Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – November 14, 2023

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – October 31, 2023

Item No. 1 Hoarding Taskforce Update and Information Sharing Agreement

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and submitted the following to Council:

1. That this semi-annual update be received as information.

2. That the City enter into, execute, and deliver an Information Sharing Agreement with:

   A. A&O: Support Services for Older Adults, Inc.;

   B. Healthy Aging Resource Team – Winnipeg Regional Health Authority;

   C. Healthy Outreach and Community Support, Complex Community Service Integration, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority;

   D. Canadian Mental Health Association – OCD Centre Manitoba;

   and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to implement the foregoing (the "Ancillary Agreements").

3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the Information Sharing Agreement and Ancillary Agreements, and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

4. The authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of all future Information Sharing Agreements with external organizations providing services or participating in the Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Triage Group, and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – October 31, 2023

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Duncan,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 31, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

On May 5, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide a written report on a semi-annual basis to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services, commencing in November 2023 regarding the Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Taskforce, including:

1. The number of referrals and where they were referred to.

2. In-kind costs incurred by the City.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Hoarding Taskforce Update and Information Sharing Agreement

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
R. Youngson L. Gilmour	C. Schmidt	N/A	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks directed the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS) to establish a multi-stakeholder taskforce to address hoarding behaviors within the City. A taskforce was subsequently formed and, after several meetings, a "triage group" consisting of direct service providers was identified.

At its May 5, 2023, meeting the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide a written report on a semi-annual basis to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services, commencing in November 2023 regarding the Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Taskforce, including:

1. The number of referrals and where they were referred to.
2. In-kind costs incurred by the City.

The framework is in place for a referral program that will simplify how people can receive help with hoarding conditions. The City will receive and triage referrals from internal City departments and facilitate hoarding mitigation support through participating triage group members. A key component for this process to move forward includes the completion of an information sharing agreement (ISA) to protect personal information and facilitate the sharing of referral information by the City to external organizations, which requires Council approval.

Additional resourcing for City staff will be required to enable the City's continued involvement in the referral process. As described in greater detail below, hoarding and collecting behaviors are linked to complex mental health concerns that require intensive and sustained mental health supports. At this time, the City does not have the staffing, or resources needed to fully and appropriately support residents with hoarding behaviours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That this semi-annual update be received as information.

2. That the City enter into, execute, and deliver an Information Sharing Agreement with:

   A. A&O: Support Services for Older Adults, Inc.;

   B. Healthy Aging Resource Team – Winnipeg Regional Health Authority;

   C. Healthy Outreach and Community Support, Complex Community Service Integration, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority;

   D. Canadian Mental Health Association – OCD Centre Manitoba;

   and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to implement the foregoing (the "Ancillary Agreements").

3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the Information Sharing Agreement and Ancillary Agreements, and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

4. The authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of all future Information Sharing Agreements with external organizations providing services or participating in the Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Triage Group, and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASONS FOR THE REPORT

On May 5, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide a written report on a semi-annual basis, commencing in November 2023, regarding the Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviors Taskforce, including:

1. The number of referrals and where they were referred to; and
2. In-kind costs incurred by the City.

Council approval is required to enter into an Information Sharing Agreement with external organizations.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no financial implications to the Recommendations of this report. Entering into the Information Sharing Agreement with triage group members will provide necessary protections to personal information and streamline the process by which people can apply for and receive help with hoarding conditions. This will be in-line with the goals of the Hoarding Task Force.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Context and Background

Prior to discussing the development of the Taskforce, it is first important to better define hoarding and collecting behaviors, and the context in which the taskforce exists.

As outlined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), “People with hoarding disorder have persistent difficulty getting rid of or parting with possessions due to a perceived need to save the items. Attempts to part with possessions create considerable distress and lead to decisions to save them. The resulting clutter disrupts the ability to use living spaces”. However, the APA notes that hoarding is different from Collecting behaviours where “collectors typically acquire possessions in an organized, intentional, and targeted fashion. Once acquired, the items are removed from normal usage.” Further, the APA notes that the “acquisition of objects in people who hoard is largely impulsive, with little active planning… whereas those of collectors are narrowly focused on a particular topic.”

In terms of consequences, the APA suggests that a “hoarding disorder can cause problems in relationships, social and work activities, and other important areas of functioning. Potential consequences of serious hoarding include health and safety concerns, such as fire hazards, tripping hazards, and health code violations. It can also lead to family strain and conflicts, isolation and loneliness… and an inability to perform daily tasks.”

Support for individuals who hoard typically involves intensive and sustained mental health supports. As identified by the APA, “randomized controlled trials have established cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for hoarding disorder as an effective treatment” however it is important to note, and as acknowledged by the APA “despite the effectiveness of CBT for hoarding disorder, a substantial number of hoarding disorder cases remain clinically impaired by their hoarding symptoms after treatment.”

The above information is important context in understanding that hoarding is most often linked to complex mental health concerns that require significant and ongoing mental health supports. These supports do not exist currently within the City. Further, as identified through the work of the Taskforce and the Triage Group, needed services are also limited in community or have significant wait times.

On March 22, 2022, the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee recommended to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks that the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back in 90 days on the formation of the following:

1. Establishing a taskforce on Hoarding and Collecting Behaviors in public and private spaces within Winnipeg, led by the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, with the following action items to be considered:

    A. Set terms and references to guide the work of the taskforce;
    B. Identify and invite stakeholders, including those with lived experience, to ensure an inclusive approach.

The stated purpose of the taskforce, as identified during the first meeting of the group, was to collectively address hoarding and collecting behaviors in public and private spaces within the City of Winnipeg, including:

1.1 Enabling enhanced collaboration and communication between all stakeholders with related responsibility or expertise as facilitated by the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service.
1.2 Establishing a primary point of contact and channels of communication to ensure the appropriate agency is able to address reported issues.
1.3 Gathering input from involved parties, including those with lived experience to guide current and future planning.

