



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	March 7, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Co-ordinated Access System for Social Housing (CES14052(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Tammy Morasse 905-546-2424 ext. 3727 Adam Sweedland 905-546-2424 ext. 7282 Gillian Hendry 905-546-2424 ext. 4818
SUBMITTED BY:	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community and Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That a Procurement Policy 11 be approved for a single source contract with Del Management Solutions Inc. (DMS) for the administration of the centralized waitlist for social housing applicants in the amount of \$358,280, effective to March 31, 2017, to be charged to Dept. ID and account 624200-57101;
- (b) That the City of Hamilton enter into an Agreement amending the terms of the current Agreement between the City of Hamilton and DMS for the continued operation of Access to Housing from March 31, 2016 to March 31, 2017; and,
- (c) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services be authorized and directed to execute the Amending Agreement referred to in recommendation (b), in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 24, 2015, City Council approved Report CES14052(a), regarding the Co-ordinated Access System for Social Housing. That direction approved a Procurement Policy 11 for a single source contract with Del Management Solutions Inc. (DMS) for the administration of the centralized waitlist for social housing applicants, effective to March 31, 2016.

Under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, the City, as Service Manager, is required to provide a service that manages the application and the wait list processes for social housing. Del Management Solutions (DMS) has been providing Hamilton's Access-to-Housing service (ATH) as a third-party delivery agent by agreement with the City since 2010.

ATH serves as a central point for the application and initial eligibility screening for the City's social housing units operated by Hamilton's 43 social housing providers. As part of the Council direction, on June 24, 2015, (Report CES14052(a)), Council approved the recommendation in principle to transfer the ATH social housing waitlist service from DMS as a third-party delivery agent to in-house service delivery, subject to receiving a detailed implementation plan with estimated costs. Housing Services Division staff was directed to report back to Emergency & Community Services Committee in October 2015 with the detailed implementation plan.

There has been a delay in gathering the information necessary to complete the implementation plan and therefore it is recommended that the contract with Del Management Solutions Inc. (DMS) be extended until March 31, 2017. The current agreement with DMS expires on March 31, 2016. An Agreement amending the terms to allow for the continued administration until March 31, 2017 is necessary to ensure that there is no disruption to the current level of service while a detailed plan is prepared to bring the service in-house.

It is necessary to obtain the approval of Council for the Policy 11 as a single source because the monetary value of the contract exceeds \$250,000 as per Policy 11, Section 4.11 of the City's Procurement Policy.

Alternatives for Consideration - Not applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

The estimated annual cost of \$358,280 is consistent with previous years and is included as part of the Housing Services Division 2016 operating budget submission.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with Report CES14052(b).

Legal:

Legal Services will prepare the Agreement with DMS to amend the terms to extend its services until March 31, 2017. An extension of this contract is necessary for the City to meet its obligations under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton, as Service Manager for social housing, is responsible for meeting provincial requirements under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* for managing the wait list process for social housing. Hamilton's social housing wait list service is called Access to Housing (ATH). Access to Housing establishes eligibility for the subsidized social housing units using criteria set out in the *Housing Services Act*, while various social housing providers are responsible for offering vacant unit to applicants.

Operation of a centralized system for selecting households for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) social housing has been a long-standing requirement under provincial legislation. With the Housing Services Act, service managers were provided with flexibility on how they manage the waiting list for social housing, including introducing new policies and systems to improve customer service and the applicants' ability to make informed housing choices. This change in legislation and the City of Hamilton's endorsement of its 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (Report CS11017(c)) led to a review of the ATH Service.

To ensure that the system for accessing social housing is responsive to the households in need of social housing, Housing Services Division staff undertook a review of the current waiting list process for social housing (Report CES14052). It was determined that while the ATH service meets the mandate of administering the waiting list according to legislated requirements; the service is not adequately equipped to meet the varying needs of the individuals and families on the waiting list. Recommended improvements include the delivery of an enhanced model with a case management component that offers a person-centred service to support individuals and families while they apply and wait for a social housing unit.

It was determined that bringing the direct administration of the social housing waiting list function into the City's structure will improve the wider social housing system. As Hamilton's affordable housing market is shrinking and the number of households and length of time on the social housing waitlist is increasing – it has become even more critical for applicants to make informed decisions about their housing and to not depend on social housing as their only housing remedy. A key change in the enhanced model is the introduction of a case management component to better support applicants and meet their needs not only related to housing but also regarding employment, income support and broader social supports. The enhanced service will not only guide applicants through the social housing application process but also provide information about other applicant's housing options, make referrals to City and community resources and offer support to help people obtain and maintain market housing.

The transition from third-party to in-house service delivery is a complex initiative which requires substantial due diligence. Housing Services Division staff have engaged the City's Real Estate Division, Corporate Facilities Management, Human Resources, Finance and Administration and CityHousing Hamilton staff to scope out the necessary steps and costs in order to develop a robust business case to support the transition of the ATH Service to Housing Services Division. The best location, the service delivery model, staffing and the financial impact must all be considered for an initiative of this scope.

An extension of the current agreement will allow the City to:

- Provide uninterrupted, predictable wait list services to social housing applicants and housing providers, and;

- Continue to develop a detailed implementation plan to transition the enhanced model for social housing wait list services from DMS to the City of Hamilton.

DMS has agreed to an extension of the agreement to provide the ATH service until March 31, 2017 to allow staff to conclude preparation of the detailed business case.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

It is necessary to obtain the approval of Council for extension of the Policy 11 as a single source as the monetary value of the contract exceeds \$250,000 as per Policy 11, Section 4.11 of the City's Procurement Policy.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Housing Services Division consulted with Procurement and Legal Services about Report CES14052(b). Corporate Facilities Management, Real Estate and CityHousing Hamilton have been included in ongoing consultation about this project.

DMS has also been consulted on a regular basis related to the ongoing delivery of the agreement terms. They support renewing the agreement.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

The current agreement with DMS expires on March 31, 2016. An Agreement amending the terms to allow for the continued administration until March 31, 2017 is necessary to ensure there is no disruption to the current levels of this mandated service.

On June 24, 2015, Council approved Report CES14052(a) in principle to bring the administration of the ATH social housing waitlist service to in-house, subject to receiving a detailed implementation plan with estimated costs. Housing Services Division staff was directed to report back to E&CS Committee in October 2015 with the detailed implementation plan.

Completion of the detailed implementation plan is taking longer than anticipated. One option is to co-locate the ATH with Housing Services Division which is currently located at First Place in the central downtown area at the intersections of King Street East and Wellington. It is an accessible location and office, on main bus-routes, across the street from the Ontario Works Main Office and close to other offices such as the Housing Help Centre and Legal Aid. CityHousing Hamilton is the current landlord.

Housing Services Division staff is working closely with staff from Corporate Facilities and Real Estate Divisions to conduct a detailed assessment and comparison of potential sites, including the proposed site of First Place, 350 King St E. Further information is needed related to:

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1. Space available at First Place, including space planning and cost perspective as conducted by Kathryn Vogel Architect;
2. Lease and other “Fit-Up” estimates for space options at First Place from CityHousing Hamilton, Real Estate and Corporate Facilities; and,
3. Space available throughout the City of Hamilton’s real estate portfolio, including lease estimates and the respective “Fit-Up” costs, as prepared by Real Estate and Corporate Facilities Management Divisions.

Based on the assessment of the comparison of the space-planning and “Fit-Up” assessments performed by Vogel architects and City staff, a financial review, and finally, the operational and service delivery criteria of space suitable for ATH needs, staff will be able to conclude and recommend a detailed implementation plan that best accommodates the Housing Services Division and ATH operational needs. There is currently no space or capacity to bring the ATH service in-house at this time.

If the Agreement is not renewed, the City will be responsible for assuming operation of the social housing Access to Housing effective April 1, 2016. There is not adequate time to ensure a smooth transition of this service from DMS to the City. Current staffing, spatial and technical considerations need to be addressed in order to ensure that consistent and predictable service is not jeopardized.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

- 2.1 Implement processes to improve services, leverage technology and validate cost effectiveness and efficiencies across the Corporation.
- 2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None