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## Council Report 2020-99

**Title:** Using Join-in Northumberland for Community Safety and Well Being Public Engagement

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**Reviewed by:** Lisa Horne, Director, Community and Social Services

**Approved by:** Jennifer Moore, CAO

**Strategic Plan:** Thriving and Inclusive Communities

**Council Date:** October 21, 2020

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### Recommendation

**“Whereas** the Council of the County of Northumberland reviewed Report No. 2020-99; and

**Whereas** it has been approved by the Council of the Corporation of the County of Northumberland that the Northumberland Community Safety and Wellbeing plan implementation will be administered and led from a County level;

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved That** the Council of the Corporation of the County of Northumberland receive the update and results from the first community questionnaire undertaken to inform the required advisory committee and actions to complete the initial Northumberland Community and Safety Plan and maintain compliance with the amendment to the Police Services Act 1990.”

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to update the Council of the Corporation of the County of Northumberland of the process and results of the first community questionnaire for the Community Safety and Well Being plan. This questionnaire was developed and implemented through Join-in Northumberland – utilizing the Bang the Table community engagement online platform. The results will inform the priority setting of the Leadership table as they prepare the mandated plan for the legislated requirements of the Police Services Act amendment which came into effect on January 2019 to develop the Community Safety and Wellbeing plan for the County of Northumberland.

## **Background**

The new legislative requirements related to Community Safety and Wellbeing planning came into force on January 1, 2019, as an amendment to the *Police Services Act, 1990* (PSA). The initial date for completion of the plan was January 2021 however, this has been amended considering the pandemic and re-direction of resources. The new date for completion of the initial plan has not yet been determined by the Attorney General (although we expect late 2021).

The Community Safety and Well Being plan requires developing and implementing evidence-based strategies and programs to address local priorities (i.e., risk factors, vulnerable groups, protective factors) related to crime and complex social issues on a sustainable basis. Following awareness raising and presentation sessions across the County, the online questionnaire was developed to further the reach to the community and to garner residents' experiences, concerns and ideas.

The questionnaire was live for a period of five weeks through July and August 2020 and was promoted highly through social media. The highest number of referrals to the site came from Facebook (140) with others coming from a range of search engines.

The online consultation tool that has been utilized is through a platform known as Bang The Table. Access to this platform is through the web and the access page and details can be found at 'Join-in Northumberland.ca'

Join In Northumberland is an easy-to-use consultation tool that expands the ways in which Northumberland County engages with the community, fosters dialogue, and gathers feedback on municipal priorities and projects.

This survey is an indicator of community experience and perception across a range of domains including safety, crime, health, recreation and other determinants of health. From the results we can identify that 86% of people who completed the survey indicate that they feel safe either all or most of the time while only 6% feel unsafe most or all the time. 21% of respondents feel that crime has increased significantly over the last 3 years as an example of the data.

Through this virtual public space, residents are invited to share thoughts, ideas and experiences to help shape a range of County-led programs, policies and services. Northumberland residents are also able to keep up to date as the summary of all results and

comments are posted on the Join-in Northumberland web pages – allowing the community to see the results of the questionnaire and other online options of their involvement.

The stated objective for this online questionnaire is to invite a diversity of voices. The County values input about what actions would have a meaningful impact in neighborhoods to sustain or improve safety and well-being and to move away from reactionary, incident-driven responses. Re-focusing efforts and investments towards the long-term benefits of social development, prevention, and in the short-term, mitigating acutely elevated risk is the goal of this plan.

It is important that the County ascertain summary and reporting process and standards for the data ascertained from Join-in Northumberland engagement and consultation activity. Guidelines for the retrieval and use of the data collected will enhance the quality and reliability of the use of the evidence. The level of breakdown, summary and analysis to Council is important to consider for consistency and quality.

## **Consultations**

Join in Northumberland had 625 visitors to the Community safety and Well Being pages including Council reports, Ministry information and planning documents and the community questionnaire.

341 of these visitors are recorded as ‘informed participants’ which means that they visited multiple pages, some printed some of the information or downloaded a document. Of these, 143 people completed the questionnaire.

The results of this questionnaire will form part of the data set that supports the Leadership table identifying the top priorities to enhance community safety and well-being in Northumberland.

The data and business manager who coordinates the current risk driven reporting (for the Situation Table) who is situated in the Port Hope Police Service is supporting the integration of this data along with other local and regional data including crime, health and social services data to coordinate and develop the Community Safety and Wellbeing plan priorities on behalf of all stakeholders across Northumberland and will offer support to undertake this analysis.

## **Legislative Authority/Risk Considerations**

The legislative requirement for Community Safety and Well Being plans has come from the Police Services Act 2018 amendment which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

The responsibility to prepare and adopt a CSWB plan applies to:

- ▶ Single-tier municipalities;
- ▶ Lower-tier municipalities in the County of Oxford and in counties; and
- ▶ Regional municipalities, other than the County of Oxford.

## **Discussion/Options**

The development and implementation of a Northumberland County Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan will further enhance communication and collaboration among sectors, agencies and organizations and encourage increased understanding of and focus on local risks and vulnerable groups.

The County-wide plan will help to build on the modernization and transformation of service delivery, including realignment of resources and responsibilities to better respond to priorities and needs in our community, thus reducing the financial impact of social determinants of health and crime.

## **Financial Impact**

It is anticipated that the financial impact to the Council of the Corporation of the County of Northumberland to lead the development of the plan within the legislated timeline incurs costs of staff time and minimal associated costs for consultation and administration. Future costs are not yet determined.

## **Member Municipality Impacts**

This opportunity to share the required activity including consultation, the development of the plan and the collection and analysis of the data and reporting that will be required will be most effective and efficient on a County-wide basis.

Member municipalities will have critical influence on the advisory committee and subsequent planning and implementation groups. All municipalities will be involved and have a role in the required community consultations and identifying their local priorities and risks. Other stakeholders across Northumberland are also required to be involved.

## **Conclusion/Outcomes**

The creation of a Northumberland plan will help address identified risks and opportunities through evidence-based programs and strategies, focusing on social development, prevention and risk intervention.

It is recommended that the Council of the Corporation of the County of Northumberland support the inclusion of the initial data and analysis from the Join-in Northumberland questionnaire and further development of engagement opportunities on this platform to gather input and reaction from local residents. This will be matched with other engagement opportunities including community meetings, focus groups and focused information sharing.

This activity will support the successful development and implementation of a County of Northumberland Community Safety and Wellbeing plan that is effective and able to represent and respond to the priorities in our community, and that County staff continue to lead and coordinate the planning, development and required reporting of the Community Safety and Well-being plan while ensuring compliance with provincial legislation.