

# WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION Board Meeting

## MINUTES

Thursday 20th July 2023

**7:15 pm Redmond Community Centre**

### **Attendance**

Phil Cooke, Geoff Bell, Euphemia Chukwu, Elaine Gosnell, Mina Faragalla, William Sheehy, Jackie Myers, Adrian Essex, Kristina Zagar, Leonora William, Kalu Amogu, Jaquie Knowles

### **Guests Included**

Isobel Pierce, Carol Boye, Anthony Green, Jaime Powell, Sarah Young, Ameera Hassan, Roda Hassan

### **Section 0 - Introduction**

#### **0.1 Welcome / Apologies for absence**

1.1. Barbara Panuzzo, Andrea Anderson, Omar Villalba, Oonagh Gormley, Caroline Selman, Hillary Britton, Simon Donovan

#### **0.2 Acceptance of minutes of 15th June 2023**

#### **0.3 Matters Arising / Action Tracker**

- 0.31 Roda did not get any inquiries to forward to Simon Donovan concerning the MHDT financial information he provided.
- 0.32 Roda received an email from Jada Guest at Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) containing reports from their sewage contractor DNL, which Roda subsequently distributed to the Board.

**ACTION: If the Board has any questions, Roda will forward them to NHG.**

- 0.33 Samuel Betts, Head of M&E at NHG has relayed the suggestions to Jada to organise a WGN residents' meeting for all tenures, not just shared ownership.

- 0.34 There was an action for NHG concerning the Rowan gates and M&E issues. An update will be provided at the next contract meeting.
- 0.35 Hackney have arranged the meeting for Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August for the Pest Control strategy.
- 0.36 At the June Board, Geoff and Jackie raised questions and concerns about how vulnerable residents' damp and mould cases are being picked up. They asked what Hackney will be doing to ensure they are being proactive. Roda noted that Loulla Weekes at the Hackney Operational meeting reported that any person from Hackney Council who comes in contact with a resident with damp and mould in their property are required to report it.
- 0.37 Roda circulated the damp and mould update from Hackney Council at the end of June.
- 0.38 The Board has made a request for a detailed breakdown of Phases related to the damp and mould cases. Hackney clarified that this information was received on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July. Isobel and Carol will review the data and subsequently distribute it.
- 0.39 The Public forum group has not met since the June Board and are scheduled to meet next week.
- 0.40 Regarding the report on windows from Berkeley, the update remains consistent with the one provided during the June Board meeting.

## **Section 1 - Introduction**

### **1. Presentation on Phase 4, Berkeley Homes:**

- 1.1. Jaime Powell gave the presentation on Phase 4. She reported that Berkeley had been working on the Phase 4 proposals with the Design Committee and the scheme was prepared for submission for December 2022. However, this submission was retracted on 23<sup>rd</sup> December following the government's release of a consultation document stating their intent to update the building fire regulations, adding a requirement for a second set of fire escape stairs in buildings over 30m in height. Berkeley and the Design Committee looked into fitting in a second staircase without fundamentally changing the scheme. The presentation focused on the background to the proposed changes in fire regulations, changes to building layouts, changes to the ground floor layouts and access and potential building height changes. Berkeley has looked at ways to recoup the value to pay for a secondary staircase.
- 1.2. The revised scheme has been reviewed with the GLA (Greater London Authority), the London Borough of Hackney planning team and the Health & Safety Executive. Berkeley have had a Pre-app Gateway 1 meeting and received written feedback that the layout and incorporation of the second stairs is compliant to what they are looking for.
- 1.3. The government consultation proposal includes modifications to building regulations and recommends sprinklers in care homes and a maximum height threshold for the use of one staircase in blocks of flats. The presentation showed the A Blocks facing Seven Sisters Road, B Blocks facing Woodberry Down, and Block C, the tower.

While B1 and B2 are slightly below the 30-metre height threshold, Berkeley has chosen to incorporate a secondary staircase in all buildings, as they are uncertain about the regulations that will follow the consultation document.

