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<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON JUNE 17, 2013</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ONTARIO WORKS DECENTRALIZATION UPDATE</b>

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

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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- Ontario Works in the Community Strategy, Community and Protective Services Committee, July 19, 2010
- Ontario Works in the Community Strategy, CONFIDENTIAL REPORT, Board of Control, July 21, 2010
- Ontario Works in the Community Strategy, East London, Finance and Administration Committee, November 30, 2011
- Ontario Works Decentralization, Community and Protective Services Committee, February 4, 2013

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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The decentralization of Ontario Works services in the City of London is about bringing Ontario Works closer to individuals and families who access the services. It is a service delivery model that better reflects the needs of Londoners; is more responsive and integrated; and is more aligned with the City's mission of *At Your Service* as well as the Service London approach of improving customer service by aligning services through collaboration, coordination and partnerships.

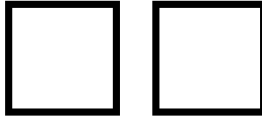
The current model of delivering Ontario Works services to approximately 11,000 London households (or approximately 24,000 adults and children) from one central office located downtown no longer meets the needs of Londoners. It creates unnecessary barriers to accessing services and does not provide the optimum environment for an effective and collaborative relationship between the Ontario Works participant and their caseworker.

Earlier this year (February 2013), Council approved in principle a high level Ontario Works decentralization plan that includes decentralizing services to all four quadrants of the city, as well as a possible smaller presence in the core area of the city (to be re-evaluated as the planning and implementation continues). The specific Council resolution is provided below:

February 13, 2013

6. That, on the recommendation of the Acting Ontario Works Administrator, the following actions be taken with respect to the decentralization of Ontario Works services:

- a) the Ontario Works Decentralization plan, outlined in the staff report dated February 4, 2013, **BE APPROVED** in principle;



- b) the Civic administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to engage in community conversations to share the above-noted Ontario Works Decentralization plan; and,
- c) the Civic administration **BE DIRECTED** to report back to the Community and Protective Services Committee with a detailed implementation plan, including the associated financial strategy, and a summary of community and stakeholder input.

### **Update and Next Steps:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress to date, and to provide information regarding next steps before reporting back with a detailed implementation plan.

On April 9<sup>th</sup> and May 7<sup>th</sup> of this year, two community forums were held and attended by a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- community agencies and organizations who directly or indirectly provide services to or support Ontario Works participants (including agencies and organizations with which we have purchase of service agreements)
- individuals and families who have or have had experience with Ontario Works, and
- local community and/or neighbourhood groups or associations interested in being involved in the decentralization process of Ontario Works.

At these forums, City staff:

- provided an overview of the decentralization plan, including the staged approach, proposed timelines, opportunities for further community engagement and next steps
- sought feedback on the guiding principles, objectives and site selection criteria, and on how they could be achieved
- invited community partners, agencies and organizations to identify interest in co-location / shared service opportunities at decentralized Ontario Works locations, and
- asked local community and neighbourhood groups and associations how they should be engaged in the decentralization process.

Attached, in Appendix A, B, and C, are the revised guiding principles, objectives and site selection criteria that include input from the community forums (revisions are underlined and italicized for easier reference). The revisions also include preliminary input from staff. The staff engagement process is outlined more fully later in this report.

In general, feedback received through the engagement processes to date identifies great support for the decentralized model, as well as the guiding principles, objectives and site selection criteria. In addition, the community conversations have highlighted the following:

- ensure that efforts continue to lessen the stigma attached to Ontario Works, through education, communication, awareness and locations that promote dignity and respect for individuals and families
- provide child minding options on site for families while at their appointments, through innovative and creative partnerships with other community agencies or services, and
- ensure community engagement continues, and that communication with neighbourhoods is as open and transparent as possible, so that we can together truly support individuals and families in our community.

To support the undertaking of the decentralization of Ontario Works services, we have established a governance model that includes:

#### ***Executive Lead***

- Sandra Datars Bere, Ontario Works Administrator/Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home
- Report to the City of London Senior Leadership Team for direction, guidance or information, as required.



