

ADOPTED by Council at its meeting held April 16, 2012 [M199-2012]

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Windsor, Ontario, April 16, 2012

REPORT NO. 68 of the
**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
HEALTH & CULTURE STANDING COMMITTEE**
of its meeting held March 21, 2012


Present: Councillor Al Maghnieh, Chair
Councillor Alan Halberstadt
Councillor Percy Hatfield
Councillor Ed Sleiman

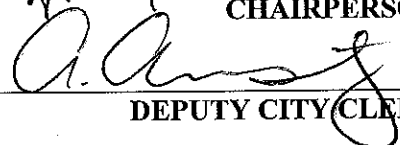
Regrets: Councillor Ron Jones

That the following recommendation of the Social Development, Health and Culture Standing Committee **BE APPROVED** as follows:

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by Councillor Hatfield,
THAT the presentation by the Acting Manager, Social Policy & Planning regarding "Approaches to Social Assistance Reform" **BE RECEIVED.**
Carried.

Clerk's Note: The PowerPoint presentation entitled "Approaches to Social Assistance Reform" is attached as background information.



CHAIRPERSON


DEPUTY CITY CLERK

NOTIFICATION:		
Name	Address	Email

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Approaches to Social Assistance Reform

Mary Ellen Bernard, Acting Manager of Social Policy and Planning
Diane Quinn, Acting Executive Director, Employment and Social Services
March 21, 2012



Background

- In November 2010, the Provincial Government established the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario, chaired by Ms. Frances Lankin and Dr. Munir Sheikh
- Focus of the Commission is to “carry out a comprehensive review and provide specific recommendations for improving the social assistance system”
- Social Assistance is defined as Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)



Drummond Report

- Drummond report focused on “themes that run through all sectors including ways to achieve efficiencies in administration and service delivery”
- Confirmed that maintaining 2 systems (OW & ODSP) is more expensive and reduces quality of service
- “Consolidating OW & ODSP into a single program and delivering at local level shows promise... Equal attention must also be given to better integration of Employment Ontario with social assistance”.



- The Commission distributed an ‘Issues and Ideas’ paper in June 2011, to which they received over 700 written submissions and met with more than 2000 people.
 - The Commissioners met with City of Windsor staff in June and a departmental response was submitted in September
- In February 2012, the Commission issued Discussion Paper #2: Approaches for Reform as the next stage in the consultation process.



City of Windsor's Response to the Social Assistance Commission

- We support the merger of OW and ODSP for delivery at the local level by the Municipality
 - Better use of financial and staffing resources, enhances customer service, improves coordination with community partnerships, allows for greater ability to respond to changes in local economy.
- We support the shift of responsibility for employment programs to the Municipality to stream-line services for the participant and employer
 - Windsor is one of 6 / 47 municipalities that provides OW and EO programs;
 - Job seekers are better served and simplifies staffing programs available to employers.



- We believe that employment programs must have a dual focus: employment placement and employment retention
 - Currently few resources are available to help participants after they leave OW for employment



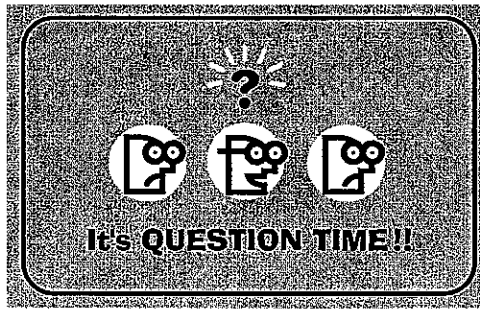
- We strongly emphasized that this major shift must be accompanied by block funding and that no additional costs can be passed onto the local tax base
- Block funding would allow Municipalities to respond to the needs of their job-seekers with local solutions
- We support less prescription and more flexibility to leave room for innovation



Next Steps

- Responses to Discussion Paper #2 are being collected by the Commission before the end of March
- The Commission's goal is to submit a final report to the Government with their recommendations by June 2012





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