

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: Encampment Response Update
Date: June 13, 2023

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development that, the following actions **be taken** with respect to the June 13, 2023, Encampment Response Update report.

- a. **To APPROVE** The funding allocation from the Social Services Reserve Fund for the total municipal allocation amount of up to \$255,000.00 to support a portion of the costs of the Phase 1 Encampment Response on a temporary basis as outlined in this report and as attached as Schedule 1;
- b. **To AUTHORIZE and APPROVE** One-time contract amendment of existing agreements in the total estimated cost of \$100,000, to support London Cares and Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA);
- c. That, Civic Administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to undertake all administrative acts which are necessary in relation to this project;
- d. That, the approval given herein **BE CONDITIONAL** upon the Corporation amending a Purchase of Service Agreement, and;
- e. **To DELEGATE**, the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development or written designate to take all necessary action to implement Phase 1 of the Encampment Response.

Executive Summary

Like many other communities across Canada, London is continuing to see an increase in individuals sleeping rough and experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The volume of individuals sleeping rough and in encampments has been on the rise and so too is their level of despair, hopelessness, and declining physical health. These impacts of experiencing homelessness have stretched resources in the community and have led to impacts throughout the broader community including street-involved activity and unpredictable or disruptive behaviours, disruption to businesses, trespassing, urban camps, and excessive garbage.

These challenges are related, in part, to the increased impacts of trauma and living unsheltered which may include struggles with substance use and under-treated mental illness, while the volume of homelessness puts pressures on social supports, makes access to treatment difficult, and is compounded by the lack of available affordable housing spaces with proper supports.

To this end, many outreach serving organizations have been coming together to try and address the immediate health and safety concerns being experienced throughout the city by those living unsheltered and to strategize what can be done over the next 30, 60, and 90 days to assist and respond to the situation. This report serves to provide an update of these efforts that are happening in parallel to the Health and Homelessness System Response and to seek out additional resources to assist in targeted and cumulative measures formed through a human rights lens and focused on more coordinated service provision.

Ultimately, the development of a fulsome Encampment Response will occur in alignment with the collective efforts of the system response. The immediate intention is to develop short term supports addressing the ongoing and emerging concerns facing individuals living unsheltered and simultaneously continue to mitigate the impacts of homelessness on all Londoners through the work of

the System Response implementation tables focused on creating 24/7 Hubs and Highly Supportive Housing.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

This report aligns with the strategic areas of focus in the 2023-2027 [City of London Strategic Plan](#). The City of London is a sustainable city within a thriving region, committed to culture, innovation and providing a safe, affordable, welcoming, and healthy future for today and for the next generation.

Housing and Homelessness

- The City of London demonstrates leadership and builds partnerships to increase quality, affordable, and supportive housing options.
- London has a robust community system of health, homelessness, housing stability services, policies, procedures, and by-laws in place to support individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness or in precarious housing consistent with Council's recognition of the health and homelessness emergency.

Wellbeing and Safety

- London has safe, vibrant, and healthy neighbourhoods and communities.
- London is an affordable and supportive community for individuals and families.
- Londoners have safe access to public spaces, services, and supports that increase wellbeing and quality of life.
- Housing in London is affordable and attainable.
- Londoners have access to quality, affordable, and timely services.
- Londoners have equitable access to key services, community supports, and recreational opportunities that enhance wellbeing and resilience.
- Increased access to a range of quality, affordable, and supportive housing options that meet the unique needs of Londoners.
- London continues its efforts to promote animal welfare including companion pets and wild animals.
- Decreased number of Londoners at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Improved safety in London's shelters system

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.

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 during the COVID-19 pandemic to attain and retain permanent housing. This work supports recovery efforts through a coordinated COVID-19 Response that will support the transition of homeless individuals and families.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

The following reports are directly related to the Encampment Response and City of London's Coordinated Informed Response

- 2022-2023 Winter Response Outcome Report (CPSC May 24, 2023)
- Update 2 – Whole of Community System Response Implementation (SPPC, May 9, 2023)

- Update – Whole of Community System Response Implementation (CPSC: April 18, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response and Community Accountability Working Group Funding Reallocation Request (CPSC April 12, 2023)
- Health and Homelessness Summits – Proposed Whole of Community System Response (SPPC: February 28, 2023)
- Municipal Council Approval of The Housing Stability Plan 2019 to 2024 as Required Under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (CPSC: December 3, 2019)
- Core Area Informed Response – Pilot Update Report (SPPC: March 4, 2019)
- Core Area Informed Response (SPPC: September 17, 2018)
- Health and Homelessness Summits – Proposed Whole of Community System Response (SPPC: Feb 28, 2023)

