



City of
Peterborough

TO: Members of Budget Committee

FROM: Malcolm Hunt, Director of Planning & Development Services
Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

MEETING DATE: November 25, 2013

SUBJECT: Report PLHD13-005
Impact of Provincial Program and Funding Changes on
Housing and Homelessness Programs

PURPOSE

A report for consideration during 2014 Budget deliberations, which assesses some of the impacts of provincial program and funding changes on housing and homelessness programs.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the recommendation outlined in Report PLHD13-005 dated November 25, 2013 of the Director of Planning and Development Services and the Director of Community Services as follows:

That Report PLHD13-005 be received for information purposes.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget or financial implications of this report.

BACKGROUND

On October 10 2013, The Peterborough Poverty Reduction Network (PPRN) presented their analysis of the impacts of reductions to discretionary benefits and emergency housing benefits in Peterborough to the Joint Services Steering Committee. In response to the community presentation, the Committee requested additional information about the impacts of the changes in provincial homelessness and discretionary benefits funding from staff. The following information has been prepared in response to that request. It will also serve as additional context for the 2014 Budget proposal which incorporates new provincial programs (e.g. Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)) and recommends municipal funding to partially address deficiencies due to cancelled provincial programs in both Housing and Social Services Divisions.

The attached report, "Impacts of Housing and Homelessness Program and Funding Changes" (Appendix A) provides information about the housing and homelessness prevention programs funded through the Housing and Social Services Divisions over the past several years. Both Divisions offer programs for both social assistance clients and low income residents (not in receipt of assistance), though in each area there are some programs that are restricted to either low income clients or social assistance recipients. In summary, the key information from the attached report is:

Funding changes:

Social Services:

- The Provincial share of funding is increasing due to the upload but key programs such as Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB-\$2.8M) have been eliminated
- CHPI with an annual allocation of \$1.7M and a one-time transitional grant of \$1.2M has been introduced in 2013. It is a consolidation of emergency and domiciliary shelter funding as well as homelessness prevention, services and supports program funding. Part of the funding has been used to establish the Housing Stability Fund to meet some of the needs previously addressed by CSUMB. This money is now flowed across both the Social Service and Housing Divisions

Housing:

- Provincial capital funding has declined, but may increase to previous levels by 2015
- Provincial Federal funding, and municipal funding for social housing has remained relatively stable
- A Proposal for new municipal rent supplement of \$200,000 annually is in the 2014 budget
- Provincial rent supplement from Investment in Affordable Housing is \$322,000 in 2014 (up from zero in 2011)

Program changes:

Housing:

- Over 500 affordable housing units have been built since 2000, but the social housing waiting list has remained stable
- More households are receiving monthly rent supplements than in 2012

Homelessness:

- The Housing Stability Fund (HSF) has been designed to help prevent homelessness. It starts to fill the gap in programming, partially created by the end of Community Start Up Benefit.
- The HSF is now available to all low income residents rather than just those eligible for social assistance.
- The HSF has been supplemented in 2013 by a one-time grant which ends in April 2014. HSF allocation was \$2.0M in 2013 reducing to \$1.0M in 2014 and \$0.7M in 2015 (final allocation for 2014/15 is still to be determined).

Discretionary Benefits:

- There has been a 30% reduction in the total level discretionary benefits over the last 5 years (mostly due to provincial funding constraints in the last two years).
- Key areas of concern are clients' access to subsidized bus passes and the level of funding for dentures.
- Though discretionary benefits are important, the cuts have not and will not likely create the level of impact resulting from the recent homelessness program changes.

Analysis of Community Indicators:

- Community indicators such as hydro disconnections, evictions and shelter usage can be used effectively to measure the impact of housing and homelessness programs.
- Common measures across programs need to be clearly defined and tracked over time.
- Though there are indications of the impact of the homelessness program changes in the monthly eviction tribunal docket and recent shelter usage, these and other indicators will need to be tracked on an ongoing basis to monitor the impacts.

The attached report represents staff analysis of the impacts of the funding changes. PPRN has already provided their analysis of the impacts to the Joint Services Steering Committee. PPRN has provided detailed information about the impacts on individuals and agencies. The staff report focuses on funding and broad community measures. Given short amount of time since the funding changes were made and the limits of the data that is currently available the full extent of the impacts in the community are not known. Staff and the community must continue to work together.

Together methods can be developed to monitor, evaluate and report, not just spending, but also the outcomes of programs to inform future planning decisions. This information and analysis will help to plan the most effective services within the available funding allocations.

Submitted by,

Malcolm Hunt
Director of Planning and Development Services

Ken Doherty
Director of Community Services

Contact Name:

Susan Bacque
Manager of Housing Division
Phone: 705-742-7777 Ext. 1492
Toll Free: 1-855-738-3755
E-Mail: sbacque@peterborough.ca

Linda Mitchelson
Manager of Social Services
Phone: 705-748-8830 Ext. 3770
Toll Free: 1-855-738-3755
E-Mail: lmitchelson@peterborough.ca

Attachments:

Appendix A - Impacts of Housing and Homelessness Program and Funding Changes