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Date July 6, 2022 **Report No.** 2022-273

To Chair and Members
Social Services Committee

From Marlene Miranda, General Manager
Community Services & Social Development

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item []
Item For Consideration [X]

2.0 Topic **Municipal Affordable Housing Development Incentives Update [Financial Impact – None]**

3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report 2022-273 Municipal Affordable Housing Development Incentives Update BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT the City Clerk BE DIRECTED to forward a copy of the final resolution and staff report to the County of Brant.

4.0 Executive Summary

At the September 2021 City of Brantford Council meeting, staff were directed to report back to Council and Brant County Council by Fall 2021 with a summary of current City incentives for affordable rental and homeownership housing development which could be shared with potential developers, and to conduct further research regarding other incentive options that may be considered.

The goal of the 10 Year Housing Stability Plan, the Municipal Housing Master Plan and the Mayors' Housing Partnerships Task Force Affordable Housing Action Plan is for the development of 506 municipally-owned and operated affordable rental housing units and the development of 337 non-profit and private sector rental units between 2020 – 2030.

While the City of Brantford, as Service Manager for Housing, is incrementally developing more units, there has been minimal response from non-profit and private sector developers. The Service Manager and the City currently provide some municipal incentives towards the development of affordable housing, and the County of Brant has some incentives as well that are outlined in this report. This report provides a summary of the past and current municipal incentives for affordable housing development, as well as some additional incentives for consideration and further analysis.

5.0 Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of current municipal incentives available for affordable housing development, and to also provide other potential incentives for consideration.

6.0 Background

At the September 2021 City of Brantford Council meeting, the following resolution was approved regarding Development Incentives for Affordable Housing Developers:

WHEREAS the Council approved Housing Stability Plan 2014-2024 identifies targets for creating both 506 municipally-owned new affordable housing units and 337 new affordable housing units created by non-profit and private sectors partners by 2030 to address population growth while maintaining current service level standards; and

WHEREAS the Municipal Housing Master Plan approved in October 2019 set a target of 506 municipally owned and operated new affordable housing units to be developed between 2020-2030; and

WHEREAS the Housing Stability Plan 2014-2024 also has a goal of increasing and preserving affordable housing options which includes increasing affordable homeownership opportunities; and

WHEREAS significant outcomes of the Mayors' Housing Partnerships Task Force that took place during 2020 were to identify municipally owned sites that would be potentially suitable for affordable housing development, to identify

possible municipal financial resources, and to establish a mentorship program to encourage affordable housing development; and

WHEREAS the Mayors' Housing Partnerships Task Force Housing Action Plan approved in January 2021 is to encourage municipal, non-profit and private sector partners to develop more affordable rental and homeownership housing, and to find ways to accelerate this process; and

WHEREAS the City provides some incentives for the development of affordable rental and homeownership housing through the Housing and Homelessness Services Department such as development charge relief through the Municipal Housing Facilities By-law; and

WHEREAS the City also provides some incentives for all types of housing development through the Planning Department, and recently approved Downtown and Greyfields Community Improvement Plans include incentives for the development of affordable housing units;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

A. THAT Staff BE DIRECTED to report back to Council and Brant County Council by Fall 2021 with a summary of current City incentives for affordable rental and homeownership housing development which could be shared with potential developers; and

B. THAT Staff conduct further research regarding other incentive options that may be considered.

Creating more affordable housing to achieve housing affordability and stability for all are foundational components of realizing the strategic directions and actions of the 10-Year Housing Stability Plan (Provincially Legislated Five Year Review of the Brantford-Brant 10 Year Housing Stability Plan; Report 2019-575), and the objectives of the Municipal Housing Master Plan and the Mayors' Housing Partnerships Task Force Affordable Housing Action Plan.

The high demand for affordable housing in the City of Brantford and County of Brant, as well as across Canada, will continue to grow as the City and County communities expand, as per population growth projections. One of the ways to address this need is to create new affordable housing developments, both rental and home-ownership options.

