



## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition Terms of Reference**

### **Preamble:**

The province of Ontario required all municipalities to develop and approve a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, in accordance with the requirements of the Police Services Act. Communities across the province undertook a harmonized and integrated planning process driven by a multi-sectoral advisory committee that included representatives from an identified list of community agencies and service providers. This collaborative municipal approach to tackling priority risks and needs of the community through a strategic and holistic lens was taken with a vision that communities will be better prepared to meet their residents' current and future needs.

In Oxford County, the eight municipalities of Blandford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, Ingersoll, Norwich, South-west Oxford, Tillsonburg, Woodstock, and Zorra chose to work in partnership to develop a joint plan to be implemented in both a system-wide and local level. In September 2020, the area municipalities and the County launched a planning process to develop a shared Community Safety and Well-being Plan in response to the requirements established in the Police Services Act. A multi-sectoral Advisory Committee spearheaded the planning process of representatives from across Oxford municipalities, including police and emergency services, health care, social services, school boards, and community service providers. The themes emerging from the consultation phase address county-wide challenges, some of which rely on services provided by the County of Oxford. The County committed to working with the area municipalities to lead the implementation of the Safe and Well Oxford Plan.

The completed Safe and Well Oxford Plan was presented to all local Councils and received support and approval. County Council endorsed the Plan on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and agreed to undertake the lead on the implementation of the Plan with shared responsibility and support from all area municipalities.

Safe and Well Oxford establishes goals and objectives to address Oxford's priority risk themes. The three priority risks that Safe and Well Oxford will address through a social development and prevention lens include:

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

In response to the Safe and Well Oxford third identified risk, the County proposes establishing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Coalition to address the noted issues and work towards the desired outcomes detailed in the Plan.

**Mandate:**

The mandate for the DEI Action Coalition will be to advise the County Council and area municipalities, make recommendations, and provide a monitoring and measuring role to help ensure that the County applies a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and guided by the vision of Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022, to its policies, services, and programs.

The Committee will develop an annual work plan focused on goals related to:

- Developing an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, including an Inclusion Charter, for all communities across Oxford County.
- Provide insight advice and make recommendations to the County Council and area municipalities relating to the following:
  - Identifying systemic barriers faced in accessing County services, information, programs, and facilities;
  - Strategies for building connections and fostering a deeper sense of inclusion, safety, and belonging, especially for marginalized groups;
  - Propose Oxford County initiatives, services, and policies to meet the changing needs of a diverse community;
  - Employment and employee awareness policies, initiatives, and programs.
- Liaise with organizations and stakeholders, particularly those from marginalized groups including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, non-white racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, people with low socioeconomic condition/status, and newcomer community members from systemically disadvantaged communities to facilitate discussions that promote a broader understanding of systemic inequalities and encourage engagement between residents of diverse backgrounds and abilities, to generate solutions for removal of barriers to equity.
- Building on best practices recommend and source DEI training to leaders and staff from across all area organizations. Provide recommendations on opportunities for education and awareness programs for the Action Coalition, members of Council and staff, and area municipalities on anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in consultation with the County Administration and within the budget allocated by the County Council. Engage in relevant training about reconciliation, diversity, equity and inclusion, anti-racism, and anti-oppression issues and strategies for orientation capacity building and knowledge development of effective practices annually.
- Developing an EDI employee recruitment plan so government and community organizations reflect our changing and rich diversity (to be shared with area municipalities).
- Classifying and addressing the types of discrimination that create roadblocks to safety, well-being, service access, and community engagement.
- Developing virtual and in-person public awareness and education campaigns to overcome myths and ignorance. A great example is the London Community Foundation podcast "What London Can Be."
- Initiate community conversations and media campaigns about discrimination and racism, including cultural events, cross-cultural forums, and problem-solving sessions to address barriers to equity and inclusion.
- Introduce opportunities for learning and self-awareness (media campaigns) where people of all ages can reflect on their values, biases, and beliefs.

The Committee will report progress on its work plan annually to the County Council and all area

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municipalities through the **Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee**.

**Composition:**

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition shall be composed of a maximum of 11 voting members as follows:

Role	Member
Committee Chair	To be selected annually from within the volunteer/voting members of the Committee.
Committee Vice-Chair	To be selected annually from within the volunteer/voting members of the Committee.
Community Members	4-5 volunteer members appointed from the community.
Stakeholder Representation	5-6
Co-lead Oxford County Liaison/Support (non-voting)	1 Oxford County DEI Officer
Co-lead Area Municipality Liaison/Support (non-voting)	1 staff support from the area municipalities

**Selection Process:**

Community Members will be selected through an application and interview process. The interview panel will include the appointed Committee Co-lead and a member of the Steering Committee.

Committee members will have the skills, knowledge, and lived experience to contribute effectively to the Committee's mandate. Committee members must be Oxford County residents, business owners, or stakeholders who have an understanding of the impacts of racism and systemic discrimination on marginalized people and meet the following general qualifications:

- be familiar with overall community issues;
- have demonstrated knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- be able to build meaningful relationships and connections within the community.

