

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION Board Meeting

MINUTES

**Thursday 21st March 2024
7.15 pm Redmond Community Centre**

Attendance

Kalu Amogu, Geoff Bell, Phil Cooke, Adrian Essex, Oonagh Gormley, Jackie Myers, William Sheehy, Dulce Laluces, Mina Faragalla, Jacquie Knowles, Donna Fakes, Elaine Gosnell, Euphemia Chukwu, Gloria Obiliana, Ekaterina Andreeva, Maggie Lewis

Guests Included

Hermione Brightwell, Isobel Pierce, Tom Anthony, Sarah Fabes, Anthony Green, Cllr Sarah Young, Cllr Guy Nicholson

Section 0 - Introduction

1. Welcome / Apologies for absence

Andrea Anderson, Omar Villalba, Leonora Williams, Kristina Zagar, Barbara Panuzzo, Tina Parrott, Doreen Cox, Hilary Britton, Cllr Caroline Selman

2. Acceptance of minutes:

- 2.1. The March minutes were agreed with two corrections: in paragraph 5.6's action Berkeley did not say they would bring back wind information to the WDCO Board. They noted that they would speak to RWDI and see if it could be included in the consultation boards and the application pack. Subsequently, the windiest season was shown on the consultation boards.
- 2.2. Roda noted that Philip Wellard should also have been included as one of the guests.

3. Matters Arising / Action Tracker:

- 3.1. Roda noted that she received an update from Carol stating that Hackney will present the housing numbers at the April Board meeting. The figures are currently undergoing internal review, and they are awaiting final approval before being presented to the Board.
- 3.2. The ITLA provided the Design Committee representatives with the approval rate figures for the second masterplan.
- 3.3. Isobel provided an update on split households: there are ongoing discussions within the Council about the approach towards implementing the policy, considering the significant number of families interested in split household moves and the limited availability of void properties to facilitate these moves. Hackney is intending to provide a more detailed update at a future Board meeting. Mina expressed concern about the lack of progress on out of phase split households, which has led to frustrations among the Board members. Despite the policy change

two years ago and monthly Board meetings over the past two years, the updates from Hackney have remained consistent, with no actionable progress reported. The Board seeks clarification on what steps need to be taken to make progress on this issue. Cllr Nicholson explained that he is acutely aware of the need to resolve this issue. Hackney is currently navigating the challenge of balancing this with the delivery programme of new homes, ensuring that those who are prioritised for new homes indeed receive them. What he anticipates is that senior council officers have been convening and drafting a paper with recommendations. This paper will be presented to a number of lead Members involved in this matter. However, he could not confirm whether it would be ready in time for the April and May Board meetings.

- 3.4. Mina acknowledged the complexity of the issue and noted that the Board does not expect a solution overnight. However, given that it has been an ongoing issue for over two years, there are growing concerns. He felt that this situation is indicative of a broader problem, particularly with the Housing Needs team in Hackney.
- 3.5. Cllr Sarah Young noted that the issue stems from the involvement of multiple departments, including Housing Needs, Regeneration, and Repairs/Disrepairs. Each department has its own system for determining when and where to relocate individuals. However, the split household situation cuts across these departments, creating complexity and making it difficult for the council. She noted that officers are working diligently to untangle this complex situation and find a clear set of solutions.

ACTION: Cllr Nicholson will arrange a meeting separately with Mina and Elaine to discuss their individual case regarding the out-of-phase split household.

- 3.6. Roda has circulated the amended motion, approved by the Board, and has sent it to the Hackney Planning Officer. This information was also shared with the partners.
- 3.7. Geoff inquired about the timeline for Phase 4 to be presented to the Planning Subcommittee. Berkeley confirmed that they are aiming to have Phase 4 on the agenda for the April committee meeting and are actively pushing for it.