Given the high price of land and building construction costs, developers find it difficult to create affordable housing without municipal and other incentives. While funding and land are integral to facilitate the development of more affordable housing, incentives for affordable housing provide support with

financial viability, and help to maximize the number of affordable units and thus the community impact of each project.

For the purpose of this report, an “incentive” means a program, process, and/or financial grant that was designed with the purpose of helping to facilitate the development of new affordable housing units. Additionally, it is important to note that there are incentives for developers of affordable rental and homeownership housing that are administered by the Housing and Homelessness Department as the Service Manager as well as separate incentives that were created by each individual municipality (City of Brantford and County of Brant) and are administered through various land use planning tools.

Financial Assistance through Upfront Capital Grants and/or Operating affordability payments – Federal and/or Provincial Programs administered by Service Manager

The Service Manager participated in the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (COAHP) Pilot and subsequent funding waves between 2005 - 2009. The funding could be directed to various housing priorities with Investment Plans approved by Council, and was initially focused on four components: new supply, affordable homeownership, rent supplement and housing allowance programs. These new supply funds were a combination of upfront capital forgivable loans (grants) and/or annual affordability payments toward mortgage costs.

The Province’s multilateral Affordable Housing Framework: “*Building Foundations: Building Futures, Ontario’s Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy*” was announced on August 10, 2011. The Investment in Affordable Housing Program (IAH) was part of this Strategy replacing the COAHP, and provided a flexible notional funding allocation to the Service Manager to deliver five housing program components in accordance with identified community needs. The City of Brantford was allocated \$3,662,204.00 to deliver five housing program components (2011-2015): Rent Supplement, Ontario Renovates, Homeownership, Rental Housing (new supply), and Housing Allowance. This added program option meant there was less for new supply, with an allocation of \$584,096 (16%) in Year 2 of the program.

On August 11, 2014 the Province and the Federal government announced a six year extension to the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (IAH) program. On December 18, 2014 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) announced a notional funding allocation for all six program years in the amount of \$7,634,400, with \$4,733,328 (62%) allocated to new supply.

The 2016 Federal Budget established the Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF), to be delivered under the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) Program over three years (2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19). City of Brantford as Service Manager received an allocation of \$4,706,200 in Year 1 and 2, plus an additional \$760,000 in Year 3, and \$2,521,758 (46%) of this was allocated to new supply, namely the John Noble Apartments development.

A new affordable housing program, the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI), was introduced in 2019 which was modeled after other similar previous affordable housing programs such as the IAH program, including a New Supply component and additional features such as the support services component and the eligibility of social housing under the Ontario Renovates component. Only four years of allocations have been announced to date (2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 & 2022/23) for a total of \$3,374,500, with \$660,000 (20%) earmarked for new supply.

Projects approved under the Rental Housing component must remain affordable for a minimum period of 20 years. Affordability is defined as having rents for the project that are at or below 80 percent of CMHC Average Market Rent (AMR) at the time of occupancy.

Between 2005 and 2012, the City of Brantford as designated Service Manager for Housing for the City of Brantford and County of Brant, provided grant funding through these federal and provincial funding streams to the non-profit and private sector for new affordable housing development. The Service Manager allocated in excess of \$21 M in federal and provincial funding to 17 affordable housing developments to create 440 affordable rental housing units in the community. Of these 17 developments, 13 are owned by the private sector, two are owned by the nonprofit sector (Brant Native Housing Walnut Street and Alfred Street locations), and two are owned by the City of Brantford (acquired Heritage House and constructed Bell Lane, which received funding through the former federal Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rental Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and debenture financing).

Between 2012 and 2021, new supply funding was allocated to three municipally owned and managed Affordable Housing developments (Sherwood Apartments, John Noble Apartments, and Stirton Ave four-plex), while also utilizing other grant opportunities such as Home for Good Funding for a fourth development at Marlene Ave, capital reserves, as well as debenture funding where needed. Two other Service Manager developments are currently underway using some

of this funding (Trillium Way, Paris) and provincial Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) funding (177 Colborne).

