Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

To: **Chair and Members, Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee**
From: **Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development**
Subject: **May Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response**
Date: **May 9, 2023**

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, that the May Progress Update – Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response Report **Be Received** for information.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made since Council endorsed the Whole of Community System Response on March 8th. The efforts of the Whole of Community System Response continues to progress towards system implementation. Since the last report to Council there have been multiple working meetings to establish an implementation framework that will be used to guide and support the implementation planning and the ongoing initiation of the whole of community system response including the Strategy and Accountability table, multiple implementation tables, specific terms of references, and organizational commitment to collaboration letters.

The implementation framework signifies the ability to now operationalize the Strategy and Accountability Table and establish the necessary procedures and guidance for the implementation tables to begin their work.

The work to implement the Whole of Community System Response has been supported by advocacy efforts with the Province of Ontario, the Federal Government, and through discussions with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Big City Mayors.

As well, recent Provincial funding investments in homelessness will assist in addressing emerging pressures for the current system and help to maintain current services and target future investment opportunities to advance the work of the Whole of Community System Response.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

Housing and Homelessness
- Increased access to a range of quality, affordable, and supportive housing options that meet the unique needs of Londoners.
- Decreased number of Londoners at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Improved safety in London's shelters system

Wellbeing and Safety
- Londoners have safe access to public spaces, services, and supports that increase wellbeing and quality of life
- Housing in London is affordable and attainable

Links to Community Recovery
The City of London is committed to working in partnership with the community to identify solutions that will drive a strong, deep, and inclusive community recovery for London as

we move out of and beyond the global COVID-19 pandemic. This report, and the items within, are linked to supporting Londoners experiencing homelessness to attain and retain permanent housing. This work supports recovery efforts through a coordinated response that will support the transition of individuals and families experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness who have a variety of support needs into permanent housing.

Analysis

- **1.0 Previous Reports Related to this Matter**

  - Update – Whole of Community System Response Implementation (SPPC: April 18, 2023)
  - Health and Homelessness Summits – Proposed Whole of Community System Response (SPPC: February 28, 2023)

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Moving Forward with Implementation Planning

The City of London is experiencing a crisis in the collective ability across many sectors to provide timely and appropriate supports for people experiencing the impacts associated with the health and homelessness   crisis. On March 8th, Council endorsed the Whole of Community System Response. Since that time, leaders across various sectors have been meeting to develop the implementation framework that will support the implementation planning and initiation of the system response. The intention was to have the implementation framework in place by the end of April and then to proceed with implementation planning through May and June, returning to Council with the recommendations for implementation and associated funding requests for hubs and supportive housing by early summer.

Three meetings have been held - March 27th, April 19th and 27th. Through these meetings an implementation framework emerged with feedback provided on priority setting, the role and method of meaningful consultation with those with lived and living experience, how to best facilitate the participation of frontline workers in the implementation tables and defining the scope of certain elements of the implementation tables. The first three implementation tables that will be activated will be for the Hubs, Housing Continuum, and Encampments. Following very closely to these three, will be the activation of the Workforce Development and System Foundations tables. Below is a brief overview of the implementation framework.

Community

Middlesex-London Ontario Health Team

Shared Values & Principles

Strategy & Accountability Table

Implementation Table

Frontline

City Council

Lived & Living Experience

Federal Government

Backbone Team

Reference Table

Frontline

Shared Values & Principles

Provincial Government

Community

Figure 1 Implementation Framework

The implementation framework is based on collective impact, which is the commitment of a group of individuals and organizations from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem. To create lasting solutions on a large scale, organizations from all sectors coordinate their efforts and work around a clearly defined goal. In this case, it is the implementation of the whole of community system response.

Reflecting the whole of community system response, the implementation framework places people at the centre, consistent with the shared commitment to a people centred, housing centric system.

Referring to the Figure 1 graphic, the description begins in the middle of the diagram and moves out from there:

- The experiences of those with **Lived and Living Experience** will be centred in the entire implementation process, through an Advisory Council, which will advise on strategy and priorities, program and service design, evaluation and research, *and* as active participants in implementation tables, focused first on the co-design of hubs, the housing continuum, and services that support encampments.

- The expertise and insight of **Frontline Workers** will also be centred, with the strong acknowledgement that a people centred system must focus on both those we are trying to help *and* those that are doing the critical work every day. This means that frontline workers will be engaged as full participants on the implementation tables and funding may be provided for agencies that need to backfill with relief staff to make this possible. There will also be a workforce development implementation table to determine the best way to meaningfully

engage frontline workers in an ongoing way and address key issues such as wellness, training, compensation, engagement, etc.

- **The Strategy and Accountability Table**, which will be populated by leaders from all organizations who have signed a commitment to continue to collaborate on system implementation, will guide the overall implementation of the whole of community system response.