**Steering Committee**

- Sandra Datars Bere, Ontario Works Administrator/Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home
- Lynne Livingstone, Managing Director, Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services
- Martin Hayward, Managing Director, Corporate Services and City Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer
- Pina Sauro, Manager, Ontario Works Client Services
- Susan Godin, Manager, Compliance and Business Supports
- Elisabeth White, Manager, Employment and Strategic Initiatives

**Site Implementation Committee**

Representation from:

- Ontario Works
- Finance and Business Administration
- Facilities, Design and Construction
- Human Resources, including Occupational Health & Safety Services
- Information Technology Services
- Planning
- Security Services
- Realty Services
- Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services

**Key Stakeholders/Advisory**

Representation and involvement as required from:

- Housing Services
- Corporate Communications
- Parks & Recreation Services
- Union Local 101
- Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Legal Services

**System Level Work Teams**

Led by members of the Site Implementation Committee, work teams are being formed to address the following areas:

- Level and mix of services to be provided at each location
- Physical space and design, including technology requirements, and logistics
- Operating procedures and policies
- Change management
- Communications
- Community engagement
- Evaluation
- Partnerships
- Site specific relocation transition planning
- Administration

The composition of these work teams will include representation from Ontario Works and other areas of the corporation. Managers and frontline staff will be engaged through active participation on the work teams, as well as through focus groups and other means of input. As well, input will be sought from external stakeholders, as required, including community agencies and partners, and Ontario Works participants. In terms of next steps, with the input and feedback from the community engagement process, the process of the site selection for our first site in the north east quadrant of the city is commencing. Please refer to Appendix D for the proposed staged implementation timelines.

**2013/2014 North East Site Selection:**

Later this month a Request for Proposals (RFP) procurement process for leased space will be tendered inviting landlords and property owners to respond with submissions that reflect the specifications and requirements for a north east site, including the site selection criteria (Appendix C), square footage, amenities, and leasehold improvements. The following provides

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an overview of the anticipated timelines for the site selection:

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Required Actions</b>
June 2013	✓ Issue request for proposals through normal purchasing process
July/August 2013	✓ Receive and review landlord submissions ✓ Select preferred landlord submission ✓ Commence lease negotiations
September 2013	✓ Finalize terms of lease for inclusion in confidential report to Corporate Services Committee
October 2013	✓ Submit report to Corporate Services Committee ✓ Council meeting
October / November 2013	✓ North East Community Engagement and Update
March 2014	✓ Occupancy

Move-in timelines will be dependent on the site selected and the amount of leasehold improvements required. Those details will be provided via the confidential report to Corporate Services Committee.

Throughout our planning and implementation processes we will continue to work in collaboration with staff in other areas of the Corporation, including Planning, Realty Services and Facility Services to ensure that any location considered meets the objectives and policies of the City's Official Plan, adheres to zoning and land-use requirements and is reflective of community processes such as ReThink London.

**Conclusion:**

This report has provided an update regarding the process of the implementation of Ontario Works decentralization, including the community engagement undertaken to date, and next steps in the selection of the first site in the north east quadrant of the city.

We will be reporting back with respect to the outcome of the site selection process via an in camera report to Corporate Services Committee later in the year, including a detailed implementation plan and the associated financial strategy.

<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>
<b>PINA SAURO MANAGER ONTARIO WORKS CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME</b>

- C:
- L. Livingstone, Managing Director Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services
  - B. Coxhead, Managing Director Parks & Recreation
  - A.L. Barbon, Manager, C/S Financial & Business Services
  - M. Hayward, Managing Director, Corporate Services & City Treasurer, CFO
  - L. Barker, Leeanne Barker Consultants
  - S. Navaroli, CUPE Local 101 President
  - V. McAlea Major, Managing Director, Corporate Services & Chief Human Resources Officer

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## Appendix A

### Guiding Principles

(underlined italics indicate revisions based on community forums)



## Ontario Works Decentralization

### Guiding Principles

**Dignity and Respect** – A decentralized structure will treat every person with dignity and respect, encourage a culture that does not stigmatize people, and build relationships with clients based on trust, collaboration and open communication.

