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## 2020 Business Plan & Budget

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### Community & Customer Services

The Community and Customer Services Division continues to work on co-designing services and programs and offering guidance and support to a range of partners – with agencies working in the Northumberland, building capacity and wellness in the community. This includes a comprehensive reach within the community to support and facilitate the inclusion of community sector voices in the planning, delivery and monitoring of services.

As the homelessness system manager, this division also continues to develop and improve a system and framework to coordinate and manage homelessness services across Northumberland (reflecting the Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan). The Community and Customer Services division also delivers a comprehensive Community Outreach program with case workers supporting those in crisis and living on low incomes. Outreach case workers are able to meet with eligible participants in their own homes and their own communities to identify support services and help design care plans and goals with individuals.

The customer services function continues to provide the administrative infrastructure to ensure that all Community & Social Services programs are able to provide services while continuing to grow and improve the delivery of mandatory and discretionary services. This team continues to be the first point of contact with the public whether on the phone, in person at reception, by text or email

### Prior Year Accomplishments

#### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

##### Funding

- Following an invitation after the review of our initial application to the Federal Government to become a Designated Community under the Reaching Home Strategy (National Housing Strategy), we have prepared and submitted a phase two application.

##### Technology

- Worked with IT and community partners to plan and deliver an Appathon event (an App development competition) open to students and young people to design an App to support food security initiatives across the County.



### **Service delivery**

- Commenced improvements to the service agreements we have with community organizations delivering services in the County, to include robust and consistent recording and monitoring of services.
- Managed the contracts and booking for the 'alternative' service locations across the county including the process for partner agencies to use the spaces available.

### **Sustainable Growth**

#### **Food security**

- Identified the alignment between food security and Community and Customer Services and identified joint priorities.
- The customer service representatives have implemented software to track and report on food distributed to clients through the office. This information enables us to develop metrics on how many clients we are supporting.
- Joined the Northumberland Food Policy Council as the County Representative and initiated review of priorities and presentation to Northumberland County Council. We supported the development and initiation of a new project aligning official plans with food security.
- Worked with 211 to develop new food help website identifying locations and details of programs offering food (food banks, community gardens, meal programs) included QR code to support ease of access to the information.

#### **Facilities**

- Designed plans for improvements to the reception area, waiting area and interview rooms within department, to streamline services and improve customer service. Developed a cross departmental steering group to oversee the implementation of this renovations project to be completed early 2020.

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

#### **Homelessness**

- Continued to support, lead and build the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) including reviewing and updating operating guidelines and governance documents, training for members and
  - Welcomed new members to HCRT including Police Services, Rebound Child and Youth Services and Canadian Mental Health Association.



- Developed flow charts for shelter diversion and shared with HCRT and with internal case work staff, to identify preventive actions and solutions with clients to avoid homelessness offering consistent and timely responses.

### **Continuous improvement**

- Commissioned Green Wood coalition to research, build and develop a report demonstrating the benefits and possibilities of including People with Living and Lived Experience of Poverty in our planning and delivery of services. This report contains Calls to Action to help further improve the engagement of people who access our services across the department.
- Following the RentSmart train-the-trainer training in the fall of 2018, we coordinated 5 training sessions for local people across the County with 2 trainers per session. This has proved very successful, and we have coordinated further training to be completed by the end of 2019 for 12 Community Partners.

### **Partnerships**

- We have continued to participate in Community partnerships and networks including Northumberland Affordable Housing Committee (NAHC), Situation Table, Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee (HSJCC), Community Transportation Committee.
- Continued to build a Northumberland land lord engagement strategy including communications, networking and partnership opportunities, and support implementation across the County.

### **Community Safety and Well Being Planning**

- Commenced the information sharing, awareness raising and education around the mandated requirement to produce a Community Safety and Wellness Plan. Secured agreement from all lower tier Municipalities throughout Northumberland that Northumberland County, through the Community and Social Services Department will lead the formation of the advisory group and coordinate the development of the County-wide plan. First Responders including Police, Para medicine and Fire Services have been involved in these presentations and conversations and will also represent on a county-wide Board. The initial plan must be completed by Jan 2021.

### **Shelter**

- Supported development and improvement of the emergency shelter (adults) and worked with the Board of the shelter to develop policy and process to offer low barrier shelter. We supported and offered training and development opportunities for the staff and funded Governance training for the Board. We facilitated new strategic plan



development including community engagement and interviews with a range of stakeholders.

- Reviewed the current emergency motel program to identify opportunities for improvements and streamlining access for the County.

### **Funding priorities**

- Reviewed the CHPI allocations to ensure that we are able to meet the program objectives and that we are able to focus the resources to the initiatives which are highest need. Application assistance staff have helped develop improved tracking models to improve the reliability and details on the metrics reported to the ministry.

### **Community Safety and Wellbeing**

- The department has taken the lead for the mandated Community Safety and Well Being plan required under the Police Services Act on behalf of the County, and coordinated presentations across key partners in the County including Northumberland county Council, Fire Service, EMS, CAOs, Clerks, health, community and internal staff.
- Worked with Community Connections and 211 to design and develop an implementation plan for a closed loop referral system to support the most vulnerable residents in our community. The initial pilot for this new system will be implemented with the Paramedics services (EMS) and will ensure that that residents calling emergency services that do not have an immediate health need will be connected to services in the community to support their quality of life.

### **Leadership in Change**

#### **Training**

- Delivered Consent training for 12 community partner organizations utilizing AMO trainer, including information directly relevant to sharing information concerning joint clients, record keeping, when consent expires.

#### **Internal leadership**

- Established the departmental Data and Evidence Working Group, with the Early Years manager and staff representatives from all departmental divisions, with an objective to build the capacity and resources for the department to collect, store, analyze and use the myriad of data and evidence that we have across the Community and Social Services programs, and use this data to further enhance programming.
- Established the departmental Quality Improvement Working group with the Food Security manager, and staff representatives from all divisions, with the objective to build



quality improvement tools to be used across the County to enhance the work of the department.

### **Information management**

- Worked with the Records Management supervisor to build capacity within the team to review and monitor the records that are created and stored and ensure that we are compliant with the organizational records management policy.
- Developed the departmental shared drive which is TOMRMs compliant and accessible by all staff.
- Developed file management systems for departmental managers.

### **Training**

- We attended the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) Conference on homelessness in Hamilton with the shelter manager of Transition House to learn more about best practices in co-designing an updated homelessness system in Northumberland.

### **Housing and Homelessness Plan Renewal**

- Working with the Housing Services Division, the Community and Customer Services Team engaged SHS Consulting Inc. to facilitate the renewal of the ten year plan focusing on outcomes which are measurable and establishing targets. This updated plan is required to be submitted to the Province by the end of December 2019.
- As part of this renewal, we ensured that we worked with a range of stakeholders to ensure that we are able to reflect community priorities and actions supported by our partners. We held a series of engagement sessions to talk with people with lived or living experience, community agencies, County and municipal staff, private landlords, non-profit housing providers, and private residential developers.
- Key demographic groups represented in client engagement sessions and/or through community agencies consulted include: individuals experiencing homelessness, seniors, youth, persons with physical and developmental disabilities, persons with mental health issues, LBGTQ+, survivors of domestic violence, Indigenous people, people with experience in the justice system, newcomers and tenants of community housing.

### **Staff training**

- Continued building on the department's professional development training series in 2018 inclusive of all department staff and relevant to the client demographic. Staff professional development continues to be a priority in the Department and Community



and Customer Services Team members attended training including trauma informed client service, Indigenous Cultural Competency, and Resiliency training.

## **2020 Service Objectives & Initiatives**

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

#### **Service Delivery**

- We will use our Service Agreements with service delivery partners to develop tools to measure effectiveness and compliance including review process and feedback options, standardizing the review of data received from Service Agreements (i.e. utilization of the DAC in addition to Finance to identify trends), and potential gaps in service areas that we can consider expanding for 2020/2021 funding year.

#### **Prosperity**

- We will investigate the living wage for Northumberland and other poverty reduction activities and will work with our service delivery partners to develop initiatives that we can implement through our service agreements and other tools to further encourage prosperity in our communities.

### **Sustainable Growth**

#### **Food Security**

- Continue to work with the Food Policy Council and support initiatives that align with the Strategic Plan of the County. Supporting the core group, we will further investigate the promotion and delivery of community gardens including policy development and creating metrics that can be collected, reported and monitored.
- Support the Food Policy Council to hire an independent consultant to work with municipalities to review official plans and identify the alignment and opportunities to consider food security, producing a report with recommendations for future actions.
- Working alongside the Food4All manager, we will develop a donations policy, to give direction for the solicitation of donations to support food security activity and the acceptable methods for investment of donations received and the public reporting of the impact of the donations
- Continue to use the available software to track food distribution and report metrics to the department.



## **Equalities**

- If the application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is successful, we will support Green Wood Coalition to develop and implement a project that will support women who are interested in politics to learn about the political system and consider future candidacy.

## **Facilities**

- Completion of the renovations to the reception area, waiting room and interview rooms in the department including new staff work areas.
- Implementation and set up of new phone system for staff, increasing functionality to better serve clients.

## **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

### **Homelessness**

- If successful with the application for Reaching Home federal funding, we will develop a Northumberland Community Advisory Board to support the process to identify community priorities and select local projects and programs in which to invest. The Advisory Board will also develop metrics and will report to Council and the public on a regular basis.
- Following the renewal of the Ten Year Housing and Homeless Plan, we will commence implementation of renewed priorities and actions, and ensure the targets are included in our work plans.
- We will continue to promote RentSmart as a tool to help prepare people for successful tenancies. This will include coordinating community training sessions to be facilitated through partner agencies with licensed trainers.
- The common assessment tool used through our HCRT and homelessness support services is the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). This is a survey administered both to individuals and families to determine risk and prioritization when providing assistance to homeless and at-risk of homelessness people. We will continue to promote this tool and offer training to internal staff and staff from partner agencies to ensure consistent, accurate and high standard assessments and scoring are carried out.
- Following the Province's decision to cancel the 2020 requirement to undertake a Homelessness enumeration, we will consider preparations and planning around this bi-annual requirement in Northumberland County for 2021, including recruitment of volunteers, creation of survey tools and local desired demographics, training of agencies and volunteers on the tool created.



- We will implement the Federal Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) across our community with partners who receive homelessness funding through CHPI or Reaching Home. This technology will enable us to collect real-time data about the services that are available including shelter beds and will ensure that we are able to allocate services to those who require them. We will ensure that all participating agencies are supported to implement and will have regular training so that all relevant staff are able to input correctly into the system and use to its full capacity.

### **People with Lived Experience**

- Following the successful creation of the People with Lived Experience (PWLE) report commissioned from Green Wood Coalition, Northumberland County Community and Social Services (NC C&SS) will commence to develop an implementation plan for the calls to action contained in the report. This will include:
  - Identifying and creating support for people who have used our services to become involved in improvement and consultation activities
  - Developing PWLE representation on a range of front-line committees including the Homelessness Community Advisory Board
  - Developing a NC C&SS PWLE panel to review new programs, communications and operational improvements and give feedback in consultation and action planning across the department. This will include investigating how PWLE can inform any promotional or operational activities to support the implementation of 'My Benefits' – the paperless solution for OW being developed by the Province.
  - Consider methods for PWLE to be involved and inform work to review food security initiatives. This work will include research and investigation from people who use food support programs to learn how these programs increase a person's or family's food security.

### **Social Media**

- Development of department-wide texting ability through the IT infrastructure, including monitoring, client appointment reminders and general enquiry text number.