Property Tax Rebates – Federal/Provincial Funding Programs facilitated by Service Manager with Municipality

When affordable housing is being developed through federal/provincial new supply programs, there was a funding requirement to reduce the multi-residential property tax rate for rental housing projects either by setting it at a rate equivalent to, or lower than, the residential tax rate for the area; or by providing a rebate in lieu of this property tax reduction. This applies to municipalities where the development occurs.

The Service Manager first ensures compliance in meeting program funding guidelines, and then advises the relevant municipality so they can provide the annual tax rebates for the affordable housing developments. This is considered an incentive from the perspective of federal/provincial funded programs.

Development Charge Exemptions – Municipal Programs

For the Affordable Housing developments funded through federal/provincial new supply programs, Service Managers were required to have a Municipal Housing Facility Bylaw to enable municipal contributions according to *Municipal Act, 2001*. In addition, Service Managers and proponents are encouraged to provide other contributions in order to increase the financial viability of the project and/or to provide deeper affordability. Contributions by Service Managers may include: waiving or reducing development charges, planning approvals application fees, building permit fees, and full property tax exemptions as well as contributions of municipal grants, and municipally-owned land.

Through the Development Charges By-law, the City of Brantford provides Development Charge exemptions for affordable rental housing developments that meet the City's Municipal Housing Facilities (MHF) By-law criteria. This criteria has changed over time, as the by-law has been revised and updated since its creation in 2003 (By-law #162-2003). The original pilot developments (3 proponents) under the COAHP programs were able to charge at or below 100 percent of the CMHC average market rent (AMR). This program requirement changed to 80 percent of CMHC AMR for the remaining proponents of the COAHP and IAH affordable housing programs. In 2017 the MHF By-law was amended to align with the program requirements (report PHSSS2017-090, Revision of By-Law #162-2003 (Municipal Housing Facilities By-Law) to update the definition of "affordable housing" for the purposes of creating affordable

housing, according to Provincial Guidelines. One developer was exempted as they had already applied to the Small Communities Fund (SCF) – a federal public infrastructure program that defined affordable housing at 100 percent of CMHC AMR. This new private sector development (248 Grand River Ave) was developed with 156 units rented at 100 percent of CMHC AMR, with the Small Communities Fund (SCF) grant and tax increment support through the City's brownfield development program.

The City's Development Charge By-law currently also provides a development charge exemption for affordable homeownership developments that meet the MHF By-law criteria.

There is also a Downtown Exemption Area where there are no development charges applied against development or redevelopment projects.

While the County of Brant's Development Charges By-law does not exempt private affordable housing projects at this time, development charges on non-profit housing may be paid in installments over a period of 21 years, as per The *Development Charges Act*. The County's by-law is scheduled for review and update in 2024. Any requests for a grant to offset development charges would be subject to County Council consideration.

Community Improvement Plans – Municipal Land Use Planning Tools

In June 2021, the City of Brantford Council approved a Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Downtown Brantford Urban Growth Centre (UGC) (Report 2021-369) to support downtown revitalization with the goal of bringing more people to live and work in Downtown Brantford by helping property owners redevelop their properties. It was envisioned that these redevelopment projects would provide for a variety of types and tenures of residential units, including affordable housing, support existing and new commercial and institutional uses, and contribute to a complete community in the heart of the City.

The approved Downtown CIP included a Property Tax Increment-Based Grant program which provides a financial incentive to help property owners redevelop their properties within the Downtown UGC. To qualify for the program, developments must contain residential units. The grant program operates as a tax rebate, offsetting a portion of eligible redevelopment costs by phasing in the property tax increase that results from the redevelopment over ten years. The grant is enhanced to provide a greater tax rebate for projects that include

affordable housing units. The City recently received the first application for the Downtown grant program for a redevelopment project.

