

Advisory Committee Meeting – November 22, 2021

Council-In-Committee – December 14, 2021

Subject: Community Safety & Well-Being Plan
Report Number: HSS 21-25
Division: Health and Social Services
Department: Health and Social Services Administration
Purpose: For Decision

Executive Summary:

The Haldimand Norfolk Health and Social Services Division retained Kim Shippey, President of KMJ Consultants to prepare a municipal Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, as per provincial legislative requirements mandated under the *Police Services Act*. The Plan identifies gaps in current service models, summarizes recommendations to be carried out through a holistic model approach, and outlines a sustainable path forward across Haldimand and Norfolk communities.

The purpose of this staff report is to present the Haldimand and Norfolk Community Safety & Well-Being Plan (CSWB Plan), outline the purpose of the plan, how research was conducted, the main contributors to the study, and an overview of each of the three areas of focus. The CSWB Plan is meant to be a way forward for Haldimand and Norfolk Counties to better address the needs of our communities, with the aim of creating a safe, healthy, and sustainable future of its residents. The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is being presented and recommended for adoption.

Discussion:

In accordance with Ontario's mandate and the Community Safety and Well-being Planning Framework brought forward by the province, the Haldimand Norfolk Health & Social Services Division, along with its partners, has developed a unique Community Safety and Well-Being Plan to address priority risks and needs across both Norfolk County and Haldimand County, and leverage existing services for effectiveness and efficiency. This Plan has been submitted to the Ministry of Solicitor General, pending Council approval.

Spearheaded by the Health and Social Services Division, the Plan was facilitated by Project Lead Kim Shippey, President of KMJ Consultants, and supported by Dr. Katherine Bishop-Williams, Epidemiologist, Haldimand Norfolk Health and Social Services. The Project Sponsors were Heidy VanDyk, Acting General Manager of Health and Social Services Division and Christina Botas, Administrative Assistant, Haldimand County Planning & Development Division. Various community partners and members, social services and justice departments contributed critical information regarding current gaps within services, issues that require attention, as well as ways by which these crises can be addressed to ensure community needs are being met.

In the Community Safety and Well-being Planning Framework, the province outlined the following four approaches as key inputs to guide municipalities' unique plans:

1. Social Development – addressing underlying causes of social issue through upstream approaches to promoting wellness;
2. Prevention – applying proactive strategies to risks harmful if unmitigated;
3. Risk Intervention – identifying and responding to situations of elevated risk and mobilize interventions before response is required; and
4. Incident Response – requiring intervention by first responders.

Each of these inputs were incorporated in the strategies and actions of the CSWB Plan.

Serving as the foundation of the 2021 CSWB Plan, a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was completed in 2019, identifying and analyzing the needs of our Counties, as well as the requirements for healthy, safe and protected communities. This assessment reviewed the needs and overall health of residents, gaps in programming, and outlined next steps for the Health and Social Services Division. Building on the CNA, information was collected for the CSWB Plan via an additional community survey completed by 741 respondents, 86 key informant interviews, and 11 focus groups that included 68 participants. Community members and partners from mental health, addictions, social services, and justice departments were key contributors to the research.

The Community Safety & Well-Being Plan presents three major focus areas that emerged from the data collected. A brief overview of each focus area along with an associated path forward has been illustrated below.

Mental Health and Addictions

Based on the research collected, mental health and addictions were among the top priorities and areas of concern across both Norfolk and Haldimand Counties. In many instances, community members experienced higher levels of daily stress, opioid related emergencies, and hospital admissions than the Ontario average. The lack of available and reliable services, including long wait lists, lack of detox beds, lack of centralized database and consent, and most of all the lack of specialized doctors and healthcare providers, are all significant barriers to addressing and improving the lives of those living with mental illness in our communities.

