

Hackney Update

WDCO Board Meeting

June 2023

This paper provides an update on projects and work streams within Woodberry Down.

1. Vacant Possession Phase 4

As at the end of May 2023 there were 31 secure tenants, 104 temporary tenants and 36 leaseholders to be re-housed in Phase 4. Vacant possession is programmed for Spring 2025.

Leaseholder buy backs

There were 41 leaseholder owned properties at the point of making Phase 4 'in Phase', of which around half are landlord leaseholders with private tenants, and half resident leaseholders.

Five properties have now been bought back. Of the remaining 36, thirteen valuations and resulting offers have been made.

The Regeneration team is working with Notting Hill Genesis to prepare information for the Shared Equity offer for resident leaseholders. We expect marketing to launch in late July, with a priority period for current Woodberry Down leaseholders to reserve a Shared Equity property in Phase 3, if they wish. Of the 124 Shared Ownership homes under construction, thirteen are eligible to be purchased as Shared Equity.

Private tenants and homeless tenants placed in temporary accommodation

There are 104 non secure ('temporary') tenants in Phase 4. The Downsizing and Rehousing Team has been in touch with these residents to advise about the timescale for rehousing, and the team are in touch with households to carry out relevant checks, in relation to housing need, and discuss re-housing options/next steps.

Of the leasehold properties, there are 22 remaining which are owned by non-resident leaseholders, and let to private tenants. Within the buy back process it is the responsibility of the landlord to keep their tenants informed, discuss timescales and serve relevant notices. However contact details for the Council's housing team has also been sent directly to private tenants, via the 'request for information' process (see below) and if private tenants have questions or concerns, they are encouraged to make contact with the Council via the Regeneration Team, Housing Options and Advice, (<https://hackney.gov.uk/housing-options> / 020 8356 2929) or the ITLA.

Council Secure Tenants

All of the Phase 4 tenants and most of the Phase 5 tenants have now been pre-allocated new homes in Phase 3. A drop in session for Phase 5 tenants was held by the decant team at the end of May to finalise the verification process and pre-allocate new homes on Phase 3.

The re-housing requirements for Phase 4 and Phase 5 tenants have been assessed and largely met, therefore the Decant team are now prioritising pre-allocations of homes in Phase 3 to Phase 6 tenants.

An exhibition is planned for September, which will allow pre-allocated tenants to make their choices on bathroom and kitchen colours, as well as tiles for their new homes on Phase 3.

The numbers of new homes, allocations to date, and homes still to allocate remain the same as last month, and are set out in the table below.

	New Units in Phase 3	Phase 4 tenants allocated	Phase 5 tenants allocated	Homes still to allocate in Phase 3
Phase 3A	75	32	29	14
Phase 3B	42	0	13	29
Total/balance	117	0	(22 households yet to allocate)	45

2. CPO Phase 4

The Council has begun the background work to prepare a CPO. Land Referencing with a 'request for information' form was sent to all residents and leaseholders together with an Equality Impact Assessment Form. The CPO consultant (Arden Management), working with the Council, has now begun to prepare the relevant documentation for making a CPO.

Although the CPO will be progressed, we would always prefer to buy back homes by negotiation and will do everything we can to agree sales, and offer support to leaseholders in identifying the best re-housing option for them.

3. Local Lettings Policy and Split Households

In Phase 4 a total of nine households have been approved for split households, and the Downsizing and Rehousing Team have made 3 offers of one bed flats. Two applicants have now been signed up and moved in, a further one is in progress. There are a number of voids in the pipeline so we are confident that all 9 new households will be made offers before the end of the summer.

In Phase 5, twelve new households have been approved for split households. Once Phase 4 split households have been allocated their new homes, the Downsizing and Rehousing Team will start the process of re-housing these applicants.

In terms of out of phase split household requests, we are reviewing these and will be contacting applicants shortly.

The Housing Strategy & Policy team is reviewing the Local Lettings Policy for Woodberry Down, and will focus on the process for managing and prioritising out of phase split households. A procedure for the allocation of split households is being prepared and should be in place by the end of the month.

4. Allocations to NHG relets

There is no update this month.

5. Block D

The Council and MillCo continue to work towards having the relevant legal agreements in place. In order to enter the headlease the Council has to demonstrate due diligence in various areas, and progress is being made in areas such as business rates, fit out and drafting terms of agreement.

MillCo has had initial engagement with local organisations, and hope to continue with this soon. The intention is for the building to be used for a mix of uses, where some parts of the building are let more commercially to enable lower cost activity in other parts. MillCo's specialism is in arts and culture, but has committed to work with the Council and stakeholders to agree on the approach to letting space. MillCo is engaging with discussions on the ground floor strategy (led by Berkeley Homes) and is keen to coordinate their approach with other spaces in Woodberry Down.

The Council's Property Team must obtain authority to enter into the lease with Berkeley Homes. The team is preparing relevant background information to enable this.

6. Library feasibility study

The study, which sets out different options for providing a library based around the 'community hub' model, is close to completion. This model assumes there will be a mix of uses alongside a 'traditional' library uses, so that the space can both fulfill a community hub function, with colocated services and activities, as well as help to generate income for running a library.

Next steps are for the Council to confirm its preferred approach in order to fully discuss the options with Berkeley Homes, WDCO and the community in Woodberry Down. Findings from the study are also being reviewed in the context of the Ground Floor strategy, which in part will consider the strategic relationship between the various community spaces. If a library is to progress, detailed consultation will be undertaken to help guide the approach.

7. Masterplan Review

The Delivery Partners and the Design Committee are working on the Masterplan Review. A more detailed update will be provided by Berkeley Homes.

8. District Heat Network (DHN) and Energy

A follow up workshop with the DHN working group is planned for later in the month and a site visit planned. There is also an intention to visit the new Air Source Heat Pumps and the energy centre on Phase 3 in the summer.

Arup is working with Berkeley Homes and NHG to assess the current performance of the communal CHP heating which will inform their report on alternative energy sources. We anticipate an initial report by the end June.

9. Landscaping Task and Finish group/Service Charge group

Berkeley Homes will be arranging the initial meeting for the group with the landscape architects and officers from the Council's Parks team. They will also be responsible for restarting the Service Charge group. There will be further updates on these meetings at the July Board meeting

10. Damp and mould on Woodberry Down Estate

Berkeley and Hackney Council are working closely together to identify and gain access to properties for survey work to be undertaken, to both inform the Masterplan review and assess the condition of the properties in terms of damp and mould. Survey work started in February and will continue through to the summer.

Housing Services are preparing an update on progress made to date on properties that have had damp and mould issues, which can be provided at the Board in June.

11. Seven Sisters Road

As reported to the May WDCO Board, Hackney Officers and Hackney's Lead Member for Environment and Transport met with Senior officers from Transport for London (TfL) to discuss next steps for the Seven Sisters project. TfL reiterated the financial constraints that the organisation is facing but they are committed to working with Hackney to identify how to progress, and recognised that the objectives identified by the Seven Sisters Road steering Group would need to be met. Parties recognised that a refresh to the traffic modelling will be required to reflect any changes to transport patterns since it was last undertaken pre-pandemic. Following the meeting, TfL are exploring what internal resource they can provide to support the project, and have undertaken to provide an update on resourcing in the next 1-2 months.

12. Planning Update

The new case officer Louise Prew is now in place. Updates will follow from next month.

13. West Reservoir

The public consultation on the proposed improvements for West Reservoir closed on 31st May. The consultation team will now commence the process of collating the results over the next couple of weeks for the Council and the design team to review and consider if any changes need to be made to the improvement plans in conjunction with the Improvement Board.

All the background information and proposed designs can be found on our consultation website: hackney.gov.uk/west-reservoir-improvement.

14. Thames Water

The works to the New River path are due for completion at the end of the month.

15. Cultural Plan Phase 4

More details of this offer will be shared at a Board meeting in July.