The group included representation from:

- Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service Emergency Paramedics in the Community (EPIC) Program;
- Winnipeg Police Service;
- Winnipeg Transit;
- Winnipeg Animal Services;
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA);
- OCD Center, Canadian Mental Health Association;
- Age and Opportunity (A&O);
- Anxiety/Hoarding SME Mental Health Practitioner;
- Shared Health;
- Health Outreach Community Support (HOCS), WRHA;
- End Homelessness Winnipeg;
- Winnipeg Community Services, Community Development (Crisis Response);
- Main Street Project;
- St. Boniface Street Links;
- A community member with lived experience.

Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS), along with representatives from the Community Development Division's (CD) Community Crisis Team, in the Department from Community Services (CMS), and external organizations, have been able to identify the key issues and engage parties in constructive communication. This has included the establishment of a "triage group" derived from the overall taskforce and the framework for a referral program. Current members of the Triage Group include:

- WFPS;
- City of Winnipeg Community Development – Community Crisis Response;
- Canadian Mental Health Association – OCD Centre Manitoba;
- A&O: Support Services for Older Adults Inc.;
- Healthy Aging Resource Team – Winnipeg Regional Health Authority;
- Health Outreach Community Support – Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

At present, referrals from internal departments will be sent to a dedicated email, which has been created to streamline the intake of reports of hoarding conditions. This email is currently managed by CD and, subject to staff availability, may receive hoarding notifications from internal and external sources. Once received, CD acquires necessary consent and provides eligible referrals to members of the Triage Group for follow-up.

An Information Sharing Agreement between the City and external Triage Group members is required to protect personal information and facilitate the sharing of referral information by the City to external organizations.

Currently, CD is only receiving requests via the hoarding email from internal City of Winnipeg divisions and departments. It is anticipated the addition of external referrals will significantly increase requests for support and services. Continued Community Crisis workload exceeds the capacity of current personnel and CMS will need to limit their future involvement in visiting referrals. While internally identified residents will still receive referrals to service providers, there will be less interaction with City resources prior to the referral. There is currently no capacity to support additional volume of work that may arise from public promotion of the email.

The Triage Group began meeting on April 18, 2023. Since that time, the following data can be reported, up to September 12, 2023:

Referrals to Date

Assignment of Hoarding Case	Number of Cases
Community Crisis	9
Declined Service	5
Awaiting Assignment	5
Healthy Aging Resource Team (HART) Winnipeg Health Authority (WHRA)	2
Other Situations	3
Emergency Paramedics in the Community (EPIC)	1
Health Outreach Community Support (HOCS)	1
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)	1
Total Number of Cases	**27**

In-kind Costs to Date (April 18, 2023, to September 12, 2023)

In-kind costs - WFPS	$948.50 (18.5 hours Community Risk Reduction Officer)
In-kind costs - CMS	~$13,000.00 (184.5 hours Community Crisis Workers)

On average each case required roughly 4.5 hours of staff time to address or $480 in-kind costs per case.

Of all cases addressed the majority involved aging adults older than 65 who owned their own home, and were not facing eviction. In these cases, behavioural changes related to collecting behaviours is extremely challenging without ongoing mental health supports as outlined above which the City does not provide.

Next Steps

The Triage Group is currently only receiving referrals from internal sources and has not publicized the email address externally. Receiving only internal referrals since April has demonstrated increased case load, the cost to the City and demand on staff time.

As identified by CD and the Community Crisis team, CMS does not have the current capacity to continue with the volume of referrals in addition to other work. CD has expressed significant concerns related to capacity should referrals be opened to all external service providers and the public.

Therefore, while the internal support resources are still limited, as is the capacity of external providers, the City will limit promotion externally of the taskforce and the interaction of residents with the City as part of the triage process. When internal staffing is available, public awareness on the referral process can be explored with external parties.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: Oct 04, 2023

Project Name:

Hoarding Taskforce Update and Information Sharing Agreement

COMMENTS:

There are no financial impacts arising from the recommendations in this report. The staff time consumed in meeting the requirements of the work noted in the report does not relate to the core function of community risk reduction, but are fully budgeted.

John Hall FCMA, CGMA
Financial Controller
Fire Paramedic Service

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- City of Winnipeg Community Development
- Legal Services

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The work and initiatives of the Hoarding Taskforce identified in this report are applicable to the following aspects of the *OurWinnipeg 2045 Development Plan*:

Goal: Leadership and Good Governance
Policy 1.4 - Integrated Knowledge and Resources
Coordinate inter-departmental systems, projects and resources, making the best use of internal and external expertise to better understand service needs, find the most appropriate solutions, optimize resources, and maximise community outcomes.

Goal: Good Health and Well-being
Policy 4.2 - Evidence-Informed Health Action
Leverage strategic partnerships on community health and development activities that promote resource pooling, data collection, information sharing, and joint action.

Policy 4.3 - Proactive Health Intervention
Utilize social determinants of health to understand and achieve poverty reduction, crime prevention and harm reduction. Practice early intervention and engage in community partnerships that fully leverage wrap-around supports, recreation and resources, and enable opportunities for all, and especially for those who are systemically disadvantaged.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The work and initiatives of the Hoarding Task Force identified in this report are applicable to the following aspects of the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy 2021 – 2031:

Goal 4: Community Well-Being Supports for those in Greatest Need are Increased

10-year Objectives:

B. Front-line City employees have the knowledge, skills and resources to help connect residents to needed supports.
C. Strategic partnerships to connect people to needed supports are developed.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service
Division: Community Risk Reduction
Prepared by: Lisa Gilmour
Date: October 4, 2023