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| Report To: | Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Program Planning Committee                                                              |
| From:      | Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services and<br>Rhonda McCauley, Social Housing Program Supervisor |
| Date:      | June 26, 2013                                                                                                  |
| Re:        | 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan – Issue Report                                                           |

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide the DSB Board Members with the final plan for review and input of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board. The DSB has contracted the services of the Social Planning Council of Sudbury to coordinate, design and develop the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

## **Background**

Through the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) and with the passing of the Housing Services Act (HSA), 2011, the Province has completed the devolution of Ontario's affordable housing to municipalities. The Province now requires the development of a 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan that must reflect certain principles or 'interests' that the government has prescribed in addition to considering and responding to local needs. The Province has outlined some basic requirements for the content:

- plans must identify current and future housing needs;
- set objectives and targets related to identified needs;
- describe actions to meet these goals; and
- indicate how process will be measured.

## **Recommendations**

This executive summary in the Housing and Homeless plan includes the priorities that are a response to a culmination of data and research pertaining to housing, income, and homelessness gathered from within the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB. The priorities overlap and complement one another, as they reflect a whole community focus on addressing housing and homelessness over the next ten years. Many priorities involve continuing and building on existing initiatives that the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has in place, as well as increasing its efficiency and capacity as a community partner and innovator around

housing and homelessness. Integrated service delivery and enhanced evaluation are frequently emphasized components to many of the priorities.

Staff have outlined a condensed version of the executive summary in this report.

## **#1 Understand and Respond to the District's Demographic**

- The cause of this and addressing this in a comprehensive manner will require a critical look at other factors in the community that are impacting the current demand.

## **#2 Strong Emphasis on Seniors Required – Housing and Supports**

- The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will consider transitioning back to a 'seniors-only' social housing portfolio from their existing building stock. The population and consultation data strongly demonstrate demand for this change.
- The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will consider taking full advantage of the services offered through the North East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and their Aging at Home Strategy and advocate for increased services as the aging population grows. Furthermore, get connected with agencies such as Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), which provides services to assist seniors with staying in their homes longer, or helps them get set up with long-term care if needed.

## **#3 Implement Strategies to Support Overlooked Populations – Aboriginals, Youth, and Individuals who are Homeless**

- A strategy to better understand and address homelessness throughout the district must be put into place. Subcomponents of this strategy should involve hard-to-reach individuals (persons with mental health and addictions), aboriginal homelessness, aboriginal relations, and youth services and outreach.
- **Aboriginal Population and Aboriginal Youth**
  - The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB would benefit from establishing a plan to improve and increase relations with the aboriginal community both on and off of reserves, and should recognize the importance of offering culturally appropriate services.
  - Maintain aboriginal population records with every census release (starting with 2011).
  - For planning purposes, migration of low-income populations on and off reserves should be better monitored. Migration is common among persons facing homelessness. Social housing, social assistance, and other service intake forms should specifically determine aboriginal identity as well as previous place of residence for applicants, including an option of having lived on reserve within the last six months.

➤ **Youth in General**

- It is critical to get connected with schools to get a better understanding of what they offer and how connected to services they are. Sharing information would be the first step in getting a better sense of needs to inform strategies around at-risk youth.

➤ **Homelessness in General**

- The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB should continue to establish and build on partnerships with motels/hotels in the various communities for this purpose and engaging service providers in the process.
- Establish relations with Greater Sudbury's emergency shelters and other service providers who provide housing support services (i.e. the Homelessness Network, including the Corner Clinic and seven other service providers).
- Obtain quarterly data from Haven House – the only existing shelter within the district. Start to establish a base for what the needs are around homelessness and an emergency shelter system.

**#4 Address Additional Gaps in Services that Contribute to Imminent Risk of Homelessness**

- In spearheading the implementation of service delivery committees (Priority #10), increase the connectedness between hospitals, prisons, and community service providers in and around the district.

**#5 Imperative Action on Improving Transportation Accessibility Required**

- Immediate innovation around transportation is required.
- Explore opportunities to partner with and build upon existing services in the district such as the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) and Aides aux Seniors.

