

Submitted by: Karen Martin, Director of Corporate and Protective Services

Report No: 2024-094

Council Meeting Date: Regular Council - 18 Sep 2024

Subject: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Charter

File: DEI

RECOMMENDATION:

For Council's Information.

BACKGROUND & COMMENTS:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with follow up and background information regarding the development of the Safe and Well Oxford Community Safety and Well-being Plan and the proposed Inclusion Charter developed by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Coalition (DEI Action Coalition). On June 19, 2024, Council was presented the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Charter by Sarah Hamulecki and Warden Ryan, Oxford County - Safe and Well Oxford. Council also passed the following resolution on June 19:

THAT the delegation regarding Safe and Well Oxford Update and proposed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Charter be endorsed and further that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Charter be referred for a staff report.

To provide background, legislative amendments to the Police Services Act, 1990 came into effect on January 1, 2019. These amendments required every municipality to prepare and adopt a community safety and well-being plan. The legislation required that municipalities work in partnership with police services and other sectors including health/mental health, education, community/social services and children/youth services throughout their planning process. Adoption of the Community Safety and Well-being Plan was required by July 1, 2021 (extended due to the Covid-19 pandemic).

The requirement to prepare and adopt a Community Safety and Well-being Plan applies to lower-tier municipalities in the County of Oxford and in counties, and regional municipalities (other than the County of Oxford) throughout the Province. In June, 2019 Oxford County CAOs, Clerks and Treasurers met and discussed the requirements of the legislation. There was consensus that the lower-tier municipalities within the County wished to work together to develop a joint plan. Terms of Reference were prepared and approved for the establishment of a Coordinating Committee to be made up of the Clerks from each of the participating municipalities, and an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee's role was to inform and guide the information gathering process, community consultation and plan/recommendation development stages of this project. Each participating municipality within the County allocated \$10,000 towards the development of the Plan to hire a consultant to work with the Advisory Committee to make recommendations, organize the

information gathered and develop the plan for the lower-tier municipalities within Oxford. This was approved by all area municipal Councils by resolution in the Fall of 2019.

In January, 2020, Anne Becker, CEO, Climb Consulting Inc., in partnership with Lindsay Sage, Sagecomm, were retained by the Coordinating Committee to begin working on the development of the Community Safety and Well-being Plan. The ultimate goal of Community Safety and Well-being Plan (the Plan) was to achieve sustainable communities where everyone feels safe, has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate, and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

Throughout the planning and consultation phase and to support the development of the Plan, the Advisory Committee membership was made up as follows:

- Lynn Wardell, Executive Director, CMHA Oxford
- Randy Peltz, Executive Director, Oxford County Community Health Centre
- Tina Diamond, Executive Director, CAS Oxford
- Daryl Longworth, Chief of Police, Woodstock Police Service
- Tony Hymers, Detachment Commander, OPP
- Balwant Rai, Woodstock Police Services Board (formerly, Mary Anne Silverthorn)
- Lisa Lanthier, Manager of Human Services, Oxford County
- Dennis Wright, Thames Valley District School Board (formerly, Karen Edgar)
- Kelly Baker, Executive Director, Wellkin (formerly, Mamta Chail)
- Samantha Fox, Southwestern Public Health (formerly, Erica Arnett)
- Kelly Holbrough, London District Catholic School Board (March, 2021)
- Dennis Guy, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Oxford County (March, 2021)

As outlined in the Plan, community engagement activities were undertaken, in partnership with the Advisory Committee, to identify community priority risks. This process included the completion of an environmental scan, focus groups including over 150 participants, an online community survey with over 1,300 participants, youth-focused community survey and one-on-one interviews with local subject matter experts – community engagement participants represented the following sectors in addition to members of the public:

- Policing
- Emergency Response
- School boards
- Hospitals
- Community Health / Health Teams
- Addictions / support agencies
- Mental health agencies and supports
- Children's Aid Society
- Organizations serving children and families

- United Way
- Housing and homelessness groups
- Justice Services
- Social Planning
- Business community
- CAO's and Mayors from the municipalities and Oxford County

The approved Plan references feedback received from the community through the public consultation process detailed above. As a result of this process and environmental scan, the Advisory Committee identified four priority risks to be the focus of the plan for Oxford County:

Mental Health

Affordable Housing

Substance Misuse and Addictions

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Safe and Well Oxford Community Safety and Well-being Plan was presented to all Oxford area municipal Councils in May and June of 2021. The plan received unanimous support and was approved by resolution of Zorra Council on June 2, 2021.

On July 14, 2021, following approval of the Safe and Well Oxford Community Safety and Well-being Plan by all area municipalities, Township of South-West Oxford Clerk, Julie Middleton, made a delegation to the County of Oxford Council to request the County's support and leadership for the implementation of the Plan on behalf of area municipalities. A copy of this request and the approved County Council resolution is attached to this report as Appendix A for information.

The Plan provides that a Safe & Well Oxford Steering Committee be established to oversee and drive the implementation of the plan across Oxford County. The Plan also provides that Action Coalitions be established for each priority risk theme and that the Action Coalitions be made up of existing or new committees/tables and inter/multi-disciplinary and accountable stakeholders, including a diverse range of residents with lived experiences, and youth. The Action Coalitions will spearhead and coordinate unified solution development, planning, decision-making and implementation processes for each identified risk priority. By working in tandem across municipalities, sectors and agencies, each Action Coalition will tackle and transform the outcomes for the risk they are addressing. The Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee was established by County Council and held their first meeting in May, 2023. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Coalition was established and held their first meeting in September, 2023. The establishment of the Committees was led by County of Oxford staff, Sarah Hamulecki and Ayesha Sajid, in consultation and partnership with Township of South-West Oxford Clerk Julie Middleton.

In July 2023, following a delegation from DASO (Domestic Abuse Services Oxford), Oxford County Council passed a resolution declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic. Following this, the Steering Committee recommended to County Council and all area municipalities, that "Gender Based

Violence” be added as a fifth priority risk area within the Plan – this request received support and Council approval from all Oxford area municipalities and the Plan has since been updated.

In relation to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, the following goals were established and approved within the Plan:

1. Establish an EDI Action Coalition to develop an evidence-informed, thoughtful and sensitive Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, including an Inclusion Charter, for all communities across Oxford County. An Action Coalition will bring together area municipalities, the County, police services, health care organizations and providers, school boards, businesses, social service providers, and agencies with a shared commitment to ensuring our communities are welcoming and inclusive for all. Most importantly the Action Coalition will engage community members representing the many differences across the County to ensure “no one is left behind”.

2. Develop, support, and promote community awareness and education campaigns to improve public understanding of racial and social justice and the individual and community impacts of stigma and discrimination.

The Inclusion Charter (the Charter), being a goal within the Plan, was then presented to Council on June 19, 2024, and staff began implementing the Charter, where applicable. Township Staff have met with Oxford County staff to discuss next steps regarding the implementation of the Charter. It is important to note that the Charter states: we encourage partner organizations to adopt or adapt to this Inclusion Charter and implement its values and principles according to their current needs and resources. The attached document outlines all the action items in the Charter and specifies next steps for Zorra specifically regarding accomplishing each item. The Charter provides guiding principles for municipalities in fostering inclusive communities and workplaces. The Township of Zorra is committed to implementing as many items that are applicable and attainable.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Various items will appear in the 2025 budget to assist with supporting the next steps of the inclusion charter.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal:

We are a vibrant community that values our uniqueness, creativity and takes pride in calling Zorra home.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Appendix A - Safe and Well Oxford Communities -County Council
DEI Inclusion Charter Calls to Action 1](#)

Approved By:

Diane Larder, Director of Finance

Don MacLeod, Chief Administrative Officer

Karen Martin, Director of Corporate and Protective Services

Status:

Approved - 11 Sep 2024

Approved - 12 Sep 2024

Pending



Safe & Well Oxford aims to create communities where individuals and families feel safe, supported and included and where they can access what they need, when they need it to live fully.

