcomer Day 2021 –virtual event planned for October 21, 2021. Volunteer committee has begun planning.

**Strategic Priority 2: Facilitate Access**

<b>High-level Activity</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Completion Date and Details</b>
2.4 Strengthen the link between Employers and Newcomers	Work with community stakeholders, employers, IMMPLY, LEDC and Chamber to participate in networking conferences/events aimed to connect Newcomers,	May 14, 2019 - City presented local resources to help support employers in hiring and retaining Newcomers at the 2019 Immigration Update for local Employers <sup>a</sup> organized by London Economic Development Corporation.

<sup>a</sup> Other presentations included: Federal Immigration Programs by Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada; Global talent and Immigration programs by Employment and Social Development Canada; and

	internationally skilled Newcomers, entrepreneurs, and international students with local employers	April 2021, City and LEDC participated in in-Tac job fair
2.4 Strengthen the link between Employers and Newcomers	Remove barriers to employment for Newcomers through increased internship positions for all Newcomers, including international student graduates, available through the City of London Internship Program.	August 2019 – Launch of new City of London Internship Program for International Student Graduates. Positions run 20 weeks, at 30 hours per week. -1 position completed Nov 2019-Feb 2020 2020 – internships did not proceed due to pandemic 2021 – plan to re-offer program May 2021 for up to 3 positions

### Strategic Priority 3: Active Engagement

High-level Activity	Action	Completion Date and Details
3.1 Data Collection Development and Coordinated Advocacy	Create an advisory body to review the progress of the implementation of the Strategy, coordinate advocacy efforts with the federal and provincial governments, and create data development partnerships to improve access to current statistical information on an ongoing basis.	Advisory Body Membership created first meeting November 30th, 2018, terms of reference and mandate approved. Body has met nine times to date, and out of the Newcomer Strategy Advisory Body, the creation of three Task Forces for Advocacy & Policy Change, Communications, and Data were formed. Participation in survey consultations on Municipal Nominee Program, July 2020 Meeting with local MPs on Newcomer Strategy Feb 2021 Meeting with IRCC staff involved in designing Municipal Nominee Program March 2020 Hired researcher to assist in data collection April 2021 Meeting with officials of Greater Sudbury April 2021
3.1 Data Collection Development and Coordinated Advocacy	Identification of the data sources needed to track the Newcomer Strategy's targeted outcome measures.	Secondary data set review completed by external researcher, June 2019. The list of the tools to be used to measure the targeted NS outcomes year over year, was finalized, June 2019. 2020 –target outcomes not measured due to COVID-related delay by Statistics Canada 2021 -
3.2 Strengthen existing and create new partnerships	Explore opportunities to create new regional partnerships to raise awareness of the immigration needs of the region and encourage secondary migration to London.	Advocacy & Policy Change Task Force to review regional partnerships. Review of current policies that prevent or hinder the attraction, retention or integration of Newcomers completed August 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2019. Next steps, including regional partners to approach, to be developed.

## Appendix B

### City of London 'Report Card' on Newcomer Strategy Progress. Update July 16, 2021

#### Outcome 1: Achieve a net average annual Newcomer inflow of no less than 4,000 Newcomers through both direct and secondary migration.

Outcome Measures - London CMA	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
1. Achieve a net average annual Newcomer inflow* of no less than 4,000 Newcomers through both direct and secondary migration.	5,959	7,170	5,455	5,225

Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb11/en/tv.action?pid=1710013601>

This table calculates the number of newcomers from the following sources:

1. Immigrants
2. Returning emigrants
3. Net Interprovincial migrants
4. Net Intra-provincial migrants

It removes emigrants and temporary emigrants from the calculation. Births and Deaths are not included in the calculation. Statistics Canada derives these estimates from a combination of administrative data sources and projections from these sources.

#### Outcome 2: A minimum of 60% of the average annual net Newcomer inflow will be between 20 and 44 years of age. Based on an average annual net Newcomer inflow of 4,000 as targeted in 1. above, no less than 2,400 of these Newcomers would be between 20 and 44 years of age.

Outcome Measures - London CMA	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
2. A minimum of 60% of the average annual net Newcomer inflow will be between 20 and 44 years of age. Based on an average annual net Newcomer inflow of 4,000 as targeted in 1. above, no less than 2,400 of these Newcomers would be between 20 and 44 years of age.	5570 (82%)	6275 (88%)	7335 (89%)

Source: IMDB

This shows the proportion of newcomers that are between the ages of 20 and 44 (the ages that IRCC gives the maximum number of points to). It is taken from the IMDB and includes principal applicants only. There is a data lag because tax files are typically 2-3 years out of date because of tax filing anomalies.

#### Outcome 3: Maintain a minimum average annual retention rate of 70% of the total gross annual inflow of Newcomers. Based on an average annual net Newcomer inflow of 4,000 as targeted in 1. above, the number of Newcomers leaving the London CMA would not exceed on average 1,714/year.

Outcome Measures - London CMA	2016/2017	2017/2018
3. Maintain a minimum average annual retention rate of 70% of the total gross annual inflow of Newcomers. Based on an average annual net Newcomer inflow of 4,000 as targeted in 1. above, the number of Newcomers leaving the London CMA would not exceed on average 1,714/year **.	75%	82%

Source: IMDB

This table measures the 1-year retention rate of newcomers to London. It is ~5 years behind because it relies on the same tax files as outcome #3, but also requires an additional year to measure retention. It is calculated as the percentage of newcomers that file taxes in London that are also subsequently present in the CMA.

**Outcome 4: Maintain an average attraction level of international students attending local educational institutions of no less than 11,000 students a year.**

Outcome Measures - London CMA	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
4. Maintain an average attraction level of international students attending local educational institutions of no less than 11,000 students a year.		11,000	11,130	13,148	12,495

Source: Educational Institutions within London

This table measures the number of international students enrolled in London annually. It is based on the reports of educational institutions themselves and has not been verified by us.

**Outcome 5: Achieve an average annual employment rate for Newcomers, who are Permanent Residents, that is no less than 7.5 percentage points lower than the employment rate of Londoners overall.**

Outcome Measures - London CMA	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
5. Achieve an average annual employment rate for Newcomers, who are Permanent Residents, that is no less than 7.5 percentage points lower than the employment rate of Londoners overall***.	2016: Newcomers between 20-44: 57%. London overall: 57.7%	2017: Newcomers between 20-44: 69%. London overall: 57%	2018: Newcomers between 20-44: 49%. London overall: 57.6%	2019: Newcomers between 20-44: 62%. London overall: 56.1%	2020: Newcomers between 20-44: 62%. London overall: 55.5%

Source: Labour Force Survey

This table shows the percentage of people between the ages of 20-44 that are employed, compared to the city rate overall. A recent study on labour market participation in the London Economic Region indicated a high percentage (87 to 91%) of Newcomers not currently participating in the labour market would be able to participate, should all barriers be addressed. This is much higher than compared to the 65 to 86% average percentage of the prime aged population (aged 25 to 44) as a whole.