To: Committee of the Whole

Agenda Section: Human Services
Division: Social and Community Services
Department: Social Housing

Item Number: CCW - 2018-402
Meeting Date: August 14, 2018
Subject: 2017 Centralized Waitlist Report

Recommendation

That Item CCW 2018-402, dated August 14, 2018, regarding the 2017 Centralized Waitlist Report, be received.

Executive Summary

The 2017 Centralized Waitlist (CWL) Report provides statistics for the year ending December 31, 2017, regarding the total number of households on the rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance waitlist, as well as additional information on wait times according to the categories of seniors, adults with no dependants, and households with dependants.

Background/Analysis/Options

The day-to-day administration of the Centralized Waitlist (CWL) for RGI assistance is managed by Simcoe County Housing Corporation (SCHC). There are approximately 3,000 available RGI units across the Social Housing system in a variety of settings including Simcoe County Housing Corporation, Non-profit, Cooperative, and Indigenous housing providers, however, our waitlist management has referral access to 2,772 units as a certain type of provider called ‘former federal’ are not mandated to participate in the centralized waitlist system.

The total number of applicants on the CWL at the end of 2017 was 3,169, which is an overall increase of 6.4% over 2,979 households in 2016. The total number of applicants on the CWL breaks down into the following groupings: 38.1% seniors, 38.8% adults with no dependants, and 23.1% households with dependants. In 2017, there were 1,533 new applications processed; an increase over the 1,484 applications processed in 2016. In 2017, 1,097 applications were cancelled which is a decrease from 1,202 in 2016.
Applications are generally cancelled for a variety of reasons, with one determining reason being that most housing needs are immediate. When applicants find accommodation elsewhere, often they do not keep their application current, including contact information, thereby rendering us unable to reach the applicant to confirm their interest in maintaining their application on the centralized waitlist. The information contained within the Centralized Waitlist (CWL) must be as up-to-date as possible to reduce delays in filling vacancies. Housing Providers can experience rental revenue loss if the waitlist is not current.

With each application, applicants are encouraged to choose as many addresses as possible to improve their chances of receiving rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing. However, this is balanced with encouragement to select communities that they feel will allow them to easily access any supports or resources they may need or want for their daily living.

Special priority status is made for applicants who are victims of domestic violence, and during 2017 they comprised approximately 36.7% of the overall number of households that were placed into RGI housing. When considering the statistics for the chronological applicants on the CWL, average wait times for applicants who do not have special priority status have not significantly changed over the past three years. Seniors are still waiting just over five years, adults with no dependants are slightly longer at five years and ten months, and households with dependants wait just over three years.

Unit turnover in 2017 was 9.6%, representing a decrease of 1.2% from 2016. Often the reasons why a tenant moves out are not fully known, however, some typical reasons are decisions to move in with another person, a change in household composition, move to long-term-care, death, or for personal decisions that are not shared with us. In rare occasions, a unit turnover may occur due to issues with the tenancy itself.

The CWL fluctuates mainly due to the number of cancellations and/or the number of new applications. The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) has indicated that as affordable housing, rent supplements, housing allowances and other programs increase, including increased methods of accessing the various types of housing assistance, waitlists for RGI housing are becoming less of an indicator of affordable housing need. This is because not all people who need housing apply to the centralized lists due to a variety of reasons including long wait times and the availability of other programs. Modernization efforts by the Federal and Provincial governments are also changing the role of the CWL as an indicator of housing need.

As part of this broader perspective of access to housing, and in consideration of RGI social housing being one component of the larger affordable housing continuum, the creation of, and access to, affordable housing are key recommendations of Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy that was approved by County Council in 2014. The Strategy includes a target to increase the supply of affordable housing by 2,685 units over the next ten years. Significant progress is being made to increase the supply of affordable housing in our region through federal, provincial, county and municipal initiatives. The County, in partnership with municipalities and other sector stakeholders, is aggressively working towards reaching the goal of 2,685 units.

Social housing modernization will include consideration of the complex housing system which includes RGI Social Housing as well as Affordable Housing. RGI is based on 30% of a household’s gross monthly income and is used to set individual household rents in designated Social Housing locations that are identified under legislation. Affordable housing is generally defined as being at or below Average Market Rent (AMR) to suit a range of low-to-moderate income households, with
the AMR’s being set usually by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Province. Specific rental development programs for affordable housing typically use a maximum of 80% AMR to set maximum rents, however within this use of AMR which appears to target moderate income households, it is possible to address really low incomes with other mechanisms such as rent subsidies and housing allowances. In light of social housing modernization efforts by all levels of government, and as more information becomes available following the Provincial election, County staff will bring further reports forward regarding access to housing and how the CWL can be used in the future to place households into appropriate housing, as well as to track housing need.

Financial and Resource Implications

The County of Simcoe directly covers the costs associated with managing the Centralized Waitlist administration within the annual budget for the Simcoe County Housing Corporation (SCHC), as part of its delegated authority under the Housing Services Act 2011.

Relationship to Corporate Strategic Plan

Strengthen Social, Health and Educational Opportunities; Establish partnerships to identify opportunities for strengthening human services and education to support improved health and well-being for our residents.

Specifically, the Social and Community Services strategic initiative:

- Develop Homelessness Prevention and Poverty Reduction Strategies

Reference Documents

There are no reference documents associated with this Item.

Attachments

There are no attachments to this Item.

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Approvals

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Date
July 18, 2018  
July 19, 2018  
August 2, 2018  
August 8, 2018