



The Corporation of the City of Stratford  
Social Services Committee  
Open Session  
AGENDA

**Date:** Monday, January 22, 2024

**Time:** 7:05 P.M.

**Location:** Council Chamber, City Hall

**Committee Present:** Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Mayor Ritsma, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Hunter, Councillor McCabe, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

**Staff Present:** Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief

To watch the Committee meeting live, please click the following link:

<https://video.isilive.ca/stratford/live.html>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website

<https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Beatty has provided regrets for this meeting.

**2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence

from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

**3. Delegations**

None scheduled.

**4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works**

**4.1 Shelterlink Youth Services – Operating Agreement and Afterhours Telephone Support Agreement (SOC24-002)**

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This item is also listed for consideration on the January 22, 2024, Regular Council reconvene agenda.

**Motion by**

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to execute a purchase of service agreement with Shelterlink Youth Services for the delivery of emergency shelter programming for youth in the service area;**

**AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to execute a purchase of service agreement with Shelterlink Youth Services for the delivery of after-hours telephone support.**

**5. Adjournment**

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

**Motion by**

**Committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Committee meeting adjourn.**



## MANAGEMENT REPORT

**Date:** January 22, 2024  
**To:** Social Services Committee  
**From:** Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works  
 John Ritz, Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability  
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services  
**Report Number:** SOC24-002  
**Attachments:** None

**Title:** Shelterlink Youth Services – Operating Agreement and Afterhours Telephone Support Agreement

**Objective:** To obtain Council approval to enter into two agreements with Shelterlink Youth Services whereby the City of Stratford will fund Shelterlink Youth Services for the delivery of emergency shelter programming for youth as well as after-hours emergency telephone support.

**Background:** Shelterlink Youth Services, formerly Stratford-Perth Shelterlink, and the City of Stratford Social Services Department have been engaged in ongoing funding relationships dating back to the mid-2000s. During this time, the City of Stratford has funded Shelterlink Youth Services (herein referred to as Shelterlink) for several programs including general provision of services, a general operating grant, life skills and youth trustee services, and the provision of emergency housing after-hours support for members of the public who need emergency shelter. As Shelterlink continues to modernize their services, new agreements are required to reflect the updated work that is currently being done as well as update the funding arrangement required to maintain stability and ongoing support for the most vulnerable youth in our community. In addition, the after-hours emergency telephone support agreement was deemed outdated and has been updated to ensure that the activities, deliverables, and outcomes were clearly defined.

**Analysis:** The proposed Operating Service agreement combines two separate models of funding: the municipal operating grant of \$50,000 that is provided to Shelterlink on a yearly basis as well as the ongoing funding of emergency shelter beds in the Shelterlink facility. Previously, Shelterlink operated a transitional housing model whereby youth were required to pay rent to reside in the facility. As part of a review of their strategic priorities, they decided to move to an emergency shelter model in an effort to reduce

length of stay and increase housing attainability for youth residing in shelter. In conversations with the City, a funding shortfall was identified due to the transition from a transitional model to an emergency model. With the transition to the new model, Shelterlink will focus on increased housing-focused services and reduce services that do not directly correlate to increased housing attainability or readiness.

In review of the current funding model, it was identified that there was a misalignment between need and funding that was being provided by the City. Shelterlink often supports youth with long-term stays in their facility and for those youth who cannot access their space, they are provided motel stays. Through the current emergency shelter funding model, the municipality pays a per-night fee for both youth and adults to reside in motel spaces, while the beds in Shelterlink did not receive any traditional funding. The new agreement, highlighted in this report, works to address this funding shortfall by introducing a per diem (per day) charge of \$40.00, up to a maximum of 15 rooms per night which is currently Shelterlink's operating capacity. Any rooms required above and beyond this total will be accessed through the current emergency housing motel model. By moving to this funding model, the City can ensure that all youth requiring support with their experience of homelessness receive it and Shelterlink receives adequate funding for the work they are doing. The per diem charge will be funded through the City of Stratford's Provincial Homelessness Prevention Plan (HPP) allocation from the province, as part of the Emergency Shelter program.

The operating grant detailed in this agreement is designed to support youth, aged 16-24, of Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys who are actively experiencing homelessness and meet the local definition of homelessness. This includes but is not limited to the provision of emergency shelter for youth experiencing homelessness at Shelterlink or in local motels if they are unable to access the facility, provision of basic needs for residents of Shelterlink and ongoing support to resolve residents experience of homelessness as quickly as possible. This program shall align with the Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys Housing and Homelessness Plan (2020-2024). Through this agreement, the City is better able to define the specific activities required to receive the operating grant, as well as collect the data required to be submitted in an effort to better understand the ongoing need in the community.

The After-Hours Telephone Support agreement focuses on two primary aspects; the provision of emergency shelter services for both youth and adults who require this service outside of the City's core business hours and the provision of afterhours support for the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP). Currently, the City of Stratford Social Services Department utilizes local motels to place individuals requiring emergency shelter support for fixed-length stays. The current emergency shelter program utilizes a housing-focused model which prioritizes activities related to finding and securing housing as quickly as possible. Within this model, program participants are supported by a Social Services Outreach Worker who will assist with activities such as document readiness, housing searches, landlord communication and arranging viewings of

potential residential units. Participants are expected to focus on finding housing during their stays and must be actively engaged to remain in emergency shelter.

The current agreement dates back to 2007 and includes deliverables, activities and outcomes that no longer reflect the mandate of the program. The new agreement focuses on modernizing the service and detailing specific deliverables, outcomes and activities that reflect the current work being done. Shelterlink will provide after-hours telephone support for emergency housing applicants and SHOPP participants and landlords, whereby they receive calls from individuals and families requiring support, assess and determine needs, assess for eligibility, attempt diversion and place eligible individuals or families in motel until the next business day. On the next business day, Social Services staff will contact the individual to complete a formal intake. Shelterlink utilizes tools provided by the Social Services Department to both attempt diversion and assess eligibility and can contact the on-call member of the Social Services management team, should the need arise.

The new agreement sees a cost increase from \$21,120 to \$50,000 to modernize the service and ensure adequate coverage is provided at all times by Shelterlink staff. This program is funded through the 100% Provincial funding portfolio of the Homelessness Prevention Plan.

### **Financial Implications:**

#### **Financial impact to prior year operating budget:**

The City's Community Grants Program provided to Shelterlink of \$50,000 was included in the 2023 municipal budgeted expenses. The per diem costs were not included in the 2023 budget but will be absorbed within the 2024 budget and within the 100% Provincially funded Homelessness Prevention Program.

The After-Hours Telephone Support program was also funded through the 100% Homelessness Prevention Program. The 2024-25 Homelessness Prevention Investment Plan will account for the increased financial cost of \$28,880 to operate the program. The 2023 agreement pays Shelterlink \$21,120 per year. There is no expected impact on the municipal tax levy as a result of this increase.

#### **Financial impact on current year operating budget:**

The City's Community Grants Program has historically included \$50,000 and is included in the 2024 draft budget for community grants. The per diem rate is included in the draft budget within the emergency shelter category of the Provincial Plan for the Homelessness Prevention program. There is no expected impact on the municipal tax levy as a result of this increase as long as the Community Grants Program is funded as presented.

#### **Financial impact on future year operating budget:**

The future years municipal operating budgets are not expected to be impacted by the After-Hours Telephone Support agreement because it is fully funded from provincial

programs. The per diem expenditure in the agreement will be included in the Homelessness Prevention Program and detailed in the Investment Plan submitted to the Government of Ontario each year. The \$50,000 cost to operate the program is anticipated to be funded from the Community Grants program, subject to annual Council approvals.

### **Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

#### **Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships**

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

### **Alignment with One Planet Principles:**

#### **Equity and Local Economy**

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

**Staff Recommendation: THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to execute a purchase of service agreement with Shelterlink Youth Services for the delivery of emergency shelter programming for youth in the service area;**

**AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to execute a purchase of service agreement with Shelterlink Youth Services for the delivery of after-hours telephone support.**

<b>Prepared by:</b>	Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
<b>Recommended by:</b>	Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
	Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer