



The Regional Municipality of Durham

Health & Social Services Committee Agenda

Council Chambers
Regional Headquarters Building
605 Rossland Road East, Whitby

Thursday, November 5, 2020

9:30 AM

Please note: In an effort to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and to generally comply with the directions from the Government of Ontario, it is requested in the strongest terms that Members participate in the meeting electronically. Regional Headquarters is closed to the public, all members of the public may [view the Committee meeting](#) via live streaming, instead of attending the meeting in person. If you wish to register as a delegate regarding an agenda item, you may register in advance of the meeting by noon on the day prior to the meeting by emailing delegations@durham.ca and will be provided with the details to delegate electronically.

1. Roll Call

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Adoption of Minutes

- A) Health & Social Services Committee meeting – October 8, 2020

Pages 4 - 15

4. Statutory Public Meetings

There are no statutory public meetings

5. Delegations

- 5.1 Michele Watson, Partnerships and Outreach Coordinator (CRS), re: Access to Community Information through Durham.211central.ca

6. Presentations

- 6.1 Alan Robins, Director, Housing Services re: Update on the Portable Housing Benefits (2020-SS-15) [Item 8.2 A]
- 6.2 Marusia Laschuk, Director, Family Services and John Riches, Assistant Director and Deputy Chief, Paramedic Services re: Non-Police-Led Mental Health Mobile Crisis Response in Durham Region
- 6.3 Lisa McIntosh, Director, Children's Services, re: Update on the Children's Services Division

7. Health

- 7.1 Correspondence
- 7.2 Reports
There are no Health Reports to consider

8. Social Services

- 8.1 Correspondence
- 8.2 Reports
 - A) Portable Housing Benefits (2020-SS-15)

16 - 20

9. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There are no advisory committee resolutions to be considered

10. Confidential Matters

There are no confidential matters to be considered

11. Other Business

12. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 9:30 AM

13. Adjournment

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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 8, 2020

A regular meeting of the Health & Social Services Committee was held on Thursday, October 8, 2020 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 9:30 AM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Councillor Chapman, Chair
Councillor Pickles, Vice-Chair
Councillor Anderson
Councillor Carter attended the meeting at 11:00 AM
Councillor Dies
Councillor Roy
Councillor Wotten
Regional Chair Henry
***all members of the Committee except Councillor Chapman and Regional Chair Henry participated electronically**

Also

Present: Councillor Bath-Hadden
Councillor Hight
Councillor Joe Neal
Councillor Smith

Staff

Present: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
S. Danos-Papaconstantinou, Commissioner of Social Services
J. Demanuele, Director, Business Services, Works Department
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
R.J. Kyle, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health
L. MacDermaid, Director, Long Term Care and Services for Seniors
A. Robins, Director, Housing Services
E. Valant, Program Manager, Housing Services
T. Fraser, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
N. Prasad, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Anderson made a declaration of interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act with respect to Item 8.2 B) Report #2020-SS-14 Re: Mental Health Support Unit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Service Delivery Agreement. He indicated that his daughter is a Nurse and is employed with the Region of Durham.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Anderson, Seconded by Councillor Wotten,
(33) That the minutes of the regular Health & Social Services Committee meeting held on Thursday, September 10, 2020, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Statutory Public Meetings

There were no statutory public meetings.

5. Delegations

5.1 Harris Rosen, Brock Resident re: Report #2020-SS-9 Expedited Supportive Housing Development considered at the July 9th Health and Social Services Committee meeting

Harris Rosen, Brock Resident, advised that he owns a waterfront property in Beaverton and is concerned with the absence of consultation with the residents of the Township of Brock. He stated that he has the following issues with regards to the project:

- Councillors voted on the Beaverton housing plan without any input from Brock Council or the residents of Brock; and
- There was no dialogue with Brock Council or the residents of Beaverton about the supports needed for the project; past drug and police activity or community safety issues; location alternatives; tendering process related to prospective service providers; the rationale for a single source provider of modular structures; age demographics; what constitutes “urgency” and how the current location addresses this; economic development and tourism in the area; and the possibility of this decision setting up homeless people to fail.

H. Rosen stated that he is unsure why consultations did not happen before July 2020.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Dies,
(34) That H. Rosen be granted a one-time 2-minute extension in order to finish his delegation.