### **Outreach Case Management**

- Continue to review the case management program offered through our outreach team including the data and evidence collected through the last couple of years. This will enable us to review the current model of support and renew our model to ensure that we utilize other services in the community and avoid creating duplication, and that ensures the clients receive the best quality service and are able to retain independence. Our aim is to ensure staff roles continue to align with community needs, Provincial and Federal government mandates and the County strategic plan. We will support and





implement the long-term goal of recommending minimum standards for case management developed through the case management working group.

### **Closed Loop Referral (211)**

- Continue to work with our colleagues in the Paramedic team, to develop and deliver a closed loop referral system to be operated through 211. This system will allow paramedics to ensure their clients have information and access to local community-based social service organizations that can assist with non-medical need and this is achieved through a referral to 211. The 211 will contact the client directly following referral from the Paramedic to identify the client's needs. For example, Paramedic staff may want to refer patients to food banks, financial assistance programs, and emergency housing services. This system ensures that the client, after they have signed consent, has a trained community navigator to help them access the services they require.

### **Community Safety and Well Being**

- Form the advisory group that will lead the development of the Northumberland Community Safety and Well Being plan, and support the leadership group to develop governance terms, a project time line and engagement strategy.
- Lead the community consultations and research to identify the priorities and the risks to be included in the first Northumberland Community Safety and Well Being plan.
- Work with other Community Partnerships including the Situation Table and the HSJCC to collect and analyze data that identifies risks and support services in Northumberland.
- Develop the Northumberland Community Safety and Well Being plan for submission to the Province.

### **Leadership in Change**

#### **Homelessness**

- We are currently an 'On-Deck' community with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, and the Built For Zero-Canada – participating in the Canada-wide movement to reduce chronic homelessness, focusing on systems change in Northumberland County; On-Deck will help help goals of a concrete Coordinated Access System and resulting document.

#### **Data and Evidence**

- Through the Data and Evidence Working group, and through departmental programming, we will continue to develop a data catalogue, which is planned to be operational in 2020. With standardized and validated data, required procedures and



policies will ensure that data can be accessed and utilized appropriately. We will ensure that this development aligns with the County vision to create and open data portal promoting the ability to use evidence to inform decision making.

#### **Creation of a File Audit Function**

- We will develop a file audit process focusing on accountability, training, and review of service gaps and identification of areas of improvement. This work will include developing an audit checklist for legislative requirements (i.e. forms, letters, and identification) and case management.

#### **Staff development**

- Learning and development opportunities will continue to be offered to staff within the department to further enhance skillsets required in providing quality customer service and case management planning. This will include utilization of the HR download system and shared opportunities with partner agencies.

#### **Business Continuity Planning**

- Continue working with the Health and Safety/Emergency Planning department to support focusing on business continuity activities in the event of an emergency situation.
- Continue planning and developing minimum service standards to ensure ongoing operations during an emergency or unforeseen incident which may impact the ability of continued operations.
- Investigate the use of Connect Text as communication tool to support business continuity.

## **Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives**

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

#### **Project Management and Social Policy**

- Explore the need for departmental support for project management function ensuring that programming and new services are delivered on time and in scope, and are influenced through a social policy lens to incorporate current and future mandates and direction.



### **Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan**

- Working with our partners we will continue to implement and review the plan, and align activities and programs with the targets and actions identified in the plan.

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

#### **People with Lived Experience**

- Working to develop methods and practice which embeds the involvement of People with Lived Experience throughout the work of the department is ongoing. Developing the process to evaluate this work, and build into all future planning will be considered.

#### **Homelessness**

- As the face of homelessness and resources available to support people coupled with the need for affordable housing in the community continues to be identified, we will explore, with our partners, opportunities to expand coordinated access to include more housing support and resources; therefore further streamlining the support available to people experiencing precarious and changing housing needs.

#### **Health**

- Working with health partners, we will continue to be aligning social care with a person's health care needs as a Social Determinant of Health and be involved in the development and delivery of a system which is designed to allow for a seamless transition for patients accessing health care.

#### **Community Safety and Wellness**

- Following the research and creation of the mandated Community Safety and Wellness plan, we will develop an implementation plan and associated work plans with reporting functions.

#### **Seniors**

- Investigate the need to develop a comprehensive approach to a County-wide seniors strategy which considers health and social care, and identifies the gaps in services. This strategy will promote evidence based practice which enables seniors to live independently and retain, or improve, their quality of life.

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## 2020 Business Plan & Budget

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### Early Years Services

Northumberland County Early Years Services continues to evolve policies, programs and services to greater align with and better reflect the Ontario government's vision and ongoing transformation of the early years and childcare system. The *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* emphasizes the role of the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager as the system planner for early learning and childcare.

### Prior Year Accomplishments

#### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

##### Licensed Child Care

- Completed the review of fee subsidy policies and updated to correspond with Ministry Guidelines.
- Continued to support licensed childcare providers with Special Purpose funding to support repairs and maintenance, play-based learning, business transformation and capacity building.
- Supported ongoing compensation through Fee Stabilization, wage enhancement and home childcare enhancement grants.
- Ongoing waitlist survey with providers to assist in monitoring childcare demand.
- Conducted an organizational review of the two licensed home child agencies to better understand the community gaps, opportunities and funding models.
- Updated the living formula for General Operating for Licensed Child Cares and Base Funding for Licensed Home Child Care.

##### EarlyON Child and Family Centres

- Continued to develop EarlyON Child and Family programming, in collaboration with the three lead agencies: Northumberland YMCA, Brighton Children's Centres and Beehive Day Care Centre.
- Established a Community EarlyON Advisory Committee.
- Increased participation in County and community events to promote programs and reach new parents and caregivers.



- Due to competing demands for space, secured a new location at Five Counties Children’s Centre for the EarlyON Centre located in the YMCA (Cobourg).
- Supported Triple P, Positive Parenting Program:
  - Continued, in partnership with other funders, the Triple P Coordinator position with Rebound Child & Youth Services.
  - Built stronger connections between Triple P Coordinator and Early Years Coordinator to better integrate Triple P into EarlyON programming.

### **Early Years Expansion**

- Completed renovations of Beehive Children’s Centre and Sunshine Heights Co-operative Daycare to increase the number licensed spaces by thirty-six for children 0 – 4 years old.
- With expansion funds, continued to support families and centres with increasing access to childcare through fee subsidy and General Operating funds.
- In partnership with the facilities department, completed the Community-Based Early Years and Child Care Capital Project. Renovated Grafton Community Centre to support a 15 space family-aged grouping licensed childcare program and an EarlyON Child and Family Centre.
- Secured space in Cobourg to expand the EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs with a plan to establish an Early Years Hub.

### **Special Needs Resourcing**

- Continued to support enhanced staffing requests to licensed childcares and approved recreation programs through expansion funds.
- Identified training to support programs with children with special needs to increase staff capacity.
- Continued to build in Resource Consultant services and supports at EarlyON Child and Family Centres to assist families with early identification.

### **Indigenous Led Early Years Program**

- Indigenous Early Years Team continued the coordination of community connections with Alderville First Nations, local Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous early years stakeholders.
- Hosted special events:
  - Two “Dare to Dance Pow Wow-style” events
  - Two Alderville Black Oak Savanna nature walk and tours



- Continued to develop kits of cultural teachings of Indigenous culture and model the delivery of the kits at EarlyON Centres and licensed childcare programs.
- Participated in County and community events to promote the early years Indigenous supports that are available to families.
- Hosted Cultural Competency Training sessions for Early Years partners including the Community and Social Services department:
  - Learning through Legends, Dreamcatcher Night
  - Indigenous Perspectives Network
- Assisted partners with supporting Indigenous families on a one to one basis as requested.

#### **Capacity Support for Early Years Providers**

- Continued to support, in partnership with Five Counties Children’s Centre, multiple learning opportunities focused on early learning professional development and quality assurance.
- Key Highlights:
  - “Adventurous Play in a Muddy Way!” - Importance of outdoor and risky play
  - “Creating Pedagogical Documentation” - Dr. Carol Anne Wien, one of the authors of Ontario’s *Think, Feel, Act*
  - Self-Regulation
  - 2019 Early Childhood Education Appreciation Event with guest speaker Alan Faigal.
  - Nutritional workshops such as “Paint Your Plate: A Foundational Approach to incorporate food literacy with children”
- Surveyed Early Years Educators on moving forward the Professional Development plan in 2020, with a focus on more frontline supports.

#### **Quality Improvement Framework**

- Continued the development of a Community Learning Quality Reflection Tool, in partnership with Five Counties and the early years community, that outlines a continuous cycle of evaluation/monitoring, goal-setting, training and improvement initiatives, mentorship, and transfer to practice to accommodate and support the integration of Licensed Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres as a single system.
- Implemented pilot sites fall 2019.



### **Early Years Service Planning and Community Engagement**

- Developed the 5 year Early Years Service System Plan, in partnership with relevant community partners and families. The plan integrates all early years programming; child and family programs and licensed childcare.
- Through a strategic planning process, the Best Start Network and the Northumberland Children's Services Committee investigated consolidating into one Early Years Planning Table.
- Updated EarlyOn web-based calendars and information to be more user-friendly.

### **Youth Support Programs**

- Continued to pilot the Community and Social Services Trusteeship Program. This program was a collaborative approach funded through Ontario Works, Early Years and Homelessness.
- Increased youth service delivery capacity through supports geared to improve existing services offered by Rebound Children and Youth Services, by reducing wait times, increasing access and helping to address the significant service gap with younger youth and children under the age of 12 (connected to EarlyON).
- In partnership with the KPRDSB and YMCA Northumberland, continued to support the TEAM program for young mothers.

### **Leadership in Change**

#### **Data Validity, Measurement of Impact**

- Adopted KeyON, a digital sign-in system, to improve data validity.
- Continued the partnership with Trent University, on the peer-reviewed, scientific study on child development associated with EarlyON usage.
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres across Northumberland County took part in a pilot program for the new *Early Years Check-In*; a tool designed to help identify concerns about a child's development. The tool will be implemented across the province.
- The Evidence Working Group established a data catalogue for community social services.

#### **Professional Development**

- Building on the 2018 department-wide professional development plan focusing on human services and self-care, staff participated in: Trauma Informed Customer Service, Basic Emergency Management for Emergency Social Services, Resiliency (offered



through the Employee Assistance Program provider Morneau-Shepell) and Indigenous Cultural Competency Training.

- Supported Corporate training opportunities including: Social Engineering, Leading Through Change, LEAN Training, Defensive Driving, Mental Health in the Workplace – Mental Distress: Recognition and Response, Password Training.
- In addition to the formal Professional Development schedule, the Early Years division also invested in staff learning and development opportunities, including:
  - Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Employment Services Forum
  - Turf, Trust and Collaboration Practical Tools for Building Trust
  - OCCMS Training (Ontario Child Care Management System)

## 2020 Service Objectives & Initiatives

### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

#### Licensed Child Care

- Updating Service Agreements to multi-year agreements.
- Continue to work with the childcare providers on exploring new ideas to improve access to licensed childcare for families. Two areas of focus are increased spaces and addressing affordability.
- Review and update the provider's budget reporting tool and fee increase request process.
- Investigating the establishment of a market rate fee scale.
- Implement Fee Subsidy Attendance monitoring program.
- Develop a Child Care Providers Manual.
- Investigate opportunities to assist providers with salary grid guidelines.
- Develop a surplus fund policy for non-profit providers.
- Provide increased support through the new Early Years Coordinator-Child Care to providers and their Boards to ensure programs are viable, meet quality standards and are accountable.
- Develop a strategy based on the review for the licensed home childcare sector that compensates providers and agencies in a transparent and equitable way.
- Continue efforts to recruit new licensed home childcare providers.
- Continue to increase public awareness of licensed home childcare as a viable option for families.