The City of Brantford Council, in June 2021, also approved a Greyfields Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (Report 2021-370) to facilitate and encourage redevelopment of and reinvestment in greyfields within the Built-Up Area of the City, outside of the Downtown Urban Growth Centre. The Greyfields CIP also includes a Property Tax Increment-Based Grant program that is intended to promote the transformative redevelopment of greyfields into new mixed use developments (i.e., with both commercial uses and residential uses) that will increase a property's assessed value. Like the Downtown CIP Property Tax Increment-Based Grant Program, the Greyfields program operates as a tax rebate, offsetting a portion of eligible redevelopment costs by phasing in the property tax increase that results from the redevelopment over ten years. The grant is enhanced to provide a greater tax rebate for projects that include affordable housing units. The City has not yet received any applications for the Greyfields grant program at the time of writing this Report.

The County's Community Improvement Program (CIP) does not speak to affordable housing projects at this time. Inclusion of affordable housing may form part of the County's CIP in future. Currently the "Upper Storey Apartment Improvement Grant" provides incentives to create units in core areas throughout the County, subject to program criteria.

Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program – City of Brantford

The City of Brantford also has a Brownfield Community Improvement Plan which provides financial incentives to support the remediation of brownfield sites. The Brownfields CIP includes a Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program which provides a property tax rebate to owners who are required to file a Record of Site Condition under provincial regulations to allow for the redevelopment of a property. Although not specifically targeted at affordable housing, this program can provide financial assistance where brownfield remediation is required to facilitate an affordable housing development.

Housing & Homelessness Department Staff are responsible for administering the Affordable Housing programs and implementing strategies for marketing and monitoring the Service Manager programs, assisted when needed by other City and County departments. City and County Planning Staff are responsible for administering the grant programs offered through these Community Improvement Plans, and implementing strategies for marketing and monitoring

the programs, assisted when needed by other City departments. Ultimately staff endeavor to work together to ensure information is communicated appropriately and are currently working to update communication tools including website information.

7.0 Corporate Policy Context

The subject of this report supports City Council's 2021-2022 priority #2: "Meaningful supports are in place for those most in need in the community". In particular, the information in this report supports Brantford being a safe and healthy community, one that promotes and enables the well-being of its citizens and supports access of all citizens to a full range of health and community services. This report also supports the County of Brant's 2019-2023 Strategic Priorities: "Healthy, safe and engaged citizens".

8.0 Input From Other Sources

City of Brantford Corporate Finance and Planning, and County of Brant Planning Department staff were consulted on this report, and provided text for the relevant sections of the report.

9.0 Analysis

Federal/provincial affordable housing program funding allocations had increased with the Investment in Affordable Housing Program (IAH) from 2014/15 to 2019/20 with an average of \$1,272,400 annually, and then decreased with the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) from 2019/20 to 2022/23 with an average of \$843,625 annually. This may be due to the two new programs introduced at the same time as OPHI:

The Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) is to protect affordability for households in social housing, to support the repair and renewal of existing social housing supply, and to expand the supply of community housing over time (regeneration/intensification).

The COHB is a federal-provincial housing allowance program launching on April 1, 2020. The program is jointly funded through the CMHC-Ontario Bilateral Agreement under the 2017 National Housing Strategy and is provincially delivered. The purpose of the COHB program is to increase the affordability of rental housing by providing an income-tested, portable housing benefit (PHB) payment directly to eligible households in housing

need that are on, or are eligible to be on, social housing waiting lists and to households in housing need living in community housing.

The OPHI affordable housing program funding also was originally focused on four program areas which has now grown to cover six components. With less funding and more program components, this means that the amount available for the development of new supply is restricted, and has to compete with other important housing priorities and demands.

Since 2005, 22 new Affordable Housing rental developments have been created providing 668 units that are Below Market or low end Market rent levels, with some Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) Rent Supplements added for those needing a more substantive subsidy. Most of the private or non-profit affordable rental developments were completed between 2005 and 2012 when more capital grants were available for new supply. As of 2021, the City of Brantford as Service Manager for Housing for the City of Brantford and County of Brant has completed 122 rental units at five developments and taken over the assets of one development (149 units in total).