- **Implementation Tables** will co-design each component of the system and develop the associated implementation plans and funding requests for consideration/affirmation by the Strategy and Accountability table. The initial implementation tables, with design sessions beginning in May, will be hubs, housing continuum and encampments, followed closely by workforce development and systems foundations (encompassing standards of care, measurement etc.).

- Separate **Reference Tables,** which include Funders (province, federal, municipal, Fund for Change-LCF, United Way etc.), as well as the Building and Development Industry and Businesses and BIAs, will bring specific subject matter support to parts of system development.

- **A Backbone team** will provide staff support for system implementation including the Strategy and Accountability table and all of the Implementation tables. The City of London has already dedicated three staff resources to this team and it will also require involvement of frontline workers to support the development of a strong system of engagement and co-design with those with lived and living experience.

- In terms of **Funding and Accountability,** requests to support the implementation of the system response will be prioritized by the Strategy and Accountability Table and directed to the appropriate level of government or other sources (LCF, United Way, etc.) through the standard processes of business cases and applications. Upon approval, standard processes for contracts, oversight and management will occur with the respective funders.

- In terms of **Oversight**, the Strategy and Accountability table is tasked with leading the implementation. City Council will continue to play a key oversight role in terms of decisions regarding investments to support implementation, establishment/changes to associated policies and by-laws, and approval of plans for the implementation of hubs and highly supported housing and the approach to encampments. Other levels of government will play key oversight roles in relation to funding for hubs, highly supported housing and other key system deliverables.

Appendix A provides a more detailed description of the functions of the Strategy and Accountability Tables as well as the first three implementation planning tables for hubs, highly supportive housing and encampments.

Indigenous Led Response

To ensure a culturally safe response that is appropriate for Indigenous community members, we will follow the lead of Indigenous colleagues and support an Indigenous-led system response, which is not designed in a colonial way and respects the deep knowledge and consultation already inherent in the Giwetashkad Strategy, and the intention to honour all relations in defining next steps.

There is a commitment to Indigenous representation in overall system governance and implementation co-design, and a commitment to recognizing that the definition of

Indigenous homelessness is separate and distinct from the common colonialist definition of homelessness.

2.2 Emerging Issues

Encampment Strategy – With conditions on the streets continuing to worsen, there was widespread agreement amongst leaders that action is required immediately. While this will be part of the whole of community system response it cannot wait until full system implementation, so a short-term 30 to 90 day encampment response is being created collaboratively by a group of agencies, co-chaired by Chantelle McDonald from London Cares and Greg Nash from LIHC, and will eventually integrate with the overall system response. The group began meeting on May 5th. The focus of this immediate work is on the health and safety of those in encampments, the workers supporting them and the community. Any recommended fundamental changes to the current approach to encampments will be brought forward to Council.

2.3 Next Steps

With the implementation framework now in place, the focus of the work is on the detailed implementation planning necessary to implement the first hubs and highly supportive housing units as quickly as possible. The objective is to bring forward the recommended plans and associated funding requests by early summer in order to begin implementation of hubs and highly supportive housing as quickly as possible this fall.

The Strategy and Accountability Table will be meeting on May 11th, 2023 to establish a number of operational procedures and practices that will direct the work of the implementation tables, support involvement of those with lived and living experience, and support the participation of frontline workers. The table will also be finalizing the Terms of Reference(s) for the Hubs, Housing Continuum, and Encampments Implementation Tables.

The implementation tables focused on Hubs, Housing, and Encampments will launch in May and work throughout the month and into June to co-design these key elements of the system, and additional implementation tables focused on the remainder of the System Response will be launched later in May and into June.

As well, throughout 2023 and into 2024, Civic Administration will work to align existing Municipal plans and resources to the work of the new Health and Homelessness System. This will include the establishment of an internal enterprise-wide, across all departments, group of plan holders to lead this work.

2.4 Government Relations and Advocacy Efforts

Recently, Strategic Advocacy efforts led by Mayor Josh Morgan, and including members of Civic Administration, and community leaders with members of the Provincial and Federal government. Four key meetings have taken place with Federal and Provincial ministers in the month of April, including: the Federal Minister Mental Health and Addictions (April 14), Premier, Deputy Premier and Ministers of Health, Finance, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Mental Health and Addictions, and Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (April17), Federal Ministers of Health, Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, and Housing Diversity and Inclusion (April 26-28), as well as an Ontario Big City Mayors meeting with Provincial Minister of Health (April 4). London's plan has been very well received in all meetings to date.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

Funding Announcements:
On April 25th, 2023, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark and local MPP's from the Province of Ontario announced an increase of nearly $8.5 Million in the London/Middlesex Homeless Prevention Program (HPP) funding which brings the base funding amount from the Province to $21.8 Million dollars. This investment allows the City of London as Consolidated Municipal Service Manager to have some flexibility in supporting initiatives in Middlesex County, address emerging pressures and help to maintain current services, and target future investment opportunities to advance the work of the Whole of Community System Response. Any recommendations to allocate this funding toward the implementation of hubs and highly supportive housing or other aspects of implementation of the whole of community system response will be brought forward to Council for consideration and decision making.

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

Cc:
Lynne Livingstone, City Manager
Scott Mathers,   Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic Development
Kelly Scherr,   Deputy City Manager, Environment, and Infrastructure
Anna Lisa Barbon, Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports
Barry Card,   Deputy City Manager, Legal Services
Cheryl Smith,   Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services

Appendix A

This appendix provides a more detailed outline of the functions of the Strategy and Accountability Table and the initial implementation tables.

Strategy and Accountability Table:

The purpose of the Strategy and Accountability Table is to guide the overall implementation of the System Response. Specifically, the Strategy and Accountability Table will:

- Establish the Lived and Living Experience Council and receive guidance on strategy and priorities to ensure they align with the needs of people accessing the services
- Prioritize funding requests to support implementation
- Problem solve and provide direction on implementation
- Establish an accountability framework and mechanisms
- Establish an evaluation framework
- Provide direction on emerging issues
- Coordinate communication and community engagement
- Support advocacy efforts with other levels of government

Hubs Implementation Table:

The Hubs Implementation Table will co-design a network of purpose-built hubs providing a set of clearly defined service standards for a set of core functions with timely, direct pathways to housing with applicable supports. The Hubs table will develop the criteria for multi-agency service collaboration including outreach and access pathways.

The deliverables identified for the Hubs implementation table are based on initial understandings of scope at the outset of the System Response; they may be refined as the Implementation Table conducts its work. These early deliverables include:

- Develop the endorsed model for operating the first five hubs
- Define each of the agreed upon core functions of an operating hub
- Describe the operating model for collaborative, interprofessional, and multidisciplinary service delivery teams
- Identify criteria and processes used for selecting lead agencies
- Draft partnership agreements and applicable processes needed for implementation
- Establish defined service standards of care for the Hub delivery model based on each of the core functions and rooted in the guiding principles and values of the System Response
- Create a coordinated outreach process to best support people from encampments to hubs
- Establish the criteria for identifying the geographic areas for the first five hubs across the community
- Establish the criteria for identifying the highest acuity populations to be served in the first five hubs

Housing Implementation Table:

The deliverables identified in this section are based on initial understandings of scope at the outset of the System Response; they may be refined as the Implementation Table conducts its work. These deliverables include:

- Develop endorsed Highly Supportive Housing standards and approach to care
  - Conduct partner search to ensure all needed partners are participating in the development of standards and approach

- o Identify standards for highly supportive housing, drawing on existing practice locally and good practice from other communities
- o Identify principles and approach for system-wide tenant placement processes
- o Develop coordinated models of care for placed tenants that align with other System Response initiatives

- ● Implement standards and approach as part of building 100 highly supportive housing units by end of 2023 and full plan for 600 highly supportive housing units in London
  - o Identify locations and opportunities for creation of highly supportive housing
  - o Partner to build/convert suitable properties to highly supportive units as viable opportunities are identified
  - o Place tenants according to endorsed processes and implement models of care
  - o Monitor and refine approach as needed

An outcome measurement framework will be developed in coordination with the System Foundations Implementation Table, when established.

Encampment Implementation Table:
The Encampments Implementation Table will co-design a whole-of-community strategy for supporting encampments. Recognizing encampments may be part of a person's housing journey, the Implementation Table will recommend principles, strategies, and implementation approaches for coordinated outreach and supports to those in encampments, and how they interact with hubs.

The deliverables identified in this section are based on initial understandings of scope at the outset of the System Response; they may be refined as the Implementation Table conducts its work. These deliverables include:

- ● Develop the endorsed encampment management strategy
  - o Identify core principles and scope of encampment strategy
  - o Engage people with lived and living experience in ways that work for them on their needs and perspectives related to encampments
  - o Aggregate existing practices from organizations and individuals serving encampments to identify gaps, duplications, and opportunities
  - o Conduct scan of good practices for encampments in other communities
  - o Identify how encampment strategy aligns with Hub and Housing strategies developed through System Response
  - o Develop coordinated outreach approach
  - o Develop draft recommendations for coordinated, whole-of-community encampment strategy
- ● Develop an implementation plan
  - o Identify training and resource needs for organizations and individuals serving encampments (i.e. organizations conducting coordinated outreach)
  - o Create training resources and train organizations on coordinated encampment strategy
  - o Monitor and adapt response as required