**Briefing – to Members of Council**

**Council Meeting Date:** February 11, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Safe Place Initiative Briefing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidential</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment(s)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issue**

- One of the issues that has been identified by our Enforcement Services Department is harassment. This issue is not just isolated to Lac La Biche but a common concern in communities across Canada.

**Background**

- In 2014, the Seattle Police Department developed an Initiative called Safe Place. This initiative was designed to address the problems experienced against the LGBTQ2S+ community. It has now changed to encompass all hate crimes.

- The LGBTQ2S+ community is proven to have higher rates of harassment and bullying against them, along with the fact that LGBTQ2S+ individuals have a higher suicide risk than the general public.

- Vancouver Police Department along with Surrey RCMP also developed a similar initiative and it was deemed as highly successful. Alberta does not have anything like this in place.

- Lac La Biche County has examined the possibility of creating a similar initiative within the County. However, the program would be more inclusive to also include our vulnerable populations. Enforcement Services has also included the Homeless Outreach worker and FCSS in development discussions. The County initiative would allow residents who are vulnerable and in need of emergency assistance or suffering from a potential overdose to go and seek help through the program.

- The anticipated rollout date for the initiative is scheduled for February 26th 2020, which coincides with Anti Bullying day (Pink Shirt Day.)

- Enforcement Services is currently working with the three School Districts to involve the initiative in all schools within the County.

- Businesses, schools and community buildings who wish to take part would be able to complete a registration form and would then be provided with a window sticker and posters to identify that they are a “Safe Place” and supporting the initiative.
Businesses would be informed to contact Enforcement Services if they have someone attending the location who needs assistance. Enforcement Services would then attend, assess what the issue(s) are and then would offer community supports or guidance. Some of these may include reaching out to the RCMP for assistance or EMS or referring the person to contact Alberta Health Services.

- A communications plan is currently being developed.
- Enforcement Services has reached out to other Law Enforcement Agencies to determine if they are offering similar type programs. The response has been positive and several agencies are now wanting to examine the Lac La Biche initiative and the effectiveness of the rollout.
- The Enforcement Services Department will diligently work with County Staff/Departments, Local Businesses and Chamber of Commerce to rollout the initiative.
- The Enforcement Services 2020 budget will be taking the financial impact of the Initiative for 2020. There is no requirement for extra allocation of funds.

**Strategic Alignment**
- Social Wellness
- Recreation and Culture.

**Follow-up**
- None

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