



## SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>HOUSING SERVICES</b>
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>Melisa Johnson, Manager (Acting)</b>
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<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>October 19, 2022</b>
<b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b>	<b>Centralized Waiting List Priority - Homeless</b>

### **BACKGROUND**

The rules directing priority for the centralized waiting list (CWL) are governed under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

### **DISCUSSION**

Historically, the only priority for the County of Lambton's CWL was special priority status (SPS) for victims of domestic violence and/or human trafficking as mandated under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. When a unit becomes available, the vacancy would first be offered to a household with SPS. If there was no SPS household, the vacancy would be offered chronologically to households who have been on the waiting list for the longest.

The *Housing Services Act, 2011*, allows Service Managers to implement local priorities to address local needs. The local priority would apply after SPS households.

Using the information gathered in the 2021 Homeless Enumeration as well as the expansion of the local By-Name List (BNL) staff have implemented a local homeless priority. The addition of a homeless priority will allow staff to better assist households experiencing homelessness in our community.

The local homeless priority will offer one in every 10 vacancies of County owned units to households that are included on both the BNL and the CWL. When a vacancy is available for the homeless priority, a multi-departmental team, including staff from Housing Services, Ontario Works and Homelessness Prevention, will review households included on both the BNL and CWL to select a suitable household for the vacant unit. When selecting the household, staff will consider suitability, location preferences, acuity levels and support services currently in place.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no impact to the levy.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Consultations have taken place with the General Manager, Social Services, Manager, Homelessness Prevention and Children's Services and the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Providing safe affordable housing is in keeping with the County's Mission to promote an enhanced quality of life through the provision of responsive and efficient services accomplished by working with municipal and community partners.

The activities of the Division support the Community Development Area of Effort #3 in the County of Lambton's Strategic Plan, specifically:

- Advocating in a manner that raises the profile of the County and its needs in order to secure improved government supports, funding, grants, and other resources.
- Developing programs and initiatives that address poverty reduction and promote social belonging.
- Planning for and responding to the ever-changing needs of an aging population, homelessness and retaining young people in the community while supporting their transition to being employed community members and future leaders.
- Actively pursuing joint opportunities with community partners that contribute to the well-being of the Lambton Community.

## **CONCLUSION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the growing crisis in the homeless population and highlights the necessity for more affordable housing in our community. Implementing a homeless priority for the centralized waiting list will assist in moving households out of homelessness and into a subsidized housing unit.