- Update cross-jurisdictional Service Agreements with neighbouring CMSMs.

### **EarlyON Child and Family Centres**

- Continue to build on the communication strategy that focuses on increasing community awareness of the free child and family programming offered at EarlyON Child and Family Centres, including:
  - Explore social media platforms
  - Participate in community events
  - Enhance partnerships with local schools and attend kindergarten nights, welcome BBQ's, etc.
- Continue to enhance connections between County departments to explore opportunities to partner or support County events (i.e. Oaktober, MRF Open House).
- Explore opportunities for community partner agencies to offer their programs and services at EarlyON locations, enabling them to provide services across the County. Building on the Hub philosophy.
- Building partnerships and utilization of Early ON Centres with OW, Housing and Outreach.
- Continue to search for suitable permanent or satellite EarlyON locations (especially in Hamilton Township and Port Hope)
- Based on data collected through attendance, surveys and the Advisory, continue to plan and expand:
  - outreach to meet the needs of families
  - hours and days of operation
- Work in partnership with the IT department to update EarlyON IT equipment and infrastructure.

### **Early Years Expansion**

- Continue to investigate with KPRDSB, PVNCCDSB and Mon Avenir Conseil Scolaire Catholique, the possibility of capital builds and retrofits for early years spaces in their schools as per the Province's Schools First Approach.
- Explore opportunities to expand licensed childcare to address the waitlist for space for children 0 – 4 across the County.
- In partnership with Five Counties Children's Centre, build a community hub model for early years service delivery:
  - Designated space for the Indigenous Led Early Years Team
  - Office/counselling space for community partners



- Community use room for group sessions
- Direct connections to other early years programming (i.e. Infant Hearing)

### **Special Needs Resourcing**

- Engage Resource Consultants in the implementation of the Learning Quality Reflection Tool through supporting educators.
- Direct more resources to frontline to build capacity with educators to better support children with unique needs.
- Explore opportunities to support inclusion through programming or equipment.

### **Indigenous Led Early Years Program**

- In partnership with Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre, continue to increase awareness of the supports for urban Indigenous, Métis and Inuit families in Northumberland.
- Indigenous Early Years team will continue to build and enhance the coordination of community connections with Alderville First Nations, local Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous early years stakeholders.
- Support continued Cultural Competency Training sessions for Early Years partners by establishing set sessions for new staff or staff refreshers.
- Build on the Indigenous Perspectives Network.

### **Capacity Building Support for Early Years Providers**

- Based on survey data and identified goals through the Learning Quality Reflection Tool, in partnership with Five Counties Children's Centre, continue to offer multiple learning opportunities through various mediums.
- Investigate webinars and other online training opportunities to support educators by minimizing time requirements.
- Seek opportunities to support unqualified early years staff in becoming a Registered Early Childhood Educators. Explore various paths, such as the ECE Qualification Upgrade Program, a college program in Northumberland or distant education.
- Leadership/mentorship training for Pedagogical leads.

### **Quality Improvement Framework**

- Continue the implementation of the Learning Quality Reflection Tool across all Early Years Programs. Focus on a continuous cycle of evaluation/monitoring, goal setting, training and improvement initiatives, mentorship, and transfer to practice.
- Build a framework to monitor Service Agreement accountability measures.



### **Early Years Service System Planning and Community Engagement**

- Update the five year Early Years Service System Plan's key priorities, in partnership with community partners, to reflect the government's new framework. The Plan will continue to be data driven and focus on the outcome indicators.
- Connect with non-traditional and corporate partners to seek opportunities for program sponsorship through in kind or financial support for Early Years Programming.
- Engage lower tier municipalities and recreation departments in partnership opportunities with space and programming.

### **Youth Support Programs**

- Look to continue to support the joint Community and Social Services Trusteeship Program reviewing opportunities with Ontario Works and Homelessness, dependent on OW transformation.
- Maintain assistance to Rebound Child & Family Centre to support established programs with meeting demand and making stronger connections to EarlyON Centres.
- In partnership with the KPRDSB and YMCA Northumberland, investigate new opportunities to support all young parents, not just mothers, across Northumberland. Teen Education and Mothering (TEAM) may be affected by OW transformation therefore timely to evaluate the program.

### **Leadership in Change**

#### **Data Validity, Measurement of Impact**

- The Data Analysis Coordinator (DAC) will present the EDI data from 2018 to community partners. This data, in combination with KPS and other available data, is essential to inform future Early Years planning.
- Continue to develop outcomes and measures for all programming, including Early Years Service System Plan.
- Continue to work collaboratively with other department resources to build and maintain data sources that will support future programming and operational needs, including the development of key performance indicators and streamline collection methods.
- Implement a Cross-County Parent Satisfaction Survey for Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres.
- Implement a Cross-County Staff Satisfaction Survey for Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres staff.



- The Evidence and Data Working Group will ensure accurate, timely, appropriate data is available to Community and Social Services.
- Establish a Northumberland Data Consortium through the Community Data Program.
- Investigate data sharing agreements with relevant partners.
- File audit function for fee subsidy will be reviewed to ensure it focuses on accountability.

### **Professional Development**

- Continue building on the department's professional development training series, with continued focus on customer service, the client experience, self-care and Emergency Response as it relates to Social Services.
- Learning and development opportunities will continue to be offered to staff within the department, to further enhance skillsets required in providing quality customer service and case management planning.

### **Business Continuity Planning**

- Continue working with the Health and Safety/Emergency Planning department to support focusing on business continuity activities in the event of an emergency situation.
- Continue planning and developing minimum service standards to ensure ongoing operations during an emergency or unforeseen incident which may impact the ability of continued operations.

## **Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives**

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

- The overall goal is to continue to build a high-quality, accessible and affordable early years and childcare system within the provincial funding allocations.
- Continue to monitor and plan for Provincial, Ministry of Education funding reductions that will have an impact on the Early Years budget in 2021. There will be challenges with the reduction of administration funding from 10% to 2.5%.
- Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the five years Early Years Service System Plan.
- Continue to investigate opportunities to create additional licensed spaces for 0 – 4 year olds with a focus on infants to address waitlist demands across the County.
- Continue to partner with KPRDSB, PVNCCDSB and Mon Avenir Conseil Scolaire Catholique on capital build and retrofits for early years spaces.



- Through Indigenous led programming, continue to increase access to licensed childcare and family and support programs for Indigenous, Métis and Inuit families in partnership with Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre and Alderville First Nation.
- Continue to look for ways to support affordability of childcare in partnership with increasing salaries of educators.

#### **Capacity Building Support for Early Years Providers**

- Develop a workforce strategy to support recruitment and retention of early years and childcare professionals in Northumberland.
- Continue to provide ongoing support locally for professional development opportunities.

#### **Learning Quality Reflection Tool**

- Implement provincial and local mechanisms for measuring program quality as part of the overall Early Years outcomes and measurement strategy.
- Continue to implement the County's Learning Quality Reflection Tool.

#### **Early Years Service System Planning and Community Engagement**

- In conjunction with the Early Years Planning table, continue to increase awareness and access of quality early years programs.
- Continue to find opportunities to build on the Hub model.

#### **Leadership in Change**

##### **Data Validity, Measurement of Impact**

- Early Years Services recognizes the utility and power of data in planning, evaluating, and reporting and will continue to work with the department and community partners on sharing data and using data to inform decisions.

##### **Professional Development for Frontline Staff**

- Continue to build internal capacity through learning and sharing opportunities.
- Find efficiencies utilizing LEAN approaches to examine internal processes in order to meet targets and outcomes.



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# 2020 Business Plan & Budget

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## Food Security Services

The direction of Food Security Services continues to evolve and look beyond just the day to day operation of the Food 4 All warehouse. Initial steps were taken in 2018 and further expanded on in 2019 to examine some of the root causes of food insecurity both in Ontario and throughout Northumberland County. Additionally, the creation and release of our second annual report (Feed the Change 2019) helped to expand the process of educating our community about what hunger truly looks like in our area. This report also included some data regarding what is being done to address food insecurity in Northumberland.

## Prior Year Accomplishments

### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

#### Volunteer Opportunities/Development

- Provided volunteer opportunities to 4 students looking to get volunteer placement hours for their school requirements.
- Added 3 new volunteers to our warehouse program—provided County orientation and basic health and safety training to new volunteers.

### Sustainable Growth

#### Fundraising/Food raising Activities

- Worked with York Bell-Smith from Classic Rock 107.9 FM on the third annual “Classic Rock Restock” event in October of 2018 and fourth annual event in October 2019:
  - In the first 3 years, this event has raised over 9000 lbs. of product and more than \$25,000.00 in financial donations.
- Worked with staff from MYFM radio station on the second annual “All Hands on Deck” food drive in March 2019:
  - In the 2 years of this event, a total of 7100 lbs. of food and personal care items and \$3000.00 in financial donations have been raised



### **Food Security/Community Services**

- Identified the alignment between food security and community services and identified joint priorities.
- Transitioned the County representative for the Northumberland Food Policy Council to our Community and Customer Services Manager who initiated a review of the group's priorities. Additional work was done to support the development and initiation of new project aligning official plans with food security.
- Worked with 211 to develop new food help website identifying locations and details of programs offering food (i.e. food banks, community gardens, meal programs) and included QR code to support ease of access to the information.

### **Financial Policy – Membership Fees**

- After developing our new financial policy in 2018, we began to fully implement new processes based on the policy in 2019. This includes how donations are handled allocated and spent and examining and billing our annual membership fees.
  - With the release of the County's new website, an online donation option is now available where money can be donated to the Food 4 All program through the website.
- Revised our membership fee structure to help ensure additional operational sustainability and accountability.

### **Warehouse Technology**

- Continued use of warehouse inventory software to help track all incoming and outgoing product in the warehouse.
  - System allows us to ensure fair and equitable distribution of product based on inventory levels and the needs of various community agencies.
- Continued use and promotion of online appointment scheduler software that enables all of our 120+ warehouse members to schedule their own pick-up appointment at a time that works with their schedule.
- Implemented refrigeration monitoring software in Q4 of 2018 and continued use of system throughout 2019.
  - Live 24/7 monitoring of walk-in temperatures
  - Historic data of temperatures
  - Email and text notification if temperatures go out of set ranges
  - Minimize potential of product losses



## **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

### **School Nutrition Program Assistance**

- Worked with “School Nutrition Programs Central East” to provide new healthy food items including bread, juice and eggs to local school nutrition programs.
- In February of 2019, we began using a new online order program for schools to order their monthly food items.
  - Provides one system for schools to submit monthly reports and school food orders.
  - New system includes more healthy food options (that meet school nutrition guidelines) that are delivered to schools each month.

### **Food Distribution from Social Services Office**

- As part of the LEAN Yellow Belt training, we created a new process for distributing and tracking food from our Social Services office to the clients that we assist.
  - Amount of product being stored has been significantly reduced.
  - Storage cabinet is closer to the CSU staff to improve efficiencies in gathering food.
  - Clients are given choice as to what they would like to receive.
  - Inventory is tracked on a weekly basis to ensure accuracy.

