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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report BME-01-2020 Additional Information to Report BME-03-2019 Flyer Distribution



For Consideration by Council in Committee on March 3, 2020

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### OBJECTIVE:

To provide an update to Report BME-03-2019 Flyer Distribution and the outcome of staff discussions with distributors.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report BME-01-2020 Additional Information to Report BME-03-2019 Flyer Distribution be received;
2. AND THAT Report BME-03-2019 Flyer Distribution be received;
3. AND THAT staff be directed to implement Option 3 as outlined in Report BME-03-2019.

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**Respectfully submitted:** Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager of Community & Development Services

**Approved:** Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

As indicated prior through [Report BME-03-2019](#) presented November 19, 2019, Haldimand County does not have any regulatory controls regarding distribution of flyers based on the limited and localized nature of the issue and the challenges of enforcement.

Report BME-03-2019 contained details relative to 3 options available, practices of other municipalities, and a preferred approach. The report recommended Option #3 which was to place a link to the distributor's website on the County's website such that residents may make complaints directly to the distributor. As requested by Council, consideration of Report BME-03-2019 was deferred to permit staff additional opportunity to meet with distributors and determine the most effective approach to addressing public concerns. Staff met with the distributors and Ward Councillors on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and the recommendations contained in Report BME-01-2020, reflect the agreement to discussion in moving forward.

### BACKGROUND:

In the spring of 2019, Council directed staff to provide a report on the regulation of flyer distribution, with the focus on options and best practices from other municipalities. This request came as a result of a number of Council members receiving complaints from residents within their wards. Staff first reported on flyer distribution in Report PED-BC-03-2015.

On November 19, 2019, Staff report BME-03-2019 Flyer Distribution provided Council details relative to options available to regulate flyers, practices of other municipalities, and presented the preferred approach of placing a link to the distributors' website on the County's website.

During the Council in Committee meeting of November 19, 2019, a member of Council described how he had previously worked directly with a distributor of flyers in order to respond to residents' complaints about how flyers were being delivered. As part of this overview, it was proposed (by the Councillor) that a meeting take place between staff and the distributors with Council representation. That meeting took place on January 8, 2020.

Council deferred report BME-03-2019 to a future Council in Committee meeting to permit staff additional opportunity to meet with distributors. The results of that consultation and a staff recommended approach to addressing the distribution concerns is the focus of this report.

## **ANALYSIS:**

On January 8, 2020, Staff along with members of Council met with flyer distribution representatives from Metroland, (owners of the Sachem and Glanbrook Gazette) and Lakeshore Shopper in order to discuss complaints from residents regarding how flyers were being delivered. A third distributor – Deliveries Unlimited which distributes retail flyer packages – was not able to attend the meeting but was contacted separately.

At the meeting Councillors and Staff had the opportunity to hear from the company representatives about the challenges the industry faces in the distribution of flyers. More so, Councillors and Staff heard from Metroland and Lakeshore Shopper regarding the commitment they have in responding to flyer delivery complaints. Both companies already have a process in place for customers to unsubscribe/stop the flyer distribution to a specific address, at the request of the resident. They also have strict protocols in place for their staff (delivery personnel) and clear communications (with them) as it relates to execution of unsubscribe/stop delivery. This is the same for Deliveries Unlimited based on the separate discussion that took place with that business.

According to the industry representatives, the concerns expressed by residents of Haldimand County are the same concerns brought forward by residents in neighbouring municipalities where Metroland and Lakeshore Shopper distribute flyers. Similarly, the representatives from Deliveries Unlimited indicated that other municipalities have contemplated passing by-laws, resulting in meetings being held by municipalities to discuss a plan on how to best respond to resident concerns.

It was understood, that should the County pass a by-law to regulate flyer deliveries, the industry would comply. It has been suggested by the industry in order to comply with the By-law the only way to comply would be to stop delivery to the specific address in question. Residents then may complain to their Councillors that they do not get their flyers delivered.

Metroland advised that they have successfully implemented solutions in other municipalities such as Fort Erie, Mississauga, Brampton and St. Catharines placing the onus on the resident to complain to the distribution company. This has been accomplished by providing a link on the municipality's website so residents can voice their concern directly to the delivery company.

All three parties consulted—Metroland, Lakeshore Shopper and Deliveries Unlimited—and agreed that they would be willing to partner with the County for a similar solution and would be willing to receive complaints regarding flyer delivery, through a link on the County's website. The link would also enable residents to unsubscribe/stop the flyer distribution. Representatives present at the meeting advised that the website complaints link has been successful and complaints have reduced in the municipalities where it has been implemented.

All companies indicated that ensuring that their flyers are delivered to those residents who want their flyers is an ultimate goal.

After having met with the companies representing the flyer delivery industry, the Staff recommendation outlined in report BME-03-2019 is proposed as the go forward. To reiterate, that plan would consist of the County working with the industry in the creation of a website link, hosted on the County's website that would allow residents/businesses to file complaints and unsubscribe. This is viewed as a practical solution to the concern of residents and has proven to be effective in other area municipalities where it has been implemented.

## **FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Not applicable.

## **STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:**

Haldimand County must attempt to provide harmonized service levels throughout the entire County in order to be consistent, fair and equitable.

## **REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

None.