

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 19th October 2023

7:15 pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance

Kalu Amogu, Andrea Anderson, Geoff Bell, Phil Cooke, Adrian Essex, Elaine Gosnell, Jackie Myers, Tina Parrott, William Sheehy, Leonora Williams, Donna Fakes, Dulce Laluces, Gloria Obiliana

Guests Included

Jaime Powell, Isobel Pierce, Anthony Green, Cllr Sarah Young

Section 0 - Introduction

0.1 Welcome / Apologies for absence;

Hillary Britton, Euphemia Chukwu, Mina Faragalla, Oonagh Gormley, Jacquie Knowles, Ngozi Obanye, Barbara Panuzzo, Omar Villalba, Ekaterina Andrea, Caroline Selman, Simon Donovan

Acceptance of minutes:

- 0.21 Elaine sent Roda an email questioning the accuracy of paragraph 1.4. From the ITLA's understanding, Tom had provided the information regarding the benefits of the 2024 masterplan that Berkeley were looking to improve tree retention from 30-60% from the 2014 masterplan, provide more green open spaces than building footprints, provide an increased quality and quantity of public open spaces and more public open spaces than private amenity spaces.
- 0.22 Elaine also asked in her email if paragraph 1.3.27 could be recorded more accurately. Elaine had noted that 15% of the properties were less desirable single aspect in Phase 4 and inquired how many flats this was. She also mentioned she was told that there are 511 flats in total with 77 single aspect. Cllr Sarah Young reported that Elaine gave a detailed description of why she objects to this at the last meeting. The Board will revisit these points once Elaine is present, following the Partner Updates.
- 0.21 Roda did not receive the information on stalls and charity groups from Simon Donovan. Since the Hidden River Festival has already taken place, the Board has agreed to close this action.

- 0.22 Jaime Powell reported that at the November Board, Tom will be presenting on the Ground Floor Strategy. Additionally, he will provide updates on the masterplan, car parking, and cycle parking podiums, while addressing the inquiries related to active and non-active ground floor frontages.
- 0.23 Geoff requested that Berkeley's presentation at the November Board on podiums and car parking include a reference to the Hackney Plan statement regarding car parking on Woodberry Down. He also sought an answer regarding the issues related to car parking and cycle parking, emphasising the importance of contextualizing these within the recommendations outlined in Section 13 of the Hackney Plan.

ACTION: Jaime has confirmed that these aspects will be incorporated into the November presentation.

- 0.24 The Hackney Regeneration team will provide information about viability at the November Board. Berkeley will also deliver an explanation for the necessity of increased homes and viability at the November Board.
- 0.25 Board members expressed concerns about the potential time constraints during the November Board discussions, considering the multitude of presentations/updates scheduled, including the Ground Floor strategy, viability information from Berkeley and Hackney, as well as podiums and parking.
- 0.26 The Board inquired about the possibility of implementing alternative arrangements to ensure adequate time to discuss these items. Roda suggested that Board members engage in further discussion during the Board meeting, without partners, to determine which presentations should be included in the November Board agenda and which ones could be presented outside the Board. Once the Board members have reached a decision on the preferred approach, Roda will enquire whether the partners can accommodate their request.
- 0.27 Anthony Green clarified that the presentation of the Social Life update is also scheduled for the November Board.
- 0.28 Hackney submitted a written update on "split households" which Roda circulated to the Board the week before.
- 0.29 Roda received confirmation from Hackney that the WDCO budget has been approved. She was in the process of forwarding the invoices to Kalu for approval before the final submission to Hackney Council.

0.3 Matters arising / Action tracker

- 0.30. In terms of the Residence Tower Windows report, Jaime reported that Berkeley are still in the same position. The Chair asked for Berkeley to provide a timeline on when they can bring the report to the Board. Jaime responded that this is not feasible as the timeline is under the purview of their legal team.
- 0.31. Geoff reported that they are awaiting progress from the Design Committee concerning the masterplan review before advancing further with the Public Forum. Adrian emphasised the Board's responsibility to organise the Public Forum and suggested resuming

discussions, taking into consideration that the masterplan review might only provide a preliminary understanding of the next steps.

ACTION: Roda will schedule a meeting for Omar, Mina, and Geoff to continue planning for the Public Forum.

- 0.32. Roda received an update from Carol Boye, stating that the Hackney Regeneration Team is in the process of organising another meeting for the Pest Control Strategy, involving representatives from each organisation. Michael Pamment from Berkeley has also coordinated a site visit walk with various partners to identify specific issues at the NHG blocks and explore potential resolutions. The Board agreed to keep this action open until there is progress made.

Section 1 - Introduction

Partner Updates

- 1.1 **Answers to written questions:** Adrian inquired about the Insight retrospective billing and expressed dissatisfaction with the answers provided by Berkeley. He emphasised that this matter should not be brought to the Board, as not all Board members are affected. Adrian suggested that the Residents' Association take the lead in challenging Berkeley on this issue. Cllr Sarah Young provided an update, mentioning her discussions with Michael Pamment and Emily from Rendall & Ritner, who are organising surgeries for residents to address individual concerns.
- 1.2 The Executive Committee had proposed that such matters be raised at the Liaison meeting and coordinated with the chairs of the Residents' Association. However, this hadn't happened as the Residents' Association had been handling it separately.

ACTION: Once there is an update to provide, Adrian will inform the Board about the Residents' Association's progress on this issue.

- 1.3 Geoff asked what was Berkeley's timeline for presenting their tenure split proposal in the third masterplan to the Board. Jaime clarified that the tenure split is scheduled to be presented to the Board in November as part of the Masterplan presentation.
- 1.4 Sarah Young clarified that the Board is interested in understanding the partners' positions on the tenure split, including the allocation of social homes, affordable homes, shared ownership homes, and private homes in the rest of the regeneration. Additionally, they want to explore whether there is any flexibility in these allocations.
- 1.5 Geoff highlighted previous promises made at the Design Committee in April, where a full discussion on the matter was pledged within four months—yet it has not been delivered. There was also a commitment from NHG for a discussion on affordable home models in September, which has not been fulfilled. Geoff stressed the importance of these discussions coming to the Board so that members can express their views.
- 1.6 Anthony noted there are currently two possible dates, the 15th and 29th of November, for NHG to present to the Design Committee about intermediate options. He reported NHG's preference for shared ownership due to its ability to generate cross-subsidy for

social rented homes, its long-standing presence in the market, and recognition by mortgage lenders, especially in a high-interest rate environment. NHG's presentation for the Design Committee is expected to return to the Board in December. Isobel also noted that Hackney Council is also examining intermediate tenures and options, with an update scheduled for the Board in early 2024.

ACTION: Anthony will distribute the presentation ahead of the Board, allowing Board members to review it in advance. The presentation will then be summarised for a shorter update at the December Board meeting.

1.7 The Board clarified that the written question regarding the service charge account was intended for Birchwood, not Maplewood. Frustrations were expressed over the ongoing delay in the accounts, with initial expectations set for September 2022, followed by delays in March, June, and September. As of now, Birchwood residents are still awaiting their accounts. Roda shared an update from NHG, indicating that they have recently recruited a service charge officer to handle the 2020/21 accounts, with completion anticipated by 4th November.

ACTION: Anthony will find out the timeline for when Birchwood residents entitled to a refund will receive a surplus payment from NHG and will provide this information to the Board members.

1.8 William raised concerns about the changes and NHG's approach to the estate walkabout. Anthony sought feedback from the Board on areas where NHG could improve in this regard. Roda expressed the Board's preference for a more collaborative approach to determining the best way forward, especially concerning streamlining meetings as part of the Awayday priorities on governance. The Board also advocated for a discussion on objectives before making changes. Sarah suggested a collaborative and practical process involving a thorough review of meeting details through a spreadsheet, defining terms of reference, and specifying the focus of each meeting. Anthony acknowledged that the delivery partners aimed to streamline meetings and recognised that NHG's M&E offer needs improvement. He reported that the Director of Assets at NHG apologised for service delivery issues to residents and assured ongoing efforts to address them. The principles around escalation of issues will be presented to the Liaison group for resolution. Roda noted that the Executive Committee members, William and Kristina, along with partners, initiated efforts to streamline meetings as part of the Awayday priorities on governance, emphasising the need to resume and make further progress in these discussions. Geoff also shared some positive news about the swift completion of repair works by NHG.

ACTION: NHG will arrange a meeting with WDCO members from the NHG blocks to discuss how they can achieve the objectives and improve estate inspections and walkabouts.

General questions:

- 1.9 Gloria reported the persistent issue with the cable TV aerials at Bankside to NHG. Roda noted that Jada had given an update, confirming that the matter is currently being addressed. William also expressed concerns about television issues and mentioned Berkeley's involvement in assessing the situation, suggesting a Freesat box as a potential solution. William sought assistance from NHG and Berkeley to address the problem, with Anthony suggesting a possible connection to the crane's position.

ACTION: Jaime and Anthony will raise this concern with Trevor, work together to find a solution, and present an update at the upcoming Liaison meeting.

- 1.10 Adrian inquired about the possibility of the Berkeley report, not just for November but potentially on a quarterly basis, providing more detailed information about the demographics of buyers. Specifically, he sought insights into whether purchases are made by UK-based individuals or foreign investors and requested information on the percentages of asking prices achieved in these transactions. Jaime responded that she does not have the authority to share this information but assured Adrian that she will inquire within Berkeley Homes. Jaime also confirmed that Berkeley does sell flats to foreign investors, who subsequently rent them out to occupants in the UK. She clarified that these flats are not left vacant and emphasised that foreign investment is a vital factor funding the Woodberry Down regeneration. Furthermore, Jaime noted that Berkeley still has UK purchasers and is planning to launch a reduced deposit scheme for residents in Hackney, Haringey, and Islington, making it more accessible for local residents to purchase flats.

ACTION: Jaime will provide an answer at the next Liaison meeting regarding the feasibility of including buyer demographic information in the Berkeley report.

- 1.11 Elaine inquired about an update from Hackney Council regarding the split household and sought an explanation for why the out-of-phase offers have not been run in tandem with the other phases. Isobel provided background information on the policy changes concerning split households, noting that small clarifications were made earlier this year. She clarified that the policy is live and actively implemented by the Decant team. While the policy is live, no offers have been made thus far. Isobel emphasised that the policy revolves around the availability of homes, requiring empty homes in later phases before implementing the split household offer. She also noted that the Decant team are currently looking at applications for children of tenants set to move into Phase 3 and that expansion would be considered once this phase is completed.
- 1.12 Elaine shared her experience during a walkabout with the Mayor of Hackney in February 2022. The Mayor, aware of Elaine's efforts and complaints over the past nine years, expressed excitement about the offer. Elaine, however, is unsatisfied over the lack of progress, despite consistently raising the issue of out-of-phase offers at every meeting. Roda noted that, during recent ITLA surgeries over the past two weeks, residents have been applying for surplus homes in

Phase 3, including a significant number of young people applying for out-of-phase split households. Roda reported that the Decant team is currently conducting verification checks for those who have requested split households.

- 1.13 Elaine expressed frustrations over Hackney, introducing another criteria that people have to apply for Phase 3 when this stipulation is not in the lettings policy and asked the Decant team if the criteria change has come into play prior to any Phase 3 applications. Francis Kwarteng, the Decant manager, updated that the out-of-phase applications alone were in the region of 50-60 applicants; his team needed to pre-allocate the 35 surplus units in Phase 3, which had meant writing to all existing Hackney tenants on the estate asking if they wished to be considered for these units. Any tenants that are interested in the 35 surplus units and pre-allocated properties would then be eligible for their children to split. So, in this way, some of the "out of phase applicants" might get allocated their own tenancies.
- 1.14 Elaine inquired about the implementation of the criteria related to tenancy dates. Francis clarified that the tenancy date is considered alongside other factors like housing needs and phase. In cases where two applicants share the same priorities, the Decant team will need to establish a method to determine priority for property allocation.
- 1.15 William asked NHG to provide safety checks on the emergency lighting at Birchwood and Maplewood and raised issues of electrical failure at Maplewood. William also raised that the building is single aspect with no windows and that the corridors are pitch-black without the emergency lighting working. The Board also mentioned that when the doors were changed at Birchwood and Maplewood, residents were given new fobs which do not open the bin area.

ACTION: Anthony will take the issues on the emergency lighting and fobs back to NHG and will come back with an update.

- 1.16 Sarah inquired about the current situation of those in temporary accommodation in the phase currently being decanted. Francis responded that they are in contact with the Benefits and Housing Needs team. There will be a letter to residents in Phase 4, but the letter is tailored to inform them that it specifically affects the leaseholder, not them, since they are in temporary accommodation. In previous phases, the council successfully rehoused people in temporary accommodation, mostly providing direct offers for permanent homes. Unfortunately, for Phase 4 temporary tenants, finding alternative temporary accommodation is more likely due to a shortage of properties across Hackney.
- 1.17 Geoff inquired with the Decant team about the surplus in the number of homes in Phase 3. Francis explained that this is due to some tenants in Phase 5 not taking up their offer for a property in Phase 3. Since the Council hasn't declared Phase 5 a "decant phase," they are not obligated to take the properties. He emphasised that this involved a small number of tenants, as there are 65 secure tenants in Phase 5, and 51 of them are pre-allocated.

Round Table (vacancy):

- 1.18 There was a vacancy for the Round Table after Jackie's election as Chair. The Board held an election, in which Phil Cooke was chosen by the Board to serve as the WDCO representative on the Round Table.

Board Discussion without partners

- 1.19 **Update on the meeting with the Deputy Mayor:** Roda sent out a written update from the Executive members which gave a brief outline of the issues WDCO raised with the Deputy Mayor and what the actions that came out of the meeting were.
- 1.20 Roda stated that Deputy Mayor Guy Nicholson clarified that, while he currently holds the position of Deputy Mayor and is overseeing Woodberry Down, he is temporarily filling the role until a new Mayor is elected in November. Hence, his presence at the meeting was to listen to and understand the concerns raised by WDCO rather than making substantial commitments.

ACTION: The Chair will follow up with Deputy Mayor Guy Nicholson to check progress with the actions from the meeting.

- 1.21 Geoff highlighted that Section 13 of the Hackney Plan outlines Hackney's vision for the Woodberry Down regeneration and pointed out that some promises in that plan have been broken or remain unfulfilled. He emphasised discrepancies, such as the justification for the podium based on the Hackney Plan's stance on on-street parking, which, according to the Woodberry Down section of the plan, advocates for minimising both on-street and off-street parking. Geoff also noted discrepancies in the wording of community facilities, where the Hackney Plan mentions 'transformed community facilities', and the alternative provided was 'community facilities for everyone.'
- 1.22 Adrian pointed out that Hackney is framing the regeneration as community-led, which, he feels is not the case. He recommended emphasising this aspect when communicating with the Deputy Mayor.
- 1.23 Elaine inquired about the rooftop green space in the high-rise area, questioning whether it qualifies as green space. She pointed out that Berkeley had previously reported to the Board that it does. Sarah added that, in terms of biodiversity, this rooftop space offers significant benefits.

AOB:

- 1.24 Roda asked the Board members what presentations and updates they wanted at the November Board. The members expressed the need for proposed presentations and updates to be sent in advance, which the delivery partners intended to present at the November Board. The Board will then review the material and decide on appropriate dates for these presentations, determining which ones should be included in the November Board agenda.

ACTION: The Chair will email the Board's request to the partners on Monday.

1.25 Roda highlighted that the minutes remain unaccepted as the Board hasn't had the opportunity to address the concerns raised by Elaine.

ACTION: Roda will add the acceptance of the September minutes on the agenda for the November Board.

1.26 The Chair noted that delivery partners have proposed an earlier start time for Board meetings at 6 pm or 6:30 pm. However, the Board members decided against an earlier commencement. The decision was influenced by the fact that several Board members are working, and an earlier schedule would pose challenges for their attendance.