### **Hunger Action Month Activities**

- Second annual Hunger Action Month activities implemented in September of 2019.
- Proclamation by County Council recognizing September as Hunger Action Month in Northumberland County.
- Shared our second “30 Ways in 30 Days 2019” calendar via social media in an effort to show community members how they can help.
- Released our second annual report (Feed the Change 2019) which identifies food security data and Food 4 All distribution statistics from 2018.

### **Milk 4 Families Program Review (Ongoing)**

- Continue to examine the Milk 4 Families program to ensure maximum value for our investment.
- We continue to spend more program funds on liquid milk purchases for distribution through local food banks (weekly purchases from Kawartha Dairy).
- Changed gift card allotments to local programs to more accurately reflect their individual client needs.





- Added new gift card distribution points including the Social Services office, community agencies and childcare centers.

#### **Food Banks Northumberland – Standards of Service**

- Began to work with local food banks and key community partners to establish consistent levels of service to local food bank visitors.
- Looking to provide food items based on the revised Canada’s Food Guide.
- Identify quantity and quality of food currently being provided.
- Working to identify service gaps between locations and identify ways to fill these gaps.

#### **Leadership in Change**

##### **Waste Diversion/Food Rescue**

- Added 2 new partners that we work with for waste diversion:
  - Food waste is picked up weekly by local farmers and diverted from landfill.
  - Total of 18,000 lbs. of waste diverted in Q1 + Q2 of 2019.
- Began new partnership with Second Harvest and their [FoodRescue.ca](http://FoodRescue.ca) program to begin accessing rescued food from donors.

##### **Warehouse Transportation**

- Food 4 All van continues to be used for both food security and emergency social services (ESS) purposes.
- RFQ for replacement warehouse fork-lift went out in Q3 of 2018 and after some production delays the unit was purchased in Q1 2019.

##### **Food Banks Northumberland – Professional Development**

- Continued quarterly meetings with all County food banks with the intention of providing more professional development training to their leaders and volunteers.
- Continued with our theme of “Moving from Good to Great” and will continue to focus our meetings on sensitivity training, customer service training and additional client-focused development opportunities.

##### **Revised/Updated Warehouse Operational Policies**

- Original warehouse policies were created and implemented in 2015.
- As several processes and systems have changed since that time, updates to the policies were required to capture these changes.



- All required changes were made by the end of Q2 2019.
- New policy document will be kept as an electronic file to assist with ease of distribution and ease of updating whenever necessary.

## **2020 Service Objectives & Initiatives**

Historically, the focus of the Food Security division has centered primarily on the day-to-day operation of the Food 4 All warehouse program. In 2018 we started to expand our focus to look at some of the bigger issues that affect food insecurity. Additionally, in 2018 we started examining ways that we can provide more consistent service and food choices to families and individuals that rely on assistance from local food banks and feeding programs. In 2019 and looking forward to 2020 and beyond, the focus of the Food Security division will continue to expand and examine the broader issues of food insecurity and poverty reduction within Northumberland County and finding ways to alleviate some of the barriers that contribute to these issues.

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

#### **Volunteer Opportunities/Development**

- We will continue to provide volunteer opportunities which will provide interested individuals with marketable skills (i.e. fork-lift training, First Aid/CPR) to improve their opportunities to gain employment.

#### **Increase Local Food Purchasing**

- As we move to purchase healthier food options, we will continue to purchase these items from local producers/suppliers whenever possible, and we will continue to look for new local suppliers whenever possible. Current local purchases include:
  - Local grocery stores
  - Fresh produce and beef from local farmers
  - Liquid milk directly from supplier (Kawartha Dairy).

### **Sustainable Growth**

#### **Food Security/Community Services**

- Working alongside the Community and Customer Services Manager, we will develop a donations policy, to give direction for the solicitation of donations to support food security activity and the acceptable methods for investment of donations received and the public reporting of the impact of the donations.



- We will continue to work with the Food Policy Council (through our Community and Customer Services Manager) to support initiatives that align with the Strategic Plan of the County. Through this group, we will further investigate the promotion and delivery of community gardens including policy development and creating metrics that can be collected, reported and monitored.
- We will also support the Food Policy Council to hire an independent consultant to work with municipalities to review official plans and identify the alignment and opportunities to consider food security, producing a report with recommendations for future actions.

### **Staff/Volunteer Training & Development**

- Examine staffing needs of operation and develop a plan to determine how to best utilize current staff and volunteers to best serve the operation.
- Continue with development and training opportunities for staff and volunteers.

### **Business Continuity Plan**

- Work to finalize our business continuity plan for the warehouse operation to ensure minimal disruption of service to our members during emergency situations.
- Work is currently being done on business continuity through the provincial food bank organization (Feed Ontario) and we will include this in our local planning.

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

#### **Food Security Master Plan**

- Working in partnership with the Community and Customer Services Manager on the beginning stages of developing a “Food Security Master Plan” that will work towards:
  - Identifying the actual level of food insecurity currently in Northumberland
  - Ensuring community-wide food security
  - Embedding food security into other plans and strategies
  - Providing greater consistency in what is being distributed from local food banks including the quantity and quality of food
  - Linking those in the community who self-identify as struggling with a wider range of services such as income, employment, education, housing, health, etc.

#### **Ongoing Community Development Plans**

- Continue the “Moving from Good to Great” professional development program with our Food Banks Northumberland partners and their volunteers.



- Continue to review and improve the “Milk 4 Families” program to determine need and impact.
- Support where possible, the development of a municipal Poverty Reduction Strategy.

### **Leadership in Change**

- Continue the training and development opportunities for both staff and volunteers including but not limited to:
  - First aid, Health & Safety, Safe Food Handling and Fork Lift Certification.

## **Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives**

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

#### **Increase Local Food Purchasing**

- We will continue to use local producers/suppliers whenever possible for food purchases for the operation.
- We will look to source out new local suppliers for additional food purchases.

### **Sustainable Growth**

- Continue to operate as a distribution hub and member of Feed Ontario as a best practices warehouse operation for food and essential item distribution.
- Continue to examine sustainable funding opportunities for the operation (i.e. grants, membership fee adjustments, online donations, etc.)
- Continue to research and implement updated processes and practices to streamline the overall operation and make it as efficient as possible.

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

- Continued development and implementation of the local “Food Security Master Plan”.
- Continue and expand “Moving from Good to Great” training and development program for local food banks and feeding programs.

### **Leadership in Change**

- Continue to enhance staff and volunteer roles that align with the County’s and Food 4 All’s strategic goals.



- Continue to develop and enhance internal warehouse policies and procedures to ensure high customer service standards.
- Work with other County departments to enhance service delivery to community partner agencies.



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## 2020 Business Plan & Budget

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### Housing Services and Northumberland County Housing Corporation

The direction and strategic priorities of Housing Services continues to evolve to better reflect the strategic direction of the department and County, specifically focusing on the renewed Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan and the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy. Housing Services continues to strive to better address the needs of Northumberland County residents facing housing security, and remains committed to implementing an eviction prevention model of community housing administration. Housing Services continues to prioritize the development and implementation of key strategic planning initiatives to guide investments into the maintenance of existing community housing stock alongside the creation of new affordable rental housing.

#### Prior Year Accomplishments

##### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

###### Development of a County Affordable Housing Strategy

- Finalized and adopted the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Finalized and presented Affordable Housing Strategies for each of the member municipalities.
- Adopted an interim Affordable and Rental Housing Program Policy to support the development of affordable rental housing in Northumberland County. Revised the Municipal Housing Facilities By-law to reflect findings in the Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Developed draft contribution agreements for member municipalities and the County to support affordable and rental housing projects.

##### Sustainable Growth

###### Social Housing Master Plan/Northumberland County Housing Corporation Asset Management Plan

- Engaged in a procurement process for the creation of a Social Housing Master Plan and NCHC Asset Management Plan.



### **Investment in Affordable Housing of Ontario Program Extension 2014**

- Oversaw the completion and initial occupancy of a 31 unit affordable rental housing build in Cobourg geared to seniors and people with disabilities.
- Entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Retirement Life Communities to support households on the centralized waitlist for wheelchair modified units with first access to barrier-free units.

### **Elgin Park Redevelopment**

- Completed a successful application to Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) Seed Funding for support in the pre-construction work for the Elgin Park Redevelopment.
- Hired architectural firm to conduct pre-construction design and re-zoning work for the transformation of Elgin Street semi-detached units to the planned Elgin Park Redevelopment.
- Began sourcing financing options for the full construction of Elgin Park Redevelopment.

### **Capacity Support for Non-Profit Housing Providers**

- Continued completion of operational reviews for non-profit housing providers, revised processes and templates for the operational reviews, including a greater focus on capital project planning.
- Continued support for non-profit housing providers in preparation for End of Operating Agreements and financial impacts to each provider.
- Began implementation of Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) providing critical capital infrastructure funding to non-profit housing providers.
- Entered into a Rent Supplement Agreement with Hastings Housing Corporation to support the continued delivery of community housing in Hastings.

### **Northumberland County Housing Corporation Governance**

- Supported the election of a new skills-based Board of Directors for the NCHC.
- Completed the development of supporting corporate and governance documents and processes for the NCHC and Northumberland County as the sole shareholder of the corporation.



## **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

### **Social Infrastructure Fund**

- Continued implementation of the provincially and federally funded Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF). Continued investments in 2019 included:
  - Housing Support Program providing monthly rent subsidies to low-income households in private rental agreements.
  - Oversaw home repair projects through Renovate Northumberland, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland.

### **Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)**

- Began implementation of COCHI and OPHI provincial and federal funding in Northumberland County. Investments made in 2019 included:
  - Oversaw home repair projects through Renovate Northumberland, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland.
  - Oversaw community housing capital repair projects through COCHI and OPHI and aligned with Building Condition Assessments (BCA) and AssetPlanner.

### **Home Ownership Revolving Fund**

- Provided down payment assistance to 4 prospective homeowners through Habitat for Humanity Northumberland using funds in the Home Ownership Revolving Fund.

### **Northumberland Renovates Revolving Fund**

- Entered into a service agreement with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland for the ongoing management of the Northumberland Renovates Revolving Fund.

### **Service Level Standards**

- Completed and submitted to the provincial government Northumberland County's Service Level Standard Action Plan.

### **Community Engagement/Partnerships**

- Engaged with community agencies and key stakeholders on housing strategies, coordinated service deliver and seeking opportunities to promote community engagement within the NCHC community housing stock.
- Participated in local, regional and provincial networking tables to address issues relating to housing.





- Continued to network and dialogue with agencies and developers on the need to create additional housing stock in Northumberland.
- Continued public education initiatives of Housing Awareness Day raising awareness of affordable and attainable housing issues within the broader community.

### **Tenant Engagement**

- Hosted 6 Strawberry Socials at Seniors buildings throughout Northumberland County in recognition of seniors month.
- Continued partnering with the Northumberland Community Health Centres to deliver tenant programming in Port Hope, Cobourg and Colborne.
- Hosted bike safety initiatives in Port Hope with families, providing helmets and partnering with the Port Hope Police Services.

### **Indigenous engagement**

- Facilitated presentation to Community and Social Services Management Team on services provided by the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre.
- Continued to work toward a Memorandum of Understanding and potential services agreement for urban-based Indigenous services in Northumberland County with the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre.

### **Leadership in Change**

#### **Implementation of Housing Retention (Eviction Prevention) Based Community Housing**

- Continued implementation of housing retention model, including tools, training, and policies.
- Completed revision of housing retention policies and procedures to support this delivery and oversight of eviction prevention funds.

