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Report 2025-163

Report Title: 310 Division Street Operating Model

Committee Name: Social Services

Committee Meeting Date: July 30, 2025

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Council Meeting Date: August 13, 2025

Strategic Plan Priorities: Innovate for Service Excellence
 Ignite Economic Opportunity
 Foster a Thriving Community
 Propel Sustainable Growth
 Champion a Vibrant Future

Information Report

“Whereas County Council directed staff at the June 18, 2025 County Council meeting to provide a report at the July 30, 2025 Social Services Committee meeting regarding the timeline, budget, implementation plan, and operational expectations of transitioning 310 Division Street, Cobourg to a higher barrier shelter that focuses on serving lower to moderate acuity individuals;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That the Social Services Committee, having considered Report 2025-163 ‘310 Division Street Operating Model’, recommend that County Council direct staff to proceed with implementing the emergency shelter operating model as outlined in this report and as directed by Council at the June 18, 2025 Council meeting by Council Resolution 2025-06-18-522.”

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with details on the proposed operating model for emergency sheltering services at 310 Division Street, Cobourg, Ontario.

Background

On June 18, 2025, County Council provided direction to County staff to close the warming/cooling hub at 310 Division Street effective July 4, 2025, and to report back to the Social Services Committee on July 30, 2025, regarding the timeline, budget, implementation plan, and operational expectations of transitioning 310 Division Street, Cobourg to serving lower to moderate acuity individuals.

The warming/cooling hub at 310 Division Street was closed on July 4, 2025, as per County Council direction.

Consultations

Internal consultations have occurred with the Chief Administrative Officer, legal counsel, departments of communication, finance and community and social services.

External consultations have occurred with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and OrgCode Consulting Inc. and Transition House Coalition Inc.

Legislative Authority / Risk Considerations

The County is the designated service manager for housing and homelessness under the *Housing Services Act, 2016* and is responsible for developing and implementing a 10-year housing and homelessness plan. In addition, the County oversees and administers annual Homelessness Prevention Program funding to support a system of services that support and address homelessness within Northumberland.

Risks associated with this new operational model include:

- Potential increase in visible homelessness and encampments.
- Ability to provide supports and services to unsheltered individuals may become more difficult without a permanent address and basic stability.

Discussion / Options

County staff have developed a proposed emergency sheltering model that is rooted in housing focused services, able to serve the most individuals needing emergency shelter within our community and adheres to Council direction.

Anticipated changes with the new shelter model, include:

Operational Expectations

Intakes will be based on presentation, recognizing that circumstances change and eligibility may be reassessed at a later time or date. Updated eligibility criteria include:

1. Signs that someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol will deem them ineligible for service.

Signs and symptoms of recent substance use can include:

- a) Drowsiness.
 - b) Slurred speech. Quick, slow or fluctuating pace of speech.
 - c) Lack of coordination.
 - d) Irritability or changes in mood.
 - e) Problems concentrating or thinking clearly.
 - f) Memory problems.
 - g) Involuntary eye movements.
 - h) Lack of inhibition.
 - i) Decreased alertness.
2. Escalated or disruptive behaviors will not be eligible for service.
 3. Upon intake security will do a bag and pocket search as well as utilizing handheld metal detectors. Individuals found with items that violate the rules will not be eligible for service.
 4. Diversion conversations will take place before initiating intake process.
 5. Individuals will have an assessment (VI -SPDAT) done to determine level of acuity and support required within 48 hours.
 6. Individuals will meet to create a housing focused case plan within 72 hours.
 7. All references to amnesty lockers will be removed from intake and code of conduct documentation.
 8. The County will provide oversight and support for the operator to recruit 2 housing focused case managers that will be responsible for service plans for each individual utilizing their service. There will be minimum education and experience requirements. This will result in new staffing models and potential changes to current staffing complement.
 9. The operator will clearly communicate intake times and curfews. Anyone out after curfews (other than special permissions, such as employment) will be considered self-discharged.
 10. Gate to be installed across the driveway. This will be closed after hours as a physical deterrent for anyone not eligible to be on property.
 11. Fire Safety Plan to be updated to reflect the changes.

County oversight:

County staff will be involved in the creation, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of intakes, case plan audits, and participating in the appeal processes. Outreach staff will be on site multiple times a week and will support operator staff when appropriate.

Considerations:

Transitional Housing Units on the 4th floor are managed by County staff and have an assigned lead. This is a separate program. They do not fall under the same model as the shelter. There is a separate selection process, and the occupants are low acuity and housing ready. They pay rent and have an occupancy agreement that outlines the rules and levels of engagement. They have access to security after hours if needed and to County staff during business hours.

Implementation Plan/Timeline

The implementation plan is dependent on variables that have not yet been settled, these include:

- Approval of Fire Safety Plan
- Ratification of collective agreement with Transition House
- Negotiating, finalizing and executing amended agreements with Transition House
 - Service Agreement
 - Operational Licensing Agreement
- Determining final budget for the approved model

In conjunction with the writing of this report, County staff are working with Transition House to advance discussions relating to service delivery, staffing and ultimately budget. It is anticipated that this will be finalized in draft form prior to the August County Council meeting.

It is anticipated that an implementation date will be set within the amended agreements and will likely be achievable for Fall 2025. Actions required to be able to achieve this include:

- Finalized Emergency Sheltering Budget
- Amended Agreements with Transition House
- Amended Policies and Procedures (Transition House)
- Staffing Complement and Recruitment
- Changes to Security Services
- Communication with Service Users

Budget

The budget for this operating model is still under development and is anticipated to be finalized by August Council. It is likely that the cost of emergency sheltering will remain relatively static, this will be impacted by the approval of the amended Fire Safety Plan.

Financial Impact

The financial impact of this report is considered in three main areas:

1. Warming Hub – with the removal of the 24/7 drop-in centre, there is a ‘cost-savings’ to the operations at 310 Division Street. However, the cost to run a winter warming hub will likely require the full proportion of the existing 310 Division Street budget to operate the 24/7 drop-in centre. For the 2023/2024 winter season, the cost to run a warming room between October and April was approximately \$432,879. This does not factor in the likely cost of transportation that will be required to run a hub in an area outside of Cobourg.
2. ECE compliance – with the enforcement of a strict curfew and eligibility criteria the need for the existing security complement may become redundant, particularly in the overnight hours. With the removal of the drop-in centre, all clients of 310 Division Street emergency shelter will be within the facility overnight.
3. Emergency shelter budget – this will be completed in draft by August Council and is anticipated to be cost neutral.

Member Municipality Impacts

To be determined. Any future warming/cooling hub services will be located outside of Cobourg as per the direction of County Council.

Conclusion / Outcomes

It is recommended that Committee/County Council direct staff to implement the emergency shelter model as outlined above.

Attachments

1. Report 2025-163 ATTACH 1 'Council Resolution 2025-06-18-522'