

## Report SSR-SS-09-16

**To:** Chair Burley and Members of the Social Services Committee  
**From:** Barb Fedy, Director of Social Services  
**Meeting Date:** October 12, 2016  
**Subject:** Children's Services Program Review  
**Status:** **Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution SSC76-16; Endorsed by County Council November 1, 2016 per Resolution CC137-16;**

### Recommendation

1. That **SSR-SS-09-16** and the report of consultant Kathryn O'Hagan-Todd, entitled *Report to County of Grey, Children's Services Program Review*, be received and serve as the basis for strengthening the operations of the Social Services Department, specifically but not limited to the Children's Services Program; and
2. That the Director and the Social Services Management Team prepare an action plan for implementing the recommendations of the Report, to be considered by the Social Services Committee as part of the annual departmental work plan deliberations.

### Background

Through RFP-SS-01-16 consultant Kathryn O'Hagan Todd was contracted by the County to undertake an operational review of Grey County's Children's Services Program. The purpose of a program review is to assess the existing processes, practices, staffing, technology, and organization of a department to identify opportunities for improvement that will optimize service delivery while making the best use of resources. It is good business practice to undertake program reviews from time to time to ensure that departments remain relevant in light of changing circumstances and service demands.

Since 2011 County Council has included funding annually through budget processes to undertake such reviews. Other recent reviews of County Services include the following departmental programs: Information Technology, Transportation Services and Human Resources Departments as well as Grey County Housing. Resulting departmental improvement plans have or are being implemented. With ever-increasing community expectations, workload pressures, staffing challenges, and provincial legislation and

program changes, it was timely to undertake a review of the Children's Services Program within the framework of the overall Social Services Department.

## Benefits

The benefits to the organization for undertaking such a review include:

1. Establishing an organizational framework that will assist in correcting any identified challenges in the organization.
2. Identifying opportunities to organize work, align resources and reporting relationships more effectively and efficiently.
3. Demonstrating to staff, management and other stakeholders that any identified concerns are taken seriously and that appropriate, constructive and inclusive action is taken to make improvements.
4. Validating value of services and programs to the public.

## Risk

Reviews of this nature, no matter how positive the results may be, are often unsettling for affected employees. It can be rather unnerving to have a third party questioning and assessing every aspect of a department's operations. Ensuring open, clear and timely communications is the key to managing this risk.

## Terms of Reference

During the review the following terms of reference were utilized to form the scope and basis of a Request for Proposals document that was issued in accordance with the County's procurement policies:

1. The study will focus on the Children's Services division of Grey County Social Services with reference to the overall operations of the Social Services Department which includes managing Ontario Early Years Centre program(s).
2. Fully engage and interview all staff related to Children's Services and support staff, in person and by other modes as needed.
3. Engage clients, service providers and Bruce County Children's Services in this review for feedback.
4. Provide a comparative chart of four or more similar sized municipalities for caseloads, work distribution, number of appointments per day, number of FTE's, licensed spaces and other appropriate comparative measures.
5. Recommend operational efficiencies based on best practice of other municipalities.
6. Provide analysis on the implication of implementing electronic tools.
7. Report on a full analysis of review of current job descriptions against demands and changes to service levels and new regulations.

8. Analyze and make recommendations on the financial, monitoring and accountability processes and other business supports, in light of the overall operations of the County of Grey Social Services Department.
9. Analyze current policies and procedures, and create updated policies and procedures that meet Grey County corporate expectations.
10. Explore opportunities for service integration with engagement of Ontario Works Division of Grey County Social Services and Grey County Housing.
11. Review current use of existing technology in day-to-day business operations.
12. Prepare and present the completed report including the summary statement to the management, through an in-person meeting.

Attached is the final report of the consultant and next steps include forming an implementation committee, including staff and management, to prioritize the recommendations. Updates will be provided to Committee on a regular as milestones are achieved.

## Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology Considerations

Funds to complete the program review of the Children's Services Program within the Social Service Department by a third party were budgeted for a total of up to \$20,000. The final expenditure is not anticipated to exceed this total.

Given the recommendations contain staffing impacts for two additional full time equivalent staff to the Children's Services staff team, the impacts to the 2017 Budget are as follows:

- The estimated gross cost of the Child Care Supervisor is \$96,239 of which \$70,735 is funded by Mitigation Reserve funding. The remaining \$25,504 is funded by net levy.
- The Ministry of Education directed Data Analysis Coordinator position required in 2017 is estimated at a gross cost of \$74,981 with the Ministry providing \$73,153 in funding and the remaining \$1,828 being funded by net levy.

## Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

Undertaking departmental reviews addresses the following strategic goal and priority objectives of the County Corporation as set out in the Corporate Strategic Plan:

**Goal Six – Achieving Excellence in Governance and Service:** *To foster a culture and organizational structure that facilitates exceptional public service delivery.*

**6.2** Continue to explore ways to improve communications and collaboration within and between County departments and service areas.

**6.5** Explore new or enhanced sources of revenue to offset service and program costs.

**6.7** Ensure that County services and programs are inclusive, accessible, and reflective of the diversity of the population.

**6.9** Develop benchmarks and performance indicators to measure and track efficiency and effectiveness in priority service areas.

## Attachments

[Final Report - Children's Services Program Review](#)

Respectfully submitted by,

Barb Fedy, Director of Social Services