



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No. 14.3.1
Halifax Regional Council
January 30, 2018

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Deputy Mayor Wayne Mason, Chair, Community Planning & Economic
Development Standing Committee

DATE: January 19, 2018

SUBJECT: Request for Staff Report - Delivery of Housing Services and Programs within
HRM

ORIGIN

January 18, 2018 meeting of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, Item No. 13.1.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order 1, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, Schedule 3, Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference, section 6 (a):

Other Duties and Responsibilities

6. The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee shall have an active interest in the Agencies and Initiatives that support Community and Economic development throughout the municipality by:

(a) promoting and encouraging the development of programs, policies in initiatives in the municipality that support Community and Economic development throughout the municipality.

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report to assess options for requesting the transfer of the responsibility to operate and deliver housing programs and services within the boundaries of Halifax on behalf of the Province, including but not limited to the following considerations:

1. Transferring of the responsibilities of Housing Nova Scotia in the Halifax region, including Metro Regional Housing Authority (MRHA), Preston Area Housing Fund and other Not-for-Profits to the Municipality;

Recommendations continued on page 2.

2. Fund this transfer through property tax, by redirecting property tax points from the mandatory education and social housing funding collected by the municipality for the province, to ensure the core housing program operations would be funded by property tax revenue, rather than provincial grants;
3. Develop an approach for provincial participation and cost sharing in Federal housing and regionally significant housing programs with equitable distribution of funds based on population;
4. Discuss the housing allowance paid to clients living in MRHA becoming the same as the program provided to other private and not for profit land lords.
5. Make recommendations regarding management structure as either an arms length agency, a department of the Municipality, or combination of options.

BACKGROUND

A motion requesting a staff report on the delivery of housing services and programs within HRM was before the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee for consideration at its meeting held on January 18, 2018.

For further information, please refer to the attached Councillor Request for Consideration form dated January 18, 2018.

DISCUSSION

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee discussed this matter at its meeting held on January 18, 2018 and forwarded the recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The requested staff report, if approved by Halifax Regional Council, will address financial implications.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no risks associated with this report. The requested staff report, if approved by Halifax Regional Council, will address risk considerations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee meetings are open to public attendance, a live webcast is provided of the meeting, and members of the public are invited to address the Committee for up to five minutes at the end of each meeting during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee did not discuss alternative recommendations.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Councillor Request for Consideration form dated January 18, 2018.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant, 902.490.6521

Attachment 1

Request for Consideration		
<p>x Agenda Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least 5 working days prior to the meeting)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Added Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least one day prior to meeting)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor</p>
<p>Council or Committee: CPED</p>		<p>Date of Meeting: Jan 18, 2018</p>
<p>Subject: Staff report regarding potential</p>		
<p>Motion for Council to Consider: CPED recommend Halifax Regional Council request a staff report to assess options for requesting the transfer of the responsibility to operate and deliver housing programs and services within the boundaries of Halifax on behalf of the Province, including but not limited to the following considerations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transferring of the responsibilities of Housing Nova Scotia in the Halifax region, including Metro Regional Housing Authority (MRHA) to the municipality; 2. Fund this transfer through property tax, by redirecting property tax points from the mandatory education funding collected by the municipality for the province, to ensure the core housing program operations would be funded by property tax revenue, rather than provincial grants; 3. Require provincial participation and cost sharing in Federal housing and regionally significant housing programs with equitable per-capita distribution of funds based on population; 4. Require the housing allowance paid to clients living in MRHA is the same as the program provides to other private and not for profit land lords. 5. Make recommendations regarding management structure as either an arms length agency, a department of the municipality, or combination of options. 		
<p>Reason: The Halifax Housing Needs Assessment (2016) found approximately 1 in 4 Halifax households have a housing affordability issue.</p> <p>Since 1997 housing has been a provincial responsibility with minimal municipal involvement in delivery. At that time Halifax became one of the few if not the only major city in Canada without a housing department. Housing needs are met in other cities by closely coordinating the work of planning departments with affordable housing programs. The current structure across two orders of government creates some challenges in Halifax. Additionally, some issues are unique in Halifax, such as extreme weather response and shelter needs which may be best delivered through carefully tailored programs addressing urban housing and poverty needs.</p> <p>A significant concern is to ensure a transfer of responsibility & authority with funding, rather than download the cost to the municipality. A way to ensure funding is transferred and controlled by the municipality would be to transfer "tax points" currently collected by the municipality for mandatory education and use those points to make housing self funding from property tax.</p>		
<p>Outcome Sought: Examination of opportunities and risks of resuming responsibility for housing delivery in HRM</p>		
<p><i>Councillor Waye Mason</i></p>		<p><i>District 7</i></p>