- 1.4. In the updated floor plan for the A2 blocks, Berkeley has redesigned the layout to include the second staircase. Meanwhile, the B block units remain unchanged but the staircases have been repositioned to run parallel to one another. This revised layout also has the benefit of enhancing the provision of daylight. As for the C block units, their floor plans remain similar, with the exception of repositioning the window at the end of the corridor to accommodate the new staircase. To create more space within the A1 units, Berkeley has extended the building line to reclaim an additional room. This adjustment ensures that the layout conforms to the requirements for a two-bedroom and wheelchair-accessible unit.
- 1.5. The addition of a second staircase and corridor has reduced the overall ground floor block footprint. One advantage of this change is that there is now an exit from the car park leading directly to the staircase. Previously, prior to the addition of the second staircase, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) had advised Berkeley not to establish a connection between the car park and the second staircase.
- 1.6. Due to the ripple effect on the car park floor, some parking spaces have been sacrificed to make room for additional corridors and to accommodate the commercial library area, bin stores, bike storage, plant rooms, and sprinkler tanks on this level. However, there is an exemption for social rented residents who own cars. Previously, there were sufficient parking spaces to facilitate the relocation of residents in Phases 6 and 7 with cars. Despite the reduction in the number of available car spaces, they can facilitate the relocation of Phase 6 residents, whilst tenants from Phase 7 with cars will need to wait until Phase 5.
- 1.7. The Board inquired if the Regeneration team had considered extending an offer to individuals in Phase 7. Berkeley responded by explaining that there were initially 65 available parking spaces, but this number has now decreased to 48. Phase 6 residents with cars can still relocate, but the total car parking space requirement may further decrease.
- 1.8. The Board questioned why they were consistently informed that Berkeley couldn't reduce the number of parking spaces while the Design Committee considered alternative options apart from the podium. Berkeley clarified that the parking spaces were necessary for Phase 7 residents to relocate, and any reduction in parking spaces would limit the number of residents with cars who could move. Berkeley's primary goal was to facilitate the relocation of as many residents as possible within the provided homes.
- 1.9. To finance the addition of seven extra staircase cores in a project that already faces viability challenges, Berkeley has explored the possibility of increasing the number of homes to generate additional revenue. They have considered the incorporation of extra homes and the addition of one extra storey to the properties on Seven Sisters Road and two extra storeys to the C block tower. Berkeley felt that these changes do not negatively impact the urban

landscape and has conducted assessments regarding their effects on daylight, wind, and the microclimate. The proposed adjustments have been limited to these two locations to avoid any adverse effects on the microclimate.

- 1.10. The Board asked if the flats facing north have dual aspects. Berkeley responded that they have 85% dual aspect.
- 1.11. LBH planning team are happy with the inclusion of the second stairs and the layout changes. They are also happy with the changes in the B block of the rotation of the stair for more daylight into the court.
- 1.12. Berkeley and the LBH planning team are still unresolved on massing. LBH planning team have suggested 2 extra storeys on Seven Sisters Road however, Berkeley are not keen on the design.
- 1.13. In terms of wind conditions, the new layout of Phase 4 incorporates a lower skirt to diffuse wind, improving the outdoor wind conditions in the square and toward Skyline.
- 1.14. The distance between the buildings remain unchanged, and their orientation ensures that windows do not directly overlook each other.
- 1.15. In summary, improvements have been made to the fire escapes for all buildings to align with new British standards. Minor changes have been made to building layouts to incorporate the stairs. A direct connection from the car park to each building has been reinstated, although parking spaces have been reduced. Nevertheless, there are sufficient spaces for Phase 6 tenants. The sunlight levels in public areas have had "minimal" adverse impacts and still significantly surpass the recommended guidelines. Berkeley still needs to address height concerns with the LBH planning team.

**ACTION: Roda will share this presentation with the Board members.**

**ACTION: Board members will forward additional questions regarding the last few slides of the presentation to Roda, who will then circulate them to Berkeley.**

## **2. Partner Updates;**

- 1.1. **Written Questions:** There was a written update provided by Hermione on Block D which Roda circulated to the Board. Hermione reported that the Council must enter into a head lease with Berkeley. This has to be authorised by the Council's Cabinet. They are working with Property Services to prepare the relevant reports. There is a long lead in time but the paper is provisionally tabled for Cabinet in the Autumn.
- 1.2. Property Services is working with Mill Co. and the Regeneration Team to develop terms of the agreement. This includes a lease and an operating agreement, which is where the commitments to deliver community benefit will be set out. Hackney has initiated the drafting of terms with Mill Co. and plans to present them to the working group in September.

- 1.3. Mill Co. will be taking in subtenants and Hackney is anticipating that the units will be let with 'blended' rents, with one unit likely to be let at a fully commercial rent to help balance costs with lower rent spaces.
- 1.4. Hermione also provided an update on the 'Understanding Woodberry Down' survey conducted by NHG to gain insights into what residents believe is needed in the area.
- 1.5. Simon Donovan provided an update that the Hidden River Festival still requires funding from its partners. They are aiming to maintain the funding level at the same amount as last year, which was £5000 from each of the delivery partners. Simon will bring up the festival's funding needs during the Round Table discussion.

**ACTION: Roda will distribute any further inquiries from the Board regarding the Block D update members to Hermione.**

**ACTION: Simon Donovan will share the Hidden River Festival budget with Roda who will circulate it to the Board.**

**ACTION: Roda will forward the local talent launch information from Simon Donovan to the Board.**

- 1.6. **General questions:** The Board members inquired about whether the individuals submitting applications in Phase 6 for planning approval, typically the houses in Woodberry Grove, are informed that these homes will be demolished as part of the regeneration. Isobel responded by explaining that the masterplan encompasses those specific sites, and applicants should be aware of this through the planning permission process.
- 1.7. The Board members also raised a question about the local lettings policy and the split households. The last paragraph of the update mentioned that the review of out-of-phase split households is still pending. Has the previous timeline, which was supposed to conclude by the end of June, been completed? Isobel explained that there is a defined process for the local lettings policy. The procedural note has been drafted and is currently under review by James Goddard.

## **2. Board discussion without partners;**

- 3.1 Finance:** Roda has circulated the finance budget for 2023/24. The budget was drafted by the Finance Committee. This needs final approval from the Board before going to Hackney Council. Kalu has made amendments to the final expenses for 2022/23 as agreed by the Finance Committee which will come to the Board at the AGM.
- 3.2** The Board asked about childcare expenditure. Roda explained that the Finance Committee agreed that if Board members required childminding, this would potentially come out of the contingency fund.
- 3.3** The Finance Committee expressed concerns regarding the expenditure of £125 per month on Board refreshments and suggested removing this expense. However, Roda pointed out that

there is a budget allocation of £375 to cover expenses for April, May, and June.

**3.4** William contacted a local restaurant owner to see if he could provide refreshments and negotiate a lower cost. The Board agreed to reduce the WDCO website to £1200 and to add in £100 per month for Board refreshments. The Board approved the budget based on these changes to send to Hackney Council rather than wait until the September AGM.

**3.5 Update from Executive Committee on governance:** The Executive Committee provided a written update on governance which Roda summarised and circulated. Kristina and William had a meeting to discuss further governance and the meeting structures. Roda has sent the Board slides with amendments from the Executive Committee on how the organogram should look and who should be attending meetings for different partners.

**3.6 Constitutional Review update:** The working group had a meeting at the end of June and came up with proposed change to the vision and mission which aligns with the Design Committee's vision. The Constitutional Review group is not presenting this today as a motion as the constitution states that any changes to the constitution has to be done at a Special Board meeting or the AGM. This could potentially be on the agenda for the AGM. The next step is to look at any other areas of the constitution that need changing.

**3.7 Public Forum:**

**ACTION: Mina, Geoff and Omar will update at the AGM.**

**3.8** Roda additionally mentioned that the public consultation for the masterplan, initially planned for July, has been rescheduled for September. In response, the Executive Committee has tasked Roda with contacting Berkeley to request an updated programme, as they previously received one during the Board meeting in January/February. Roda advised that Berkeley has informed her that the revised program will be presented to the Board during the August presentation.

**3.9** The Board members have requested that Berkeley provide the meeting papers and presentation at least a week in advance and if the meeting is taking place in August to arrange a hybrid meeting. Additionally, the Board intends to schedule a meeting without Berkeley's presence to discuss the proposals and has asked Berkeley to provide the date for this meeting at least two to three weeks in advance.

**ACTION:** Roda will email Berkeley to raise the Board's request.

**3.10** Regarding the bi-elections, Roda proposed holding them before the AGM in September, and the Board gave their approval.

**3.11** The Board also agreed to wait until the AGM to elect a replacement for Philip Dundas' vacancy in Block D.