**Diversity and Equity** – A decentralized structure will respect and respond to the diversity of clients' situations and needs, including the unique experiences and barriers they face.

**Accessibility** – A decentralized structure will ensure Ontario Works offices are located in areas where our clients live. The decentralized offices will be easier to travel to, understand and navigate.

**Effectiveness** – A decentralized structure will be linked to other community services and agencies.

**Relationship Based Support** – A decentralized structure will acknowledge and support caseworkers to develop healthy, trusting, supportive and stable relationships with their clients.

**Awareness** – A decentralized structure will strive to inform and educate the local communities about the value of financial and employment assistance and alter negative attitudes and behaviours.

**We Cannot Do It Alone** – A decentralized structure will support the active development of partnerships with those who can play a role in supporting our clients in their move from social assistance to employment. These partners include agencies, schools, employers and employment services, families and others living in the community.

**Accountability** – A decentralized structure will set measurable goals against which we can assess the success of the reform of London's Ontario Works system.

**Cost Effectiveness** – A decentralized structure could ideally be co-located with municipally owned facilities as a means of reducing occupancy costs.

**Client-Centred:** A decentralized structure will offer services in a client-focused, family-friendly, safe and comfortable environment where our clients can access services with anonymity.

**Connectedness** – A decentralized structure will strive to create opportunities for our clients to become connected to the resources, services, agencies and people in their own community. This will help our clients to form new relationships and create a sense of belonging.

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## Appendix B

### Objectives

(*underlined italics* indicate revisions based on community forums)



### Ontario Works Decentralization

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## **Ontario Works can best achieve its objectives by:**

- Helping clients feel welcomed, respected, *safe* and cared for as unique individuals
- Leveraging linkages to the client's neighbourhood, family, friends and safety net
- Optimizing convenience and ease of access to Ontario Works services and programs
- Connecting to services close to where clients live
- Integrating with related community-based services
- Engaging local community businesses and residents in helping vulnerable families
- Building collaborative relationships between the caseworker and client
- Optimizing the effective and efficient use of limited resources in how we serve Ontario Works clients.



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## Appendix C

### Site Selection Criteria

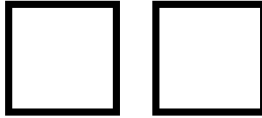
*(underlined italics indicate revisions based on community forums)*



Ontario Works Decentralization

# Site Selection Criteria:

- Proximity to where clients live
- Access to public transit
- Parking options for people who drive
- Opportunity to co-locate with other agencies or municipal services
- Close to existing related resources/services
- Locations where people feel safe and comfortable, and lend to client anonymity
- Square footage requirements will include family-friendly, welcoming space considerations (such as welcoming waiting area; child minding; private desk side interviews; lighting)



**Appendix D**  
**Staged Timelines**

**2013 / 2014 – North East**

Establish a location in the north east quadrant of London that would serve approximately 23% of the total Ontario Works households.

**2014 / 2015 – South West**

Establish the location to serve the south west quadrant of the city by investing in expansion of a city-owned facility, the South London Community Centre. This location would serve 24% of the total Ontario Works households. This strategy that was borne out of an opportunity to expand immigrant settlement services and attract additional investment dollars by the federal government, and from a community conversation with the South London community where residents and community organizations saw the tremendous benefits of building on existing synergies. This strategy was presented to Council in 2010. Consultation, planning and design work for this capital build would commence in 2013.

**2015 / 2016 – South East**

Establish a location in the south east quadrant of the city, which would serve approximately 24% of the total Ontario Works households.

**2016 / 2017 – North West, Core**

Establish the north west location of leased space that would serve approximately 21% of the total Ontario Works caseload.

Establish a core area location of leased space to serve approximately 8% of the total Ontario Works caseload. This core area location could also house the administration and back-office functions of the Ontario Works operations, including cheque production, finance administration, en masse letter production and central mail sorting. It is noted however that the back-office services could be located in any quadrant of the city that provided the most effective and efficient ways to run the operation.