

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday 16th February 2023

7.15 pm Redmond Centre

Attendance

William Sheehy, Jackie Myers, Jacquie Knowles, Ngozi Obanye, Mina Faragalla, Phillip Dundas, Euphemia Chukwu, Leonora William, Hillary Britton, Geoff Bell, Oonagh Gormley, Phil Cooke

Guests Included

Tom Anthony, Jaime Powell, Cllr Sarah Young, Jane Havemann, Carol Boye, Fionnuala KC, Roda Hassan

Section 0 - Introduction

0.1. Apologies for absence

0.1.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

Kalu Amogu, Tracey Lavers, Adrian Essex, Elaine Gosnell, Eleanor Andressen, Andrea Anderson, Omar Villalba

0.2 Minutes and Matters Arising

0.2.1 Berkeley Homes shared the engagement strategy and this was circulated last week with the Board papers.

0.2.2 Jane Havemann provided a verbal update on the program for the split household. Colin Bright could not attend but would be happy to attend a future Board if required. There is a central list of all households who have indicated interest in a split household. A total of 9 cases have been approved for split households in Phase 4 and the checks and verification process will be completed in February. They are anticipating starting viewings for some of the split households in March. At the moment Phase 4 is being prioritised because the remaining households have been pre-allocated a new build property. There are currently 12 households who have indicated interest in split households in Phase 5. Letters were sent out to residents in Phases 6, 7 and 8 and there were 43 responses across all three phases. The Decant team and the ITLA will begin to hold drop-in sessions for split households in Phases 6-8 to discuss residents' rehousing requirements. They are anticipating this to start in March, and the verification process letters will be sent out afterwards.

- 0.2.3** Roda circulated the letter from Berkeley Homes' legal team on the 13th December and 20th January.
- 0.2.4** Hilary Britton enquired if Hackney knew how many of the residents in Phases 6, 7 and 8 are over 65. Jane Havemann clarified that the housing needs survey has provided them with this information. They are thinking about how to manage that and part of this will be to continue to work closely with Anchor Hanover who specialise in housing for people over 55.
- 0.2.5** Jane Havemann provided an update on the timescale for damp and mould cases. Hackney is working on getting a consistent list of the cases across Woodberry Down as different people across the estate have registered issues with damp and mould with different departments. They are coordinating a master list with the Building maintenance team to ensure that the severity of all cases are being captured. Hackney is also working in partnership with Berkeley, who are undertaking building surveys for Phases 5-8. Berkeley is working closely with the voids and decant team as well as the building maintenance team. Some of the surveys have started this month and they are anticipating surveys in Phases 5-6 in March and April and Phases 7-8 in April and May. In the summer, they will focus on collating these findings to provide a broader picture of whether these are isolated incidents or systemic issues.
- 0.2.6** Jackie Myers asked if Hackney will consider temporarily decanting residents who are dealing with severe damp and mould. Jane confirmed that they will explore all options including temporary decants, they need to understand all the cases and consider whether the damp can be treated/repared or if other options need to be explored.
- 0.2.7** Geoff Bell highlighted that, at the last Board meeting, access to the New River Path was discussed. It was agreed that this would be considered as part of the masterplan review. Geoff wants to ensure this is not forgotten about. Tom Anthony confirmed that the New River Path is on the agenda for the masterplan review.
- 0.2.8** Roda has circulated the presentation from Thames Water to the Board and will circulate the MillCo presentation.
- 0.2.9** There was a request for the rodents and pest control strategy to be on the agenda for the SMB meeting. The meeting was rescheduled for the 16th March due to a clash.
- 0.2.10** NHG were asked to provide an update regarding the service charge review request to the Maplewood and Birchwood resident association. Roda confirmed that the update has been provided to the resident association. NHG will review the 2020-2021 service charge account in parallel with their work on the 2022-2023 accounts.
- 0.2.11** There was a request from the Board for Hackney Health and Safety team to carry out an assessment but are yet to carry this out until they receive the report and findings from Berkeley Homes. Berkeley will share their findings with Hackney when this is available. The action has been reassigned to Berkeley.