#### **Rent Geared to Income Application Modernization**

- Continued modernization process, focusing on the implementation of Yardi's RentCafe software.
- Established and began implementation of Housing Readiness process for reviewing waitlist applications.
- Modernized applications to reduce administrative burden alongside offering additional options to promote housing stability and comply with accessibility requirements.



### **Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan**

- Engaged SHS Consulting Inc. to support the renewal of the ten year plan with a focus on measurable outcomes and establishing targets ahead of the provincial submission deadline of December 2019.
- Hosted a series of engagement sessions on the development of the renewed plan, focusing on people with lived or living experience, community agencies, County and municipal staff, private landlords, non-profit housing providers, and private residential developers.
  - Key demographic groups represented in client engagement sessions and/or through community agencies consulted include: individuals experiencing homelessness, seniors, youth, persons with physical and developmental disabilities, persons with mental health issues, LBGTQ+, survivors of domestic violence, Indigenous people, people with experience in the justice system, newcomers and tenants of community housing.

### **Effective Case Management and Collaboration**

- Established the Case Management Working Group which included caseworkers from across all service divisions. The focus of this working group has been to identify case management activities across the department to develop consistent approaches to service delivery.

### **Professional Development for Frontline Staff**

- Continued building on the department's professional development training series in 2018 inclusive of all department staff and relevant to the client demographic. Topics covered in 2019 included trauma informed client service, Indigenous Cultural Competency, Emergency Social Services through Basic Emergency Management, and Resiliency training.

## **2020 Service Objectives & Initiatives**

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

#### **Development of a County Affordable Housing Strategy**

- Complete presentations of member municipal affordable housing strategies.
- Work with member municipalities to explore feasibility and implementation options of the Affordable Housing Strategy.



- Continue the implementation of the Affordable and Rental Housing Interim Policy with member municipalities in support of affordable housing proponents seek funding from other levels of government.

## **Sustainable Growth**

### **Social Housing Master Plan/Northumberland County Housing Corporation Asset Management Plan**

- Work with the successful bidder to develop a Master Plan and Asset Management Plan for the County as a Service Manager and as the sole shareholder of the NCHC.
- Identify and explore revitalization opportunities to expand the social and affordable rental housing stock throughout Northumberland.

### **Elgin Park Redevelopment**

- Complete pre-construction work and re-zoning requirements for the Elgin Park Redevelopment project through working with the successful proponent and Major Projects Division.
- Seek financing options for the full construction costs of the Elgin Park Redevelopment project.
- Continue to support tenants and work with affected tenants at start of construction to minimize and mitigate any potential impacts.

### **Capacity Support for Non-Profit Housing Providers**

- Ongoing completion of operational reviews for non-profit housing providers, revised processes and templates for the operational reviews, including a greater focus on capital project planning.
- Continue support for non-profit housing providers in preparation for End of Operating Agreements and financial impacts to each provider.

### **Community Housing Building Condition Assessments**

- Complete BCAs, elevator audits, capital reserve replacement forecasts for all community housing providers, including non-profit housing providers and the Northumberland County Housing Corporation.
- Seek funding opportunities for the completion of this funding to support the purchase of energy and accessibility audits where feasible.
- Support all community housing providers through providing asset management software in order to ensure information is up-to-date.



### **Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) Governance**

- Continue to develop internal processes to support the full implementation of the purchased services agreement between Northumberland County and the NCHC.
- Continue to support the strategic direction of the NCHC Board of Directors to support housing stability of existing and future tenants and consider opportunities to expand housing stock.

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

#### **Social Infrastructure Fund**

- Continue implementation of the provincially and federally funded Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF). Continued investments in 2020 include:
  - Housing Support Program providing monthly rent subsidies to low-income households in private rental agreements.
  - Oversee the completion of home repair projects through Renovate Northumberland, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland.

#### **Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)**

- Continue implementation of COCHI and OPHI provincial and federal funding in Northumberland County. Investments made in 2020 include:
  - Oversee home repair projects through Renovate Northumberland, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland.
  - Oversee community housing capital repair projects through COCHI and OPHI and aligned with Building Condition Assessments (BCA) and AssetPlanner software.

#### **Home Ownership Revolving Fund**

- Provide down payment assistance to 5 prospective homeowners through Habitat for Humanity Northumberland using funds in the Home Ownership Revolving Fund.

#### **Community Engagement/Partnerships**

- Continue engagement with community agencies and key stakeholders on housing strategies, coordinated service deliver and seeking opportunities to promote community engagement within the NCHC community housing stock.
- Participate in local, regional and provincial networking tables to address issues relating to housing.



- Continue to network and dialogue with agencies and developers on the need to create additional housing stock in Northumberland.
- Continue public education initiatives of Housing Awareness Day raising awareness of affordable and attainable housing issues within the broader community as aligned with the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy.

### **Service Level Standards**

- Continue to implement the proposed actions outlined in Northumberland County's Service Level Standard Action Plan.
- Consider options to expand rent supplement programming to gradually increase rent-geared-to-income units and preserve Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program.

### **Tenant Engagement**

- Continue partnering with the Northumberland Community Health Centres to deliver tenant programming in Port Hope, Cobourg and Colborne.
- Using a client-centred approach, continue to seek and develop strategies that increase tenant engagement both within social housing and throughout the department and related services.

### **Indigenous engagement**

- Continue to work toward a Memorandum of Understanding and potential services agreement for urban-based Indigenous services in Northumberland County with the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre.

### **Leadership in Change**

#### **Implementation of Housing Retention (Eviction Prevention) Based Community Housing**

- Continue the implementation of the housing retention model of community housing, including tools, training, and policies.
- Continue the development of policies and guidelines relating to the housing retention framework.
- Continue to educate and raise awareness within the broader Community and Social Services department and other departments supporting the work of the NCHC.



### **Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan**

- Initiate the implementation of the ten year housing and homelessness plan, including action planning within the Community and Social Services department and other key housing stakeholders.

### **Effective Case Management and Collaboration**

- Continue to work toward the long-term goal of recommending minimum standards for case management through both policy and referral reviews. It is further anticipated that recommendations will be provided for training and onboarding of future staff into case management roles.

### **Creation of a File Audit Function**

- Develop a file audit function focusing on accountability, training, review of service gaps and identification of service gaps and identification of areas of improvement.
- Develop a file audit checklist that will include legislative requirements (i.e. forms, letters, and identification), case management activities that identify action planning through documentation and notation and corporate standards, including financial, Information Technology, confidentiality and records retention.
- The audit review will be completed monthly and will include 1% of all Housing Services files (i.e. NCHC tenants, Rent Supplement tenants, ODSP HAP files, centralized waitlist, Home Ownership and Northumberland Renovates files).

### **Professional Development for Frontline Staff**

- Continue building on the department's professional development training series, a focus will continue to be on customer service, the client experience, self-care and Emergency Response as it relates to Social Services.
- Learning and development opportunities will continue to be offered to staff within the department to further enhance skillsets required in providing quality customer service and case management planning.
- Training opportunities will be prioritized that support both Housing Services staff and staff in other departments working toward a successful implementation of the Housing Retention Framework alongside supporting the NCHC Purchased Services Agreement.

### **Business Continuity Planning**

- Continue working with the Health and Safety/Emergency Planning department to support focusing on business continuity activities in the event of an emergency situation.



- Continue planning and developing minimum service standards to ensure ongoing operations during an emergency or unforeseen incident which may impact the ability of continued operations.

#### **Data and Evidence Gathering**

- Continue to work collaboratively with other department resources to build and maintain data sources that will support future programming and operational needs, including the development of key performance indicators and streamlining collection methods.
- Continue to validate data points in databases to ensure data available is reliable and valid.
- Develop ongoing statistical tracking processes and standard datasets to ensure availability of required data points for evidence informed decision making practices.

## **Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives**

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

#### **Development of a County Affordable Housing Strategy**

- Affordable rental stock in Northumberland County is increased. Low income residents are able to access safe, affordable and adequate housing in their community.
- Collaborate with member municipalities to encourage private development of affordable housing, while raising awareness around the scope of planning and the role municipalities play in encouraging the creation of new affordable housing.
- Creation of an Affordable Housing Taskforce bringing together leaders throughout the County to plan for long-term opportunities to create new affordable housing stock that reflects various needs throughout the County.

#### **Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan**

- Through community partnerships, work to meet the changing needs of the community and align with objectives, outcomes and targets of the plan.

### **Sustainable Growth**

#### **Development of a Social Housing Master Plan**

- Northumberland County is well positioned to respond to changing needs arising from the end of operating agreements and rent supplement funding, while maintaining service level standards.



- Community housing in Northumberland County is safe, affordable and adequate to meet the evolving needs of community members.
- Strengthen and build relationships with external housing providers to ensure strong accountability and planning is maintained. Strive towards positive landlord-tenant relationships that are mutually beneficial while moving towards an eviction prevention delivery of community housing.

#### **Northumberland County Housing Corporation Asset Management Plan**

- Ensure responsible long term capital planning of community housing units and buildings operated by the NCHC.
- NCHC's portfolio matches the long-term needs of the County and is growing alongside the changing and expanding need of the community.

#### **Community Housing Growth, Regeneration and Intensification**

- The number of Rent Supplement units is increased throughout the County.
- Elgin Park Redevelopment is implemented and reaches full occupancy.
- A landbank is developed to support the ongoing and future development of additional community housing and market rental units across the County.
- Potential community housing projects and 'shovel-ready' affordable housing projects are identified and funding is sought for the fulfillment of this project.

#### **Northumberland County Housing Corporation Governance**

- NCHC is governed by a strategic and skills-based Board of Directors that provides direction in line with the Shareholder Direction and governing documents.

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

#### **Indigenous Engagement**

- Indigenous people living in Northumberland County have access to safe, culturally competent, and relevant mainstream and indigenous-specific supports.
- Community and Social Services staff and external partner agencies are trained in Indigenous Cultural Competency Training.

#### **Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan**

- Develop new, and nurture existing, partnerships and relationships to better support the availability of supportive resources to tenants and clients engaged with community housing in the County





## **Leadership in Change**

### **Implementation of Eviction Prevention Based Community Housing**

- Community housing in Northumberland County is administered, delivered and supported using an eviction prevention model ensuring that prospective tenants and current tenants have access to strong case management services and have needed supports to have a successful tenancy.
- When tenants are evicted from the NCHC, they have been provided with adequate case management and support ahead of the eviction, they have been given the option to be connected with other homelessness prevention services.

### **Long term sustainability of Northumberland County Housing Corporation and Housing Services**

- Business continuity planning has occurred and both the NCHC and Housing Services are well positioned to respond to changing provincial and federal policy, legislation and funding.
- Policies are developed and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure housing retention frameworks are implemented. Processes are developed to support the NCHC purchased services agreement by Housing Services and support departments.

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## 2020 Business Plan & Budget

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### Ontario Works

#### Prior Year Accomplishments

##### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

The Ontario Works Service Plan covering 2019/2020 was submitted and approved by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services in June 2019. The purpose of the Ontario Works Service Plan is to provide a practical strategy for achieving employment outcomes, including the provision of a full range of employment assistance activities that support the increased employability of recipients, and ensuring that the program is delivered in accordance with the legislation, regulations and policy directives. The full Service Plan is completed once every two years.

The Social Assistance Modernization Strategy has continued throughout 2019, now in the third full year of implementation. The following efficiencies have been introduced to improve the client experience:

- Online access to client information;
- Enhancements to self-serve options, including the Interactive Voice Response and mobile platform, for clients to access filing information; and
- Streamlined/centralized third party benefits delivery (monthly pay run).