July 7, 2021

In September 2020 municipalities across Oxford County, including the Townships of Blandford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, Norwich, Zorra and Southwest Oxford, together with the Town of Ingersoll, the Town of Tillsonburg, and the City of Woodstock, launched a planning process to develop a shared Community Safety and Well-being Plan, Safe & Well Oxford, in response to the requirements the Police Services Act. The planning process was spearheaded by a multi-sectoral Advisory Committee made up of representatives from across Oxford municipalities, including police and emergency services, health care, social services, school boards and community service providers.

Over the last year, more than 1,400 members and front-line service providers from across Oxford municipalities have shared their ideas about how to address priority risks and improve the safety and well-being of their communities. Safe & Well Oxford truly reflects the multitude of diverse voices the committee heard from and sets out the plan for how government, service providers, residents and businesses can work together to address the root causes of the most complex social issues Oxford communities face. Although there are many areas that influence the safety and well-being of communities, the four priority risks that Safe & Well Oxford will address through a social development and prevention lens are:

- Mental Health
- Affordable Housing
- Substance Misuse
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Safe & Well Oxford establishes goals and objectives to address Oxford's priority risks. It asks all local municipalities, service providers, residents, businesses and more to step forward and work together to achieve our shared vision of community safety and well-being. Safe & Well Oxford has received very positive support and endorsement from all local Oxford municipal Councils. It is critical that implementation of this Plan be a shared responsibility across the entire County and include community members and local representatives to improve the overall well-being for our residents. On behalf of the CSWB Plan Coordinating Committee, below is a request for County Council's consideration for their leadership in implementing Safe and Well Oxford Communities: Community Safety and Well-being Plan.



Proposed Resolution:

Whereas legislative amendments to the Police Services Act, 1990 came into effect on January 1st, 2019, which require every municipality to prepare and adopt a Community Safety and Well-being Plan and that municipalities work in partnership with the police services and other sectors including health/mental health, education, community/social services and children/youth services throughout their planning process;

And Whereas the requirement to prepare and adopt a Community Safety and Well-being Plan applies to lower-tier municipalities in the County of Oxford and in counties, and regional municipalities throughout the Province (other than the County of Oxford);

And Whereas in October, 2019, local Councils within Oxford County supported a collaborative approach to the development of a Joint Community Safety and Well-being Plan within Oxford County;

And Whereas local municipalities established a Coordinating Committee made up of the Clerks from each of the lower-tier municipalities, and an Advisory Committee made up of representatives from across Oxford municipalities, including police and emergency services, health care, social services, school boards and community service providers. The Advisory Committee's role has been to inform and guide the information gathering process, community consultation and develop recommendations for the Plan to address community safety and well-being within Oxford.

And Whereas each participating municipality within the County allocated \$10,000 towards the development of the joint Community Safety and Well-being Plan and hired a consultant to work with the Advisory Committee and Coordinating Committee to consult with members of the public, local agencies and organizations to contribute to the development of the plan.

And Whereas the key priority risk themes within the County have been identified as follows:

- Mental Health;
- Affordable Housing;
- Substance Misuse;
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

And Whereas the purpose of Safe and Well Oxford Communities is to improve the safety and well-being of community members, by defining and addressing priority risks through proactive, integrated system-wide strategies, the responsibility of which falls within the jurisdiction of the County within Oxford;

And Whereas all Councils across Oxford County, including the Townships of Blandford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, Norwich, Zorra and Southwest Oxford, together with the



Town of Ingersoll, the Town of Tillsonburg, and the City of Woodstock have approved [Safe & Well Oxford Communities: Community Safety and Well-being Plan](#);

Now Therefore be it resolved that the Council of the County of Oxford support and endorse Safe and Well Oxford Communities: Community Safety and Well-being Plan (the Plan);

And Further That the County of Oxford establish a Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee as recommended in the Plan to oversee the implementation of the goals and objectives established and approved to address the following priority risk themes identified within the Plan:

- Mental Health;
- Affordable Housing;
- Substance Misuse;
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion



DEI Inclusion Charter Calls to Action – Township of Zorra Implementation Plan

Quick Wins (within the First Year)			
Goal	Role	Action(s)	Timeframe
Consider the use of a community flag pole to participate in flag-raising ceremonies, e.g.: a. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Day Flag b. Pride Flag c. Black History Month Flag d. Every Child Matters Flag.	Community Partners	Put a policy in place that speaks to which flags we fly and provides the opportunity for community groups to request other flags be flown.	Complete
Include DEI and vaccination statements in job descriptions with revisions to existing accommodation statements.	Employers	<p>The following statement will be included in all the Township's job postings:</p> <p>Zorra Township is committed to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the Corporation. Zorra Township promotes representational and employment equity to represent and serve our communities well. Zorra Township is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applications from all qualified individuals, including women, racialized persons, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and other equity-seeking groups. Studies have shown that women and minorities are less likely to apply for posted vacancies unless they meet every single qualification. Zorra Township is dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive workplace and encourages you to apply if you're excited about this role. You may be the right candidate even if your experience doesn't align perfectly with every qualification in the job description. Zorra Township is committed to fostering an accessible and equitable recruitment process for all applicants. The</p>	Complete / Ongoing

DEI Inclusion Charter Calls to Action – Township of Zorra Implementation Plan

		<p>Township will attempt to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure the applicant's full participation if requested. In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, resumes are only accepted in response to advertised vacancies and will be used for the purposes of determining eligibility for employment only. We appreciate all resumes, but only those selected for interviews will be contacted. If you require any document in an accessible format, contact us via email, in person, by telephone, or in writing using the contact information above.</p> <p>A statement regarding vaccinations has been prepared and will be included in job postings when required.</p>	
Include a DEI vision statement during orientation to demonstrate the organization's commitment to creating a work environment and culture where diversity, equity, and inclusion are reflected and valued.	Employers	<p>The following statement has been added to the Township website:</p> <p>Diversity, equity and inclusion is at the core of who we are, and we work diligently to promote a sense of belonging and inclusion for all Township employees. Zorra Township aims to create a work environment and culture where diversity, equity and inclusion are not only reflected and valued but embedded in policy and practice.</p>	Complete
Advertise employment opportunities through enhanced outreach and communication with organizations that are affiliated with historically underserved, underrepresented, and equity-impacted groups.	Employers	Safe and Well Oxford has a stakeholder list which includes contacts for some of the underrepresented groups/organizations and job postings will be shared with these contacts.	Ongoing

DEI Inclusion Charter Calls to Action – Township of Zorra Implementation Plan

Develop accessible customer service toolkits for customer service counters that include: a Ubi-duo Machine; personal amplifier; hearing loops for service counters; magnifiers; pen grips; a signature guide; an iPad with Google Translator App to mitigate language barriers.	Service Providers	<p>Google translate is available on the front desk counters.</p> <p>Some of the items listed have been included in the 2025 budget.</p>	In Progress
Update public-facing forms with preferred pronouns, salutations, and names to make them more inclusive.	Service Providers	Staff are working toward having all Township forms updated accordingly and will ensure any new forms are updated in the same manner.	Ongoing
Utilize anti-racism and intersectional policy development processes and frameworks, including Gender-Based Analysis Plus and Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Frameworks and Equity Toll, to review existing policies and develop new ones, e.g., Accommodation policies, Workplace Harassment Policy, Dress Code Policy, and Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy.	Policy Makers	<p>Staff will continue to apply these noted frameworks and utilize the below sources.</p> <p>Government of Canada has a course with examples (Introduction to GBA Plus - Women and Gender Equality Canada)</p> <p>City of London has explained the Equity Tool well through the following link Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Framework (london.ca)</p>	Ongoing

DEI Inclusion Charter Calls to Action – Township of Zorra Implementation Plan

One to Three Years			
Goal	Role	Action	Timeframe
Promote public participation in policy development through broad-based engagement platforms, e.g., Speak Up, Oxford!, and Ingersoll's FlashVote platform.	Policy Makers	<p>Follow the Township's 200-16 Public Engagement Policy.</p> <p>Utilize Zorra Now and social media to encourage and facilitate public participation when needed.</p> <p>Ensure all avenues of public engagement are accessible (accessible social media posts, surveys, public meetings, etc.).</p>	Ongoing
Develop internal DEI Action Plans that address systemic issues and eliminate barriers through a well-informed strategy to identify priorities and apply best practices.	Employers	Further research is required on this goal. Oxford County has an internal DEI Action Plan.	One to Three Years
Develop a DEI Human Resources Best Practices Guidebook to support managers and supervisors in ensuring that they utilize fair, equitable, and inclusive employment and workplace practices.	Employers	Further research is required on this goal. Region of Niagara has a DEI Human Resources Best Practices Guidebook.	One to Three Years

DEI Inclusion Charter Calls to Action – Township of Zorra Implementation Plan

<p>Provide educational and awareness opportunities for all staff and members of councils by considering trainings on the following topics: i. Addressing Racism in the Workplace ii. Why Diversity Matters iii. Embracing Gender and Sexual Diversity iv. Evolution of Human Rights in Canada v. Unconscious Bias vi. Workplace Sensitivity vii. Gender-Based Analysis Plus Training viii. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Anti-Racism Training (IDEAA) ix. Indigenous Cultural Mindfulness Training x. Indigenous Community Awareness Training.</p>	<p>Employers</p>	<p>Staff complete annual training videos in the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Racism, Racial Discrimination and Human Rights - Diversity Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace - AODA the Integrated Accessibility Standards - AODA Customer Service Standards <p>Provide coffee break training sessions for staff to participate in educational discussions and videos.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities by continuing to embed and strengthen accessibility within Customer Service, Information and Communication, Human Resources, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and evaluating the impact of services and policies.</p>	<p>Service Providers</p>	<p>Complete through the preparation and review of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and the corresponding annual requirements.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

DEI Inclusion Charter Calls to Action – Township of Zorra Implementation Plan

Continue consultation with the respective Accessible Advisory Committee (AAC) on the service delivery, programs, and initiatives.	Service Providers	Schedule an annual meeting with the Oxford AAC committee to review service delivery, programs and initiatives.	Ongoing
Incorporate provisions into procurement policies and procedures to encourage suppliers and service providers that engage on behalf of the County and Area Municipalities to train their staff in DEI, too.	Purchasers	This goal could be part of the evaluation criteria when reviewing vendor submissions. This goal ties in with other procurement goals within this plan and will all be reviewed and worked on together. This goal also ties in with similar criteria the Township has for vendor submissions regarding Accessibility. Further research is required.	
Create and provide a general code of conduct for contractors about expectations of behaviors and consider working this into the procurement process itself.	Purchasers	Research in this area is required. Caledon has a vendor code of conduct.	
Ensure equitable access to procurement opportunities in Oxford County through outreach and enhanced communication with organizations affiliated with historically underserved, under-represented, and equity-impacted groups.	Purchasers	Further research is required in this area. Staff would follow a similar process to the sharing of job postings.	Ongoing

DEI Inclusion Charter Calls to Action – Township of Zorra Implementation Plan

Support various cultural celebrations that reflect the diverse people and populations in Oxford County and demonstrate support through active communication channels, i.e., social media, newsletters, etc.	Community Partners	The Township will continue to promote community cultural celebrations through Zorra Now, social media, and Council meetings (Items of Community Interest). These celebrations will also be promoted on Zorra's Cultural Map (online) once that is completed (2025).	Ongoing
Dedicate resources to DEI initiatives, including people, time, and money.	Community Partners	Include DEI initiatives in the budgeting process.	Ongoing