

**Priorities Committee Meeting\_Mar30\_2021**

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**STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE****Community Safety and Wellbeing 2021****Report Purpose**

To provide Priorities Committee with a report on options and possible next steps for developing a Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy for Strathcona County.

**Our Prioritized Strategic Goals**

Goal 8 - Foster an environment for safe communities

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 5 - Foster collaboration through regional, community and governmental partnerships

**Report**Background

- Mental health challenges, substance abuse, violence and many forms of criminal behaviour stem from root causes of adverse social, economic, community and family conditions.
  - Community health and social support systems are challenged to meet higher demands for increasingly complex needs.
  - Police have become the default responders to mental health and other non-criminal calls for service, resulting in the criminalization of health and social problems.
  - Responding to health and social issues as criminal matters aggravates risk factors and can compromise community safety and wellbeing.
  - While Strathcona County is a safe place to live, social isolation, employment interruptions and financial pressures associated with the pandemic are anticipated to increase risk factors for mental health challenges, substance abuse, violence and criminal behaviour.

Community Safety and Wellbeing

- Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) is a way for municipalities to address the root causes of crime while simultaneously promoting wellness.
  - Ontario legislated changes to the Police Services Act (2019), mandating all municipalities to develop CSWB plans.
  - Several communities in Alberta are also developing and implementing CSWB plans to respond to non-criminal situations more effectively, reduce dependence on crises driven responses and improve the continuum of supports and services.
  - It is a public health approach to reduce risk, vulnerability and harm by enhancing protective factors.
  - CSWB requires community wide collaboration to collect and interpret data in order to prioritize risks and at-risk populations.
  - A deeper examination of systems and issues leads to identifying shifts, which can be implemented to enhance safety and wellbeing.
  - Developing a CSWB strategy will also strengthen capacity to respond to emergent vulnerabilities associated with the pandemic.

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### Social Framework

- The Social Framework has created conditions to support a CSWB Plan.
  - Social Framework principles are the same principles required to guide CSWB planning: a commitment to collaboration, systems thinking, focusing on root causes, community wide outcomes and collective ownership.
  - The Social Framework Leadership Table (SFLT) is comprised of public, non-profit and private sector leaders who have been building strong relationships by applying these principles in working and learning together on shared challenges and arising opportunities.

### Next Steps

- To begin taking steps towards building a Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan.
- Social Framework Leadership Table will support CSWB planning in an advisory role.
- A sub group of SFLT members and the Strathcona County Community Services Division will form a CSWB planning Steering Committee.
- The Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) will mentor the Steering Committee and SFLT by providing strategic advice, expertise and resources to support CSWB Planning.

### **Council and Committee History**

- November 24, 2020 Council motioned *That by the end of the first Quarter of 2021, Administration will provide a report on options and possible next steps for developing a Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy for Strathcona County.*
- November 9, 2020 Family and Community Services (FCS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) presented the concept of Community Safety and Wellbeing to the COVID 19 Citizen and Community Supports Task Force.

### **Other Impacts**

**Policy:** N/A

**Legislative/Legal:** N/A

**Interdepartmental:** N/A

**Master Plan/Framework:** Social Framework

### **Enclosure(s)**

- 1 Community Safety and Wellbeing Presentation