CARRIED

H. Rosen stated that the right thing to do is to suspend the housing project until there are answers to the issues raised by him and requested that the committee consider the application of the Human Rights Code with respect to age and transportation issues as they require significant afterthought.

5.2 Mona Emond, Executive Director, North House, re: Gaps in Service in North Durham

Mona Emond, Executive Director, North House advised that North House is a small agency located in Uxbridge that has been providing homelessness and housing supports for the Townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge since 2004. She stated that in those Townships, there is not a lot of employment opportunities and medical, mental health and addiction supports are scarce. She stated that the people served each day often go without the basics of care because they're either not available or they are unable to travel between Townships.

M. Emond advised that she has co-chaired the Health Homelessness and Housing Committee North Durham Working Group which has a focus on social service needs in the north as well as a service hub pilot. She stated that through the Committee, partnerships are leveraged with other organizations and asked to commit to bring services to the most rural communities in north Durham. She stated that the hub is open to anyone in the community. She advised that the pilot will be used as a framework to shape the hub in the supportive housing being constructed in Beaverton.

M. Emond also advised that she sits on the Supportive Housing Advisory Board for the new Beaverton project and in doing so, has the opportunity to ensure that the voice of the people in the north is ingrained in the foundation of the project. She stated that regional staff, the Housing Services Department, and Council members are recognizing the north and including them in regional plans by bringing services to the people who desperately need them.

M. Emond responded to questions of the Committee.

5.3 Dean Astolfi, Director of Supportive Housing for Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Elgin Middlesex, re: Development of Supportive Housing in Beaverton

Dean Astolfi, Director of Supportive Housing for Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Elgin Middlesex, appeared before the Committee with regards to the Development of Supportive Housing in Beaverton. He stated that they have provided supportive housing for over 40 years and at present, supportively house close to 1000 individuals across their communities.

D. Astolfi stated that from experience, a project like this is usually met with fear of the unknown. He stated that some of the people supported will present in ways that might be unsettling but this may be due to mental health issues and more likely due to circumstance. He stated that although more housing seems to be the solution to homelessness, home ownership is something not easily attainable for many. He further stated that projects such as the Beaverton Project is needed to provide safe, supportive, and affordable housing to the most vulnerable.

D. Astolfi stated that research has shown that 3% of criminal acts can be attributed to a mental health diagnosis and over 80% of those supported are likely to be victims of crime. He stated that supportive housing is the best intervention as it gives people a place to be, a place to belong, and supports to deal with issues they are faced with. He further stated that people can more readily manage their mental health when they are not contending with things like their next meal or a place to sleep at night.

D. Astolfi stated that the Beaverton Project is an investment in the community and an investment in dignity.

D. Astolfi responded to questions of the Committee.

5.4 Theresa Treadwell, Program Manager, The Salvation Army, re: Supportive Housing and Housing Projects Moving into Communities

Theresa Treadwell, Program Manager, The Salvation Army, appeared before the committee with regards to Supportive Housing and Housing Projects Moving into Communities.

T. Treadwell advised that she has been with The Salvation Army for over 15 years and oversees four emergency housing programs, 2 multi-service centres and over 50 supportive housing units throughout York and Durham Regions. She stated that supportive housing has shown to reduce homelessness, unnecessary hospital visits and involvement in the criminal justice system. She also stated that The Salvation Army provides supportive housing to a wide range of individuals including seniors; individuals with disabilities, brain injuries, mental health needs, and substance abuse; as well as those with a history of homelessness. She further stated that from her experience, supportive housing has enabled individuals and families to regain dignity, find stability and make positive connections in community.

T. Treadwell advised that she has been involved in the planning, opening and operating of two multi service centres that includes supportive housing. She stated that these centres are vital service hubs for the community and many community members access these service hubs for a number of supports and services that either did not exist or were not accessible prior to the build.

T. Treadwell stated that supportive housing that incorporates service hubs have the potential to facilitate a wide array of services and support for the community thereby stabilizing situations before they become a crisis. She stated that she welcomed supportive housing in her community and urges local communities to encourage it as well.

T. Treadwell responded to questions of the Committee.

5.5 Johanne St. Louis, Women's Services Coordinator, The Nourish and Develop Foundation, re: Beaverton Supportive Housing Project

Johanne St. Louis, Women's Services Coordinator, The Nourish and Develop Foundation appeared before the committee with regards to the Beaverton Supportive Housing Project.

J. St. Louis stated that there are a lot of vulnerable residents that live in the Township of Brock and there are several buildings that inadequately house some them. She stated that most of these buildings are unsafe and don't meet current health and safety fire regulations. She stated that there are no other places for these individuals to transition to and would like to see an effort made to prioritize them to have access to the new supportive housing facility in Beaverton. She also stated that these individuals can use a clean supportive slate to help them improve the quality of their lives without creating an additional problem area for the Township.

J. St. Louis also stated that she would like to see an effort to coordinate the existing services to provide additional support to organizations and also to identify and enable vulnerable residents to transition into the new housing facility.

6. Presentations

6.1 Laura MacDermaid, Director, Long Term Care and Services for Seniors re: Update on the Long Term Care Division

Laura MacDermaid provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Long-Term Care Update. A copy of the presentation was provided to committee members prior to the meeting via email.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Presentation Overview
- Long-Term Care in Ontario
- Long-Term Care
- Long-Term Care: From Residential Care to Health Service Provider
- Complex Conditions, Multiple Health Needs
- Long-Term Care Provincial Funding (Per Diem)
- Durham Region owned Long-Term Care Homes
- Durham Region Long-Term Care & Services for Seniors
- Resident Profile
- Rapid Change, Significant Impact
- Staff Profile
- Challenges to the Sector
- Reports on the Long Term Care Sector
- Responding to Sector Pressures
- COVID-19 and Wave 2 Preparedness
- Senior Safety Office
- Summary

L. MacDermaid stated that Long Term Care homes are funded, regulated and inspected by the Ontario Ministry of Long-Term Care. She stated that all long-term care homes are publicly funded and ownership is either private, municipal or non-profit charitable. She stated that by law, long-term care homes must provide residents with safe, consistent, high-quality, and resident-centred care.

L. MacDermaid stated that there are 623 homes in the province with 19 of them in Durham. She advised that the average wait time for placement in Durham is three and a half times the provincial wait time and the demand for long term care is expected to continue to rise. She stated since 2010, only individuals with high or very high care needs became eligible for long-term care. She provided a breakdown of the top health conditions of those living in long term care homes.

L. MacDermaid advised of the following challenges faced by the sector: growing demand; need for capital renewal; human resources; staffing levels and workload; operational funding; regulatory framework; and changing resident profile. She stated that in response to the challenges, Durham homes are responding with measures such as: a nurse practitioner in each home; working on a virtual medicine model; Trained Behavioural Supports Team in each home; hiring Infection Control Practitioners; and continuing to address workplace violence, to name a few.

L. MacDermaid provided an overview of the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic as well as Wave 2 Preparedness measures.

L. MacDermaid responded to questions of the committee with regards to the long waitlist for placement in Durham; the availability of at home supports and access to those supports; and the issue of the number of younger people in long term care facilities.

6.2 Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou, Commissioner of Social Services and Alan Robins, Director, Housing Services Division re: Supportive Housing Project – Beaverton

Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou and Alan Robins, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to the Supportive Housing Project in Beaverton.

Highlights of the presentation includes:

- Beaverton Housing with Supports
- Who lives in a supportive residence?
- What is Durham's need for supportive housing?
- Durham's need is urgent – Expedited Process
- More Supports Needed in North Durham?
- The Real Reason

S. Danos-Papaconstantinou stated that the Supportive Housing Project in Beaverton will provide urgently needed housing for those who need extra support and want to use this opportunity as a stepping stone to more independent living, or need ongoing support, and want to live in a rural community.

With regards to who lives in a supportive residence, S. Papa-Constantinou stated that the following populations require supportive housing: at-risk seniors; people with disabilities; youth; indigenous people; people experiencing mental health and addiction challenges; and those experiencing violence and human trafficking. She stated that people live in a supportive residence by choice and stated that residents of the new housing units will have the choice of moving to Beaverton and will only be matched if it's appropriate for their circumstances. She also stated that people in need from north Durham will be given priority.

A. Robins provided an overview from OrgCode, an organization that specializes in homelessness and housing, of the number of new supportive housing units required and needed each year to maintain status quo, make a marginal improvement and meet full need. He stated that the Region of Durham needs supportive housing and each year delayed has a cumulative impact. He stated that the Beaverton Housing Project is one of many ways to end chronic homelessness.

A. Robins stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted an urgent need to address chronic homelessness and reviewed the process involved in determining the location for the Beaverton Supportive Housing Project. He advised that staff is aware of the concerns raised by the local residents and their Council and have tried to address these concerns. He stated that OrgCode will be performing a Suitability Study for the project. He also stated that the Region has teamed up with support partners to open a support hub to provide local access to important services. He further stated that a virtual Public Information Session is scheduled to be held on October 29, 2020 at 6:30 PM to gather community input. He advised that an online survey will also be open for 3 weeks beginning October 8th.

The Committee viewed a brief video with regards to an individual's experience with the In/Out of Crisis Program at Camp Samac.

Staff responded to questions with regards to public information sessions with the public; federal and provincial funding for homelessness programs; whether 50 units is a good amount of units to effectively deliver services; coalitions advanced with community partners; employment staff for the project; the importance of addressing the questions raised by residents regarding the process for becoming a resident of the facility, the timelines and the requirements; and whether there is a minimum age or requirement to be single that would qualify individuals for supportive housing.

Questions to Health

R.J. Kyle responded to questions from Chair Chapman with respect to Thanksgiving and Halloween festivities.

R.J. Kyle responded to questions from Councillor Roy with respect to the time frame for getting results from COVID-19 testing and whether there is a centralized location that would get results faster.

7. Health

7.1 Correspondence

There were no communications to consider.

7.2 Reports

There were no Health Reports to consider.

8. Social Services

8.1 Correspondence

- A) Correspondence from Becky Jamieson, Municipal Clerk, Township of Brock, dated September 28, 2020 re: Proposed Supportive Housing – Beaverton
- B) Correspondence from Becky Jamieson, Municipal Clerk, Township of Brock, dated September 29, 2020 re: Proposed Supportive Housing - Beaverton - Pause and Hold
- C) Correspondence from Becky Jamieson, Municipal Clerk, Township of Brock, dated September 29, 2020 re: Petition - Peter Bornemisa, On Behalf of Citizens of Brock re: Proposed Supportive Housing – Beaverton
- D) Correspondence from Peter Bornemisa, on behalf of Citizens of Brock, re: Petition to Further Study Supportive Housing Project in Beaverton

A petition was submitted opposing the location at 133 Main Street for Modular housing until the Region of Durham seeks formal public consultation, input and feedback. Further, that formal studies and research be completed to support this location as being the optimal location for supportive housing. Further, that this resolution be sent to the Region of Durham, Municipal Affairs and Housing and MPP Laurie Scott.

A copy of the petition has been retained in Legislative Services.

- E) Correspondence from Residents of Township of Brock to Region of Durham Council members regarding the Durham Region Social Housing Proposal located in Beaverton

Moved by Councillor Pickles, Seconded by Councillor Roy,
(35) That correspondence items A) to E) inclusive be received for information and forwarded to Regional Council.

CARRIED

8.2 Reports

- A) Approval to Award a Sole Source Contract for the Supply and Delivery of SPAN Medical Products Canada Inc.'s Encore High/Low Beds and GEO Mattresses to Cardinal Health, for use by the Region of Durham's four (4) Long-Term Care Homes (2020-SS-13)

Report #2020-SS-13 from S. Danos-Papaconstantinou, Commissioner of Social Services, was received.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Carter,
(36) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That the Regional Municipality of Durham enter into a sole source contract with Cardinal Health for the supply and delivery of SPAN Medical Products Canada Inc.'s Encore Beds and the supply of GEO Max mattresses for a term not to exceed five (5) years at an estimated total cost of \$1,346,400* for use at the Region of Durham's four (4) Long-Term Care Homes subject to financing being approved in the Long Term Care Homes annual Business Plans and Budgets; and
- B) That the Commissioner of Finance be authorized to execute any necessary documents related to this sole source agreement.

CARRIED

B) Mental Health Support Unit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Service Delivery Agreement (2020-SS-14)

Report #2020-SS-14 from S. Danos-Papaconstantinou, Commissioner of Social Services, was received.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Carter,
(37) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding a Mental Health Support Unit to commence service on January 1, 2021 for a period of one year be executed in order to outline funding arrangements and the expedited recruitment of nurses through Lakeridge Health;
- B) That subject to successful negotiations under the MOU, a tripartite Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) with Lakeridge Health and Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) that details the objectives, services, service levels, deliverables, and outcomes of the Mental Health Support Unit be authorized;
- C) That pre-budget approval for the one-year program at a cost up to \$450,000 to expedite the recruitment for a Mental Health Support Unit be funded from the 2021 Non-Departmental Budget;
- D) That the Federal and Provincial governments be requested to provide funding to support expanded mental health services, including those provided by this program; and

- E) That the Regional Chair and Clerk be authorized to sign the MOU and subsequent agreement, subject to the concurrence of the CAO, Commissioner of Social Services, Legal Services and the Commissioner of Finance.

CARRIED ON THE FOLLOWING
RECORDED VOTE

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Councillor Carter	None
Councillor Dies	
Regional Chair Henry	
Councillor Pickles	
Councillor Roy	
Councillor Wotten	
Councillor Chapman	

Members Absent: None

Declarations of Interest: Councillor Anderson

9. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There were no advisory committee resolutions to be considered.

10. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

11. Other Business

There was no other business to consider.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Health & Social Services Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 9:30 AM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

13. Adjournment

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Dies,
(38) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM

Respectfully submitted,

B. Chapman, Chair

N. Prasad, Committee Clerk

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2463.



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Health and Social Services Committee
From: Commissioner of Social Services
Report: #2020-SS-15
Date: November 5, 2020

Subject:

Portable Housing Benefits

Recommendation:

That the Health and Social Services Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 To provide an overview of the efficacy of the Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB) and Canada-Ontario Housing benefit (COHB) programs.

2. Background

2.1 A portable housing benefit (PHB) is a monthly benefit paid directly to eligible low-income households. Unlike other forms of housing assistance, like rent-geared-to-income (RGI), the PHB is tied to the household and not a physical housing unit, allowing the benefit to move with the household.

2.2 Beginning July 2019, the Region piloted 70 PHBs under the new Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB) program (Report #2019-COW-4). Durham PHBs offered in accordance with the Housing Services Act, 2011(HSA) PHB framework can be included as an alternative to RGI under the Region's legislated service level standard (SLS) of 4,446 units.

a. 35 PHBs are included under legislated SLS – as they were offered to eligible applicants on the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) according to HSA priority rules, or to tenants transferring out of RGI units

- b. 35 PHBs are not included under legislated SLS – as they were offered to targeted groups in accordance with local priorities: youth (aged 16 to 26 years), people with development disabilities; and formerly homeless people exiting Housing First programs.
- 2.3 In addition to the Durham PHB, the Region also began facilitating applications for the federally-provincially funded Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) in April 2020 (Report #2020-INFO-63).
- 2.4 The COHB is a portable housing benefit that can be used anywhere in Ontario. It is offered to eligible applicants on the DASH wait list, as well as targeted applicants in line with Provincial priorities.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 Report #2019-COW-4 2019 Regional Social Housing Servicing and Financing Study provided approval for the development of a Portable Housing Benefit (PHB) framework to support the introduction and implementation of a total of 70 PHBs, consisting of 35 PHBs within the Region’s legislated service level standard and 35 PHBs above the Region’s service level standard.
- 3.2 Report #2020-INFO-63 Overview of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit informed Regional Council of the administration of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) in Durham, which began on April 1, 2020.

4. Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB)

- 4.1 The Durham PHB bridges the difference between roughly 30 per cent of recipient’s net income and the average market rent. Social assistance recipients receive the lesser of this bridge amount or the difference between the Ontario Works or ODSP shelter allowance and actual shelter costs.
- 4.2 The majority of Durham PHB applicants (about 78 per cent) receive social assistance:

Durham PHB Recipients as of September 30, 2020

Type of Benefit	ODSP	Ontario Works	Employment	Other ¹	Total ²
Durham PHB – SLS	22	5	1	7	35
DASH wait list	18	3	0	6	27
RGI Transfer	4	2	1	1	8
Durham PHB – non-SLS Total	18	9	2	5	34
Youth	4	9	2	4	19
Developmental Disability	10	0	0	0	10
Housing First	4	0	0	1	5
Total Durham PHB	40	14	3	12	69

- 4.3 Because the Durham PHB is stacked with the maximum social assistance shelter allowances, the average Durham PHB issued to social assistance recipients is about \$546 per month, whereas the average amount issued to non-social assistance recipients is \$819 – an average of about \$605 across the program. This makes the Durham PHB an affordable alternative to RGI, which provides an average subsidy of about \$720 per month.
- 4.4 Despite the lower subsidy costs, the Durham PHB still provides recipients with reasonable housing affordability.
- The Durham PHB covers at least 60 per cent of total shelter costs for all but 2 non-social assistance recipients. A third of these recipients receive assistance in excess of their total shelter costs, bringing them closer to RGI rates.
 - Most social assistance recipients receive assistance to cover 100 per cent of their shelter costs through the combination of the Durham PHB and their Ontario Works or ODSP shelter allowance – leaving them with their basic needs allowance for non-shelter expenses, as is the case with RGI households.
- 4.5 Durham PHB recipients are generally stable in their housing situations.
- Over the last 12 months, about 71 per cent of Durham PHB recipients have remained stably housed in one place, with only 4 recipients moving more than once.
 - About 90 per cent of Durham PHB recipients are renters or roomers, and 70 have last months' rent on deposit at their current residence.

¹ Other income includes Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and other pensions.

² One Durham PHB is currently in the process of being allocated due to turnover in the program.

- 4.6 Feedback from Durham PHB recipients has been largely positive. Many recipients reported having been on the DASH wait list and struggling with housing affordability and suitability for many years before being offered the Durham PHB.
- 4.7 In particular, many people with developmental disabilities and their families have expressed a desire for the expansion of the program. They have advised that the Durham PHB has afforded greater flexibility in meeting individualized housing needs, closer to families and supports. It has allowed them to better plan for their futures and fostered greater independence and participation in their communities.
- 4.8 Only two people have exited the program; one was deceased and one youth reconciled with family.
- 4.9 Take up of the Durham PHB has been excellent, particularly by DASH applicants, youth and people with developmental disabilities. More than 500 DASH applicants expressed interest in receiving one of the 27 Durham PHBs offered through the wait list. There was less interest from people transferring from RGI in the program and they had greater difficulty securing units outside of community housing. Consequently, staff have shifted focus to DASH applicants when SLS eligible Durham PHBs become available.
- 4.10 As an alternative to RGI, the Durham PHB provides:
 - a. More immediate and flexible assistance to low-income people on the DASH wait list who might not otherwise receive an offer of RGI
 - b. A timelier response to a potential shortfall in the Region's service level standard (SLS), given the low turnover rates in community housing and the decreasing number of private landlords entering into Commercial Rent Supplement agreements with the Region.
- 4.11 To continue to provide greater flexibility in meeting the needs of low-income residents and to ensure that the Region meets its legislated service level standard of 4,446 RGI units/PHBs, the Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB) program will be expanded to permit the shifting of RGI units to Durham PHBs. The total number of Durham PHBs and RGI units will not exceed the total of the legislated SLS and the extra 35 PHBs approved outside of the legislated SLS.

5. Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

- 5.1 Like the Durham PHB, the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) offers timelier housing assistance to low-income households on the DASH wait list who might not otherwise be able to secure affordable housing.
- 5.2 Beginning July 1, 2020, the calculation of the COHB was aligned with the higher Durham PHB benefit by adjusting the average market rent to which the benefit was paid. This has increased affordability for current and new COHB recipients.

- 5.3 To date, 131 applicants from Durham have been deemed eligible for the COHB and removed from the DASH wait list. The Region has now fully committed its 2020-2021 planning allocation of \$1,135,127.
- 5.4 MMAH has indicated that uncommitted COHB funding will be reallocated from areas with low uptake to service managers who can deliver funding to households by the end of November 2020. The Region is well positioned to offer new COHB benefits to DASH applicants within this short time frame. Staff will be working with MMAH to secure the additional funding.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 6.1 This report aligns with the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
- a. To ensure a range of programs, services and supports are available and accessible to those in need, so that no individual is left behind.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Portable housing benefits are an alternative form of financial housing assistance to rent-g geared-to-income (RGI). They are flexible benefits that are not tied to a housing unit. In some circumstances, they can be used to meet the Region's legislated service level standard under the Housing Services Act, 2011.
- 7.2 The Durham Portable Housing Benefit (Durham PHB) and the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) relieve pressures on the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) wait list and provide a more timely, flexible and responsive approach to assisting low-income households in Durham.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou
Commissioner of Social Services

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer