

STANDING COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

HOMELESSNESS AND COMMUNITY IMPACT COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

Approval authority	Council	Adopted by	Resolution No. <u>116/26</u>
Effective date	<u>2026-09-02</u>	Review date	At least once each Council term
Administrative lead	Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk	Committee type	Standing advisory committee of Council

1. Purpose

The Homelessness and Community Impact Committee (the “Committee”) assists the Council of the Municipal District of St. Stephen (“Council”) in carrying out its governance, advocacy, convening, and oversight responsibilities concerning homelessness and its effects on individuals, neighbourhoods, businesses, public spaces, emergency services, and municipal operations.

The Committee’s long-term outcome is a coordinated housing and support system that makes emergency shelter at Lighthouse Lodge unnecessary. This outcome is to be pursued through prevention, diversion, housing, health and social supports, accountability, and measurable reductions in homelessness—not by displacing people, withdrawing emergency protection before suitable alternatives exist, or transferring impacts elsewhere in the community.

Governance role. The Committee reviews, listens, connects, monitors, and recommends. Council decides. Administration manages municipal operations and implements Council direction.

2. Authority and Accountability

The Committee is established by Council and reports to Council. It may make recommendations within this Terms of Reference but has no authority to:

- approve a policy, program, grant, contract, expenditure, partnership commitment, shelter decision, or other matter reserved to Council or another lawful authority;
- direct municipal employees, assign administrative work, supervise service delivery, or exercise the authority of the Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk or another municipal officer;
- direct or oversee Lighthouse Lodge, a provincial department, health authority, police service, housing provider, social-service provider, or community organization;
- make decisions concerning an individual’s eligibility, accommodation, treatment, enforcement, housing placement, or personal case;

- commit the Municipality or another organization to any expenditure, service, position, or obligation; or
- speak on behalf of Council or the Municipality unless expressly authorized by Council.

Council may refer additional homelessness or community-impact matters to the Committee by resolution. If this Terms of Reference conflicts with legislation or a municipal by-law, policy, or Council resolution, the higher authority prevails.

3. Mandate and Responsibilities

3.1. System Outcomes and Strategy

The Committee shall:

- recommend to Council a community homelessness action framework with clear outcomes, responsibilities, milestones, resource implications, and performance measures;
- promote a housing-focused, person-centred, trauma-informed, and evidence-informed response that recognizes the differing needs of people experiencing homelessness;
- support prevention and diversion measures intended to reduce entries into homelessness and repeated use of emergency shelter;
- identify gaps across the housing continuum, including supportive, transitional, affordable, and market housing, and recommend an appropriate municipal advocacy, convening, policy, or investment role;
- promote coordinated access, case conferencing, and data-informed service planning by the organizations lawfully responsible for those functions; and
- advise Council on the conditions, partnerships, capacity, and safeguards required before Lighthouse Lodge can cease operating as an emergency shelter because the need it serves has been eliminated or sustainably met through better alternatives.

3.2. Community Impacts and Municipal Interests

The Committee shall assess and advise Council on material community impacts associated with homelessness, including:

- health, dignity, safety, and well-being of people experiencing homelessness;
- use, accessibility, and stewardship of parks, streets, facilities, and other public spaces;
- impacts on neighbourhoods, residents, local businesses, tourism, and economic development;
- demands on fire, police, emergency medical, enforcement, public works, recreation, and other services;
- community perceptions of safety, social cohesion, stigma, and public understanding; and
- municipal costs, legal and operational risks, and opportunities for coordinated prevention.

The Committee shall seek balanced, practical responses that protect human dignity and lawful access to services while addressing significant effects on the broader community. It shall not recommend measures whose principal effect would be to move people or visible impacts from one location to another without addressing underlying needs.

3.3. Lighthouse Lodge Transition Objective

The Committee shall maintain a specific workstream concerning Lighthouse Lodge. Its objective is to recommend and monitor a responsible transition pathway under which the Lodge is no longer required as an emergency shelter. The pathway shall:

- establish a verified baseline for shelter use, unsheltered homelessness, inflow, exits to stable housing, returns to homelessness, and unmet support needs;
- identify the permanent housing, supportive housing, transitional arrangements, outreach, health, mental-health, substance-use, income, and other supports required to reduce and ultimately eliminate reliance on the Lodge;
- identify accountable lead organizations, funding requirements, intergovernmental decisions, dependencies, and risks;
- include measurable milestones and regular public reporting using aggregate, non-identifying information;

- include contingency planning so that shelter capacity is not withdrawn before a safe and sustainable alternative response is demonstrably available; and
- define evidence-based readiness criteria for any recommendation concerning the Lodge's future use.

The Committee does not operate, manage, fund, close, relocate, or repurpose Lighthouse Lodge. Any municipal decision concerning the facility or municipal resources remains subject to Council approval and any applicable legal, contractual, funding, or regulatory requirements.

3.4. Partnerships, Advocacy, and Accountability

The Committee may:

- convene housing, health, social-service, public-safety, Indigenous, business, faith, and community partners for strategic coordination;
- invite organizations and people with relevant lived or professional experience to provide information;
- recommend advocacy priorities to the Province of New Brunswick, the Government of Canada, regional bodies, and other funders;
- seek clear descriptions of partner roles, commitments, service gaps, outcomes, and barriers, while respecting each organization's legal authority; and
- recognize and build upon effective local initiatives and available community capacity.

Participation by a partner does not transfer its authority or accountability to the Committee, nor does Committee membership bind a participating organization unless that organization has separately authorized a commitment.

3.5. Engagement and Lived Experience

Subject to Council direction and coordination through administration, the Committee may recommend focused engagement with people who have experienced homelessness, affected residents and businesses, service providers, and the broader public. Engagement shall have a defined purpose, use accessible and respectful methods, protect personal information, compensate lived-experience participation where Council has approved a budget or policy for that purpose, and explain how input will be used.

The Committee is not a forum for resolving individual complaints, managing personal cases, receiving reports of urgent risk, or adjudicating disputes. Such matters shall be directed promptly to the appropriate municipal or external process.

3.6. Monitoring, Data, and Policy Review

The Committee shall review aggregate performance information, relevant municipal strategies and policies, partner reports, and Council referrals at intervals established in its work plan. Data collection and reporting shall use consistent definitions where practicable, identify limitations, avoid unnecessary personal information, and protect privacy and confidentiality.

The Committee may recommend policy amendments or new policy direction to Council. Administration remains responsible for preparing policy language, procedures, implementation plans, resource estimates, and operational advice unless Council directs otherwise.

3.7. Coordination with Other Committees

Where a matter falls or may fall within the mandate of more than one committee, the matter shall be brought to Council for confirmation of the lead committee, the scope of each committee's involvement, and the expected reporting process.

The lead committee shall coordinate its review through the Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk. Other affected committees may provide input within the scope assigned by Council. Administration should, where practical, coordinate information and reporting to avoid duplicate reviews, competing work plans, and repeated requests for substantially the same work or advice.

A joint information session may be held where it would support an efficient and informed review; however, each committee shall maintain its own quorum, minutes, and recommendations unless Council establishes a joint committee or another process by resolution.

Where affected committees reach different conclusions, their recommendations and supporting reasons shall be presented together or cross-referenced in the report to Council. Coordination does not authorize a committee to act outside its mandate, direct administration, commit municipal resources, or make a decision reserved to Council.

4. Membership

- The Committee shall consist of up to nine voting members appointed by Council.
- Council shall appoint three members of Council and may appoint up to six public members.
- Council should seek public members who collectively bring lived experience of homelessness; housing or shelter experience; health, mental-health, substance-use, or social-service knowledge; public-safety or emergency-response knowledge; business or neighbourhood perspectives; and rural and urban community knowledge.
- At least one public member should have lived experience of homelessness or housing insecurity. Participation shall be structured to protect dignity, privacy, safety, and meaningful involvement.
- Public members serve the Municipality as a whole and do not represent or bind an employer, agency, interest group, or population unless Council expressly establishes a designated representative position.
- The Mayor is not a member unless appointed by Council. The Mayor may attend in accordance with the Municipality's procedural by-law and applicable law.
- The Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk, relevant staff, Lighthouse Lodge representatives, service providers, community partners, and advisors may attend in a non-voting capacity when requested or required.

5. Appointment, Term, and Vacancies

- Council shall appoint the Chair from among the Council members and may appoint a Vice-Chair from among the voting members.
- Appointments shall be reviewed annually. A member continues until a successor is appointed unless the member resigns, ceases to be eligible, or is removed by Council.
- Council may fill a vacancy at any time. A vacancy does not invalidate Committee proceedings provided quorum is maintained.
- Public-member recruitment and appointment should be open, inclusive, skills- and experience-based, and consistent with municipal policy.
- Council may remove or replace any member at any time.

6. Meetings and Procedure

- The Committee shall meet monthly during its first year and at least quarterly thereafter, unless Council approves a different schedule. Additional meetings may be called when required by the Chair in coordination with the Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk.
- Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Local Governance Act, the Municipality's procedural by-law, this Terms of Reference, and any other applicable Council policy.
- Committee meetings shall be open to the public except where a closed meeting is authorized by law. Electronic participation is permitted only in accordance with applicable law and the procedural by-law.

