



London Homeless Coalition Organizational Review

Final Report
April, 2014
OrgCode Consulting, Inc.



London Homeless Coalition Organizational Review

April, 2014

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Introduction

Established in 2000, the London Homeless Coalition (LHC, or Coalition) has consistently acted as a meeting place for individuals and organizations involved in ending homelessness in the City of London. The Coalition traces its creation to the funding requirements of the now-defunct federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiatives program, which later evolved into the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Over the last 13 years, the Coalition has played an active role in system planning, advocacy, and relationship building.

In 2013, the Coalition identified the need to undertake an organizational review. The need for this review emerged in response to an evolving situation in the local housing and homelessness system, and a growing sense within the Coalition that it needed to better define its role in the community. In late 2013, OrgCode Consulting Inc., was retained to complete this project. The review was explicitly defined as not being a strategic planning exercise, and as such no consideration was to be given to changing the Coalition's mission and vision. Nevertheless, the review is by its nature strategic, as it encompasses the Coalition's entire structure and terms of reference.

In developing the parameters of the organizational review, the LHC Steering Committee identified the following eight questions as important considerations:

1. How do we change the operating structure to better suit the current needs and capacity of the London Homeless Coalition and the community?
2. Is there a more effective structure to better fulfill the mission?
3. How important a role should advocacy have in the operation of the LHC?
4. What needs to change for the London Homeless Coalition to anchor advocacy as its primary activities:
 - How are topics/issues selected?
 - How are disagreements or conflicts on issues handled?
 - How are position papers developed, such as forming sub-committees or working groups?
 - How is consensus reached on position papers or advocacy efforts?
5. Defining Membership
 - What does it mean to be a member of the London Homeless Coalition?
 - Is there an affiliate role for those that are interested primarily in information?
 - Should the London Homeless Coalition have an application process?
 - Should there be a membership fee?
6. Structure
 - What are the pros and cons of the London Homeless Coalition becoming incorporated?
 - What support (financial and otherwise) does the London Homeless Coalition need when developing position papers?
 - What are the pros and cons of having a staff person? What are the issues related to the LHC employing its own staff person or staff being employed by an agency?

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– If staffing is determined as a priority where would sustainable funding come from?

7. How can the interests of the London Homeless Coalition be improved such as elections, involvement with individuals with lived experience and sustainability?
8. Should the London Homeless Coalition continue to be the Community Advisory Board for the Homeless Partnering Secretariat? Are there better models that would support proactive funding allocations that also response to the conflicts of interest created by members of the London Homeless Coalition and Steering Committee applying for funding that requires the approval of the Membership?

The following report endeavors to answer these questions, and to provide the basis for a more focused and capable London Homeless Coalition.

Methodology

Several approaches were used to develop this report:

Document Review

OrgCode reviewed the agenda and minutes for every general membership meeting held by the LHC, going back to its inception. Other related documents, including community plans and terms of reference, were also included in this review.

Member Engagement

An electronic survey was made available for several weeks in December. The survey link was posted on the Coalition's Facebook page and distributed to members through a mailing list. A total of 57 survey responses were received. OrgCode also conducted interviews with key informants, such as current and past Chairs and Steering Committee members.

Comparator Research

OrgCode investigated similar organizations in other communities, and conducted research into the formation and organization of community groups. This research allowed the project team to identify promising and/or common practices in community mobilization and advocacy.

Executive Summary

Based on the priorities identified by the Coalition, the following conclusions and recommendations have been identified. Table 1 provides a summary of the recommendations.

1. How do we change the operating structure to better suit the current needs and capacity of the London Homeless Coalition and the community?

2. Is there a more effective structure to better fulfill the mission?

The current LHC structure appears to have served the organization well; the Coalition has survived for over a decade as an entirely volunteer driven operation. It is apparent, however, that there are weaknesses in the current structure. The Chair provides the primary role of overseeing the actions and opportunities of the Coalition, and in this way the responsibilities of the Chair are similar to those assigned to a President or Chairperson of a non-profit organization. The Chair is expected to do far more than convene and preside over meetings, including serving as public spokesperson, mediator, and planner. Consequently, the individual holding the Chair can have a major influence over the direction and momentum of the Coalition. To mitigate this reliance on the Chair position, it is recommended that the Coalition develop terms of reference for the Chair, including the expected time commitment. An average of five hours per week is a reasonable average amount of time a Chair would need to commit to his or her role, and this should be considered as part of the election process. In addition, it is recommended that the capacity of the Steering Committee be enhanced through the development of designated Coordinator roles that hold defined responsibilities.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the structural recommendations and how they intersect with each other.

3. How important a role should advocacy have in the operation of the LHC?

Consultations with LHC members indicated that advocacy is considered an important part of the Coalition's role in the community. Using the priority setting process proposed in this report, it is recommended that the Coalition's advocacy efforts be integrated into much of its operations.

4. What needs to change for the London Homeless Coalition to anchor advocacy as its primary activities?

It is recommended that the Coalition identify three to seven priorities that will anchor its advocacy efforts. One or two of the highest priorities should be selected for pro-active advocacy, entailing the development of position papers, media releases and public education. The remaining priorities should be held for 'issue monitoring', wherein the Coalition makes a deliberate effort to share information and observe developments that may impact these priorities.

5. Defining Membership

It is recommended that the open membership approach be retained, but that the Coalition adopts different membership types on the basis of responsibilities and roles.

6. Structure

It is not recommended that the Coalition hire staff, nor is it recommended that the organization incorporate itself as a non-profit.

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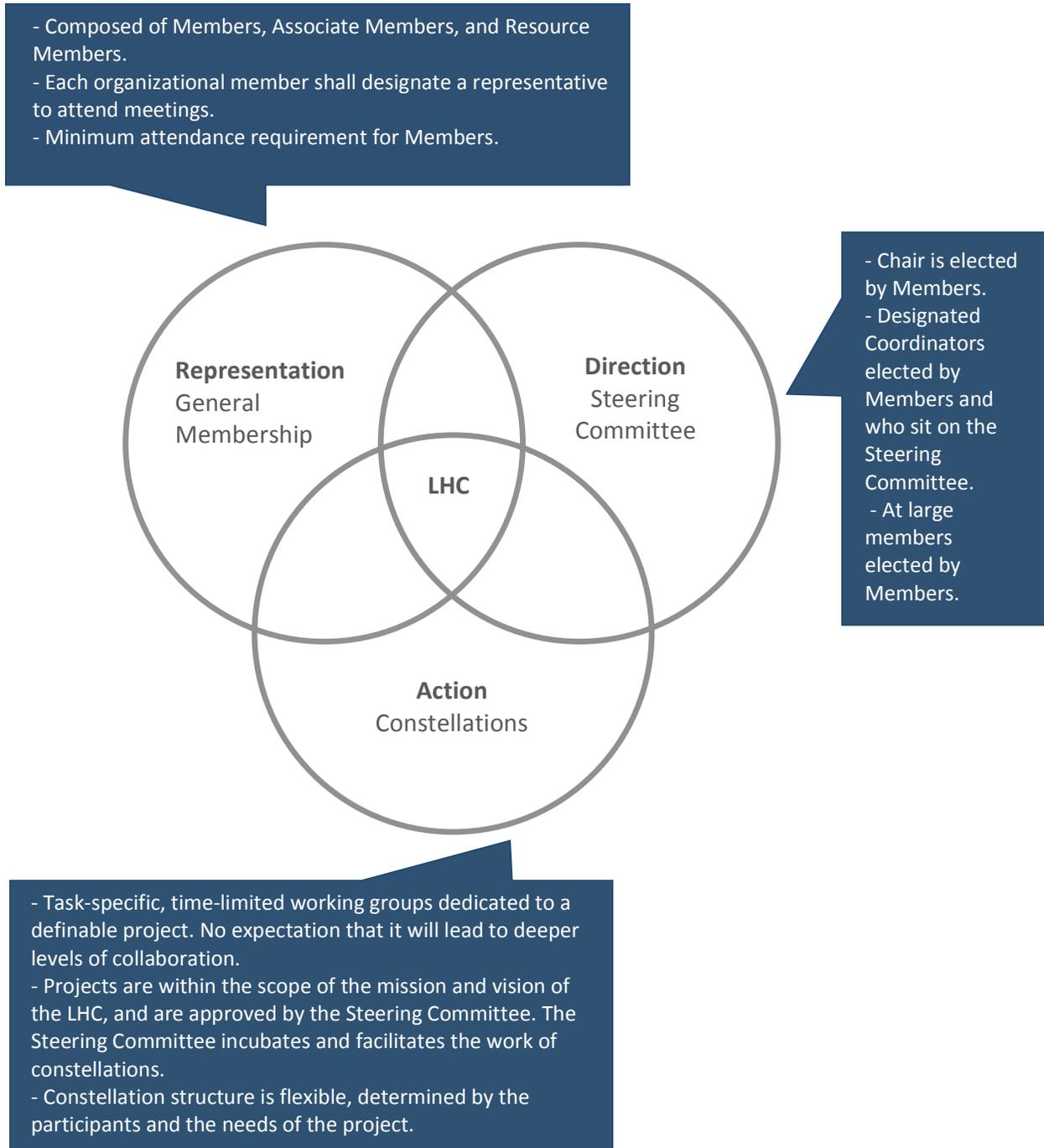


Figure 1: Overview of London Homeless Coalition structural recommendations

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7. How can the interests of the London Homeless Coalition be improved such as elections, involvement with individuals with lived experience and sustainability?