**#6 Employment and Training Opportunities**

- This priority demands innovation as well as maximizing the potential of the programs already in place by the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB through increased outreach (see #9).
- Partnering with employers, educational institutions, non-profit organizations and Employment Ontario service providers who are already involved in the current employment and training programs of the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB should be built upon as part of a larger process to develop an integrated labour market strategy for the Manitoulin - Sudbury District.

## **#7 Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Housing**

- To assist with the development of the Energy Plan that is set to begin in 2013 and to identify opportunities for reducing energy usage, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has been tracking energy consumption in all of their stock. Software being used from the National Research Council will be helpful in evaluating the return on investment for energy initiatives and opportunities.

## **#8 Innovation and Efficiency with Affordable Housing**

- The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB should continue with the practice of the Direct Shelter Subsidy (DSS) over the next several years and maximize its usage.
- As done in 2011, the BCAs should continue to be used for Capital Asset Management Plans and annual budgets.
- It is important that repairs made through the Northern Housing component of the Affordable Housing program be followed up with. Evaluate and make recommendations based on how the funding was dispersed and what it was targeted for. Determine if the program was successful in targeting major repairs. Compare 2006 and 2011 census statistics (when the 2011 statistics become available) to determine if the percent of dwellings requiring major repairs has decreased. Determine if residents were made aware of the program, particularly individuals with low incomes. In the event that funds become available again, this information would position the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB to be able to make effective use of it.
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis on energy efficiency initiatives that the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB put into place for housing over the last few years. Continue to monitor and compare costs from pre-repair years, as well as to other buildings with older appliances and fixtures, to determine if and where similar initiatives could be applied if money becomes available.
- An alternative to future negotiations for social housing buildings would be the inclusion of subsidized *units* within multiple existing buildings. Next steps should include increased outreach to property managers/owners and maintaining updated records about rental dwellings (i.e. locations, prevalence, and costs) throughout the district.
- With the cost of monthly payments on housing being more affordable than rent in many parts of the district it is worthwhile to explore programs that the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB could implement to assist low income earners to become home owners.
- Explore alternative developments and companies for affordable housing; e.g. Options for Homes – a non-profit housing corporation whose mandate is affordable home ownership (usually condominiums).

## **#9 Increase Opportunities by Increasing Knowledge Dissemination**

- Quarterly communications (i.e. newsletter) will be sent out to social housing tenants and OW and ODSP recipients, detailing existing programs and services – even if they have not recently changed.

## **#10 Spearhead Integrated Service Delivery**

- It would be advantageous to create a district-wide integrated service delivery committee with sub-committees mandated across different regions. The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB and other service providers should have the capacity to continue with case management for some clients after they are housed.
- With the district being so spread out and services being limited, a coordinated system of service delivery is essential. It is recommended that the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB offices and partnering support services implement the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) 4.0 when the program is released within the next few years.

## **#11 Increased Advocacy Roles for Civic Leaders**

- It is recommended that civic leaders advocate for the enhancement and return of helpful affiliated programs, such as the bursary program for social housing tenants and their children.

## **#12 Increase Program Evaluations**

- Building on and in addition to those recommendations are the following;
  - Take a closer look at trends in social assistance for social housing in the context of population changes and economic factors within the district. Closely monitor the impact of the elimination of the CSUMB. It is important that a strong record of unmet need be kept and reported on. At this time especially, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB should take measures to ensure a closer monitoring of homelessness within the district and within the next year, develop a strategy around aiming to better understand the scope of the issue within the district in general, and among specific populations like youth and aboriginals.

### **#13 Closely Monitor the Release of RFPs and Opportunities for Funding**

- Actively seek out calls or requests for proposals (CFPs or RFPs) that provide funding for housing and homelessness initiatives. Connect with and follow updates from the North East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Secretariat (HPS). Inquire about annual HPS funding as well, which has been recently renewed, and previously used by many communities across Canada for capital projects and homelessness prevention initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff call upon the board to approve the plan in principle pending review and feedback by municipalities, stakeholders and the province by Sept. 6, 2013. The board will consider final approval at the September 26, 2013 Board meeting.