



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** Members of the Joint Services Steering Committee

**From:** Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

**Meeting Date:** October 13, 2016

**Subject:** Report CSSSJSSC16-007  
Provincial and Federal Transformation and Local Response

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## **Purpose**

To provide an update on a number of Provincial and Federal initiatives currently underway that could impact the people that are served by these programs and the City as the local Service Manager.

## **Recommendations**

That the Joint Services Steering Committee endorse the recommendations outlined in Report CSSSJSSC16-007 dated October 13, 2016, of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That the report be received for information.
- b) That staff's continued involvement in consultations and working groups as appropriate to provide input into these reforms be endorsed.
- c) That staff's plan for the development of a Community Wellbeing framework including a community engagement strategy, identified priorities and a measurement framework for 2017 be endorsed.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

There are no budget implications as a result of receiving this report. Budget implications related to Recommendation C will be addressed through the 2017 Budget process.

## **Background**

There are a number of Provincial and Federal policy and program changes currently being contemplated, which could have significant impact for the people we serve as well as for the City in its role of Service Manager. The changes are meant to provide a more person centred approach to services and to be more efficient. The issue of adequacy of income and alternative approaches are also being considered. The following report attempts to provide a high level overview of these changes and consider the potential impacts locally. Included are updates on initiatives in the following areas:

### **Income Reform**

#### **Changes to Child Support under the Ontario Works Act**

In situations where child support may be available, families on Social Assistance have always been required under the Ontario Works Act to pursue child support payments through family court. As of January 2017, these payments will no longer be considered income and families are not required to pursue potential support as a condition of eligibility for Ontario Works. The effect of this will be to increase the overall family income. Many families where child support may be available fall below the poverty line. This policy change will be of benefit to those children. Ontario Works Service Managers are still expected to ensure families have help working through the process of obtaining support order if required.

#### **Basic Income Guarantee Pilot**

Basic income, or guaranteed annual income, is a payment to eligible families or individuals to ensure a minimum level of income, as described in Report C55516-001. Ontario committed in the 2016 budget to design and implement a pilot program to test the growing view that a basic income could help deliver income support more efficiently, while improving health, employment and housing outcomes for Ontarians. The province has appointed the Honourable Hugh Segal to provide advice on the design and implementation of a Basic Income Pilot in Ontario.

Mr. Segal will draw on his expertise in Canadian and international models of basic income and consult with thought leaders to help Ontario design a pilot. Mr. Segal will deliver a discussion paper to the province by the Fall to help inform the design and implementation of the pilot. The discussion paper will include advice about potential criteria for selecting target populations and/or locations, delivery models and advice about how the province could evaluate the results of the Basic Income Pilot.

Locally there is an active Basic Income Peterborough Network (BIPN) and Income Security Working group connected to Peterborough Poverty Reduction Network that continue to meet and provide local interest and advocacy on these issues. Locally the BIPN have 20 local community agencies supporting the Basic Income Resolution that Council supported earlier this year. They have provided input to Hugh Segal's upcoming report and plan to host the Ontario BIG network meeting in Peterborough in November 2016. As well, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, staff has opportunity to provide input into these working groups and will continue to provide updates as to opportunities for broader input.

### **Income Security Reform Working Group**

To help guide the province's efforts to reduce poverty, support people in their efforts to participate in the economy, and provide services in a way that makes sense to the people who need them. The intention is to move away from a complex system of social assistance, to a more holistic, client-centred approach to a broader income security system. The working group will provide advice to government on social assistance reform, income security, and supports for housing, health and employment. The Basic Income Pilot announced in the 2016 Budget will help inform this work.

George Thomson, Senior Director of the National Judicial Institute and former Ontario Provincial Court Judge, who also chaired the Ontario Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform, will act as the Income Security Working Group's facilitator. Together the group will:

- Help Ontario develop a roadmap for an income security system that is based on fairness, adequacy and simplicity.
- Recommend priorities for reform, including on the structure of a future social assistance system.
- Determine the sequence of actions and the costs of a multi-year implementation plan for income security reform.
- Provide advice to the minister on how government can improve the client experience for those receiving income supports.

The Income Security Reform Working Group will meet over the next 12 months, beginning on June 30, 2016, and will report back to the government with recommendations by summer of 2017.

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## **Benefits Transformation Led by Ministry Of Finance**

Benefits Transformation is a multi-ministry initiative focused on improving the way people access various government services including income-based benefit programs and making the program administration more efficient. Ministry of Finance is leading the plan for an electronic reloadable payment card that will reduce the need for paper cheques to clients.

### **Social Assistance Modernization Working Group**

The work of this group will closely link with Benefit Transformation. The guiding principles:

- a modern responsive service delivery system that is simple, consistent and easy to understand and navigate
- cost effectiveness where expenditures are reduced/avoided driven by more effective use of existing resources
- client-centred service that is integrated across program areas and seamless from a client perspective

The strategic themes include:

Making the service system more efficient

Moving towards service and functional integration across programs and ministries.

Improving access to and usability of the system.

Strengthening program management and oversight.

