

Transitional Housing – Operational Budget

Presented To:	Community Services Committee
Meeting Date:	October 18, 2021
Type:	Correspondence for Information Only
Prepared by:	Tyler Campbell Children and Social Services
Recommended by:	General Manager of Community Development

Report Summary

This report provides an update on securing provincial funding for the permanent operating budget for the transitional housing business case passed by Council in the 2021 budget process. The report also provides an update on the startup of the program.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

The report supports Council's Strategic Plan in the area of Quality of Life and Place as it aligns with the Population Health Priorities of Indigenous Youth, Mental Health, Housing and Healthy Streets by providing transition housing and clinical treatment services to individuals that are chronically homeless in the community. This report has no relationship to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

Staff are currently awaiting the outcome of a Provincial RFP process for the funding of transitional treatment beds. If the RFP funding is not approved, staff will be able to draw on limited one-time provincial grants for 2022 from the Social Services Relief Funding Phase 4 which will partially offset operating costs. Under this scenario staff anticipate a funding shortfall of approximately \$800,000. Once confirmed, staff will seek direction on available funding sources.

Background

During the 2021 budget deliberations, Council unanimously approved the transitional housing business case which funded a dedicated Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) in a community housing setting along with associated operating costs totaling approximately \$2.2 Million. The program is intended to stabilize chronically homeless individuals with clinical supports and provide a pathway to community housing or other forms of support that lead to long term housing and recovery.

The business case for 2021 was fully funded with a combination of funding sources that included a draw from capital and other one-time grants that were available in 2021. Council further directed staff to work with the Mayor's office to bring a funding request to the Province to fund the operating costs on an annualized basis.

This report provides an overview of work that has been undertaken over the last six months to fund this program along with an update on program startup.

Funding

Immediately following the approval of the business case in March 2021, staff began to work with key partners to target possible provincial funding sources. Meetings took place with the Centre of Excellence for Addictions and Mental Health and Ontario Health North. The Mayor's Office also held meetings with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The work that has been completed to date has led to the submission of an application for funding through a recent Request for Proposals (RFP) from the Mental Health and Addictions Centre for Excellence. The RFP process closed on September 15 and no formal timeline was given for decision making after the closure date. Staff are aware of other agencies in Greater Sudbury, that already have clinical treatment programs in place, which have also applied for funding under this RFP process. Staff are undertaking further discussions with Ministry and Ontario Health North representatives to continue to implore the need for this program in the community.

Current Status

City staff have been meeting with Health Science North (HSN) staff on a biweekly basis since March and have made significant progress on startup of the program. In terms of staffing, HSN has completed the recruitment process and will have the initial members of the ACT team in place including completion of training and orientation by November. The program is intended to ramp up through 2022 in order to have a full staff complement in place to provide services when a permanent service site is constructed. City staff have been working with community partners to identify two pilot locations to initiate the program. These sites will house individuals from a startup perspective on a smaller scale while a fully functioning site is being constructed, upon approval of the proposal submitted to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rapid Housing Initiative for funding that was earmarked for Greater Sudbury.

The pilot sites will house 15 individuals to start with some ability to expand to just over 20 individuals if COVID-19 remains under control locally within the homeless population. It has been confirmed that the ACT team will also have capacity to conduct outreach at shelters to provide some clinical consultation and treatment services for individuals that are on the Coordinated Access System's By-Name list.

Budget Status

Given the late startup of the program, less money than originally anticipated in 2021 was needed and as such it is anticipated that reserve funds will not be needed. However, the full cost of the ACT team will be realized in 2022. If Provincial funding does not materialize in time for the 2022 budget process, Council will need to provide direction on the funding shortfall. Staff are currently reviewing options to lower the impact for 2022 as there are new one-time provincial grants available to the end of March 2022, however they will not cover the full cost of the program. Staff are currently anticipating a funding shortfall of \$800,000 after these provincial grants are applied.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to work with HSN on program startup. In addition, a secondary agreement with the HSN Research Institute is being worked on to ensure that a robust research and program evaluation model is in place at the outset of the program. Initial outcome data is expected in mid-2022 and will be reported back to the Community Service Committee.

Staff will advise Council when a decision on the CMHC application is received to provide details on next steps with the permanent site location.

Resources Cited

Transitional Housing Business Case, Finance and Administration Committee Meeting, Thursday, March 11, 2021 <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=4017>