6.1. Quorum and Vacancies

Quorum is a majority of the voting positions that are filled at the time of the meeting, but shall never be fewer than five voting members.

- A position is vacant only when no person currently holds the appointment.

- The temporary absence of an appointed member does not create a vacancy and does not reduce the quorum requirement.
- If fewer than five voting positions are filled, the Committee shall not transact business until Council fills sufficient vacancies or expressly amends this Terms of Reference.

Voting positions filled	Members required for quorum
9	5
8	5
7	5
6	5
5	5
Fewer than 5	No business may be transacted

6.2. Voting and Meeting Administration

- Each voting member present has one vote. A tie vote is defeated. Proxy voting is not permitted.
- The Chair shall approve agendas in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk or designate. Materials should normally be distributed sufficiently in advance to permit informed review.
- The Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk or designate shall ensure that notice, agendas, records of closed meetings, and minutes are prepared and retained as required. Minutes shall record recommendations and decisions without attributing debate unless required by law or the procedural by-law.

7. Conduct, Conflicts, Confidentiality, and Respectful Participation

- Members shall comply with applicable conflict-of-interest requirements, the Council Code of Conduct where applicable, and municipal confidentiality and information-management requirements.
- A member shall disclose any actual or potential conflict and refrain from participating when required by law or policy.
- Confidential information received through Committee service shall be protected and used only for authorized municipal purposes.
- Members shall approach homelessness and community impacts respectfully, use person-first language, avoid requesting or disclosing unnecessary personal information, and refrain from using Committee service for partisan, personal, organizational, or commercial advocacy.
- Members shall not publicly identify, speculate about, or discuss the circumstances of an individual who uses or may use shelter, housing, health, enforcement, or social services.

8. Access to Information and Advice

Through the Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk, the Committee may request information reasonably required to carry out its mandate. Requests that would require substantial unplanned work, external advice, engagement, data development, or expenditure shall be referred to Council or addressed through the Municipality's approved budget and work-planning processes.

The Committee may request the attendance of an appropriate municipal official, service provider, community organization, or subject-matter expert. Any engagement of independent professional advice requires prior Council authorization unless already authorized by policy and budget.

9. Reporting to Council

- Committee recommendations shall be presented to Council through approved minutes, a Committee report, or a staff report, as appropriate.
- Recommendations are not binding until adopted by Council.
- The Chair shall provide quarterly progress reports during the first year and an annual report thereafter, summarizing the Committee's work, attendance, aggregate performance indicators, partner coordination, community input, significant observations, outstanding matters, resource implications, and priorities for the next period.
- A significant or time-sensitive matter requiring Council attention shall be reported promptly.
- Public reporting shall distinguish verified data from estimates, explain material data limitations, and exclude information that could reasonably identify an individual.

10. Annual Work Plan and Initial Deliverables

The Committee shall recommend an annual work plan to Council for approval. The work plan shall identify proposed priorities, expected outcomes, performance measures, anticipated reports or engagement, coordination with other committees or partners, and resource implications. Council may revise the work plan or refer additional matters at any time.

Within six months of its inaugural meeting, the Committee should recommend to Council:

- a baseline community homelessness and shelter-use profile using aggregate, non-identifying information;
- a partner and responsibility map identifying mandates, current services, gaps, dependencies, and decision-makers;
- a draft community homelessness action framework, including the Lighthouse Lodge transition pathway and readiness criteria;
- recommended municipal advocacy priorities and any proposed municipal policy or budget actions; and
- a public reporting dashboard or concise performance-reporting format.

11. Administrative Support and Budget

The Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk shall identify appropriate administrative support and shall provide or designate meeting and records support. The Committee has no independent budget unless Council establishes one through the annual budget process.

12. Remuneration

Council members shall receive remuneration only as provided by the applicable remuneration by-law or policy. Public members shall serve without remuneration unless Council determines otherwise, but may be reimbursed for authorized expenses in accordance with municipal policy. Any compensation for lived-experience participation must be expressly authorized by Council or municipal policy.

13. Review of Terms of Reference

The Committee shall review this Terms of Reference after its first year and at least once during each Council term thereafter, and recommend any amendments to Council. The first-year review shall assess whether the Committee's mandate, membership, meeting frequency, performance measures, and relationship to other committees remain appropriate. Council may amend or revoke this Terms of Reference at any time.

14. Effective Date

This Terms of Reference comes into effect upon approval by Council.