In the fall of 2019, it is expected that Northumberland County will begin implementation of the online solution for clients to access information about their file, including:

- Online reporting of income;
- Electronic storage of letters and forms; and
- Ability to submit changes to the information, including address and members of the benefit unit.

Community & Social Services continues to operate the Service Locations located in Port Hope, Brighton, Colborne and Campbellford in order to meet with clients in their home community. The Community Service Hubs are also used by many non-profit agencies and service providers at no cost to the agency in order to further serve our communities. Opportunities to collaborate with the Early ON centres for additional meeting space and to engage persons served through Community & Social Services with supports within their communities.



In 2019, Employment Programming continued to be provided to Ontario Works and ODSP clients to increase their employability. This included one intake of the Goals and Pathways to Success Program (GPS) facilitated by the Community Training & Development Centre and one intake of the Working with Food 6-week workshop was also offered in the spring of 2019. New this year and through a collaboration with the Help Centre Northumberland, two intakes of Job Fit, a literacy based pre-employment program was offered in the late spring and early fall.

Additionally, two intakes of Loyalist College's Elevate Plus program were completed in the late winter and late summer of 2019, with a third intake being contemplated. This 6-week program, which includes 4 weeks of in-class training and a 2-week unpaid employment placement with local manufacturers, has been held at the Agri-Food Venture Centre in Colborne, and has led to full-time employment for at least 80% of the participants.

Through a collaborative funding opportunity with the Early Years and Homelessness Programs, the Trusteeship program continued through Rebound Child & Youth Services. The program continues to provide financial support and coaching for individuals and families served through the Social Services department who have identified struggles with budgeting and specifically the youth under the age of 18 years (as mandated under the *Ontario Works Act*). The Trustee representative from Rebound Child & Youth Services is a member of the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT).

In an effort to assist all members of Northumberland County to obtain the resources that may be available to them through the various federal programs, funding was provided through Ontario Works Employment Programming to the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program delivered by the Help Centre of Northumberland. In 2018, the program assisted in the completion of 2,049 income tax returns, returning approximately \$5.09 million to residents of Northumberland County. As of the end of June 2019, 1,098 tax returns have been completed, returning approximately \$3.7 million to residents of Northumberland County.

## **Leadership in Change**

Building on the 2018 Professional Development Plan, in 2019, training for all department staff continued focusing on human services and self-care. Department staff participated in the following training, held on site:

- Indigenous Cultural Competency;
- Emergency Social Services through Basic Emergency Management;
- Trauma Informed Customer Service; and
- Resiliency (offered through the Employee Assistance Program provider Morneau-Shepell)



In addition to the formal Professional Development scheduled, the Ontario Works division also invested in staff learning and development opportunities, including:

- Central East Region Forum held in May 2019 focused on “The Power of Connection”, including an Indigenous Cultural Awareness workshop;
- Cannexus National Career Development Conference;
- Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Employment Services Forum;
- Eligibility Review Officer (ERO) conference;
- Mental Health First Aid; and
- Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Directives Training.

Utilizing an existing referral tool through the Community Employment Resource Partnership (CERP) website, all Ontario Works Caseworkers are making electronic referrals to partnering agencies. While this tool was introduced in 2018, the continued use has ensured clients are receiving appropriate services through the employment agencies in a more timely fashion. In addition, the Employment Caseworkers within the Ontario Works team continued to use the Employment Readiness Scale (ERS) as an assessment tool with the recipients that they are supporting. This tool provides insight and direction through an Action Planning model with the individual being served to support their progression through the employment services continuum. The ERS is supported by the Workforce Development Board, and many Employment Ontario sites.

In 2019, the Case Management Working Group was established utilizing caseworker volunteers from across all service divisions within the Community & Social Services department. The focus on this working group has been to identify case management activities across the department to develop consistent approaches to service delivery.

## **2020 Service Objectives & Initiatives**

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

In the spring and early summer of 2019, announcements were made by the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities (MTCU) and the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS) regarding the transformation of Employment Services across the province. Starting in 2020, Northumberland County is part of a prototype region that includes the City and County of Peterborough, the City of Kawartha Lakes, the County of Haliburton and the District of Muskoka that will see changes to the delivery of employment services. Information shared to date has indicated that the focus of Social Assistance delivery partner’s staff will be on life stabilization activities for recipients to prepare for pre-employment. At the time of



preparation of this Business Plan, further details on the impact to program delivery and funding within Northumberland County is unknown.

With limited details regarding implementation dates of the Prototype, the Ontario Works Division is remaining cautious with planning for pre-employment programming. In the event that funding is available, programming focused on life stabilization and soft-skills will continue to be the focus. Collaboration with community agencies will continue in 2020, ensuring appropriate and timely referrals are made to support the achievement of individual client goals.

Further to the changes to the delivery of Employment Services, the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services has also indicated that there will be a change to the definition of disability for the purposes of determining eligibility for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). While the implementation date has not been announced, it is expected that the Ontario Works caseload will increase as a result.

Entering the fourth year of the five-year Social Assistance Modernization Strategy Roadmap, the following initiatives are anticipated to be launched:

- Reloadable Payment Cards for Northumberland County recipients;
- Enhancements to self-serve options for clients to access file information;
- Risk Based Digitally Verified Granting testing; and
- Electronic Document Management.

As these changes are occurring, front-line Ontario Works staff will be part of the discussion and will help shape the implementation and roll-out to the people that are to be served.

As a division that serves the residents of Northumberland County in both ongoing financial assistance, and in events of emergency situations, it is important that planning focusses on business continuity in the event of emergency circumstances. Continuity planning has begun with the Health & Safety/Emergency Planning department. Minimum service standards recognize the need to have staff available to complete applications and issue payments. In the event of emergency, other responsibilities, including updating files and focusing on employment activities can be suspended. Additionally, resources through the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services can also be deployed to ensure continuity of payments for ongoing clients or if an alternate location is required for payment production. In 2020, continued planning and updating will be addressed to provide awareness for staff of the requirements during an emergency.



## Leadership in Change

In 2020, a file audit function will be developed that will focus on accountability, training, review of service gaps and identification of areas of improvement. A file audit checklist will be developed, that will include the following:

- Legislative requirements, including forms, letters, identification;
- Case management activities that identifies action planning through documentation and notation; and
- Corporate standards, including financial, Information Technology, confidentiality and records retention.

The Audit Review will be completed monthly and include 1% of the Ontario Works ongoing caseload, selected using the Integrated Case Report provided through the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) on a monthly basis. This Audit will be separate from the Ministry-mandated Eligibility Verification Process (EVP) that is currently conducted by the Ontario Works Caseworkers. Currently in the development phase of this project, it is anticipated that through implementation the process will be further refined.

Learning and development opportunities will continue to be offered to staff within the department to further enhance the skill set in providing quality customer service and case management planning. With anticipated changes to program delivery and potential legislative changes, there will be a focus on providing staff with opportunities to learn and understand what the new role will be. Continuing with previous Professional Development plans for the department, a focus will continue to be on customer service, the client experience, self-care and Emergency Response as it relates to Social Services.

It is anticipated that the Case Management Working Group will continue to work towards the long-term goal of recommending minimum standards for case management through both policy and referral reviews. Additionally, it is anticipated that there will be recommendations provided for training and onboarding of future staff into case management roles.

At this time, it is expected that the Community & Social Services department will be participating in the Central East Region Forum, hosted by the six municipal Social Services offices within Central East Region. It is anticipated that eight staff will be offered an opportunity to attend.

The Ontario Works division will continue to work collaboratively with other department resources to build and maintain appropriate data sources that will support future programming and operational needs. This will include determining metrics and streamlining collection methods to provide demographic information that will inform evidence-based planning.



## Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Through collaboration with other divisions within the department and the greater community, a continued focus to enhance the client experience and possibility for individual success by:

- Following up with all changes through the Employment Services Transformation, and other activities relating to the delivery of Ontario Works;
- Following up with all changes through the Social Assistance Services Modernization Strategy;
- Enhancing and expanding services throughout the community, specifically through use of Community Service Locations;
- Building partnerships and utilization of EarlyON Centres and resources;
- Reviewing opportunities surrounding the continued operation of the trusteeship program joint with Early Years and Housing & Homelessness Services;
- Building greater connections for clients who are experiencing homelessness to community programs; and
- Modernizing the Social Services facilities and service locations to be more inviting and client-centred, including safety, technology and infrastructure improvements.

### Leadership in Change

The continued viability of the Ontario Works program is dependent on Ministry plans and objectives. Locally, continued monitoring and planning to ensure quality customer service and realization of full provincial funding is completed.

In addition, the Ontario Works division will continue to:

- Build internal capacity through learning and sharing opportunities across the division and department;
- Review and discuss client-centred case management model in a collaborative environment; and
- Find efficiencies utilizing LEAN approaches to examine internal processes in order to meet targets and outcomes.

## 2020 Issue Paper

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### Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative

#### **Purpose**

This is a request for support to reallocate program funding within the Community Homelessness Initiative (CHPI). The recommended reallocations supporting individual service agreements which we will co-design with our community partners will help meet the priorities identified in the CHPI guidelines and priorities, and ensure that we continue to offer services and support to those who are homeless or most at risk of homelessness in our community.

#### **Background**

Originally implemented in January 2013, the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) is a 100 per cent provincially funded outcomes-based program that aims to prevent and end homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing and homelessness services for people experiencing homelessness and for people at-risk of homelessness.

CHPI is administered under a service agreement between the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and each Service Manager (SM). The Minister of Housing is the successor to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and is responsible for the CHPI service agreement. The responsibility for delivering CHPI in local communities rests with 47 SMs across Ontario. These SMs are provided with funding and flexibility to offer programs and services to meet the objectives and outcomes of CHPI.

The vision for CHPI is to have:

A coordinated and holistic service delivery system that is people-centered, evidence informed and outcomes-based, and reflects a Housing First approach that focuses on homelessness prevention and reduces reliance on emergency services.

CHPI funding requires, that as a CSM, we are engaging in planning activities related to program delivery, which includes assessing service needs, identifying partners, and setting targets and methods to measure success in working toward ending homelessness. The CSM is responsible for implementing risk management strategies to mitigate any risks in meeting CHPI outcomes





and understanding the assessment required to ensure the service provider has the capacity to deliver the service. We are responsible for administering the program as laid out in the program guidelines and reporting performance indicators and status of outcomes back to the ministry.

## Consultation/Options

The Community and Social Service Department operate this funding through service agreements with at least 8 local not-for-profit service providers and receive quarterly reports that identify program and service usage, outcomes and identify issues, alongside detailed financial reporting. Quarterly updates from the managers of these services and programs also enable the department to monitor emerging trends and needs in the community.

In 2017-18 a study and report was completed with OrgCode Consulting INC., which reviewed all participating local agencies that provided homelessness services and identified recommendations for the “Alignment with Best Practices for Sheltering & Homelessness Support Services” in Northumberland County.

In 2019 the rigorous and wide ranging community consultations for both the Affordable Housing Strategy and the Housing and Homelessness Plan renewal have also been opportunities to reflect on the priorities in the community and the effectiveness of services that prevent homelessness, and provide services to support those that are experiencing homelessness.

It is these combined experiences that has led us to identify the provision of adequate and safe emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness, using a housing first approach, as priority in our community and serving our most vulnerable population with our finite resources.