Our Path forward

In order to strengthen mental health services, the shortage of qualified healthcare professionals should be addressed. To do so, the following may be considered: build capacity for family physicians, noted as one of the main sources of health care in rural communities, to provide mental health supports; increase the number of residency spots in local hospitals; and offer incentives to psychiatrists by making the field competitive. Addressing this barrier could allow for 24/7 assistance in a crisis, rather than solely relying on emergency services or the justice system; offer the opportunity to create a collective service system to share patient information; offer informative sessions on the dangers of non-prescribed drugs particularly engaging youth; and educating communities on the services available via accessible avenues. Connecting service providers, stakeholders, and our communities including business owners, can assist in the development and rollout of a more proactive, rather than reactive approach to mental health and addictions within Haldimand and Norfolk.

Rurality

Over 50% of residents within Norfolk and Haldimand Counties reside in a rural community, covering a combined 2,859 km² and average population density of 35.7 people/km². This vast landscape and low population density, comparable to a Northern community, contributes to significant barriers to accessing health and social services, employment, food, and education. These barriers include transportation, low public funding, and in turn a lack of services and healthcare professionals required to meet the needs within our communities.

Our Path Forward

To address the barriers of rurality, the CSWB Plan proposes increasing access to public or subsidized transportation. Norfolk County's Economic Development and Tourism Department has added *Ride Norfolk*, the County's sole public transit system, to its portfolio for Council consideration in the hopes of improving its service delivery model to be more efficient and easier to access. An alternative solution proposed includes subsidizing other forms of transportation, such as Uber. This partnership has been successfully implemented in other municipalities, and would be a significant cost saving and reliable form of transportation that would eliminate the need for capital investments in infrastructure and transit. In order to develop a successful path forward, the Plan calls upon the province to address the varying and unique needs of rural and urban municipalities alike.

Poverty and Homelessness

Research collected from the CNA and CSWB demonstrated that poverty and homelessness are prevalent issues within our Counties. The lack of access to services, low incomes, high costs of housing and overall living are directly connected to mental health and addictions. Lack of affordable housing, emergency housing and a

reintegration strategy for those discharged from incarceration, are all areas of concern to be addressed in order to create safe and healthy communities.

Our Path Forward

Given the correlation between poverty, homelessness and the other two focus areas, an automated consent system that includes accessing support for employment, and services to address addictions and mental health is one of the first steps in ending poverty. Additionally, creating an effective reintegration program with concrete discharge plans, including increasing availability and lessening restrictions on admission to emergency housing, is a proactive approach to mitigate harm and promote safety and well-being of individuals facing these challenges.

Research highlighted that youth are significantly impacted by the three focus areas. As such, a detailed framework in the Plan addresses the varying needs of our local youth to ensure the youth within our communities succeed. The two main policies recommended include the establishment of a mentorship program, which includes community-based group mentoring across ages, and the development of a youth centre, incorporating programs and activities that foster healthy relationships and supports overall development.

Financial Services Comments

Norfolk

The Approved 2020-2030 Capital Plan included an allocation of \$65,000 for the Community Safety and Well Being Plan. The Province, via the Municipal Modernization program, funded the project. Project status and recommendations will be provided in the next capital status report.

At this time, any financial implications related to the Plan have not been identified. However, once Council approves the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and the establishment of an implementation committee, recommendations and actions from the committee will be presented to Council along with any financial implications for further consideration.

Haldimand

Haldimand Finance staff have reviewed this report and agree with the information provided by Norfolk Financial Services. Any future impacts would be cost shared based on the applicable cost sharing agreement, and should be ranked and evaluated during the appropriate budget process.

Interdepartmental Implications:

Norfolk

Haldimand Norfolk Health and Social Services Division will be calling upon various partners to assist in the successful implementation of the CSWB Plan. These may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Police officers from both the Haldimand and Norfolk OPP detachments
- Haldimand & Norfolk Fire
- Haldimand & Norfolk EMS/Paramedic staff
- Haldimand County Community & Development Services Department and Norfolk County Community Development Division
- Health & Social Services Division
- Social Services & Housing
- Homelessness Prevention Services
- Local businesses and community organizations

Multi-sectoral partnerships are key to ensuring the Plan meets the immediate needs of our shared communities.

Haldimand

Staff are appreciative of Norfolk County taking the lead on the development of the plan on behalf of Haldimand County. The Police Services Act legislated that each municipality/Police Services Board develop a Community Safety and Well Being Plan. The legislative requirement for this plan does not fall under the normal health and social services legislation and therefore is not a mandatory program that Norfolk County, as the Board of Health or CMSM has jurisdiction over for Haldimand County. However, considering the various organizations that are key stakeholders in such a plan, there were many that cover both Haldimand and Norfolk and rather than duplicate efforts by doing two separate plans, Haldimand County engaged the Health and Social Services Department to prepare the plan on its behalf.

Haldimand County staff support the plan as presented and concur with the recommendation to appoint the Health and Social Services Division as the implementation lead.

Consultation(s):

To help inform the Plan and ensure it was constructive and inclusive, consultation was carried out amongst partners, divisions, community members, and local boards across the two Counties. This was conducted via a survey (administered to the public across both Counties), informant interviews, and focus groups. Representatives from the following participant groups and organizations are included below.

Key Informant Interviews:

- Youth Unlimited, Norfolk County
- Community & Mental Health Services
- Community Policing Liaison Officer, Norfolk County

- Emergency Services, Haldimand County
- Police Services, Haldimand County
- Haldimand & Norfolk Police Services Boards
- Holmes House Withdrawal Management
- Haldimand & Norfolk OPP Detachments
- Homeless Prevention Services, Haldimand Norfolk Social Services & Housing
- R.E.A.C.H. Haldimand-Norfolk
- Paramedic Services, Norfolk County

Focus Group: Seniors

- Community Programs, Recreation, Norfolk County
- Recreation Coordinator, Norfolk County
- Norview Lodge Long-Term Care Home
- Cedar Crossing Retirement Community
- Haldimand-Norfolk Community Seniors Support
- Alzheimer's Society of Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton, Halton
- Simcoe Seniors Centre
- Community Support Centre Haldimand-Norfolk
- Delhi Friendship Centre

Focus Group: Norfolk BIA, Chambers of Commerce, & Board of Trade (BOT)

- Simcoe BIA
- MHN Lawyers
- Port Dover BOT
- Simcoe Chamber of Commerce
- Strategic Innovation & Economic Development, Norfolk County
- Delhi Chamber of Commerce

Focus Group: Haldimand BIA, Chamber of Commerce, BOT

- Dunnville Chamber of Commerce
- Caledonia Chamber of Commerce
- Cayuga Chamber of Commerce
- Hagersville Chamber of Commerce
- Dunnville Chamber of Commerce

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Priority "Foster Vibrant, Creative Communities".

Explanation:

The purpose of the CSWB Plan is to identify key areas where strategies need to be implemented in order to improve the overall sense of community safety and well-being. When people feel safe, included and support in their community they are better able to participate which in turn supports the community as a whole.

Conclusion:

The Haldimand Norfolk Health and Social Services division, consultant Kim Shippey, along with its partners has created a Haldimand and Norfolk Community Safety & Well-Being Plan. Staff are in support of the Plan, recommend that the Advisory Committee support its adoption, and appoint the Health and Social Services Division as the lead for implementing the Plan. The aim is to leverage existing services and partnerships, mitigate harm, and promote safety and well-being within our shared communities. Regular updates on the Plan's implementation will be provided to Advisory Committee and Haldimand and Norfolk Councils.

Recommendation(s) of Health and Social Services Advisory Committee: As presented in Staff Report #HSS 21-25

Recommendation(s):

THAT Staff Report HSS 21-25, Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, be received as information;

AND THAT Council approve the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan as presented;

AND THAT the Health & Social Services Division be appointed as the Lead for implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan for Haldimand and Norfolk Counties;

AND FURTHER THAT an implementation committee be established consisting of approximately 12 individuals, including but not limited to an employee of the Haldimand Norfolk Health & Social Services Division, epidemiologist Dr. Katherine Bishop-Williams, representatives from Haldimand and Norfolk's Emergency Services Divisions, Police Services Boards, Haldimand and Norfolk OPP Detachments, and representatives of community based social services and justice sector partners.

Attachment(s):

1. Health and Social Services Haldimand and Norfolk, Norfolk County and Haldimand County, (2021). Haldimand and Norfolk Community Safety & Well-being Plan

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