



Social Services

High Level Core Service Overview

City of Stratford

*Costs are currently allocated based on caseloads*

***Ontario Works and ODSP***

The mandate of this division is to administer the Ontario Works Act in accordance with legislative guidelines set by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services. The City also administers Ontario Works on behalf of the County of Perth and St. Marys. The County and St. Marys contribute to the funding which is based on the caseloads within each of their respective areas. Perth County comprises approximately 21% of the caseloads, St. Marys has 4%; with the remaining 75% of caseloads in the City of Stratford.

The Ontario Works 2007 budgeted net levy for Stratford was \$2.45 million. A reduction of \$358,000 was budgeted for 2008 as a result of the Provincial government’s decision to phase-in the funding of the Ontario Disability Support Program. There will be additional savings until 2011, when the ODSP program funding is fully uploaded to the Province. In addition, the Provincial Government, on October 31, 2008, announced that it will upload all social assistance benefits by 2018 and pay the portion of Ontario Works benefits that are presently paid by municipalities.

The following is the Province’s phase-in plan.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>OW Benefits</b>	0%	3%	6%	14%	29%	43%	57%	71%	86%	100%

The administration of the Ontario Works program will continue to be cost shared on a 50:50 basis.

*Based on 2006 statistics, the City of Stratford's average caseloads per caseworker are above average*

Illustrated below are the results of a survey conducted by Stratford in 2006 showing the average caseload by an individual caseworker.

CMSM	Caseload	Caseworkers	Average
Bruce County	552	14.0	39.0
Lambton County	1,680	40.0	42.0
London	7,862	153.0	51.0
Oxford County	964	18.0	53.0
Grey County	791	12.0	66.0
Huron County	375	5.5	68.0
St. Thomas	828	12.0	69.0
Windsor	7,167	96.0	75.0
Chatham-Kent	2,311	24.0	96.0
Average			62.1
Stratford	460	6.0	77.0

Stratford had 77 cases per caseworker compared to the survey average of 62. This is a mandated program, whereby the City only has control of the administration costs that are reasonable when being compared to other municipalities and therefore, no further action is being recommended.

*The Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre budget for 2009 reflects a 24% reduction in the net levy compared to the 2008*

**Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre**

The Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre provides Day Care services for children ages 18 months to 5 years. Programs include: full day, half day with lunch, and a half day flexible day care program that is also available. The Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre also provides resource consultant services to special needs children, families and day nurseries throughout Perth County.

In 2007, the Centre had a budgeted deficit of approximately \$75,000 and in 2008 the budgeted deficit is approximately \$77,000. The projected deficit included in the 2009 proposed budget is approximately \$58,400 which is a decrease of \$18,600 (24%) over 2008. These deficits are funded through the tax levy. This is a discretionary service, however, and it serves a recognized need in the community as evidenced by the fact that the waiting list includes approximately 140 children. Anne Hathaway also provides consultant services to the community.

The following is a fee comparison of child care with nearby day care centres.

<b>Fee Comparison</b>		
	<b>2 Year Old per Week</b>	<b>3 Year Old per Week</b>
YMCA	\$ 175.00	\$ 145.00
Anne Hathaway	\$ 176.85	\$ 154.00
St. Marys	\$ 168.75	\$ 161.25

As illustrated above, user fees for the Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre are comparable to the nearby day care centres.

**Recommendation**

***That the Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre continue to investigate ways of raising revenues or reducing expenditures to make it fully self-sustaining.***

***Funding social housing from the assessment base will continue to pose problems for municipalities across Ontario***

### ***Housing***

On December 12, 2000, Bill 128 (Ontario), The *Social Housing Reform Act*, received Royal Assent. The *Social Housing Reform Act* (SHRA) requires municipalities to assume responsibility for the funding and administration of social housing programs that were previously funded and administered by the Province of Ontario and/or Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Since social housing devolution was first announced, municipalities have expressed concerns about the problems associated with paying for social housing programs on the property tax base.

Administration of the social housing programs involves the management of the transfer payments system, ensuring that housing providers adhere to program requirements, establishing operating policies and providing advice and guidance to housing providers. Housing providers will continue to own and manage their properties.

- administrative costs for oversight of the programs; and
- program costs to be allocated as transfer payments to housing providers

Service manager's social housing costs fall into two categories:

The City is responsible for the provision of geared-to-income housing for lower income families and senior citizens, handicapped persons and single individuals in the City of Stratford, St. Marys and the County of Perth.

The Housing division has 633 of their own public housing units, as well as 125 subsidized units in privately owned buildings under the rent supplement program. The City is also responsible for the administration of the *Social Housing Reform Act* which involves the administration and monitoring of the allocated dollars to the non-profit and cooperative housing providers.

The following table provides a comparison of housing costs on a net per capita basis with various comparator municipalities.

<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>Net Expenditures per Capita</b>
Brantford	\$ 82
Brockville	\$ 30
Cornwall	\$ 106
North Bay	\$ 77
St. Thomas	\$ 87
Average	\$ 76
<b>Stratford</b>	<b>\$ 56</b>

Social housing programs face serious cost risks associated with:

- mortgages – as interest rates increase so do housing provider’s costs;
- capital repairs – potential repair costs are greater than the funds available in the present social housing funding envelope;
- operating costs – costs for utilities or other building components are increasing at a faster rate than rent revenues;
- geared-to-income subsidies – if incomes of subsidy recipients decline, RGI subsidy requirements increase; and
- even though mortgages will have been paid in full, rent revenues may not be sufficient to cover costs such as capital repairs or geared-to-income subsidies on an ongoing basis

Stratford, like most municipalities, is faced with an aging housing stock, coupled with insufficient funding to properly maintain the portfolio. The current situation is extremely challenging and makes managing the large portfolio difficult. In order to develop a strategic approach to this challenge and to prioritize maintenance and repairs, a study was undertaken of the overall portfolio condition.

The study results provided the following information:

- Condition evaluation of housing portfolio
- An analysis of their capital investment required to bring the portfolio up to reasonable standards and fiscal projections

The City provides the administration of Public Housing to St. Marys and Perth County. Costs are distributed to St. Marys and Perth County on the basis of equalized assessment. The problem with this method of distributing costs is that different tax ratios are used to calculate the weighted assessment. For example, Stratford's industrial tax ratio is 3.22, whereas the County's ratio is 1.96. Therefore, Stratford is paying a disproportionately higher share of housing costs under the existing methodology. It is recommended that costs be distributed on the basis of unweighted assessment.

#### ***Recommendations***

***That, based on the results of the condition assessment of the housing stock, a long-term financing plan be developed within the constraints of available resources.***

***That the distribution of housing costs be updated using common tax ratios or unweighted assessment for Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County.***