1.2 Coordinated Informed Response in Community

Coordinated Informed Response (CIR) is a municipally funded initiative that involves multiple service areas and organizations working together to respond to and support encampment, individuals sleeping rough, and the impacts of such on the individual and surrounding community. The CIR team strives to find balance between compassion and discretion, and necessary enforcement of Municipal Bylaws. As part of an enterprise-wide approach the Coordinated Informed Response partners include City departments; Emergency Management and Security Services, Housing Stability Services, Municipal Compliance, Parks and Forestry, London Fire Department, Transportation and Mobility, Service London along with external agencies from London Cares, Atlohsa Family Healing Services, and London Police Services. Coordinated Informed Response began as a fulltime initiative as approved and funded by City Council in the 2020-2023 Multi-Year budget. The CIR program is continuously monitored and adjusted to ensure it is meeting the needs and concerns of the London community.

The knowledge gained and relationships fostered through CIR will continue to be applied to new service delivery approaches as we work collectively as a community to adapt to a community response that meets the current needs of individuals living unsheltered. The CIR program has been temporarily providing enhanced service hours six days a week while demand for their services from the community continues to grow. This report seeks to maintain the enhanced service delivery hours throughout the summer months and into the fall.

The collaborative response supports the City of London's Strategic Plan, the Core Area Action Plan, the Housing Stability Action Plan, among other community plans and strategies.

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 The Encampment Response purpose

The Encampment response will support individuals who are living unsheltered with basic human rights while working on a community informed long-term strategy. The Encampment table is guided by a UN Special Report on the Right to Housing titled "[A Human Rights Approach - A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada](#)". As a community we are focusing to provide 7 key aspects of Principle 6 of this protocol to individuals living unsheltered or in encampments. These include:

1. Access to safe and clean drinking water
2. Access to hygiene and sanitation facilities
3. Resources and support to ensure fire safety.
4. Waste management systems
5. Social supports and services
6. Resources to support personal safety of residents.
7. Facilities and resources that support food safety.

2.2 The Encampment Response Table

In support of the ongoing work through the Community System Response meetings, an interim Encampment Response Table has been implemented within London to support the current acute need of individuals living unsheltered. This working group is based on the values and principles established

through the Health and Homelessness Summit work and reflected in the Council Approved Community System Response plan.

The encampment work is focusing on urgent acute health and safety needs over the next 30–90 days. The community-provider designed response is proposed to support individuals living unsheltered within London with the goal of meeting their needs through a human rights-based approach.

This interim encampment response includes a community driven multisectoral approach that leverages the strength of many existing providers and resources through the delivery of coordinated social services, health care supports, basic needs provisions through funded and volunteer organizations as an immediate crisis response. The work of this table will begin to align with the larger Whole of Community System Response.

Throughout the London community over the past 12-18 months, there has been an increase of:

- Violence - with encampment residents experiencing victimization from others who are living unsheltered, and from people living in surrounding neighborhoods.
- Acuity of mental and physical health issues.
- Overdoses and the toxicity of street substances.
- Fire safety issues.
- Threats to staff and volunteers who are supporting unsheltered residents.
- Hopelessness and desperation among unsheltered residents, and the teams who support them.
- Numbers of encampments, and the number of people sleeping unsheltered.

Frontline staff from community organizations, along with calls for CIR involvement, have demonstrated that the community continues to see an increased desperation resulting in damages, fires, safety concerns and medical care fluctuations due to a lack of accessibility to basic needs such as, washrooms, showers, food, water, and personal connections. Although the encampment table's long-term goals coincide with the Health and Homelessness Summit and the eventual creation of a community-wide strategy, there is an immediate acute need to coordinate efforts to support the ever-growing number of individuals living unsheltered in London. To date, there have been three in-person meetings of the larger Encampment working group: April 21, 2023, May 12, 2023, and May 26, 2023. There have also been concerted efforts by the co-chairs and members of Civic Administration between meetings to formulate plans and align resources.

The first meeting determined an immediate interim need for services to support those experiencing unsheltered homelessness while the Whole of Community System Response continues to pursue implementation plans for Supportive Housing and Hubs, and additional supports can be defined. Two co-chairs have been identified to lead these discussions in Greg Nash, Director, Program Development & Complex Urban Health, London Intercommunity Health Centre (LIHC) and Chantelle McDonald, Director of Service, London Cares Homeless Response Services.

At the second meeting, encampment safety items including the outreach encampment safety tool were reviewed for possible improvements with a focus on human trafficking, underage individuals, and camp capacity. It was determined a continued use of the current safety protocol and tool with additional consideration of cultural trauma is appropriate. The current encampment garbage program established by Coordinated Informed Response was shared with the group and a determination was made that the most utilized garbage collection locations would be appropriate for coordinating additional resources and providing enhanced, multi-agency service depots. Time was dedicated to re-affirming the working group's goals:

Increase hope to individuals experiencing homelessness by working collaboratively to provide six of the nine basic needs and ultimately decrease desperation.

- Access to clean water
- Fire safety
- Social supports
- Harm reduction
- Washroom facilities and showers
- Laundry services
- Overall safety protection of residents

Locations for the depots will be determined, based on two factors:

- 1) Where encampments are located
- 2) Where resources are most needed

The third and most recent meeting focused on the encampments and essential services to be delivered at the service depots. The group has been working to determine how to immediately provide six of the nine basic needs effectively to decrease desperation amongst the homeless community. Focus was placed on what can be provided in a short-term urgent manner by enhancing and extending existing community support while acknowledging some extra resources would be needed. The working group continues to plan for what needs to be provided through a longer-term collaborative support system at varying stages over the next 90 days.

To support the transition to the initial core area depots as part of Phase 2 it will be important to minimize any gaps in current drop-in services, 4 weeks of drop-in service will be required in addition to the original 12 weeks as provided through the recent reallocation of funds approved by council supporting the extension of the Winter Response. There is a need to extend funding to London Cares and to CMHA to ensure temporary drop-in services can stay open through phase 1 until Phase 2 can be finalized.

Basic necessities were discussed and determination of what could be implemented immediately along with what items would require longer term planning was agreed upon. The following list captures the items discussed and approved by the group. Civic Administration and participating agencies will work to get these items in place to support vulnerable individuals as quickly as possible. These include:

- Safe & clean drinking water access through increased access to bottled water.
- Hygiene and sanitation facility access through the provision of showers, washrooms, laundry, and other needs.
- Resources and support to ensure fire safety including warm clothing, survival gear for sheltering provisions, fire tips and education from both outreach and London Fire Dept
- Waste management systems including.
 - weekly garbage bag distribution and collection will be provided by the City of London
 - hand soap, cleaning supplies
- Social supports & services including connection to the HOME Bus and other support agencies for health, wellness, system navigation supports.
- Facilities and resources that support food safety including.
 - Prepared meals and snack items provided to support individuals with food security and food handling.
 - Storage containers if applicable
- Personal safety considerations including:
 - Outreach teams having regular engagements with those sleeping in encampments to gauge their safety, noting unsafe conditions and locations are sometimes difficult to identify and can be unpredictable.
 - Agreements are required amongst outreach groups to support the safety of residents.
 - Concerns will be addressed as they come forward. to the Encampment Response table
- Harm Reduction Resources including.
 - Naloxone and overdose prevention training
 - Needle disposal and collection
 - Harm Reduction Outreach support and equipment

A shared operational planning tool has been created to support communication and data collection between various outreach teams that are supporting encampments. This tool is owned and operated by London Intercommunity Health Centre and does not collect personal information about individuals. The Kovacs Group has been engaged and funded through LIHC to develop a technology platform from this temporary tool and has provided both a short-term strategy and a long-term strategy:

- Short-term: Google Form exporting to a live Excel spreadsheet and Google Map
- Long-term: Customized app, created by Kovacs Group

Individuals in the meeting were in consensus to move forward with both proposed short-term and long-term strategies.

Three smaller action working groups have been identified to support moving forward with the following objectives: Food security, food safety, and waste management/hygiene services. Supported by the co-

chairs, each smaller group has been tasked with creating strategies related to resourcing and budget considerations.

2.3 Encampment Response Table Model

The Encampment Response will use the supports of existing service areas wherever possible. Through a coordination of efforts, an initial four (4) designated support depots will be created across the community to provide access to basic needs and support the 7 identified standards. Depots will be strategically located to serve a large area including along the Thames River and in the core. The efforts and responses to the immediate needs related to encampments will adjust and expand as service levels require and as resource planning can be completed. While initial interventions may remain in place throughout the 90-day period or beyond, the effectiveness of them and the need for additional resources will be discussed and may result in additional incremental resourcing or funding requests throughout the summer months.

The Encampment Response table will make commitments to accountability and transparency through commitments in writing to support the Health and homeless response communication strategies in collaboration with the Strategy and Accountability Table and the City of London.

Community Outreach and social service supports coordination will be developed to ensure the depots are serviced daily by professionals who have established relationships with our unsheltered community and can support their basic and system navigational needs. The depot approach will allow access to basic needs and supports in specific locations reducing the need for people to travel to a variety of services within the core area to meet their necessities.

This model requires coordination for the delivery and enhanced cleanup of basic needs items including food, water, harm reduction supplies, hygiene items, etc.

The CIR Outreach team will continue to operate 7 days a week, with supports available 24 hours per day. The CIR MLEO team will continue to operate with an enhanced service delivery model and service hours of 6 days per week, and 10 hours per day. The CIR Transportation and Mobility team will continue to operate regular hours with an expanded team to support the volume of assisting with community cleanliness, abandoned encampment clean ups, the encampment garbage program, and to provide as needed assistance to the CIR core team etc.

2.4 Encampment Response Phases

The Encampment Response will roll out in three phases of approximately six weeks each, starting by addressing the immediate needs and progressing towards a formal encampment protocol for the broader community.

Phase 1 (Thames River)

The proposed service depot sites include:

- Ann Street Park area
- Cavendish Park area
- Wellington Valley Park area
- Watson Street Park area

Services at these locations are accessible and mobile to meet individuals in encampments along the river in the core of the city. City of London CIR Service London data demonstrates that these are the most utilized areas for encampments. The services at these locations will be scheduled, the sites will be prepared for direct service delivery and provision of necessities. Following the direct connection with those in the nearby encampments, the service depot will close and all material and supplies will be packed up and relocated. The only remaining service feature will be the comfort station.

This phase will focus on identifying and completing quick wins and ensuring the initial implementation of coordinated basic needs and support while beginning to meet the identified 7 standards.

Depots will include:

- Availability of three meals per day ensuring that people have access to nutritious food meeting daily caloric needs. In phase one these meals will be delivered to encampments until a regimented schedule of support can be developed at the depots.
- Snack options will also be made available through donations.
- Bottled drinking water to support hydration (3840 bottles a week)
- Fire prevention education and supportive monitoring
- System navigation
- Access to washrooms and/or comfort stations.
- Provision of showers at specific staffed location(s) during scheduled hours
- Harm reduction and Naloxone
- Removal of garbage and site clean-up support

Phase 2 (Urban depot locations)

This phase will focus on the launch of 4 urban depots providing basic needs and supports and services that align with the 7 standards. Coordinated provision of support services will begin in this phase aimed at meeting the complex needs of individuals residing both in encampments and in the core.

Any potential urban locations will look to utilize existing agency support locations and will be confirmed as part of the ongoing work to support the basic needs of those in encampments.

All depots will include the same basic needs and support services as phase one.

They will also include:

- Scheduled visits from supports and services to meet a range of needs including health and housing support.
- Provisions for individuals to keep warm and dry such as tarps, blankets, and tents to ensure fire safety.
- Increased personal hygiene provisions will be provided to individuals distributed through depots.

A continued assessment and evaluation of provisions and services from Phase 1 will be conducted as additional details and planning for the second timeframe (phase 2) are compiled.

With the continued work of a longer-term Encampment Response Protocol, linked to the Whole of Community System Response, additional work will be undertaken to launch a process for developing a comprehensive and community informed Encampment Response, which will begin when the Encampment Response implementation table is launched. A defined date for this has not yet been set.

Phase 3 (Protocol)

In the Phase 3 timeframe, the Encampment Response Table will work towards the creation of a comprehensive encampment protocol which will build on the first two phases of the immediate actions encampment actions and align with the community system response. To be effective in the process to create a community strategy on encampments, an outside resource will be utilized to provide expertise related to encampment strategies and to provide direct consultation with various impacted groups.

The protocol will further define the coordination between community agencies and service providers supporting people residing in encampments in the core. A communication App will be developed to use between collaborative outreach partners engaged in the work.

A continued assessment and evaluation of provisions and services from Phase 2 will be conducted.

The work in this phase will create a bridge between what is urgently implemented to support the basic needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and a well-established encampment Response for all of community that focuses on a human rights approach.

2.5 Funding Impact/ Considerations

The total cost to support an immediate Phase 1 Encampment Response for known initiatives planned at this time with one-time funding is estimated at \$414,000. A portion of the funding will be provided through Social and Health Development, Housing Stability Services existing 2023-24 federal and

provincial funding from the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) and/or Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy budget in the total estimated amount \$ 159,000.

This report also requests approval from Council to utilize \$255,000 of funding from the Social Services Reserve Fund to support a portion of the phase 1 Encampment Response. The funds in the Social Services Reserve Fund are intended to be used to "address unmet human services need in London through initiatives that support employment, homelessness, health, life stabilization, social services improvements and that supplement outcomes mandated under the Ontario Works program". The purpose of the reserve fund aligns well with this strategy. The balance of the Social Services Reserve Fund is approximately \$4.0 million prior to the approval of this expenditure.