It is following these consultations that it is recommended the current emergency shelter provider receives increased investment to be able to continue to meet the standards required in our service agreement with them. The current funding level to operate a 24/7 shelter, offering services to homelessness people with the highest acuity is not sufficient. Increased funding is required

- to enable the organization to be adequately staffed at all times and pay staff a living wage which is \$17.95 per hour in Northumberland (Nov 2018 Ontario Living Wage Network).
- To be able to ensure the shelter is maintained and safe at all times
- To ensure that trained staff are able to deliver services and case management to all homeless clients to help them with life stabilization and to find more permanent housing



- It is requested to increase the core investment from \$300,00.00 per year to \$400,00.00 per annum

It is recommended that current investments into mental health services with our current provider, through CHPI program funding is reviewed and opportunities to co design a new service with the delivering agency be explored. The focus of this service agreement will be on an outcome based model, looking at street level case management and systems navigation. This new model of delivery will also look at how those experiencing homelessness can access mental health support and other services, both on discharge from hospital and for those living unsheltered in the community. This service will be developed between Januarys – June 2020, implementation July 2020.

This review will release approximately \$80,000.00 and it is recommended that this saving is re-invested into the provision of shelter in this community.

We have been informed (August 2019) by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that we are not required to undertake local homelessness enumeration in 2020, while the ministry review future requirements for future homelessness enumeration. This will release approximately \$30,000 from the current proposed budget. It is planned that these funds will be reallocated to the shelter and to develop and implement a new 211 connection service. This service is far enhanced from the current 211 service and will entail the option for service providers (participants to be determined) to be able to refer residents to a trained community navigator who employs established standards and best practices to connect the client to a service in the community to help meet their needs ensuring short term goals such as food, financial assistance, health care are met as well as potentially crisis intervention.

The Director of Community and Social Services, the financial analyst in the Department of Finance and the CAO have also been involved in designing these reallocations within the 100% provincially funded amount throughout the budget and business planning cycle.

## **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact to the Northumberland County associated with this issue paper

## **Risk Considerations**

Risk has been a consideration throughout this development of this proposal. The risk associated with not increasing the investment to the emergency shelter provider is that the shelter will not be able to maintain the provision of effective and safe shelter as an option in Northumberland.



The role of the CSM to manage the CHPI program is to be able to demonstrate that we are engaging in planning activities related to program delivery, which includes assessing service needs, identifying partners, and setting targets and methods to measure success in working toward ending homelessness. This reinvestment allows the County to demonstrate investment in those with greatest need, and demonstrates an understanding that we need to ensure that the service provider has the capacity to deliver the service.

The service agreement with the shelter will be updated and ensure that the new requirements including staffing levels, staff training, wages, services offered and business continuity plans are agreed and delivered, and monitored/reported on.

The change to the services provided by Mental Health Services will be monitored and new opportunities to support health related outcomes for other community priorities will be explored. Ongoing dialogue and partnership working with the mental health provider will be a priority to ensure continued alignment of services which benefit Northumberland residents.

## **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

Services and programs that are funded and supported through the CHPI program are delivered across all areas of the County, offering support to residents in all 7 Municipalities. This will not change and services will still be available to all eligible residents.

## **Included in 2019 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

The 2019 long term plan identified the following which support the recommendations made above;

- **Development of a well-constructed Homelessness Systems Framework**
- Continue work on tailored responses for the needs of high prevalence groups
- Examine organizational capacity including strategic alignment, technical and financial resources to support additional poverty reduction initiatives

## 2020 Issue Paper

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# Community Housing Building Condition Assessments

### Purpose

This is a request to draw from the Housing Reserves, in the amount of \$125,000 to fund Building Condition Assessments (BCA), elevator audits and Capital Reserve Fund Forecasts (CRFF) for the entire community housing portfolio. It is also proposed that a project manager would also be included to oversee the project. In addition, this draw amount would allow for some flexibility in order to complete a select number of additional studies (e.g. accessibility audits and/or energy audits).

### Background

Northumberland County, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), has legislated obligations per the *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA) to provide affordable housing units to individuals and families, while maintaining a minimum of 677 prescribed rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units predominately located in non-profit housing providers (including cooperative housing providers) and the local housing corporation. Despite this legislated requirement, provincial and federal governments will be fully divested<sup>1</sup> of their interest in Northumberland County providers in 2032. As a result, the ongoing work to establish a social housing master plan alongside the creation of the non-profit and service level standard reserve account are critical in the management of these critical assets. The valuation for the full portfolio is estimated to be approximately \$140,000,000.<sup>2</sup>

A key component of the ongoing management of these housing assets (9 non-profit housing providers and 14 buildings owned and operated by the Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) is ensuring Northumberland County, as Service Manager, has the most relevant and accurate information on the overall condition of the physical assets. In 2015,

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<sup>1</sup> This does not reflect the new Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative which replaces federal funding through the expiring Social Housing Agreements dating back to the 2018/2019 fiscal year.

<sup>2</sup> This represents a replacement value for all non-profits as per the 2015 building condition assessments and an insurance valuation for the Northumberland County Housing Corporation.



Building Condition Assessments (BCAs) were completed for non-profit housing providers and data was inputted into the Housing Service Corporation (HSC)'s AssetPlanner software.

Since 2015, Northumberland County has provided training to non-profit housing providers in order to maintain and update AssetPlanner with updated information that reflects repairs made or changes to the lifecycle of key building components. Since 2017, Northumberland County has begun to increasingly require that approved capital projects match priorities as according to AssetPlanner, and as of 2018 all County-supported projects must align with AssetPlanner and an updated AssetPlanner must be evident prior to approval of projects.

In 2019, Northumberland County has received funding allocations that will support critical repairs to the Community Housing portfolio in Northumberland. It is proposed that beginning in 2021 Northumberland County directly selects projects to receive funding aligned with the findings of BCAs, Facility Condition Indices and Capital Reserve Forecast Funds (CRFF).

It is recommended that through this draw from reserves, BCAs, elevator audits and CRFF are completed for all non-profit housing providers and the NCHC. In addition, it is proposed that a project management company is hired to oversee this work and provide quality assurance and input into AssetPlanner. The draw requested will also allow for Northumberland County to seek additional pricing for accessibility and energy audits and to consider purchasing additional audits for select buildings.

It is recommended that this process be completed every 5 years in order to ensure relevant and accurate information is available on the condition of the overall community housing portfolio in Northumberland County. Further, this information will be critical for Northumberland County to ensure provincial and federal investments made under the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) are supporting the long-term viability of housing stock in Northumberland County.

## **Consultation/Options**

During the budget and business planning cycle, ongoing consultations with the Director of Community and Social Services, Department of Finance, Department of Transportation, Waste and Facilities, and the CAO have occurred. In addition, estimates of costs have been reviewed and broader conversations have taken place with other service managers.

## **Financial Impact**

All costs associated with this proposal (\$125,000) will be drawn from the Housing Reserves to complete BCAs, elevator audits, CRFF and any other optional studies determined appropriate to complete within the established budget.



## **Risk Considerations**

Risk has been considered throughout this request; the risk of not completing this work is that Northumberland County will not be able to have relevant and updated information on the overall condition of the community housing assets throughout the community. This information is valuable for decision making and ensuring capital investments are made according to the most impactful need.

The work completed in this project will be well connected with the forthcoming Social Housing Master Plan and the Asset Management Plan for the NCHC. It will be important to consider ongoing options for financing these studies on a regular five-year cycle.

## **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

It will be critical that all non-profit housing providers are included throughout the process of completing BCAs, elevator audits and CRRFs. Ongoing training on AssetPlanner will continue to support the capacity of non-profit housing providers to maintain updated records of the current asset being managed.

Further, community housing is currently provided in 5 of 7 member municipalities. Residents of these municipalities will continue to benefit from safe and adequate community housing stock throughout Northumberland County.

## **Included in 2019 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

No. The request to draw from reserves was not included in the 2019 long-term plan. However, the work outlined above is a key component of strategies identified in the long-term objectives of the 2019 Housing Business Plan.

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## 2020 Issue Paper

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# ‘Made in Northumberland’ Rent Supplement Program

### Purpose

This is a request to develop a locally-funded rent supplement program called ‘Made in Northumberland’.

It is recommended that this local program be guided by the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, the proposed targets and interim Affordable and Rental Housing Program Policy.

### Background

Northumberland County has a legislative requirement to meet established SLS set by the Province. The SLS represent the number of qualified households in receipt of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or a designated portable housing benefit that the County is required to administer. The SLS were established at the time of social housing download from the Province to municipalities and were intended to reflect the number of units transferred to the County. Northumberland County’s SLS are found in *O. Reg. 367/11 Schedule 4*, the specific targets for the County are:

- 677 Households at or below household income limits
- 377 high need households
- 22 modified units

On June 27, 2019, Northumberland County received correspondence from the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing outlining a new requirement for Service Managers that do not meet the legislated service level standards (SLS). As a result, Northumberland County is required to develop a ‘Service Level Standard Action Plan’ by November 29, 2019.

Northumberland County is not the only service manager falling below its SLS due to a number of reasons, including inaccurate levels at time of download, vacancies at time of reporting, households in receipt of RGI but who are above the Household Income Limits, and gaps in agreements between service manager and housing providers whose operating agreements/mortgages have ended. It is estimated that in order for Northumberland County to be able to meet its SLS over the next 5-10 years, a minimum of 40-50 units should be created.



This estimation does account for ongoing vacancies but does not account for any changes in funding agreements with current non-profit housing providers at the end of operating agreements/mortgages.

In order to begin meeting the SLS and the larger need for subsidized housing throughout the community, it is proposed that that Northumberland County create a 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program that incrementally increases rent supplement units in the County on an annual basis, beginning with the funding of 2 rent supplement units in 2020. Through an incremental increase to the number of rent supplement units of 2 per year, Northumberland County will be able to support households in existing non-profit housing providers, affordable housing providers and other reasonably priced private market landlords. These units may also be able to support the County's SLS for modified units through the creation of rent supplement agreements in modified units in existing affordable housing developments.

Through the 2021 budgetary processes, staff will be recommending that this program be expanded further through the creation of rent supplement agreements in 50% of all County-supported affordable rental units created under the Affordable and Rental Housing Program Policy and the Municipal Housing Facilities By-law up to a maximum of 50 rental units per year over a rolling average.

Since 2010, the number of households on the centralized waitlist (CWL) has grown by more than 260% and for some households the wait is over 9 years for a subsidized unit. While Northumberland County is encouraging the creation of new rental developments and the expansion of the existing Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) community housing stock, rent supplement programming should be continued and expanded where possible. Rent Supplement provides the opportunity for Northumberland County to increase the number of households that are able to receive RGI in private market rent settings that can complement the need to increase housing stock.

One of the key housing gaps identified in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy was a need for affordable rental housing options for households with low incomes. According to the Strategy there is a need to create 90 affordable housing units each year, predominately rental options, over the next 10 years. Of these 90 units, 52 units should be affordable to households in the first and second income deciles (in 2018 this represents households earning \$37,250 or less, meaning that rent charged would need to be approximately \$930 or less). In order to create these units, it is likely that rent supplements or other forms of subsidies will be required to ensure that units created are affordable to this demographic, in particular for households in the first income decile.

County provided support to housing developers through the provision of Tax Increment Equivalent Grants (TIEGS) as a part of the Affordable and Rental Housing Program and Municipal Housing Facilities By-law provide Northumberland County with the right to enter into





rent supplement agreements within all supported affordable units in new rental developments that receive County support through TIEGs or other incentives.