A final report with recommendation is expected in October-November 2016.

## **Social Assistance Employment**

### **Labour Market Funding Arrangements in Canada**

The federal government provides almost \$3 billion annually to provinces and territories through transfer agreements to support training and employment programming. The design and delivery of the programs and services funded under these agreements are the responsibility of provinces and territories. This includes programs and services for unemployed workers eligible for Employment Insurance (EI), individuals without recent or sustained labour market attachment (non-EI insured), low-skilled workers, employers, persons with disabilities, and older workers.

The federal government's 2016 Budget committed to using consultations to guide future investments. This opportunity will help reshape these agreements in ways that better support unemployed Ontarians, workers and employers. In Ontario, these agreements support approximately 70% of Employment Ontario's expenditures, including apprenticeship, Literacy and Basic Skills, Canada-Ontario Job Grant, Second Career, and a range of programs from other ministries including employment programs for persons with disabilities. The deadline for written submissions was August 19. Input will

be collected in a summary report and presented to federal, provincial and territorial ministers this fall.

### **Provincial Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee (PMSAEC)**

The Provincial Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee (PMSAEC) was established in 2013, to support confidential discussions related to social assistance reform and related provincial initiatives. PMSAEC is composed of representatives from various municipalities and provincial ministries, including the Ministry of Advance Educations and Skills Development Skills (MAESD), formerly the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Various studies and reports have found that there is a need to modernize and integrate employment and training services in Ontario, given the number of gaps and challenges present within the existing system.

The MAESD will encompass the current mandate of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. In addition, employment and training programs in other ministries, including Ontario Works, will be coordinated through the new ministry to create a more seamless experience for workers, job seekers and employers.

Social Service Division staff is currently participating in PMSAEC and its advisory sub groups. Recommendations regarding Ontario Works employment services transition will be presented to the Province in early 2017.

### **Early Learning and Child Care**

#### **Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (OEYCFCs)**

Earlier this year, the Minister of Education announced the provincial plan for moving forward with the integration and transformation of child and family programs to establish OEYCFCs by 2018. OEYCFC's are intended to support all children, parents and caregivers with a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible and integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development. This transformation will result in a cohesive system of services and supports that will be managed by the municipality as part of the existing responsibility for the service system management of child care. Staff will work in partnership with school boards and local service providers to plan for and implement the OEYCFC's.

Key Implementation Dates:

- August, 2016 – Launch of local needs assessments led by municipality
- January 2017 – Data analysis funding transferred to municipality
- Early 2017 – Release of new OEYCFC funding approach and allocations to municipality
- May 2017 – Submission of needs assessment summaries and initial plans for OEYCFC's
- January 2018 – Implementation of OEYCFC funding approach

**Data Analysis Coordinator (DAC)**

In order to inform service system planning and support the municipality in this new role, funding for data analysis will be transferred beginning January 2017. This funding is intended to provide support for the initial planning and needs assessment, and to enable the broader collection and mobilization of data to inform ongoing early year's community planning. The Data Analysis Coordinator will be a new full time permanent position within the Division funded by provincial revenue.

**Licensed Child Care**

In the September 12<sup>th</sup> Throne Speech, Premier Wynne outlined the government's promise to create 100,000 new licensed child care spaces within the next 5 years, beginning in 2017. This increase would double the number of licensed child care spaces available to families with preschool children in Ontario. In Peterborough, families continue to struggle to secure licensed child care when and where they need it. Licensed infant care is especially difficult to access due to the extremely limited number of available spaces. Currently there are only 62 licensed, centre-based infant spaces in the City and County. Wait lists are extremely long and most families who require care for their infant are not able to access a licensed child care space. The opportunity to create more licensed spaces for children 0 -4 years would be welcomed by families across our community.

**Federal Housing and Homelessness Initiatives**

The Government of Canada is investing an additional \$111.8 million over two years (starting in 2016/17) to enhance services to address homelessness through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Locally this amounts to just under \$66,000 per year for 2016/17 and 2017/18. The Federal funding commitment beyond March 31, 2018 is unknown. United Way Peterborough is the community entity that will receive these funds, and use of the funding will be informed by the Point in Time Count completed in March 2016, as well as the City's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

The Federal Government has announced a plan for the consultation and completion of a National Housing Strategy. Canadians across the country have the opportunity to share their ideas and have their voice heard by completing a survey at [www.letstalkhousing.ca](http://www.letstalkhousing.ca) or by submitting their views in writing. Consultations in September and October include expert roundtables, national stakeholder roundtables, indigenous, rural and remote roundtables, urban indigenous roundtables, northern housing roundtables and several focus groups. The themes for discussion include:

- **Sustainability:** environmental sustainability, social housing renewal, creating a better quality of life, economic growth and stability, supportive institutions and regulations
- **Affordability:** affordable lands and financing, affordability pressures in cities, new and renewed rental housing, first-time home buyers
- **Inclusivity:** low-income and vulnerable citizens, addressing homelessness across the country, improving housing options for an aging population, making homes and communities accessible, housing challenges in rural and remote areas
- **Flexibility:** use of data-based evidence, continuum of housing options

The deadline for sharing ideas, completing the survey or writing a submission is October 21, 2016. The results of what the consultations, surveys and written submissions provided will be released on National Housing Day November 22, 2016 through an online Town Hall and the report will be posted at [www.letstalkhousing.ca](http://www.letstalkhousing.ca).