Improving the representation of individuals with lived experience has been a consistent problem for the Coalition. Additionally, the LHC often struggles to garner representation from housing providers in the private sector, and members of the Aboriginal community. It is recommended that the Coalition commit itself to a more deliberate program of outreach to engage these groups.

8. Should the London Homeless Coalition continue to be the Community Advisory Board for the Homeless Partnering Secretariat? Are there better models that would support proactive funding allocations that also respond to the conflicts of interest created by members of the London Homeless Coalition and Steering Committee applying for funding that requires the approval of the Membership?

It is recommended that the Community Advisory Board function be permanently separated from the LHC. The Homeless Prevention System Implementation Team provides a better entity for that responsibility.

Recommendation	Summary
A: Strengthen and stabilize membership	The open membership system should be retained, but member status and roles should be delineated. Three membership types are proposed: Members, Associate Members, and Resource Members.
B: Increase the capacity of the Steering Committee	To maintain the focus and expertise of the Coalition, it is recommended that the Chair or Vice-Chair be drawn from organizations that directly serve homeless populations. To provide for better stability and consistency of operations, it is recommended that specific tasks be delegated to Steering Committee members who act as "Coordinators".
C: Use a constellation model to pursue projects and improve collaboration	The Coalition has the capacity to take on specific, time-limited projects with definable outputs. It should be explicitly understood that these constellations are dissolved once the project is completed, and that there is no automatic expectation of deeper collaboration resulting from any project.
D: On a yearly basis, identify priorities for advocacy and collaboration	The LHC should identify 1-2 priorities per year for proactive advocacy, and a number of other priorities for issue monitoring. In addition to giving focus to advocacy, this priority selection process can help structure meetings and projects.
E: Structure meetings to maximize information sharing and advance priorities	The LHC should continue to enhance the relevancy of meetings by emphasizing information sharing and collaborative problem solving.
F: Enhance the role of the website and social media in disseminating and collecting information	It is advised that the LHC make greater use of the website and social media to involve Associate Members outside of the meetings.

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G. Undertake regular outreach to groups not represented in the Coalition	Workshops, focus groups, discussion groups and other forms of engagement may be employed to connect with these groups once or twice a year, with the results reported back to the General Membership.
H. The Coalition should permanently delegate its status as the Community Advisory Board for Homeless Partnering Strategy funds	The Coalition's role in determining the allocation of Homeless Partnering Strategy funding has contributed to tensions within the membership, and frequently puts members into a conflict of interest. Permanently delegating this role will allow the membership to focus on collaboration and advocacy.
I. The Coalition should not seek non-profit status, nor should it seek to add paid staff	The burden of reporting requirements and the paying of an employee are not matched by any foreseeable benefit to the work of the Coalition.

Chapter 1: Evaluating the LHC

Several lenses have been used in this examination of the LHC. The electronic survey provided an opportunity for members to provide their own assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Coalition. Additionally, the LHC was analyzed using two frameworks. A four-spectrum organizational review was used to consider the LHC on the basis of membership, decision-making, management, and structure. This type of review allows for ‘mapping’ of the organization’s salient features. Finally, a five-pillar evaluation is used to assess the formation, process, impact, and outcomes of the Coalition.

Self-assessment: Survey responses

The following analysis outlines the responses of the 40 participants who identified themselves as members.

To gain a baseline understanding of the membership and its level of engagement, members were asked about how long they have been a part of the LHC, and their level of involvement (Figure 2). A third of respondents have joined the Coalition relatively recently, within the last one to three years. Similarly, 20 percent of respondents had become members in the last six months. In contrast, slightly over a fifth of respondents had been members from the beginning.

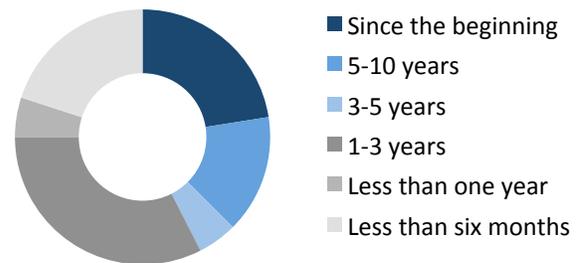


Figure 2: Length of Membership

Respondents generally do not go to Coalition meetings, as 45 percent indicated they attend meetings either infrequently or never (Figure 3). Only around 17 percent of respondents are present at every meeting. Consistent with this, 22 percent of respondents are very involved in Coalition activities, while approximately 37 percent are not at all involved (Figure 4).

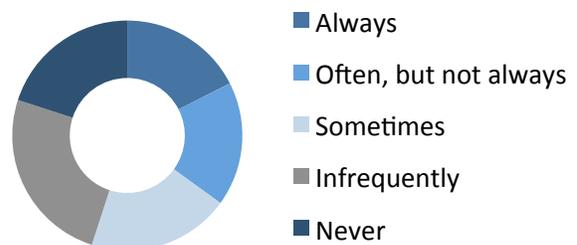


Figure 3: Meeting Attendance

Participants were generally satisfied with the effectiveness of the LHC, with nearly 60 percent of members grading the LHC as a seven and above (Figure 5). Participants showed more uncertainty on the suitability of the Coalition’s structure. A plurality of respondents, slightly over 40 percent, was either not sure or neutral when asked if the Coalition’s current structure helps it achieve its mission or vision (Figure 6).

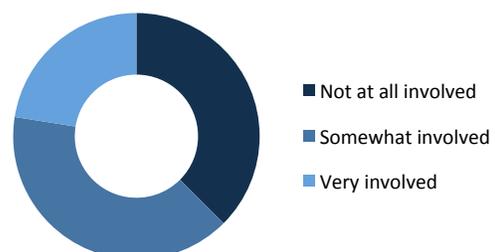


Figure 4: Level of Involvement

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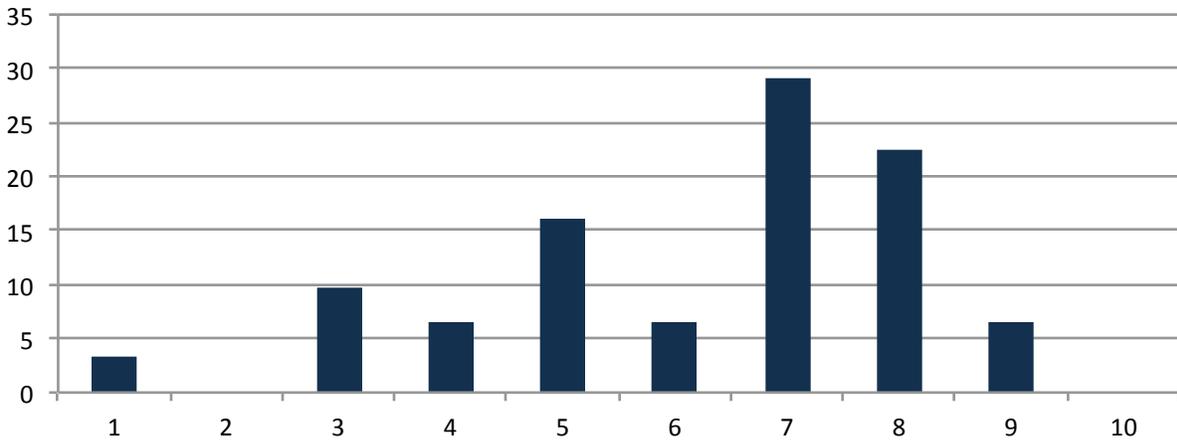