- 440 units completed between (2005 – 2012) at 17 developments (55/year)
- 228 units completed between (2016 – 2021) at 5 developments (38/year)

After 2016, New Supply funding has only been used by the Service Manager to create new affordable housing units, and will help to reach the Municipal Master Plan target of creating 506 new municipal affordable rental housing units between 2020 - 2030. For non-profit and private sector affordable housing development, only development charge and tax incremental grant incentives are currently available to these groups. Only a few affordable rental housing developments are currently in process - all by non-profit organizations:

- Brant Native Housing (12 units at 309 Campbell)
- Jaycees Brantford Non-Profit Homes Corporation (24 units at 32 Bridge)
- Habitat for Humanity Heartland Ontario Brant-Norfolk Chapter affordable homeownership Brantwood development (32 Habitat homes over several years).

Municipal incentives do not seem sufficient by themselves to attract the private sector to create new affordable units, and non-profit sector developers have had

to seek other non-municipal funding opportunities to create financially viable developments.

Municipalities across Ontario offer similar incentives in different ways, such as using the residential property tax rate for multi-residential affordable housing development instead of Tax Increment Grants (TIGs), or offer some other incentives to assist with the development of rental or homeownership affordable housing.

Examples of other types of incentives or tools to create more affordable housing:

1. Surplus Municipal Land

Municipal land is offered to affordable housing developers as part of their Request For Proposals process, along with other incentives.

In the Region of Waterloo, surplus Regional land is being offered along with other incentives as part of their recent RFP for affordable housing development.

2. Waiving planning and building permit fees

There are many fees and permits required throughout the building development process, ranging from planning applications fees (Zoning By-law Amendments, Site Plan, Minor Variance), building, foundation, demolition, hoarding permits and other fees. A grant could be provided in lieu of these fees, or they could be waived or deferred.

In City of Brantford, Parkland Dedication fees are waived if a development meets the Municipal Housing Facilities (MHF) criteria for affordable housing. In addition, a reduced Site Plan Control application fee (the Minor Site Plan application fee) is charged for developments that contain a minimum of 25% of affordable housing units.

3. Allocating municipal funds for new affordable housing through a tax levy

Municipal investment in affordable housing through the tax levy offers a sustainable source of funding to facilitate longer-term plans and strategies. This is a practice in some municipalities, while others currently have this idea under consideration to support CIPs and other incentives for affordable housing.

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville offers forgivable interest-free loans of up to \$25,000 for “small” landlords who build secondary suites in their properties, using Municipal tax base funding, to enhance the similar Ontario Renovates loan program for homeowners. This is available in the 10 municipalities in United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, and in Brockville, Prescott and Gananoque.

In the City of Brantford, there are Municipal investments through Development Charge exemptions or through federal/provincial funding allocations, however neither the City nor the County provide grant programs from tax levy funding towards capital costs of new affordable housing development.

4. Adding affordable housing as an eligible service for which development charges are collected in accordance with the Development Charges By-law

In the City of Brantford, Development Charges collected include a charge for Housing. These revenues can be utilized to finance the growth related capital costs of new Municipal affordable housing development.

5. Using planning tools such as a Community Improvement Plan

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool under Section 28 of the *Planning Act* that permits a municipality to implement policy or invest funding in a specifically defined project area. Some municipalities are creating CIPs to implement incentives for affordable housing. As discussed in Section 6 of this Report, the City of Brantford’s Downtown CIP and Greyfields CIP offer property tax increment-based grant programs that provide enhanced grants for redevelopments that include affordable housing units.

The City of Cambridge has an affordable housing CIP that exempts projects from planning and building permit fees, allows the deferral of development charges, and provides a tax increment grant.

The City of Hamilton has a Housing for Hamilton CIP that provides the framework for giving development charge grants to affordable housing.

The City of London has an Affordable Housing Development Toolkit through a CIP, and one incentive provides a re-payment loan for affordable housing development.

The City of Peterborough has an “Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan” that includes a number of financial programs including the Tax Increment Grant Program, Development Charges Program, Municipal Incentive Program and Municipal Facilities Program.

Cities of Brampton and Mississauga also identified plans to develop CIPs for affordable housing.

In City of Brantford, there are CIP programs to encourage the development of housing in specific areas, including new affordable rental development.

6. Exercising land strategies (e.g. disposition/acquisition)

Leveraging land strategies to develop affordable housing is a growing practice among municipalities, such as using “surplus” municipal land and/or acquiring other public “surplus” properties.

Oxford County has a surplus lands policy which dedicates the proceeds of surplus lands to affordable housing development.

Norfolk County has a Property Management Services Reserve which is used to provide property management services or land purchases as approved by Council, funded through the sale of surplus lands.

The City of Brantford is using proceeds from the sale of some municipal assets to help finance a significant portion of municipal affordable housing developments. An estimated \$21 million from the sale proceeds of municipal properties will be targeted for the development of new affordable housing units. Financing is considered an incentive as it supports the creation of affordable housing.

Relatively new and less common land strategies:

- Identifying parcels of land with high resale value and leveraging the proceeds of land sales or leases;
- Leveraging land value contribution to buy affordable housing through a procurement and land disposition process;
- Entering into long term land leases;

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- Implementing a “housing first land use policy” to ensure any lands declared surplus are considered for affordable housing prior to disposition;
 - Acquiring strategically located lands;
 - Implementing a land portfolio approach to manage an inventory of land for disposition and acquisition; and
 - Developing a capital revolving reserve fund for affordable housing to facilitate the aforementioned land strategies

7. Redeveloping existing Community (Social) housing sites

There is a growing recognition by municipalities of the opportunities to build more affordable housing by redeveloping and intensifying affordable housing properties that they own and operate. This redevelopment approach avoids the additional costs of land acquisition and offers opportunities to add more housing units as well as on-site community spaces for use in response to the needs of tenants (e.g., service providers, childcare facilities). Most municipalities are using this approach or considering this approach to develop new affordable housing.

As the Service Manager for Community Housing in the City of Brantford and County of Brant, there is interest in conducting a review of current Municipally-owned Community Housing sites for opportunities to redevelop and/or intensify these sites. Other Community Housing Providers are also encouraged to consider these opportunities. A separate report will be brought forward to the Social Services Committee regarding this issue.

Next Steps

Staff will review the various options and financial implications, and report back to the Social Services Committee regarding any recommendations.

Housing staff will work with planning and communication staff to promote current incentives with consolidated marketing material.

The newly created Manager, Housing Development position, is available to actively work with City and County staff to encourage and support anyone looking to develop affordable housing.

Municipal incentives are only one of the “tools” that can be used to leverage and maximize more affordable housing development. These can be used in addition to incentives, loans and/or grants through other levels of government and/or organizations such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), as well as contributions from, and collaborations with private and/or not-for-profit partners.

10.0 Financial Implications

The financial impact for any option listed in this report to help develop more affordable housing will need to be determined.

11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

12.0 Conclusion

The City of Brantford as Service Manager for the City of Brantford and the County of Brant has a long practice of providing certain incentives to develop affordable housing such as development charge exemptions and tax increment grants for public, private and not-for-profit sector developers. More recently, the City of Brantford has added some newer practices such as investing municipal funding (proceeds from the sale of assets and Development Charge revenue) and using municipally owned surplus sites for Service Manager owned and managed Affordable Housing development, as well as Land Use Planning Tools such as the Downtown and Greyfields CIPs which provide grants to facilitate redevelopments that include affordable housing units. The County of Brant has also outlined many different implementation tools through their draft New Official Plan to assist in the creation and preservation of affordable housing throughout the County, including CIPs.

Even with existing Service Manager and City/County municipal incentives, affordable housing developers continue to find it difficult to cover the increasing land and construction costs, without substantive grants from senior levels of government or contributions from other sources for the creation of affordable housing.

Some of these other incentives and initiatives should be considered as additional ways to help accelerate the development of new affordable housing units by layering on to existing incentives to make affordable housing development more financially appealing and sustainable.



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Attachments (if applicable): NA

Copy to: NA

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required ☐ yes ☒ no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk ☐ yes ☒ no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? ☐ yes ☒ no