2.6 Next Steps

Encampment Response Table representatives include Ark Aid Mission, Atlohsa, City of London, Canadian Mental Health Association Thames Valley, LIHC, London Cares Homeless Response Services, London Fire Department, London Police Services, Mission Services, The Ontario Aboriginal AIDS/HIV Strategy (OAHAS), Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (RHAC), Safe Space, Salvation Army, Sanctuary London, Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOHAC), St. Joseph's Health Centre Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team, Street Level Women at Risk (SLWAR), and 519 Pursuit. These organizations will continue to convene and work collaboratively with the co-chairs to advance the human rights-based approach to supporting unsheltered Londoners. The working group will continue to refine additional strategies for subsequent periods throughout the summer months, ensuring evaluation of what is working well, what new measures are possible, identifying appropriate resourcing needs and making response adjustments as necessary when responses are not meeting anticipated outcomes.

Phase 1 Encampment Response funding will be allocated through service agreements with City of London Housing Stability Services in accordance with the City of London procurement policy utilizing the existing council approved standard form purchase of service agreement as attached as Schedule 1 to this report.

Civic Administration will provide ongoing updates and align future phase work on this Encampment Response to the Whole of Community System Response Strategy and Accountability table and therefore bring future updates related to the Encampment Response through the Strategic Priorities and Policy committee monthly updates, including any necessary funding requests.. .

Conclusion

This report seeks Council approval for contract amendments to existing London Cares and CMHA contracts in the total amount of \$100,000 for Encampment Response Phase 1 implementation. Approving one-time funding to address this acute community need will ensure unsheltered Londoners continue to be supported. Civic Administration is also seeking Council approval to draw down the Social Services Reserve Fund in the amount of up-to \$255,000 for increased garbage collection and expanded CIR service hours. Encampment Response updates and any funding requests will be part of the Whole of Community System Response Updates presented at Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC).

Prepared by: Debbie Kramers, Manager, Coordinated Informed Response
Submitted by: Craig Cooper, Director, Housing Stability Services
Recommended by: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development

cc: Lynne Livingstone, City Manager
Anna Lisa Barbon, Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports
Paul Yeoman, Director, Parks and Forestry

Schedule 1 – Overview of Phase One Funding

Program/Service	Duration	Agency	Phase I Cost Estimate
Food and Food Safety	6 weeks	Contracted Agency. In accordance with the City’s procurement policy, 3 informal quotations are being sought to determine an appropriate supplier.	Up to \$42,000, to be accommodated within existing Social and Health Development Services budget
Existing Drop-in Staff supports	4 weeks	London Cares	Up to \$65,000 to be accommodate within existing Social and Health Development Services budget
Existing Drop-in Staff supports	4 weeks	Coffee House Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)	Up to \$35,000 to be accommodated within existing Social and Health Development budget
Access to Clean Drinking Water	6 weeks	The City of London	Up to \$5000; To be accommodated within existing Social and Health Development budget
Daily Delivery	6 weeks	Encampment Response Outreach Agencies	No cost as these services to be accommodated within existing Outreach budgets for phase one only.
Resources to Ensure Fire Safety	6 weeks	Fire Prevention & Public Education London Fire Department Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services, and Coordinated Informed Response, The City of London	No cost as these are existing City of London services that will work collaboratively with attending outreach and social service teams for education and monitoring.
Hygiene and Sanitation Services (Comfort Stations)	6 weeks	Contracted Agency. In accordance with the City’s procurement policy	Up to \$5,000; To be accommodated within existing Social and Health Development budget
Hygiene and Sanitation Services (Security for showers)	6 weeks	Contracted Agency. In accordance with the City’s procurement policy	Up to \$7,000; To be accommodated within existing Social and Health Development budget
Social Supports and Services	6 weeks	Encampment Response Outreach Agencies	No cost for phase I as these services to be accommodated with Outreach collaboration and scheduling until the specific need is determined by Encampment Response.
Resources to Support Harm Reduction	6 weeks	Regional HIV/Aids Connection	No cost as these are existing services that can be offered at the scale of phase I.
Subtotal		Program Funding from Existing Resources / Budgets	Up to \$159,000
Waste Management	6 weeks	Enterprise-wide approach – by enhancing our current City of London CIR/Roads Team garbage program in collaboration with the Parks and Waste Management Teams we will include this in their community services for parks depots.	Up to \$100,000
6-day a week CIR program	5 months	The City of London	Up to \$155,000
Subtotal		Additional Proposed to be funded from Social Services Reserve Fund	Up to \$255,000

Total Funding	\$ 414,000
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