### **Provincial Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update**

The Update of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, released in March, 2016 is the leading edge of transformational change in the housing sector. One of the pillars of this updated strategy is an equitable, portable system of financial assistance. The framework for a new system of portable housing benefits is expected later this year.

Portable housing benefits are assistance to pay housing costs that are flexible, responsive and people-centred. Unlike the current system of Rent Geared-to-Income (RGI) which is tied to units in specific buildings, portable housing benefits are linked to households and can be used wherever a household chooses to live. The Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update proposes that portable housing benefits will, over time, replace RGI as the model for providing assistance to low-income households.

### **Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit Pilot Project**

In April, 2016, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced an expression of interest process to select three Service Managers to participate in a Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit pilot project.

City staff consulted with community partners to determine whether it was feasible to run this program locally. Given the projected scale and requirements for delivery, it was determined that community partners would be challenged to provide the required level of service on the limited funding that was available. Subsequently, it was announced that 22 Service Managers were selected to participate in the pilot project, rather than being limited to three.

### **Relation to Local Planning and Services of the above Transformations**

Through most of these Provincial initiatives it is evident that there is a high degree of inter-ministerial discussion with attempts to break down silos that can cause barriers for people that are served. Most ideas are in direction to address individual needs, take a more client centred approach and there is interest in improving both the approach and the adequacy of income that is provided through various programs. It will be important that sufficient local flexibility/autonomy is taken into account with any changes made given the diversity of communities across the province. The pace and degree of change and details of implementation also must be well considered. Staff will continue to encourage consultation with municipal partners through AMO/OMMSA as these policies and program changes are reviewed.

### **Community Wellbeing Plan for Peterborough**

As both the provincial and federal government under take a number of transformation processes, the local government must determine its priorities and roles, while considering the legislative requirements and the communities' expectations. The other levels of government are also requesting input from local government. The Community Wellbeing Plan provides an opportunity for the local levels of government in Peterborough to define priorities and roles based on the community input and also communicate those expectations to other levels of governments.

“Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfill their potential.” (Wiseman and Brasher).

Municipalities are already active in the area of community wellbeing. As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for Ontario Works, Children's Services, Housing and Homelessness for the City and County of Peterborough, the Social Services Division is required to develop service plans in these areas. Locally municipal governments including the City have also taken an active role in Age-Friendly Peterborough, Sustainable Peterborough, and Accessibility plans, all of which contribute to community wellbeing. The Municipal Social Plan is already in place but is outdated and there are other social issues that are not addressed through it or any of the other above plans. A municipal Community Wellbeing plan will build on these existing plans and support the strategic directions in the areas where there may be gaps related to



issues like safe and thriving neighbourhoods, retention of youth through education and jobs, vibrant neighbourhoods, inclusive community design.

There are many organizations and committees across the Peterborough area also working on community wellbeing. They are looking to connect with each other and to work more efficiently together. The goal is to make Peterborough a better place to live. The question is how and toward what priorities. There seems to be a desire for a shared vision, evidence based approaches with systems to track progress but there is no clear coordinating entity yet. Nor are we clear to what extent the municipalities should be involved in supporting a range of various social supports. Meeting the needs of the people of Peterborough cannot be in isolation. A cross section of stakeholders from the public sector, the not for profit sector and the business sector must collaborate to meet our community needs.

The goals for the Community Wellbeing Plan are:

1. Set municipal priorities to improve the quality of life for Peterborough City and County residents
2. Provide a framework for progress reports and outcome measurement
3. Improve community engagement.

## **Summary**

There is a significant amount of change in social policy and programming being contemplated by the Provincial and Federal Government at this time. The effect of these changes appear to be positive for many of our citizens but in addition it will require the City as the Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness, Children's services and Ontario works to adapt programming in relation to these changes. It is proposed that in 2017 a local Community Well Being plan be developed to allow for the development of actions based on identified gaps and local priorities. The Social Services Division will develop a more detailed plan for community engagement for the development of the plan and the Community Wellbeing Framework for consideration in early 2017.

Submitted by,

Ken Doherty  
Director of Community Services

Linda Mitchelson  
Social Services Division Manager

Contact Name: Linda Mitchelson  
Social Services Division Manager  
Phone: 705-748-8830 Ext. 3770  
Toll Free: 1-855-738-3755  
Fax: 705-742-0542  
E-Mail: [lmitchelson@peterborough.ca](mailto:lmitchelson@peterborough.ca)

Contact Name: Rebecca Morgan Quinn  
Acting Housing Division Manager  
Phone: 705-742-7777 Ext. 1501  
Toll Free: 1-855-738-3755  
Fax: 705-742-5218  
E-Mail: [rmorganguin@peterborough.ca](mailto:rmorganguin@peterborough.ca)