

Jurisdictional Scan of Alberta Municipal Experiences in Social Service Demands

Analysis

Recommendation

That the November 16, 2020 Edmonton Police Commission report CR_8438 be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the July 6/8, 2020, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That the Edmonton Police Commission:

“Work with Administration and the Mayor to approach other mid-sized and large cities in Alberta to jointly analyze the ‘cracks in the system’ in Alberta cities that drive higher crime, disorder, and demand for service for reactive community services.”

Executive Summary

The Edmonton Police Commission recommends that the Community Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce be asked to further explore opportunities to improve service delivery within the human services ecosystem.

This report outlines the similarities and differences of the systemic issues as well as causes and responses to them for the City of Edmonton as well as Calgary, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The report also outlines input from key stakeholders within these regions and identifies the drivers of crime and social disorders. Attachment 1 provides further information on this topic and specific analysis on the perceived ‘cracks in the system’ at an operational level.

Report

Overview:

The Edmonton Police Commission recognizes that despite the efforts of many of the agencies and organizations currently working within the social services ecosystem, that ‘cracks in the system’ are still prevalent which impede the ability at an operational level to address the needs of vulnerable individuals.

Key stakeholders within Edmonton as well as Calgary, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo all identified the following drivers of crime and social disorders:

- Mental Health / Trauma
- Addiction
- Homelessness
- Discrimination
- Poverty and Social Inequity
 - Lack of affordable housing
 - Income disparity

There is an identified lack of coordination and collaboration between existing service providers and no established continuum of care for high-risk individuals. Most of the program providers focus on programs as opposed to a client-centered approach which would provide wrap-around services for individuals with better outcomes especially for those with complex needs (i.e. two or more co-occurring conditions).

The City has four Situational Tables (multiple organizations that come together to facilitate wrap-around services for individuals) which would suggest that there is duplication of services within the system. These multiple situation tables may be associated with the lack of progress and ability to meet the City's objectives outlined in their Community Wellness Strategic Plan and that the approach within the human service ecosystem is uncoordinated.

These various agencies also do not share a set of priorities or corresponding performance metrics to evaluate the collective outcomes for individuals that they serve and the inability to collect and share data between organizations is perceived as a barrier. There is a lack of specific services within many of these organizations that can address cultural needs for Indigenous peoples as well as New Canadians.

The research shows that the 'cracks in the system' are not due to a lack of resources within the identified regions but relate to the siloed organizations and their operations that result in a fractured and incomplete response to individuals in need. There is inadequate detox and addiction treatment services, mental health support, 24/7 shelter access and affordable housing availability. The resources that are currently available must be reallocated based on the principle of a system-wide continuum of care that can be agreed upon by all relevant service providers in Edmonton.

Conclusion

Multiple strategies exist between various not-for-profit organizations as well as various departments and institutions funded or operated by the City of Edmonton. Presently, there is no overarching strategic plan or applicable service model establishing shared priorities, performance metrics, and continuum of care.

Opportunities

- The City of Edmonton develops a strategic plan that establishes priorities to align funding to service providers which includes governance and accountability mechanisms with timelines and performance metrics. (Note: City could leverage the work already done on the Community Wellness Services for Vulnerable Persons With Complex Needs Plan as a starting point).
- Work with service providers to explore the legalities of FIPPA and PHIA and the ability to share data.
- Increase investment in mobile services that meet people where they are to ensure individuals receive the support they require.
- Reduce the number of Situation Tables in Edmonton to one to reduce duplication of efforts and coordinate under one overarching strategy.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is a Safe City			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Edmonton is a Safe City	7.2 Edmontonians' assessment: Safe city	68% positive survey responses	Increase
	7.3 Edmonton Crime Severity Index	84.0	Decrease

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – MNP Report: Environmental Scan and Other Jurisdictional Research Project