Figure 5: How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of LHC?
(1 = not at all satisfied, 10 = completely satisfied)

Survey participants were asked to rank the Coalition’s strengths and weaknesses on six dimensions (Figure 8). Overall, the LHC received its highest marks for its regular and useful communication to members, as well as its level of organization. On the other hand, the Coalition’s perceived weaknesses are its advocacy efforts, and its level of member interest and involvement. Over 60 percent of respondents thought that the Coalition was either very important or essential to ending homelessness in London (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Importance of LHC

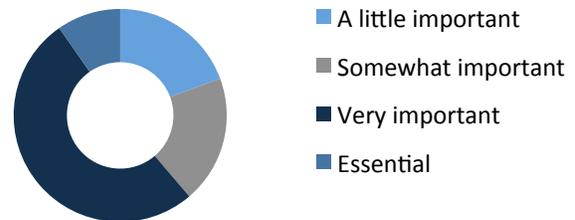
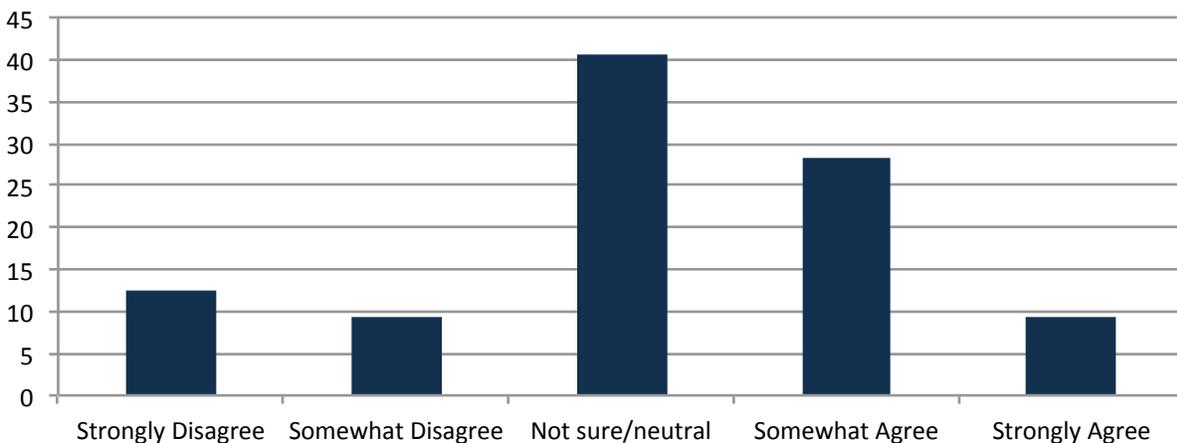


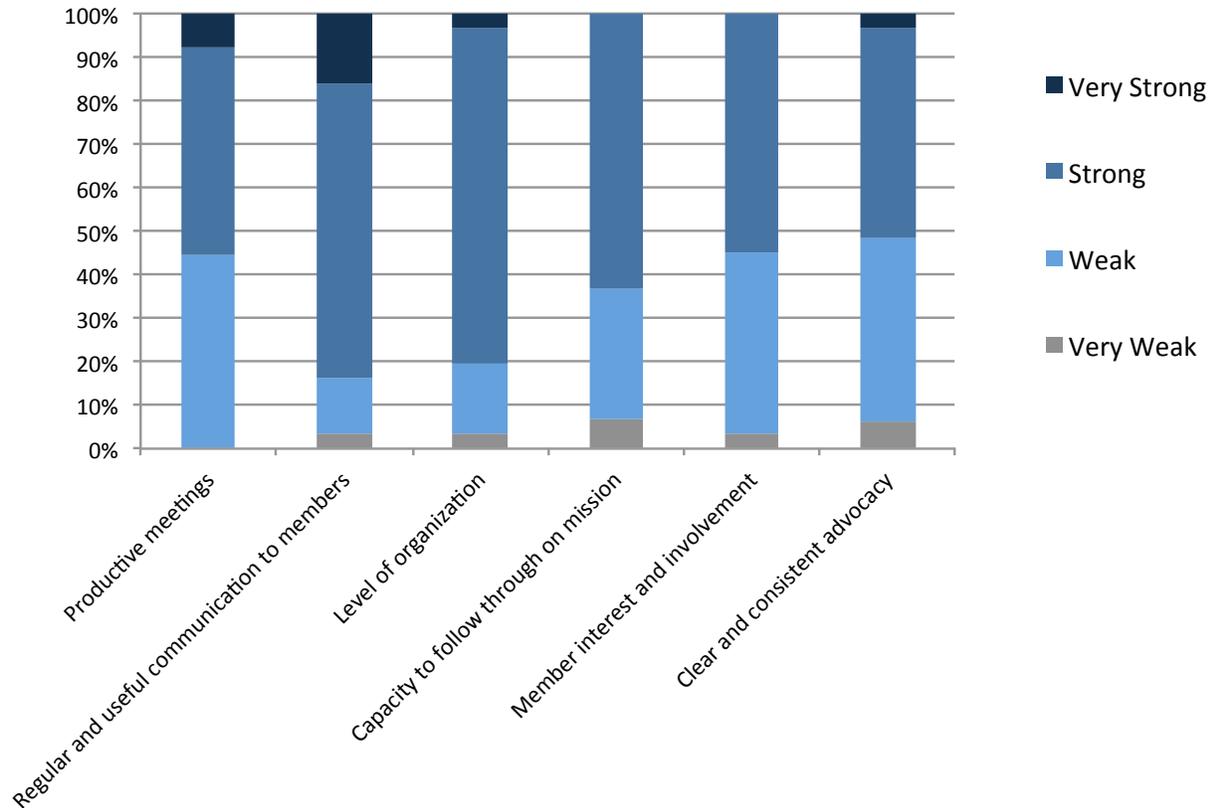
Figure 6: Agree or Disagree: The LHC’s current structure helps it to achieve its mission and vision.



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Figure 8: Please rank the LHC's strengths and weaknesses in the following areas



Survey participants were presented with four possible roles for the Coalition within the Homeless Prevention System, and were asked to indicate which they thought best describes the role of the organization (Figure 9). The roles were:

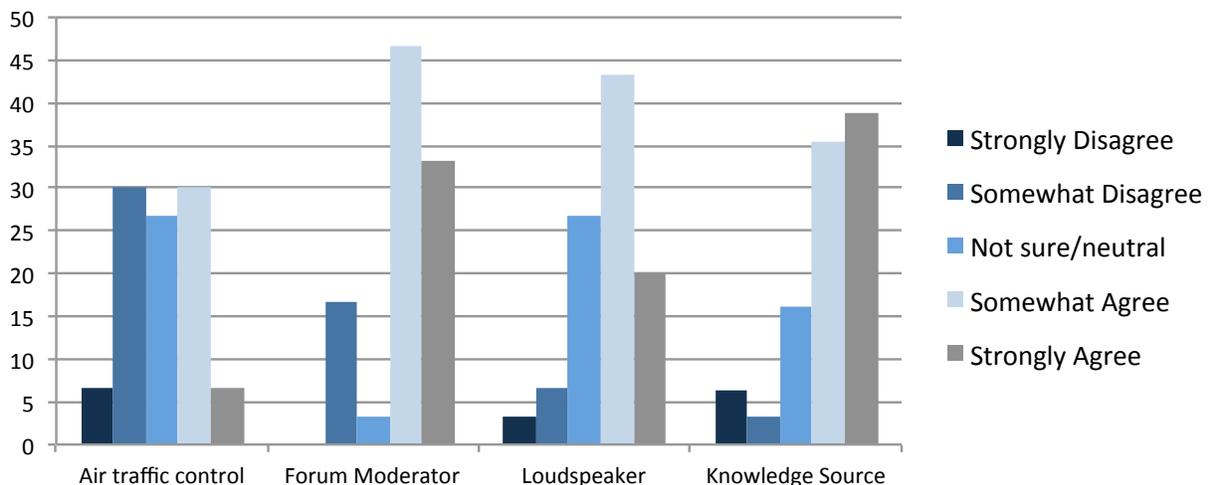


Figure 9: Which of the following best describes the role of the LHC?

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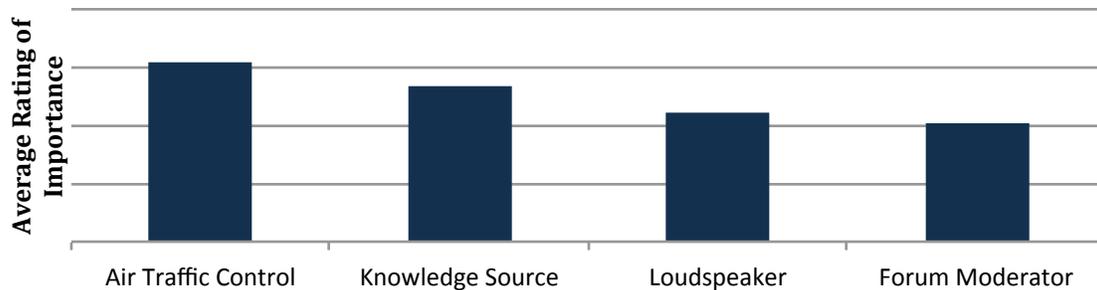


Figure 11: Which of the above four roles is the most important for the LHC?

“Air Traffic Control”

The LHC helps coordinate multiple moving parts to ensure smooth operations of the homelessness system.

“Forum Moderator”

The LHC brings together many actors and provides a means for the sharing of information, ideas and concerns amongst members.

“Loudspeaker”

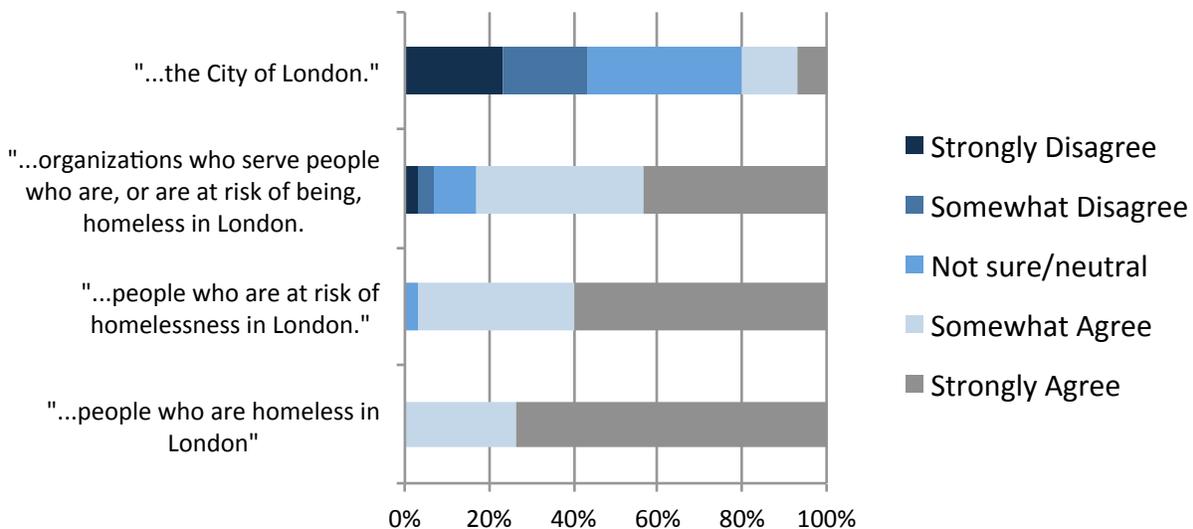
The LHC is an advocate.

“Knowledge Source”

The LHC provides information to members.

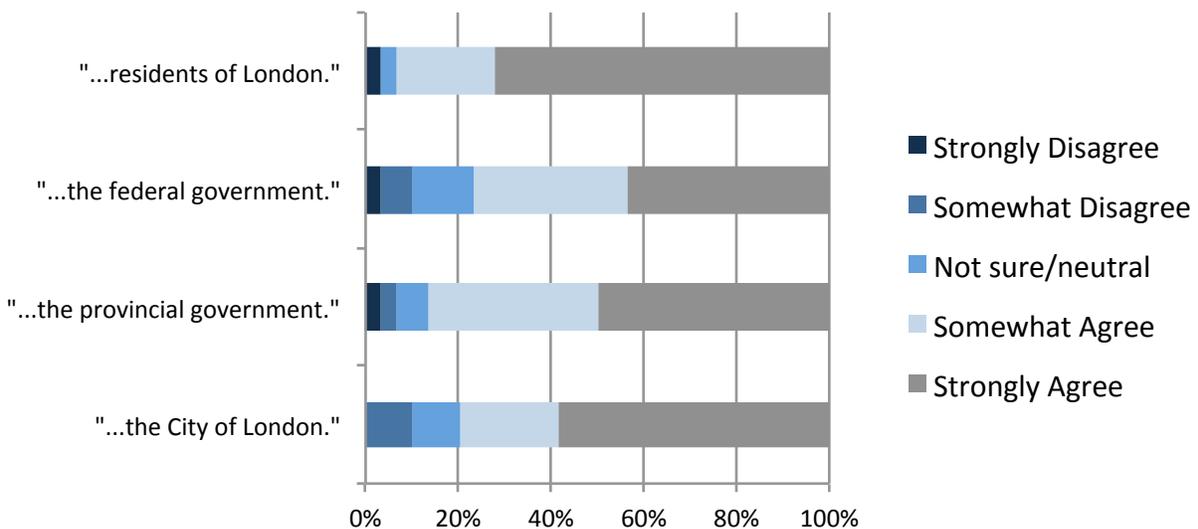
Roles garnering the highest level of approval were those that emphasized bringing community members together and providing information, followed by advocacy. Participants were most opposed or ambivalent to a role that involved the LHC in coordinating services. As a follow up, participants were asked to rank the four roles by level of importance (with lower scores indicating higher importance). The membership’s ambivalence to a coordinating role is more evident here, while a facilitation role again comes out on top (Figure 11).

Figure 10: The LHC should advocate on behalf of:



To highlight the advocacy role of the LHC, participants were asked to identify who they thought the Coalition should advocate to, and on whose behalf (Figure 10). Overwhelmingly, members believed that the Coalition should advocate on behalf of Londoners who are, or are at risk of becoming, homeless. Similarly, members believed that the primary audience for this advocacy should be the people of London, followed by the local and provincial governments (Figure 12).

Figure 12: The target audience for LHC advocacy should be:



Four Organizational Spectrums

To better understand the current operations of the LHC, it is useful to think of organizations along the four spectrums of membership, decision-making, management and structure. Although it is possible for organizations to sit at the end of any of the four spectrums, most sit in more moderate positions between the extremes. An organization’s membership, decision-making, management and structure may conflict with its mission and vision. Consequently, the question of where an organization should sit on any of these spectrums will depend entirely on what it exists to do and how it intends to do it; there is no objectively correct placement.

Membership



On one end of this spectrum is a fully open and unrestricted approach to membership, in which anyone may join the organization. Open membership is useful for developing a broad and diverse membership base, but few organizations have no prerequisites for those hoping to join. The Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness, for example, has a membership process that is open to “all organizations and individuals who agree with the ATEH [Alliance to End Homeless] Mandate” and who pay a yearly membership fee.¹ One of the most contentious elements of an open membership approach is the allocation of voting

¹ Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa. Url: <http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/alliance/mandate.cfm>

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rights. The New Westminster Homeless Coalition uses an open membership process, with the stipulation that, “[i]ndividuals and Organizations may purchase only one membership per person or organization and there will be only one vote per each membership.”² Similarly, the Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homeless Society requires that “[n]o individual shall have more than one vote at any time by virtue of individual membership and representing an institutional member. An organizational member is not restricted in the number of persons associated with it that may attend meetings of the Society but only the person identified by the organization shall have a vote.”³

A closed approach entails qualifications for membership that would limit the potential pool of members to a select and specialized few. For example, the Waterloo Community Advisory Board requires members to have a representative role to qualify for membership:

“The following people may participate as members of the CAB:

- *persons with lived experience (includes those who currently are or have experienced homelessness or are at-risk of homelessness)*
- *past or current members of the Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy Monitoring Committee (SMC)*
- *representative from the Aboriginal community*
- *representative from another funding body (e.g. Province, Private Sector, etc.)*
- *representative with expertise in the identified at-risk groups not mentioned above (e.g. youth, older adults, persons with disability, LGBTQ, new Canadians, people experiencing poverty, women and families)”⁴*

In the most restrictive cases membership may be capped at a certain number, with new members entering the organization by invitation only.

The Current LHC



There are no formal restrictions on who can obtain and keep membership in the LHC. Under the current process, anyone may become a member simply by signing up for the mailing list on the Coalition’s website. The Monthly General meetings are open to all members, and all members have voting rights. There is no distinction made between types of members, nor is there any restriction on how many members may come from any individual organization.

Open membership has the advantage of casting a wide net of interested persons and organizations involved in homelessness. It also means that the General Meetings often feature a different group of people at each session. The ability to make progress on any particularly topic is hampered by the need to bring

² New Westminster Homeless Coalition, *Terms of Reference 2010*.

³ Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness Society, *Bylaws 2010*.

⁴ Waterloo Region, *Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Advisory Board Guidelines and Conflict of Interest Agreement*.

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new or irregularly attending members up to speed; this works against the efficiency and productivity of the meetings, and knowledge gaps amongst members may impede the ability of the Coalition to speak on matters of importance.

Decision Making



The decision-making spectrum refers to the level of involvement of the general membership in the decisions of the organization. A direct approach indicates that the general membership must approve or deny every motion, project or other action taken by the organization. A delegated approach entails the creation of steering committees or executive councils that may decisions on behalf of the membership. Generally, as the level of delegation increases the frequency of general membership meetings decreases, while the frequency of steering committee (or equivalent) meetings increases. The New Westminster Homeless Coalition empowers its Committee of the Whole to develop, monitor and implement action plans while its Table Officers are delegated administration tasks. Correspondingly, the former meets more frequently than the latter. Meanwhile, the Waterloo Region Homeless and Housing Umbrella Group features a much stronger Steering Committee that is responsible for making decisions and conducting business on behalf of the Group. In this case, general membership meetings are convened three times a year with steering committee meetings held eight times per annum.

At the extreme end of the delegation spectrum, the general membership may meet once per year and only to set or approve the action plan of the steering committee for the next year.

The Current LHC



The LHC consists of a General Meeting and a Steering Committee. Both meet monthly, with the agenda for the General Meeting set by the Steering Committee. The relative importance of the Steering Committee has fluctuated over the years, depending on the capacities of the individual holding the Chair. Currently, the typical decision-making process entail the General Meeting referring matters to the Steering Committee, who subsequently brings back proposals, recommendations or other actions for approval by the full membership. Consequently, the LHC is closer to the 'direct' end of the decision-making spectrum. The fact that the General Membership and the Steering Committee both meet monthly indicates that the referral of an issue to the latter is not a delegation of decision-making authority.

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Management



Management may range from an entirely volunteer based organization to an organization administered by paid staff. In the former case, the individuals who set the priorities for the organization and implement the decisions are drawn from the same group, and are in fact likely to be the same people. Organizations with paid staff maintain a separation between priority setting and implementation, with staff responsible for administrative functions and project delivery. The availability of paid staff enhances the capacity of the organization but requires the capacity to hire, manage, and pay employees. There is also a danger of the staff becoming a crutch that replaces cooperation between members, which may work against the ultimate goals of the organization.

The Current LHC



The LHC is entirely volunteer-driven, with no paid staff. The Coalition did hire staff in its early years, but this was funding-dependent and has not re-occurred in the years since. Today, the ability to hire staff would mostly likely require the Coalition to collect dues from members.

The reliance on volunteer leadership means that the management of the Coalition has been, at times, unstable. The Chair provides much of the ongoing structure for the operations of the LHC, with the exception of some logistical support provided by the City. With little in the way of stable structure underpinning the organization, the Coalition may have the potential to veer in various directions depending on the agendas and priorities of the Chair. Furthermore, transitions between Chairs can be particularly destabilizing for the Coalition, as the organization is essentially rebuilt with each new Chairperson.

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Structure



The structural spectrum involves the degree to which activities are concentrated or dispersed. A dispersed approach spreads responsibilities for functions amongst several officials or bodies. In most cases there is usually at least two levels to an organization, one comprising the general membership and a steering committee or equivalent. However, organizations may establish more complex structures. Permanent sub-committees and officials with designated portfolios are features of dispersed organizations. For example, the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homeless has five layers, consisting of Leadership Council, Secretariat, and Executive, Finance and Audit, and Management Committees. The complexity of an organization's structure must align with its mission and vision. Groups involved in direct service delivery or intensive project management will quickly find that permanent structures will need to be created to effectively manage these processes. Organizations dedicated to information sharing or advocacy will see more benefit in concentrating their activities, as this maximizes the opportunities for member interaction and consensus building.

The Current LHC



The LHC is mostly concentrated, with only two standing bodies that both meet monthly. On occasion the Coalition has established sub-committees focused on particular projects. A notable recent example is found in the creation of a memorial for deceased individuals who were homeless. A sub-committee was created to take ownership of the project, which then worked with the City and other stakeholders to bring the project to fruition. Already three years old, the memorial sub-committee will likely remain a permanent fixture of the LHC as it organizes the addition of new names to the monument.

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Five Pillar Evaluation

The evaluation framework is based on five 'pillars', and is drawn from the documents, interviews, and observations. These pillars are:

Context	The social, political, physical and economic environment and the influence of one or more of these on the operation of the LHC;
Formative	Assessing the need that the LHC aims to fulfill, the early stages of the Coalition's development;
Process	Assessing both implementation and operation of the LHCs operations;
Impact	Assessing the changes, both in a positive and negative sense, as well as the order of magnitude of those changes, produced by the LHC;
Outcome	Outcomes may relate to changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, behaviors, conditions, or other attributes.

Context

At the macro level, the LHC exists in a broader community that has been buffeted by an evolving economic and demographic situation. The recession introduced a prolonged period of financial retrenchment from the provincial and federal governments, with predictable effects on the amount of money available to municipal governments and social services. Furthermore, there have been changes to provincial homelessness funding. The provincial Community Homeless Prevention Initiative, for example, consolidated multiple programs into one funding source, while granting municipal governments more flexibility in the allocation of funds.

In the past several years the City of London has adopted a new Community Plan on Homelessness and Community Housing Plan. In May 2013, the Homeless Prevention Strategy Implementation Plan was introduced. These documents represent somewhat of a break from prior service planning in their endorsement of a housing-with-supports, or Housing First, approach. This type of approach to housing and homelessness service provision requires integration and prioritization in service delivery, and a proportionally higher degree of resources funneled to long term housing supports and case management. Furthermore, the federal government has indicated that the next round of Homeless Partnership Strategy funding will be based on a Housing First approach. Although the LHC has endorsed the Community Plan on Homelessness and is broadly aligned with the philosophy of Housing First, the membership still exhibits some difference of opinion concerning the details of this direction.

Formative

The Coalition emerged in response to SCPI/HPS. In those early years the Coalition emerged as a mechanism for meeting funding requirements and advise the City of the development of a community plan. Beyond this, the Coalition also took on an advocacy role in the community, hosting events such as the Soup N' Bread. The circumstances that led to the creation of the LHC is one of the reasons behind the organization's central tensions: the organizations that come together to advise the City on homelessness funding are also the organizations that may apply for such funding. Despite this, the Coalition did fulfill the need to link community members and organizations at a time when these connections were tenuous.

Process

Currently, the core of the LHC operations is found in the monthly meetings of the general membership and steering committee. It is at these meetings that much of the business of the Coalition is discussed and carried out. There are exceptions to this process, as the Coalition occasionally takes on ad hoc projects and develops committees to oversee the delivery of these initiatives. An oft-cited example of this is

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the memorial placed in Campbell Park commemorating individuals who had died while homeless. In the case of this project, the idea was developed at the general membership meeting, referred to the steering committee, and then assigned to a project-specific committee.

As most of the Coalition's activity is focused on its meetings, the most important component of the Coalition's structure is the meeting agendas. The structure of the agenda has evolved over the life of the LHC. For several years, the agenda included standing items that provided space for attendees to share information at the beginning of meetings. More recently, the agenda includes updates on special projects, such the Soup N' Bread event and memorial project. An update from the City of London is one item that has been consistently included on every agenda.

Impact

Overall, the Coalition's impact is focused on 'soft' factors of relationship maintenance, consensus building, information sharing, and advocacy. It is generally perceived that the LHC has succeeded in providing a forum for this to happen, and the community has benefited as a result. By their nature, these types of impacts are difficult to track. A counterfactual analysis might help to illuminate matters: If the Coalition had not existed over the last 13 years, how might things have been different? Presumably the organization's advocacy efforts would not have happened, and the dissemination of knowledge amongst community service providers would have been difficult to achieve. In the absence of a core community Coalition, the City might have been expected to bear the burden of facilitating connections amongst service providers. This role would have been problematic, given the City's other role as funder.

Outcome

Outcomes are difficult to discern given the lack of measureable outputs. Nevertheless, the LHC has been actively involved in planning processes and advocacy over the last 13 years, and has undoubtedly shaped the local discussion of homelessness and service delivery. The most obvious outcome of the LHC's work is its own continued existence. The Coalition has maintained member involvement for over a decade, and for many of these years has been an entirely volunteer based organization. Members continue to see the relevancy of the Coalition, both in bringing together community members and facilitating the sharing of information. As many interviewees noted, there is no comparable organization that fills the niche provided by the Coalition. Longevity is an outcome of value in a community of diverse service providers and member perspectives.

Chapter 2: Recommendations for Strengthening the LHC

A: Strengthen and stabilize membership

The open membership system should be retained, but member status and roles should be delineated. Three membership types are proposed:

Members: This membership type will usually consist of organizations, but can also encompass subject matter experts and active community members. Members are expected to regularly attend general meetings. There will be only one membership per organization, and it is expected that the organization shall designate a representative who will attend meetings on its behalf.

Associate Members: This membership type will usually consist of individuals who are either in the housing and homeless field, or are interested members of the community. Associate Members are not expected to attend meetings, but will receive information and communication from the Coalition through the website and other social media channels.

Resource Members: This membership type will consist of representatives from governments, public sector agencies or other organizations that are related to the work of the Coalition. Resource Membership allows these entities to attend meetings and participate in discussions without compromising the independence of the Coalition or the Resource Member. This membership type will have no voting rights.

Members should elect the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Coordinators, and the at-large members of the Steering Committee.

Given the mandate and mission of the Coalition, it is particularly important that individuals with lived experience of homelessness remain welcome and encouraged to both attend General Membership meetings and to participate in its discussions. Additionally, the Coalition can take the initiative in inviting individuals with lived experience to become Members or Associate Members.

B: Increase the capacity of the Steering Committee

To maintain the focus and expertise of the Coalition, it is recommended that the Chair or Vice-Chair be drawn from organizations that directly serve homeless populations.

The momentum and effectiveness of the Coalition often depends on who is in the Chair position. To provide for better stability and consistency of operations, it is recommended that specific tasks be delegated to Steering Committee members who act as “Coordinators”. The Chair will retain responsibility for setting agendas, convening and facilitating minutes, managing the operations of the Coalition and speaking on its behalf where needed. A minimum time commitment of five hours a week should be expected from any person in the Chair position.

For the initial reorganization, it is recommended that three Coordinator positions be established:

Communication Coordinator: This individual will be responsible for maintaining communication within the Coalition members through the website and social media channels, and for communications with media sources.

Outreach Coordinator: This individual will be responsible for establishing relationships with those groups not typically represented at Coalition meetings. This Coordinator will take the lead in organizing outreach events as provided in Recommendation G below.

Secretary: This coordinator will hold responsibilities for establishing and maintaining membership records, maintaining meeting minutes and agendas, and other logistical tasks as required.

Coordinators should be elected directly by the Members, and upon election will automatically become a member of the Steering Committee. Only Members will be eligible to stand for election as Coordinators.

C: Use a constellation model to pursue projects and improve collaboration

The constellation model is a recent development in the study of organizational structures, and is particularly suited to volunteer organizations where capacities might be limited.⁵ A constellation model emphasizes lightweight governance structures that allow members to come together for specific projects, and then separate once the project is complete. A constellation represents a group of interested members who collaborate on these projects. The structures of the constellations themselves are flexible, and may take on the form of committees, working groups or partnerships. Constellations operate under the supervision of a central authority, in this case a Steering Committee, who acts to approve projects, nurture constellation development and guide the groups through any issues encountered. For the LHC, the strength of the constellation model is the way it channels member activity to areas where there is the most interest and energy, and does not mandate the creation of permanent structures.

The Coalition has the capacity to take on specific, time-limited projects with definable outputs. It should be explicitly understood that these constellations are dissolved once the project is completed, and that there is no automatic expectation of deeper collaboration resulting from any project.

A Project Lead should be identified for each project. Every identified Project Lead will have a standing invitation to attend Steering Committee meetings as needed to provide reports and receive direction.

D: On a yearly basis, identify priorities for advocacy and collaboration

The LHC should identify one to two priorities per year for proactive advocacy, and a number of other priorities for issue monitoring. In addition to giving focus to advocacy, this priority selection process can help structure meetings and projects. Using a logic model framework, Figure 13 and Figure 14 illustrate the importance that issue selection will play in the future operations of the LHC. The third section of this report outlines an issue selection process.

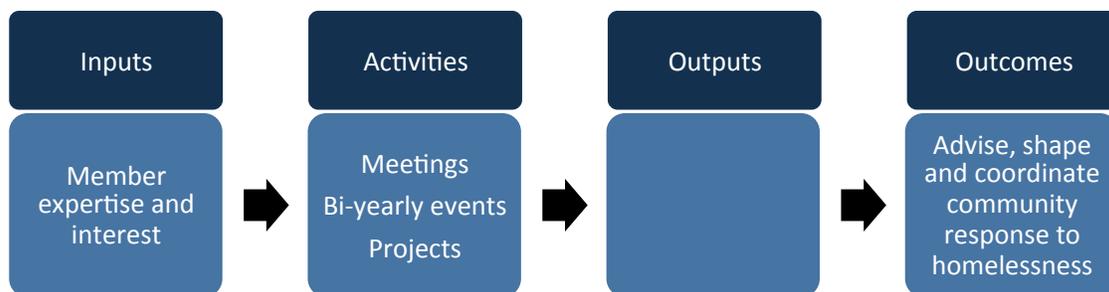


Figure 13: Current LHC Logic Model

E: Structure meetings to maximize information sharing and advance priorities

The primary recommendation here is to focus on meetings as outputs, not activities. The LHC should continue to enhance the relevancy of meetings by emphasizing information sharing and collaborative problem solving. In recent months the Coalition has adjusted its agenda structure to maximize opportunities for discussion. As the Coalition establishes priorities on an annual basis, these can be structured into the agenda to maintain the focus on these issues throughout the year.

5 Centre for Social Innovation, *Constellation Collaboration: A model for multi-organizational partnership*.

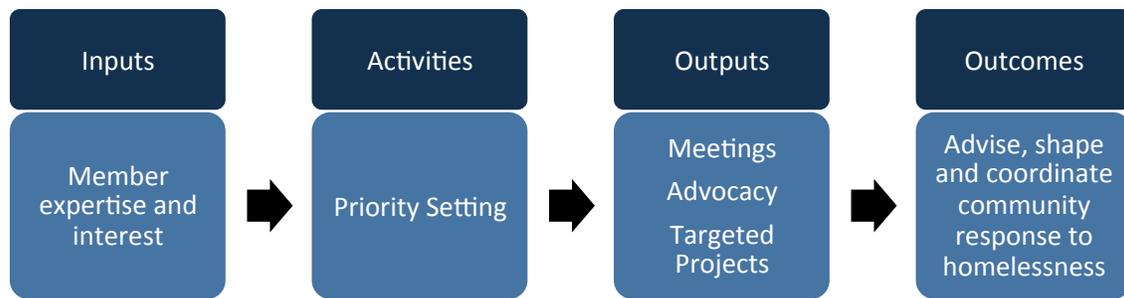


Figure 14: Proposed LHC Logic Model

F: Enhance the role of the website and social media in disseminating and collecting information

The Coalition's website is a relatively new development, and it is advised that the LHC make greater use of the website and social media to involve Associate Members outside of the meetings. For example, the LHC blog could be used to focus attention on the priorities set by the Coalition, and to facilitate discussion amongst Associate Members. These members could also be surveyed as a means of gathering community input.

Further, LHC activities can be reported through the website to inform community members of current initiatives.

G. Undertake regular outreach to groups not represented in the Coalition

It has been noted that individuals with lived experience, Aboriginal persons and groups, and private sector developers/landlords are not well represented at LHC meetings. Workshops, focus groups, discussion groups and other forms of engagement may be employed to connect with these groups once or twice a year, with the results reported back to the General Membership. Current advocacy efforts may be reoriented to meet this need. For instance, rather than two Soup N' Bread events per year, the Coalition could instead host one such event on National Housing Day and focus it on engaging people with lived experience.

H. The Coalition should permanently delegate its status as the Community Advisory Board for Homeless Partnering Strategy funds

The Coalition's role in determining the allocation of Homeless Partnering Strategy funding has contributed to tensions within the membership, and frequently puts members into a conflict of interest. These types of conflicts may serve to undermine the credibility of the Coalition's advocacy efforts going forward.

The Coalition has already begun the process of removing itself from holding this role. At the February 2014 General Meeting the Coalition voted to delegate the responsibility for conducting the next round of Homeless Partnering Strategy funding reviews to the London Homelessness Prevention System Implementation Team. In doing so, London joins other cities, such as Hamilton, in placing the review function in a body that is closer to the municipal government. This step removes the potential for conflict of interest amongst the Coalition members, and should be established as a permanent practice.

I. The Coalition should not seek non-profit status, nor should it seek to add paid staff

Achieving and maintaining non-profit status is a cumbersome process that carries significant reporting burdens. As the Coalition does not frequently accept, hold, or disperse funding to any significant degree, it is not clear what advantages might come from non-profit status. Similarly, the organizational capacities needed to hire and retain staff are beyond the current scope of the Coalition, and it is not evident what a paid staff member might do that could not be taken on by a volunteer. Furthermore, an all-volunteer organization maintains the potential for member interaction and mobilization that is critical to the success of the Coalition.

Chapter 3: The LHC as an Advocacy Organization

The Coalition’s membership has identified advocacy as being a priority activity for the organization. Advocacy presents an opportunity to influence the direction of policy and shape public opinion. It also provides a means to structure Coalition activities and address mutually held challenges. It is recommended that the Coalition adopt two approaches to its advocacy efforts:

Proactive advocacy involves the deliberate selection of issues that will be advanced through several means, such as position papers, events, education materials, and dissemination of talking points.

Issue monitoring involves selecting several issues that are of importance to the Coalition, and require ongoing observation by members. Advocacy windows may emerge during the year as these issues bubble to the surface, during which the Coalition may provide a public comment.

A proposed issue selection process is described below in Figure 15. In this process, an unstructured discussion is held at the inaugural meeting of every year, after which the Steering Committee brings three to seven priorities back to the General Membership for their consideration. Members rank the selected priorities using a scoring system, and the top priorities become the subject of proactive advocacy. The remaining priorities become monitored issues. In addition to selecting topics for advocacy, this process provides the basis for better information sharing and collaboration by explicitly defining the priorities of the Coalition’s membership.

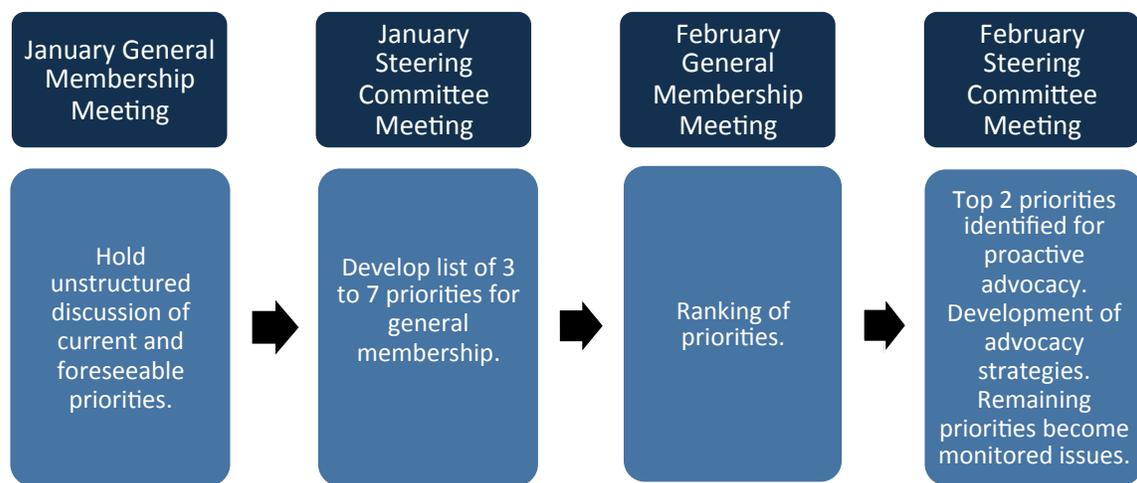


Figure 15: Advocacy issue selection process

Chapter 4: New Terms of Reference for the LHC

A draft terms of reference has been attached in Appendix A of this report. Figure 16 provides an organizational structure for the revised LHC.

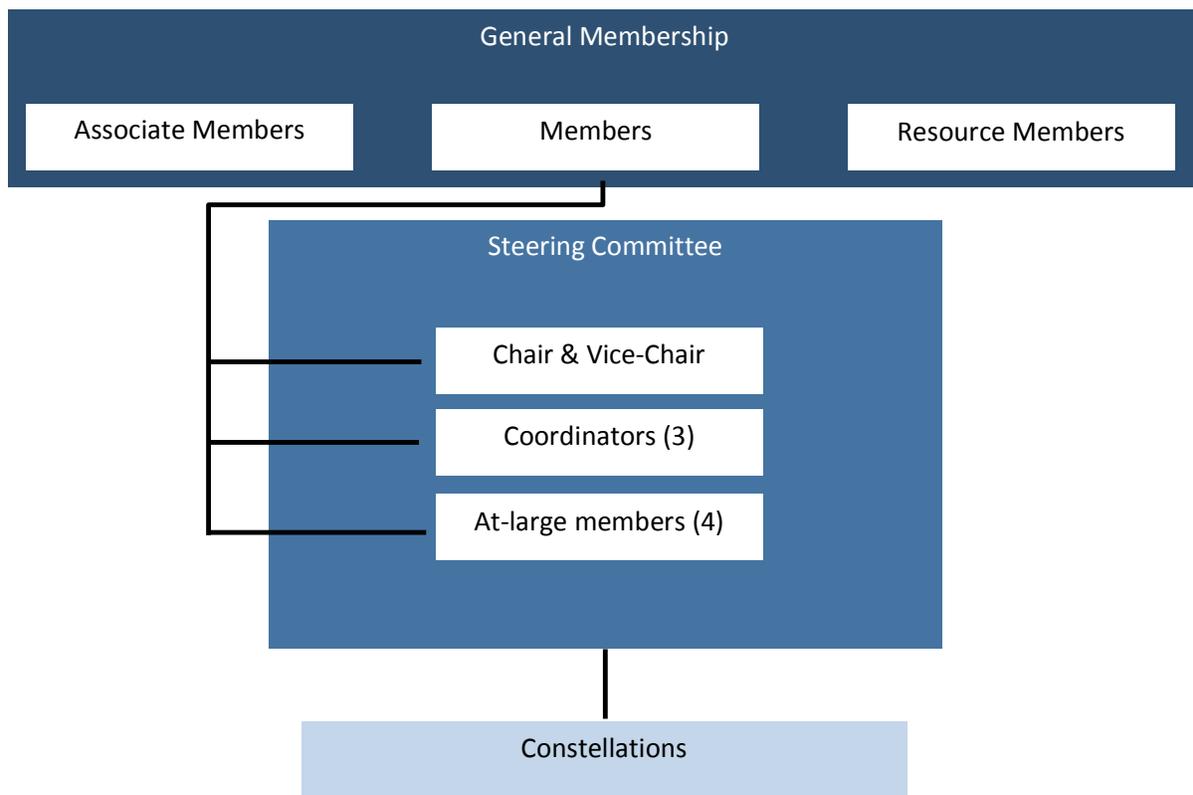


Figure 16: Proposed organizational structure of LHC

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

London Homeless Coalition

Terms of Reference

1. Mission and Vision

The LHC exists to advise, shape and coordinate community responses to homelessness, and related needs to the London area.

2. Membership

Membership is open to any individual or organization that shares the Coalition's commitment to ending homelessness in the London area.

2.1. Membership categories, roles, and voting rights

Members:

- 2.1.1. A Member is an organization or individual who regularly attends General Membership meetings.
- 2.1.2. Where the Member is an organization, the Member shall identify a delegate who will attend meetings on its behalf. This delegate shall be a person of authority within the Member's organization. The Member may change its delegate through written notification to the Chair.
- 2.1.3. Members have the right to vote for the Chair, Vice-Chair, Coordinators, and Steering Committee members.
- 2.1.4. Members are eligible to hold the position of Chair, Vice-Chair, Coordinator, and Steering Committee member.
- 2.1.5. Members have the right to move and second motions, and to vote at General Membership meetings.
- 2.1.6. Members have the right to vote at priority setting meetings.
- 2.1.7. There shall be only one vote per Member.

Associate Members:

- 2.1.8. An Associate Member is an interested member of the community who is free to attend General Membership meetings, but is not expected to regularly do so.
- 2.1.9. Associate Members regularly receive information and communications from the London Homeless Coalition.

Resource Members:

- 2.1.10. Resource Members are free to attend General Membership meetings, but are not expected to regularly do so.
- 2.1.11. Representative Members hold no voting rights.

2.2. Member application and intake

Members:

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- 2.2.1. Members shall apply in writing to the Chair.
- 2.2.2. Member applications shall be considered at the monthly meeting of the Steering Committee. A majority vote shall be required to accept a new Member.

Associate Members:

- 2.2.3. Associate Members shall apply in writing to the Chair.
- 2.2.4. Approval of Associate Membership is automatic.

Resource Members:

- 2.2.5. Resource Members shall apply in writing to the Chair.
- 2.2.6. Resource Member applications shall be considered at the monthly meeting of the Steering Committee. A majority vote shall be required to accept a new Resource Member.

2.3. Maintenance of membership status

- 2.3.1. A Member who fails to attend three consecutive General Membership meetings shall have their membership status suspended pending a discussion with the Chair. Membership status shall be reinstated with the approval of the Steering Committee.
- 2.3.2. A suspension of Membership shall entail a suspension of rights and eligibilities.
- 2.3.3. A suspended Member shall not be eligible to run for election for any position within the LHC. If the suspended Member is a Coordinator, at-large Steering Committee member, or Vice-Chair, their term in that position shall be considered cancelled and the Chair shall hold an election to fill the vacant position at the earliest convenient time.
- 2.3.4. Notwithstanding any of the above, the Steering Committee may suspend or cancel the membership of any Member if it concludes that the Member has acted in a manner that undermines the credibility or reputation of the Coalition and its members, and/or has acted inappropriately or disrespectfully to another member during a meeting.

2.4. Meetings open to the public

- 2.4.1. General Membership meetings of the Coalition are open to the public. In particular, individuals with lived experience are welcome and encouraged to attend.

3. Structure

3.1. General Membership

- 3.1.1. The General Membership shall consist of Members, Associate Members, and Resource Members.
- 3.1.2. A General Membership meeting shall be held once per month, at a time and location specified by the Chair.
- 3.1.3. Decisions can be decided by a majority vote of those Members present at meetings.

3.2. Chair and Vice-Chair

3.3. There shall be one Chair and one Vice-Chair.

- 3.3.1. Wherever possible given member availability and interest, the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Coalition shall be a member of a homeless-serving organization.
- 3.3.2. The role of the Chair is to:
 - Set agendas for the General Membership and Steering Committee meetings;
 - Convening and facilitate these meetings;

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- Receive applications for membership and bring these applications to the Steering Committee;
 - Represent the mission and vision of the LHC to the membership and the community.
- 3.3.3. It is generally expected that a Chair will be available to dedicate a minimum of five hours per week to his or her duties.
- 3.3.4. The Vice-Chair shall assume the role of the Chair as required.
- 3.3.5. The length of term for the Chair and Vice-Chair is two years or until the next election, whichever the sooner.
- 3.3.6. No Chair or Vice-Chair shall hold that position for more than six consecutive years.
- 3.4. Steering Committee
- 3.4.1. The role of the Steering Committee is to:
- Provide strategic direction to the Coalition;
 - Uphold the Mission and Philosophy of the LHC;
 - Promote the goals and objectives of the Coalition;
 - Facilitate the implementation of those goals and objectives;
 - Address any issues that have implications for the Coalition;
 - Reconcile differences of opinion and approach, and resolve disputes that may arise from those differences.
- 3.4.2. Decisions can be decided by a majority vote of those Steering Committee members present at meetings, provided that adequate notice of meeting date and time has been given and a quorum is established.
- 3.4.3. A quorum is required to conduct a Steering Committee meeting. A quorum is half the number of current elected members of the Steering Committee, plus one.
- 3.4.4. The Steering Committee will usually meet once per month, at a date and time set by the Chair. Additional meetings may be scheduled if deemed necessary by the Steering Committee or Chair.
- 3.4.5. The Steering Committee shall consist of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, three Coordinators, and four At-Large members.
- 3.4.6. Coordinators shall hold responsibility for specific functions within the Coalition.
- 3.4.7. The Communications Coordinator shall be responsible for maintaining communication within the Coalition members through the website and social media channels, and for communications with media sources.
- 3.4.8. The Outreach Coordinator shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with those groups not typically represented at Coalition meetings, and will take the lead in organizing outreach events.
- 3.4.9. The Secretary shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining membership records, maintaining meeting minutes and agendas, and other logistical tasks as necessary.
- 3.4.10. The length of term for the Coordinators and At-Large members is two years or until the next election, whichever the sooner.

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- 3.4.11. No Steering Committee member shall hold their position for more than six consecutive years.
- 3.4.12. Resource Members may attend Steering Committee meetings at the invitation of the Chair.
- 3.4.13. The City of London shall be considered to have a standing invitation to every Steering Committee meeting.

3.5. Constellations

- 3.5.1. Constellations are groups of members who work on specific, time-limited projects on behalf of the Coalition.
- 3.5.2. Members interested in launching a project shall submit a proposal to the Steering Committee.
- 3.5.3. The Steering Committee shall approve new projects, and assign resources at its discretion.
- 3.5.4. A Project Lead shall be identified for every project. For the duration of the project, the Lead shall have an open invitation to attend Steering Committee meetings to provide reports and receive direction as needed.

4. Elections

4.1. Date of Elections

- 4.1.1. The election of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Steering Committee members shall occur at the November General Membership meeting.

4.2. Nomination of Candidates

- 4.2.1. Candidates shall indicate their intention to run for a position by notifying the Chair no less than 45 calendar days prior to the November General Membership meeting. This notification should briefly include the candidate's interest in holding the position, and their qualifications.
- 4.2.2. The Chair shall circulate the above information in the agenda for the November General Membership Meeting.

4.3. Election of Candidates

- 4.3.1. Only members present at the November General Membership meeting shall have the ability to vote.
- 4.3.2. The candidate who receives the most votes shall be considered elected.

5. Establishment of Annual Priorities

5.1. Process

- 5.1.1. On an annual basis, the Coalition shall identify priorities for proactive advocacy and monitoring, using the process identified in Figure A.

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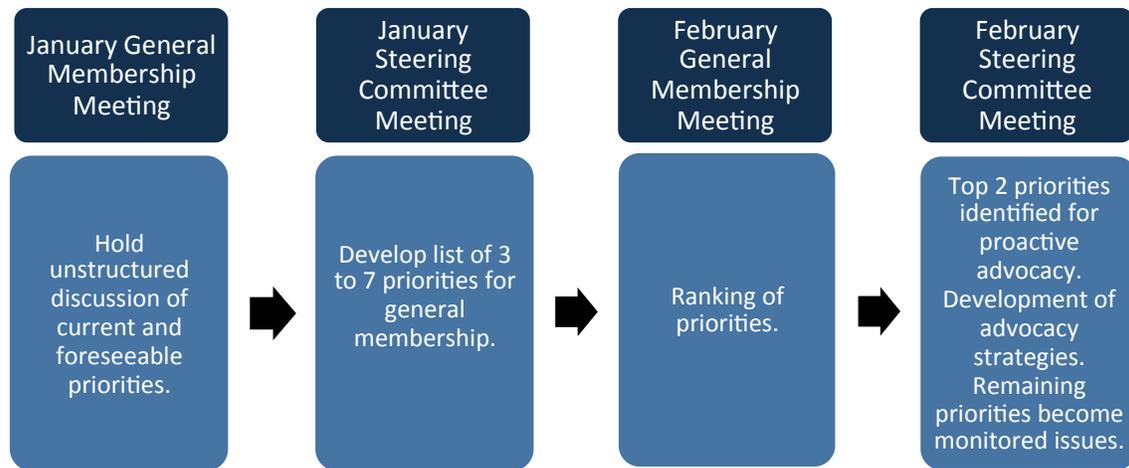


Figure A: Priority Setting Process