For the 2021 budget deliberations, staff will be recommending that Northumberland County aim to establish rent supplement agreements in 50% of all affordable rental housing units supported through the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy and Municipal Housing Facilities By-law. As private market rental units continue to increase in price, this will support Northumberland County in securing reasonably priced rent supplement units, while also allowing affordable market rents to be available to households who are able to afford these units without subsidy and/or do not qualify for rent-geared-to-income (RGI). Currently a rent supplement unit can cost between \$6,000 and \$10,000 annually, depending on the market rent amount and the household's income. The higher cost of market rent has also increased the cost of a rent supplement, with most recent units nearing \$10,000 annually. Units supported through the Affordable and Rental Housing Program will be required to adhere to a rent ceiling as agreed to in the Municipal Housing Facilities Agreement between the proponent and the County. This ceiling will allow for some stability in rent supplement levels required for these units over the next several years.

In 2019, two organizations have sought County investments through TIEGs in rental housing development proposals for a total of 28 affordable rental units. Construction on both of these projects is slated to begin in 2020, it is hoped that through the future expansion of the 'Made in Northumberland' the County will be able to expand RGI stock in affordable rental housing units.

It is further recommended that surplus funds in ongoing rent supplement programming is transferred to the Non-Profit and Service Level Standard reserve account to support rent supplement programming in the future.

## **Consultation/Options**

During the budget and business planning cycle ongoing consultations with the Director of Community and Social Services, Department of Finance and the CAO have occurred. In addition, the broader service manager network continues to be consulted in order to understand best practices.

Other options considered included not expanding rent supplement program in Northumberland County. This option would result in the lost opportunity of partnering with housing developers seeking County funded support through the Affordable and Rental Housing Program. In addition, this option would not provide an incremental supportive option to meeting SLS or affordable housing targets as per the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy. An immediate increase to the 2020 budget for the creation of rent supplement units tied to the 2 proposed projects was also considered, however considering that the funding for these projects



have not been finalized and construction has not begun, it is proposed to consider this expansion to the program for 2021.

The proposed option of creating a 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement program is well positioned to support Northumberland County's requirements to meet or exceed the legislated SLS. In addition, this proposal supports the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy goal of creating new affordable rental housing stock that is affordable to households in the first and second income deciles.

## **Financial Impact**

The financial impact of growing rent supplement programming in Northumberland County is substantial. In order to begin to implement the proposed 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program the impact to the 2020 budget is \$16,000. With this investment, Northumberland County can secure 2 additional units of affordable housing for households on the centralized waitlist, and begin to immediately count these units toward the SLS. It is also recommended that the number of rent supplement units in this program be incrementally increased by approximately 2 units (\$16,000) annually dependent on future years budgetary approvals. It is recommended that the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program budget be increased annually to reflect the market rent increase guideline established by the provincial government. It is further recommended that all year-end surpluses in rent supplement programming be transferred to the Non-Profit and Service Level Standard Reserve Account.

For the 2021 budget deliberations, staff will be recommending that Northumberland County seek to create rent supplement agreements in 50% of all affordable rental units created through the Affordable and Rental Housing Program. Through the program, Northumberland County has committed to supporting the full target of affordable housing units as per the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy. This commitment means that over a rolling average of 10 years up to a maximum of 90 affordable rental units per year. As a result, up to 50 rental units per year over a rolling average can be considered for rent supplement agreements.

## **Risk Considerations**

Risk has been considered throughout the development of the proposed 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program. The risk associated with not expanding rent supplement programming in Northumberland is that Northumberland County will continue to be challenged in meeting its legislated SLS.



In addition, consideration was given to establishing a precedent for future investments in rent supplement agreements for projects that receive County support through the Affordable and Rental Housing Program and Municipal Housing Facilities By-law.

With a commitment to creating a 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program, Northumberland County will signal its support of the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy and will be able to better serve households on the centralized waitlist for community housing. The signal to creating additional rent supplement units under the Affordable and Rental Housing Program will support County staff in articulating the potential investment that may be available to current and/or future proponents seeking County support in the development of affordable housing.

### **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

At present, rent supplement units are located in five of seven municipalities. The creation of the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program will support low income residents throughout the County.

### **Included in 2019 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

No. However, the signaling of expanding rent supplement programming in Northumberland County is referenced in several County strategic documents, including the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, the renewed Northumberland County Housing and Homelessness Plan.

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## 2020 Issue Paper

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### Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program

#### Purpose

This is a request to establish a long-term strategic management plan for the ending of the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program (SCRSP).

It is recommended that when the provincial program ends on March 31, 2023, Northumberland County begin to fund the remaining rent supplement units to be able to count toward the provincially legislated service level standards (SLS).

#### Background

The SCRSP was announced in 2000 for an initial three to five-year term; in 2004 the program was extended until March 31, 2023. The SCRSP provides Northumberland County with approximately \$247,052 of fixed annual funding (provided that the County is able to commit this funding each fiscal year). Without any confirmation or commitment from the provincial government to continue funding past 2023, Northumberland County must determine whether it will continue to fund existing agreements that currently house 34 households.

To date, Northumberland County staff have begun risk mitigation processes in attempt to limit the total risk exposure to the County, ensuring that all new agreements are clearly marked as 'time-limited' and those new tenants, community agencies and landlords understand that funding is not guaranteed after March 31, 2023. In addition, staff are closely monitoring yearly allocations to, where possible, limit the number of households that are in the program upon tenant turnover. Staff will replace a unit, when there is a risk of losing funding previously committed as according to the program funding structure.

Northumberland County also has a legislative requirement to meet established SLS set by the Province. The SLS represent the number of qualified households in receipt of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or a designated portable housing benefit that the County is required to administer. The SLS were established at the time of social housing download from the Province to municipalities and were intended to reflect the number of units transferred to the County. Northumberland County's SLS are found in *O. Reg. 367/11 Schedule 4*, the specific targets for the County are:

- 677 Households at or below household income limits



- 377 high need households
- 22 modified units

On June 27, 2019, Northumberland County received correspondence from the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing outlining a new requirement for Service Managers that do not meet the legislated service level standards (SLS). As a result, Northumberland County is required to develop a 'Service Level Standard Action Plan' by November 29, 2019.

Northumberland County is not the only service manager falling below its SLS due to a number of reasons, including inaccurate levels at time of download, vacancies at time of reporting, households in receipt of RGI but who are above the Household Income Limits, and gaps in agreements between service manager and housing providers whose operating agreements/mortgages have ended. It is estimated that in order for Northumberland County to be able to meet its SLS over the next 5-10 years, a minimum of 40-50 units should be created. This estimation does account for ongoing vacancies but does not account for any changes in funding agreements with current non-profit housing providers at the end of operating agreements/mortgages.

At present, SCRSP rent supplements are not counted toward the SLS as per ministry directive; however should the County continue funding these units after March 31, 2023, it is anticipated that these units could then be counted toward the SLS.

Should the SCRSP funding not be continued, the loss of these units will have a detrimental impact to the growing need for subsidized housing. Since 2010, the number of households on the centralized waitlist (CWL) has grown by more than 260% and for some households the wait is over 9 years for a subsidized unit. While Northumberland County is encouraging the creation of new rental developments and the expansion of the existing Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) community housing stock, rent supplement programming should be continued and expanded where possible. Rent Supplements provide the opportunity for Northumberland County to increase the number of households that are able to receive RGI in private market rent settings that can complement the need to increase housing stock.

One of the key housing gaps identified in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy was a need for affordable rental housing options for households with low incomes. It is important that Northumberland County take steps to ensure the current stock, while insufficient, of affordable rental housing options is not lost – specifically the role of existing rent supplement programs through various Northumberland County rent supplement programs, including the SCRSP. The current 2019 budget for SCRSP represents an average annual cost of approximately \$7,266 per household. This annual cost is within the general range of current and potential rent supplement units, and in fact is affordable compared to rent supplements agreements made more recently. This is reflective of the rising rental rates in Northumberland County. It is important that these affordable rental rates are maintained through the end of the



SCRSP as the cost of maintaining rent supplement units into the future will likely continue to grow based on the current rental market.

It is recommended that Northumberland County commit to the continuation of the SCRSP following the end of provincial funding in March 31, 2023. In addition, it is recommended that Northumberland County continue to advocate to the Province for the extension of the SCRSP. It is also recommended that Northumberland County begin to gradually prepare for the funding requirement in 2023 through increasing the County budget by \$83,500 annually (or as programming costs require<sup>1</sup>) until 2023 where increases would then cease and the full funding requirement would be met. It is recommended that the budget increases in fiscal years 2020-2022 be transferred to housing reserves for the ongoing work of expanding community housing stock across Northumberland County.

## Consultation/Options

During the budget and business planning cycle ongoing consultations with the Director of Community and Social Services, Department of Finance and the CAO have occurred. In addition, the broader service manager network continues to be consulted in order to monitor and advocate for the continuation of the SCRSP.

Other options considered included ending the SCRSP in 2023. This would require a strategic plan to begin immediately to prepare tenants, landlords and community agencies for the end of funding. This option would also likely increase the number of individuals on the CWL and may result in an increase to individuals experiencing homelessness if subsidized housing was not available prior to the end of SCRSP funding.

The proposed option of continuing the SCRSP is well positioned to support Northumberland County's requirements to meet or exceed the legislated SLS. In addition, this proposal supports the continuation of critical affordable housing stock in the private rental market that would otherwise be unaffordable to low income homeowners. The proposed option also supports community agency partners in supporting clients in maintaining secure housing.

## Financial Impact

The financial impact of growing rent supplement programming in Northumberland County is substantial. In order to maintain the current 34 units funded through SCRSP after March 31, 2023, the funding required will be approximately \$250,000 annually. Market rent increases can impact the overall budget, both for new tenants and accounting for provincially set annual market rent increases. It is important to note that upon the completion of provincial funding,

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<sup>3</sup> Programming Costs for rent supplement programming can vary based on fluctuation in tenant's income, annual increases to market rent, or changes to rent charged upon vacancy.



should these units be maintained through levy funding, 34 units would be added to the SLS. This would be a significant contribution to begin to meet, and in the future, exceed Northumberland County's SLS.

It is recommended that Northumberland County begin to prepare for the 2023 end to SCRSP through a gradual increase to the County budget to offset a significant increase in the 2023 fiscal year, this could represent an increase to the budget of \$83,500 annually until 2023 where the increases would then cease and the full funding requirement would be met. It is recommended that the budget increases in fiscal years 2020-2022 be transferred to housing reserves.

## **Risk Considerations**

It is important that the County begins to prepare for the likely end of the provincial SCRSP on March 31, 2023. The risk in not continuing to fund the SCRSP is the loss of critical affordable units in the private market that house individuals from the CWL. Without continued funding, the housing security of impacted households may also be jeopardized.

The proposed method of a gradual increase to reach the full funding requirement is intended to mitigate a significant financial requirement between fiscal years 2022 and 2023.

With a commitment to continue SCRSP, Northumberland County staff can better begin to prepare for an action plan to begin to meet or exceed the SLS as legislated by the province, in addition it provides a clear message to community agencies, existing tenants and landlords that the program will continue and that the funding is stable.

## **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

At present, SCRSP units are located in five of seven municipalities. The continuation of SCRSP will support low income residents in these municipalities in continuing to achieve housing security. With the continuation of the program, new landlords will likely also be added that can support residents throughout the County. In addition, the continuation of SCRSP will continue to support additional units that can be used to house applicants on the CWL. The continuation of the SCRSP will also support community agencies to continue to support clients housed under the SCRSP.

## **Included in 2019 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

No. The SCRSP budget is reflected in the long-term budget leading up to its end in March 31, 2023. The work has been completed to prepare for the end of SCRSP; however the financial impact to the proposed recommendations have not been included.