Committee members shall represent the diversity of the County and a broad cross-section of residents. An intersectional approach should be taken to ensure representation by community members with lived experience or service in agencies related to one or more of the following areas:

- Ethnocultural and linguistic diversity
- Racialized communities or People of Colour
- Francophone
- New immigrants
- Indigenous communities
- 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals
- Individuals with disabilities, including mental health disabilities
- Seniors / older adults
- Individuals living with low-income / homeless
- Post-secondary students/youth
- Faith-based diversity

All attempts will be made to stay within the guideline composition; however, if the applications received or the qualifications of applicants do not fully address the guideline composition criteria, the most capable and qualified applicants will be recommended for appointment to fulfill the membership composition.

#### **Member Expectations:**

Members are expected to adhere to the following conduct and practices:

- That all committee members, in all forms of communication, when speaking about the work of the Committee, or members of the Committee do so in a respectful manner;
- That committee members address differences of opinion or conflict with other committee members in a respectful manner;
- That all committee members respect confidentiality and privacy;
- That all committee members are required to attend a minimum of 75% of meetings, not inclusive of sub-committee meetings.

#### **Conflicts of Interest:**

Members should be cognizant of perceived conflicts in terms of issues that may serve to benefit them personally. Members shall not use their status on a Committee for personal or political gain. Conflicts of interest can be actual and perceived. Proactively managing perceived and real conflicts of interest is integral to maintaining public confidence in the DEI Action Coalition's integrity as a Committee of the Council.

An actual or real conflict of interest is a situation where an individual's professional or personal self-interest could motivate them to act in a way that goes against a client, employer, or the public interest. The individual does have the opportunity to take that action or to make a decision that personally benefits them over other interests. An actual conflict may or may not be recognized by all parties. A perceived conflict may be where a conflict does not exist, but a reasonable person may think it does due to proximity in personal or business relationships between the individuals involved in a decision.

**Subcommittees and Working Groups:**

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition may establish subcommittees or working groups to deal with specific issues or projects to fulfill its mandate and accomplish its goals. Working groups are considered to be time-limited, project-specific sub-committees of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition in that they are convened to accomplish a specific task (or tasks) in a narrowly defined time period.

Working groups must comprise at least one member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition and may include community members and other individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise.

Working groups shall be chaired, where possible, by a voting member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition and shall provide regular updates to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition about recommendations on assigned projects. Minutes of the working group meetings shall be recorded and submitted to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition for proper directing through the approval process. Working groups may meet at a time and place as the working group members decide.

**Remuneration & Expense Reimbursement:**

None.

**Term of Office:**

Committee members shall be appointed for a term consistent with the Term of Council (4 years), with the initial term ending on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

**Meetings:**

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition shall meet at least six times annually and may meet more frequently if required. A meeting schedule should be set and circulated to the members for annual approval. Should a time-sensitive matter arise requiring immediate attention, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition may meet at the discretion of the Chair.

The DEI Action Coalition in-person meetings will be held at the Oxford County Administration Building(OCAB). Meetings will be in-person, virtual, or a combination of both. All meetings will be open to the public.

Meetings shall be governed by the County's Procedural By-law, being a by-law to govern the calling, place, and proceedings of the meetings of the Council and its committees, as may be amended from time to time.

A committee member who is unable to attend a meeting shall forward their regrets to the Chair or one of the Committee Co-Leads as soon as possible.

**Quorum:**

A committee quorum requires at least five voting members to be present. If a quorum is not attained within the first 10 minutes, the formal meeting cannot proceed, and the support staff member is not required to remain and/or provide notes. If members present choose to stay, they may only do so for information exchange.

**Absenteeism:**

Members who miss three authorized consecutive meetings or four meetings overall shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Chair. In this case, candidates who have previously applied to join the Coalition will be contacted to be the alternate Committee members till the end of the remaining term.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Chair and Vice-Chair

A Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected from committee members annually at the first meeting of the new year to preside over meetings and committee business. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee shall be members of the public or the Co-Lead. Committee criteria considerations will be used when selecting the Chair and Vice-Chair.

It is the role of the Chair to preside over committee meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively and to act as a liaison between the Committee, County Council, and other sub-committees. It is the role of the Vice-Chair to preside over committee meetings and act as a liaison in the absence of the Chair.

Committee Members:

All Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition members, including the Chair and Vice-Chair, have the responsibility to help achieve the Committee's mandate and purposes. Committee members are also responsible for the following:

- Reviewing meeting materials before the meetings and arriving prepared to provide a broad perspective on the issues under consideration;
- Contributing to the creation of an annual work plan;
- Working diligently to complete assigned activities;
- Participating in working groups, as required;
- Agreeing to describe, process, and resolve issues professionally and respectfully;
- Providing input to help identify future projects or strategic priorities for future years' work;
- Communicating activities of the Committee to groups represented or those who may have an interest and offer information back to the Committee.

**Resources**

The County's DEI Officer will be a resource for the DEI Action Coalition.

**Amendments to the Terms of Reference:**

The terms of reference should be reviewed at least every year to remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the terms of reference shall require the approval of a majority of the members present. Proposed amendments to the terms of reference shall be submitted to the Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee for approval.