- 0.2.12** The action regarding the Community forum is on the agenda for the Board meeting today. This action was reassigned by the Executive Committee to the Board, as they felt the objectives and logistics would need to be agreed by the Board.
- 0.2.13** The Board has agreed to close the action for Jaime Powell to get a response from Berkeley Homes senior management. This was provided on 13th December from Berkeley's Legal team.
- 0.2.14** Jane reported that Expedition (contract extension) has now been appointed so the District Heating Network meetings will commence shortly.
- 0.2.15** It has been agreed that the reps for the Landscape Task and Finish group will be included in the drafting of the terms of reference. WDCO is appointing the reps this evening. The Board agreed to close this action.
- 0.2.16** R&R have given their apologies as they were unable to attend the February Board but will be attending the next meeting.
- 0.2.17** Samuel Betts from NHG gave an update at the last Board meeting, they have spoken to RNR and, to the best of their knowledge, none of the jetting works have caused rodent infestation. The Board has agreed to close this action.

ACTION: Roda will continue to liaise with Eleanor on the issue at Parkway.

- 0.2.18** Roda reported that NHG is not in a position to share the WGN report yet: there have been subsequent reports and they believe the best course of action is to complete the works and combine the reports. The Board members and Cllr Young are disappointed that the reports have still not been shared as they want to understand what the outcome of their investigation was. They would like to see the reports on the sewerage system to fully understand the cause of the problem. The Board has also expressed concerns that previously residents were blamed for the sewage blockages/overflows (wipes and nappies) and want to ensure this does not happen again.

ACTION: Roda will circulate updated action tracker.

Section 1 - Partner Updates

- 1.1 Written questions for partners:** There were a series of written questions that were submitted to the partners. The partners will be providing verbal updates and will circulate the written answers subsequently. There was a request for Hackney for a breakdown of vacant possessions in other phases. Jane Havemann explained that the Hackney update gives information on the decanting of Phase 4 to secure vacant possession and the allocation to Phase 3. This is because Phase 4 is 'in phase' and therefore has decant status.

Hackney can share similar numbers for Phase 5 and onwards but these are not the current focus of vacant possession.

- 1.2 There were also questions regarding the options the library feasibility study is considering. Carol reported that at the moment, Architecture 00 are looking at three options. One option they are exploring is the use of the whole 'commercial' floor space being used for library purposes. The other options consider how part of the space would be used as a library and part for co-located activity. The nature of the co-located activity has not been determined at this stage: the feasibility includes options of commercial uses (e.g. retail, cafe use) depending on feedback from the community and the needs of the viability assessment.
- 1.3 Philip asked if this will be tied into the wider ground floor strategy. Tom Anthony from Berkeley reported that they are looking for a consultant to do a baseline assessment of what is around the area and they will produce a demand assessment on what the area needs. They will also be looking at similar areas where they have been successful and what lessons can be learnt.
- 1.4 Oonagh stated that the feeling at their last Resident Association was that what residents really want is better food shops (butchers, bakers etc.). She noted it should not be assumed that all residents are advocating for the entire space to be used as a library.
- 1.5 Jane Havemann explained that the brief given to Architecture 00 is not to consider the whole space as a library and council-owned. The brief was very much about it being a civic space and ensuring that it is financially sustainable.
- 1.6 There was some feedback that the Naturalist is too expensive and not well used- it is not providing value to the community. This is a clear example where the commercial space has been unsuccessful and should be used as a lesson learnt.
- 1.7 Tom Anthony briefly went through the ground floor strategy which was provided in the Berkeley update. The first step is data gathering, to identify what is here (mapping). They will review strategic trends insofar as they affect Woodberry Down. This will enable them to produce a demand assessment and the consultant will be able to see what this area can support. The next stage will be the shaping of Woodberry Down and provide an outline curation of non-residential occupiers. The final stage will then be the engagement.
- 1.8 Cllr Young asked if in the initial engagement Berkeley is planning to run sessions with the Board to get their feedback. Tom clarified that the initial engagement stage one will be to speak to the existing tenants to see what their issues are, where they have found problems and what has been successes. The second part of the engagement, following the baseline assessment of the recommendations will be to engage with the local community.

ACTION: Partners will send their answers to the written question to ITLA.

ACTION: Roda will circulate answers to the written questions.

