



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Sub-committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: October 13, 2021
Time: 3:30 P.M.
Location: Electronic Meeting
Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Bunting - Vice Chair, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Ritsma, Councillor Vassilakos
Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Kelly Stone - Supervisor of Social Services, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary

To watch the Sub-committee meeting live, click the following link: <https://stratford-ca.zoom.us/j/84569242068?pwd=YWpXdzBYdGlaR2FJTfNBZlEyQ2lpdz09>
A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website at <https://www.stratford.ca/en/index.aspx> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

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. Housing Focused Street Outreach Program (SOC21-013)

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Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Housing Focused Street Outreach Program" (SOC21-013) be received for information.

5. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.

6. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by _____

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: October 13, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-013
Attachments: None

Title: Housing Focused Street Outreach Program

Objective: To provide Council with an update regarding the implementation of the Housing Focused Street Outreach Program which is a partnership with Choices for Change and the Stratford Police Services.

Background: Currently, our local by-name list identifies 119 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness across Stratford, Perth County and St Marys. Over the course of the last 18 months, individuals sleeping rough have become more visible in the community as affordable housing options become less attainable and informal housing options such as couch surfing are less prevalent due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors. The by-name list shows an average of 6 move-ins per month for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness over the last 12 months. Though chronic homelessness in our community is not a new occurrence, the visibility of individuals sleeping rough in our community has drawn attention from members of the public who may not have been aware of the prevalence of homelessness in the local area. The City of Stratford, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), operates the emergency shelter program for adults and families over the age of 25 through the utilization of local hotels and motels. Optimism Place provided emergency shelter and outreach services for victims of domestic violence and Stratford-Perth Shelterlink provides emergency shelter and outreach services for youth aged 16-24. Although there are emergency shelter programs in place, one of the gaps identified is that there are times outside of regular business hours when individuals are not eligible for these services due to service restrictions or eligibility requirements, are still in need of outreach support.

The City of Stratford Social Services Outreach Worker program currently provides street outreach services across the City of Stratford, Perth County and St Marys. The primary

focus of this program is connecting with individuals sleeping rough and supporting them in their movement along the housing continuum toward permanent housing. Services provided vary from basic needs such as supporting with the requirements of income support programs to reviewing eligibility for emergency shelter provision, the provision of food support and hygiene kits and ensuring they are connected to the appropriate service providers in the community. Alongside street outreach services, the Social Services Outreach Worker (SSOW) team also oversees the housing focused emergency shelter program, provides case management to individuals experiencing homelessness and housing stability support for individuals living within the Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation and with private market landlords. The SSOW team has been working closely with Choices for Change Peer Outreach staff over the past 6 months to support individuals sleeping rough and those accessing emergency shelter, and this agreement offers the opportunity to further enhance the already successful partnership.

Analysis: The new Housing Focused Street Outreach Program is designed to complement the existing outreach support team by supporting residents of Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys who are actively experiencing homelessness and meet the local definition of unsheltered homelessness, outside our regular business hours. This includes but is not limited to activities such as the distribution of “survival gear,” connections to coordinated access, assistance with document readiness and referrals to other programs and services to address barriers to housing stability. The program involves a partnership with Stratford Police Services (SPS), Choices for Change and the United Way Huron-Perth (UWPH). The SPS provided the program a vehicle as well as additional funding for basic needs and technology support for clients sleeping rough, allowing them to stay engaged with programs and community partners.

The City of Stratford is providing funding to Choices for Change for two street outreach workers who will work 5 days per week, Tuesday-Saturday, and be available for on-call support on Sunday and Monday. The exact provision of on-call support is still being defined through ongoing discussion with Choices for Change. The program shall be mobile and visible in the community, taking a proactive approach to engaging individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and responding to concerns raised by community agencies or members of the public in a prompt and appropriate manner. The focus of the program is to engage individuals sleeping rough in a person-centered approach with the primary objective of securing long-term, permanent housing.

Furthermore, the program will:

- Provide proactive street outreach to individuals sleeping rough and create a community map for use by Social Services to ensure encampments are identified and regular outreach is completed there.
- Make referrals to appropriate community agencies and connections to safe, appropriate accommodations.
- Support with provision of basic needs and other items such as hygiene kits, cell phones, footwear/clothing and food.

- Support participants with accessing community agencies to complete housing searches.
- Ensuring referrals to the By-Name list are completed and support the participants with document readiness requirements.

The expected outcomes of the program include:

- Identifying a more accurate number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Increased client experience of system navigation and response.
- Increased in-person supports for unsheltered homelessness outside of regular service hours.
- Increased support for businesses and agencies interacting with clients experiencing homelessness.
- Increased number of clients experiencing positive outcomes.
- Increased access to supports that manage safety and security.

The program is being funded through the Social Services Relief Fund and will be funded in alignment with the Stratford Connection Centre, which is expected to launch this Fall. This agreement has been executed by Choices for Change and City staff through delegated authority provided in report **COU20-035**. The funding agreement begins on October 1, 2021 and runs until September 30, 2024.

Financial Impact: The Housing Focused Street Outreach Program is 100% provincially funded through Phase 3 of the Social Services Relief Fund.

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.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Housing Focused Street Outreach Program" (SOC21-013) be received for information.



Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works



Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan Thomson".

Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer