



# WDCO REPORT

September 2023



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## 1. DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

### 1.1 Phase 2 Block D & B - Sales Progress

Phase 2 (Blocks D and B) comprises 134 Shared Ownership homes, of which 130 homes have been sold and are occupied by residents. There are 3 homes left for sale in block D and 1 home in block B.

### 1.2 Phase 3 - Construction Progress

Phase 3 build is continuing to progress well and we are expecting handovers of A1, A2 and A3 in September 2024. A1, A2 and A3 will all complete at the same time due to there being a shared podium. It is not possible to take possession on different dates due to the legal complexities of the block lease. This form of lease ultimately provides NHG more control over the block management, including service charge affordability.

An Energy Centre tour and demonstration was held by Berkeley Homes on the 17<sup>th</sup> August. Representatives from WDCO, NHG, Hackney Council and Berkeley were present. The functionality was presented by Berkeley Homes and we visited the rooftop air source heat pumps and the energy centre in the basement. The energy centre will be maintained by Berkeley who are in the process of preparing the heat tariffs for NHG to review.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> October, Hackney Council and NHG met to discuss the allocations progress ahead of the Phase 3B tenant's choice workshop. The workshop is expected to be in October/November once all residents have been allocated properties. A highly experienced Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) has been appointed to assist with this process, resourced from NHG's Regeneration Team.

### 1.3 Phase 4 and Masterplan

The detailed Phase 4 planning information will be distributed w/c 11<sup>th</sup> September to the Delivery Partners. The planning submission is currently scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> October.

The Masterplan consultation has been delayed until November. There will be two rounds of consultation - in November and with an exhibition early February 2024. This allows 6 weeks between the first and second consultation.

## 2. SOCIO ECONOMIC UPDATE

### 2.1 Social Impact of the Regeneration Programme (WD Social Impact Framework)

Over the Summer period Social Life has been conducting door-to-door surveys, stakeholder interviews and walking interviews, as well as engaging with the recruited young people from the WD My Place Project. This is to gather detailed insight into the perceptions of those living on Woodberry Down.

Social Life will be analysing the data shortly and be liaising with the Delivery Partners to confirm what has been achieved against the framework indicators. A report will be published in the Autumn/Winter. Our sincere thanks to all those who have participated and contributed.

## **2.2 Woodberry Down My Place**

LDT have recruited 8 local young people as Community Ambassadors for the WD My Place project. During the summer they have been through training on social research and how to use creative methods to engage with young people. The next steps will be working with NHG, Berkeley Homes and Hackney Council to play an active role in the forthcoming Masterplan consultation.

## **2.3 West Reservoir Open day**

NHG supported and provided funding for an Open Day at the West Reservoir on Monday 28th August. Working with Better (part of GLL) we hosted 132 visitors to the centre, with 112 residents taking part in either kayaking or sailing taster sessions. The purpose of this event was to gauge interest from the community at Woodberry Down in both the centre and water sports. One of the centre's aims is to make it accessible to those who can't already access the services. NHG was approached to provide support as part of our Physical Wellbeing programme (Let's get Active). 45% of attendees were from the WD estate and 8 local young people have started a 'Learn to Sail' course for free. This is part of a pilot to support young people to access water sports, training and career opportunities in this sector.

## **2.4 New project – The Zen Bus**

NHG is working with the Zen Project which offers a range of wellbeing services and mental health support to the community. They have a fleet of American school buses that have been converted into peaceful, calming sanctuaries that provide a range of simple activities for residents to improve their mental health and wellbeing. We will be working with the Zen project until March 2024. This is being funded from our NHG Foundation, which will enable the Zen Bus to come down and engage with the community on a monthly basis.

The Zen Bus sessions are open to all ages, all levels of experience and we would like everyone to come onboard to experience the Zen Sessions. Sessions include guided meditations, breath work and sound healing for short taster sessions that will ease anxiety, lower stress levels, whilst improving clarity and focus to bring a sense of ease and calm to the mind. This is a great introduction into mindfulness and improving mental wellbeing.

The Zen Bus will be attending the Hidden River Festival on the 30th September. And for future sessions, please look out for posters with dates for the yellow American bus.

### 3. OPERATIONAL UPDATE

#### 3.1 Mechanical and Electrical Issues - Ashview

In our previous update, we advised that the current pump set would be replaced with a combined pump and macerator unit. Our contractors, D&L began the works on the 11<sup>th</sup> September.

The works were set back two days by a pump failure that occurred, but the installation contractor worked with the maintenance contractor to ensure that residents were not affected by this issue.

The works will be split into three phases (as outlined below) and are expected to take eight weeks to complete.

1. Sewage pit area (pump station to wall – this will cover the path).
2. Communal Garden behind Ashview/Birchwood – this will not impact on any fire routes or resident access via back doors.
3. Between Ashview and Birchwood to connect into an existing manhole (before the foul water pipes connect into the sewer beneath the street).

The works are phased so that there is no impact on the existing service and residents use of the foul water pipework is not impacted. The works will be completed at no cost to residents.

#### 3.2 Planned maintenance

The condition of the rest of the drainage system serving Ashview has been found to be in good condition and the next planned maintenance to survey and clean the pipework will be conducted in December.

### 4. Housing Management Update

#### 4.1 Housing Staffing Arrangements

Mandip Kumar has started in his role of Housing Team Leader and is responsible for the line management of our five Housing Officers working across Woodberry Down and wider Hackney.

Jada Guest has returned solely to her role as Estate Operations Manager for Woodberry Down.

Housing Officers currently working on Woodberry Down are as follows:

- **Alexandra Nita** - covering 1-40 Watersreach, Maplewood, Birchwood
- **Mohammed Mayet** - covering Rowan, Hornbeam, Reservoir
- **Ayse Maguire** - covering Berryside, Bluebell, Honeysuckle, 41-84 Watersreach, 268 Green Lanes

#### 4.2 Estate Walkabouts and Inspections

Estate walkabouts with WDCO and other key stakeholders take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month. The last walkabout was completed on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Our estates team also carry out monthly estate inspections to all NHG managed blocks. NHG are



keen to engage with a wider range of residents to help encourage regular feedback on the standards of cleaning, gardening and repairs carried out by our contractors. To this end we are working with our Resident Involvement Team to communicate these new plans to residents, with implementation from October 2023.

To date the team have completed 100% of our monthly estate inspections in 2023.

### **4.3 Annual Visits**

One of the pledges under the Resident Promise is to ensure residents have a personalised service, in the form of a named contact. Housing Officers are expected to meet with residents in their home at least once a year.

Residents can speak face to face with their Housing Officer who will offer the most appropriate help and advice to support their tenancy. It is also a good opportunity for us to ensure that the property is in a good state of repair and record any changes to a household.

Housing Officers have already visited over 54% of our residents in their homes on Woodberry Down (between 1 April 2023 – 8 September 2023). We aim to visit 100% of our residents by the end of March 2024.

### **4.4 Good News**

Mo, one of our Housing Officers has worked hard to help one of our vulnerable residents remain in their home, securing an agreement from Department of Working Pensions to backdate a Housing Benefit payment of over £8000.00. This has cleared the residents' arrears and means the tenant can now focus on their health.

Mears will begin replanting the Pewsham communal garden as well as other smaller areas across the five estates this October. Residents will be encouraged to get involved and feedback on proposals for biodiverse plants and shrubbery.

### **4.5 Service Charge Resident Drop-ins**

We will hold more resident drop-ins in October 2023, once the service charge final accounts (actuals) have been published.

In relation to the wider service charge procedure (covering both estimates and final accounts) our operations directorate are working on an improved service charge process across NHG. It is currently in the early stages of development and we will share more details when we can, as well as any opportunities for residents to feed into this process.

Please note that our 'Rents and Service Charge Resident Forum' is currently on pause due to an internal restructure within the central service charge team but will be re-instated soon. We will share information on how residents can register their interest in getting involved.

### **4.6 Communications**

NHG continue to attend the monthly Woodberry Down Communications Group and to support the completion of the Woodberry Down Communication Activity Planner, with regular contributions

towards the Woodberry Down Newsletter. We are sponsoring the Hidden River Festival and will be supporting the event on the day.