1.9 Board members enquired what the latest update is on Seven Sisters Road. Jane Havemann reported that the steering group is due to meet on Friday 24 February to discuss Seven Sisters Road.

ACTION: Hackney will provide an update at the March Board meeting.

1.10 Masterplan engagement strategy update: Hilary highlighted that at the Design Committee meeting she suggested using the resident's association groups for the community workshops for the engagement. Tom Anthony reported that before they go into the masterplan review process, Berkeley wants to have an understanding of the lived experience of the wider community at Woodberry Down. They are considering what the base position is and are identifying the existing community groups that are representative of the current demographic of Woodberry Down residents. They will also consider how responses to earlier rounds of consultation compare against existing demographics. Cllr Sarah Young asked if Berkeley and the consultants could share a list of the community group they intend to hold the workshops with. Tom Anthony explained that the intention is to take that to the Design Committee in the next three weeks. They will present their assessment of the data available, their understanding of the existing group, their recommendations and how they will approach those groups.

1.11 Landscape task and finish group: Hillary, Jackie and Philip were appointed as reps by the Board.

2 Section 2 - Board discussion without partners

2.1 Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission: The council has a Living in Hackney Scrutiny committee this April. The committee meets quarterly. Carol Boye from the Regeneration team asked if WDCO would like to submit any feedback or comments about their experience at Woodberry Down in regards to the impact of the regeneration on community cohesion.

2.2 A number of Board members felt that regeneration can place a strain on integration and due to this the community can feel very fragmented and divided. People move to Woodberry Down with different interests and different dreams and those don't always coalesce as one view. It can be difficult to develop community cohesion when there is not the same historical connection because there isn't a common bond that binds them.

2.3 WDCO members also highlighted a number of elements in the design of Woodberry Down that negatively impact on community cohesion:

- The design of the homes is not conducive to community cohesion e.g., hotel-style corridors. An internal deck access could address this in future designs, however, there hasn't been any evaluation of the impacts of the two designs.
- Communal gardens for different tenures have created smaller communities and possibly more of a divide and barrier.
- The design of some of the public green spaces is not beneficial to community cohesion and could be better designed to bring together different communities. However, WDCO acknowledges that the play area in Spring Park seems to achieve this. Parents and children from different communities come together to use the play area, including those from the wider community.
- The ground floor retail/community spaces don't create a place that brings together different groups and communities.

2.4 WDCO members all agreed that smaller communities are developing within Woodberry Down. Residents are building communities within their new blocks but it's difficult to go beyond that when there isn't commonality (common problems you are working through). The Board members question whether it is realistic to have an expectation that a large cohesive community could exist. Perhaps they have to accept that there are different communities within Woodberry Down that move around each other with different histories, backgrounds and socioeconomic backgrounds. WDCO noted that there could be community spaces, retail spaces or maybe a civic space that can facilitate the interlinking of the different pockets of communities. However, they feel that this hasn't been achieved with the existing community and ground floor facilities. There is a hope that Block D could create a space used by all different parts of the community where they cross paths and create links. The idea of a library also can serve as a community hub and can re-engage community life.

2.5 One of the successes members highlighted was that, as the community changed from the original community, WDCO has also changed to reflect the community's makeup (different tenures, different socioeconomic backgrounds). WDCO has found ways to stretch across the naturally existing divide and work together. WDCO feels that it's important to focus on what brings them together and create common aims rather than looking at what divides the community.

ACTION: Roda will summarise the outcome of the discussion and will share it with the Board to approve.

2.6 Public forum: There was not sufficient time to discuss the community/public forum. The Board has agreed to have it on the agenda for the March Board.

2.7 WDCO internal priorities: The Executives have suggested that the Board should discuss the internal priorities at the Board meetings and agree action plans for the priorities. They have proposed that at each Board meeting they could discuss 1 or 2 priorities rather than arrange a separate workshop. One priority was for the WDCO website to be improved/updated. Kevin Lau, a resident who has been attending the Board meetings, has offered to assist Jackie Myers and Adrian Essex in this process. They had their initial first meeting today. They will provide an update at the next Board meeting.

2.8 AOB

Meeting ended at 9.30pm.