Action Tracker

- 3.8. Roda clarified that the action tracker now includes a "pending" status for actions. This adjustment allows for actions that are in progress and may require more time for updates to be categorised as pending.
- 3.9. Windows report (pending): Berkeley has confirmed that there is no change in the status, and they are not yet able to share the report. The Board noted that Berkeley has yet to provide information on the cause of the incident with the window falling out. While awaiting the report, the Board has requested Berkeley to at least share the information on what caused the window to fall out. They also highlighted that Hackney Streetscene cannot conduct a risk assessment without the report from Berkeley, which affects the safety of residents.

ACTION: Sarah and Tom will follow up with Trevor regarding this matter.

- 3.10. Service charge: NHG updated that James Glass (Director of Places & Estates) has spoken to Omar on the phone twice in recent weeks to discuss the service charge progress and other subjects. The Board could not confirm if the action could be closed. Anthony noted that the action itself has been completed, but Jada

continues to provide ongoing communication regarding the wider service charge issue, and they are currently working through it.

ACTION: Roda will follow up with Omar to determine if the action can be closed.

- 3.11. Feasibility study prepared by Arup (DHN): Isobel has reported that they are looking to convene a working group meeting in the next few weeks. A summary update on the findings of the report will be shared with the group, and they will discuss when it can then be delivered to the Board.
- 3.12. Hackney has reported that a response from Cllr Guy Nicholson to the Chair email will be provided by the end of the week.
- 3.13. Roda emailed the Board on 23rd January and advised that the Phase 4 application is currently scheduled for the March Planning Sub-Committee.

Section 1 – Presentation

4. MUGA/Phase 5 Football Pitch Relocation

- 4.1 Adrian asked why this presentation was being delivered and inquired whether the Board was being asked for comments, with potential room for change following feedback. The presentation aims to outline their proposal, as they plan to submit a comprehensive application to relocate the pitch from Phase 5 to Phase 2 by the end of March. Although the concept of transitioning into Phase 2 has been preliminarily approved, a formal application is still required.
- 4.2 Sarah Fabes from Berkeley presented the football pitch relocation proposal. She clarified that the current MUGA has been onsite since 2007 and has seen high usage from the public, including training sessions hosted by Arsenal. There were commitments made to the public that when the current pitch is closed, a new one will be constructed, as stated in the original masterplan. She highlighted that both the 2008 and 2014 Masterplans include relocating the MUGA to Spring Park. In line with the commitments made to the public, Berkeley aims to deliver a pitch that surpasses the previous one in quality and amenities.
- 4.3 The MUGA was upgraded to an artificial football pitch with the assistance of WDCO members and the Arsenal Foundation. This served as a temporary solution until Phase 5 was constructed, as indicated by the KSS4 Reserved Matters application.
- 4.4 The current pitch will be demolished during Phase 5 and restored to wild or natural planting, as it was before. The decision to relocate the pitch is due to its closure during Phase 5 construction, which is expected to last for 5 years due to safety concerns within the construction zone. The football pitch is utilised by Arsenal for weekly training sessions, and it is highly valued by members of the community as a significant asset.
- 4.5 The new facility in Phase 2 will be 100m² larger than the existing one, strategically located near existing amenity spaces such as the Redmond Centre, and will be seamlessly integrated into the surrounding landscape. Construction of the pitch would commence once the Lilliput centre is demolished and rebuilt in its place.
- 4.6 Sarah provided an overview of the stakeholder engagement process conducted prior to the presentation to the WDCO Board. This included discussions with Arsenal Community, current pitch users, and the My Place youth forum. A webinar was also held in February, and the proposals were presented to the Design Committee.
- 4.7 Sarah also outlined the various options explored by Berkeley for relocating the football pitch. She emphasised Berkeley's commitment to providing facilities in

both the southern and northern phases of the estate. Phase 5 west was assessed as an option but faced constraints due to existing Category A trees. The Phase 3 Park was evaluated for both its north and south sections. However, the north part posed challenges due to potential tree loss and obstruction of the fire tender route. The south part would interfere with the consented attenuation pond and couldn't be utilised until Phase 5 completion.

- 4.8 They also considered Phase 2, and noted that the relocation of the football pitch to the Lilliput Centre site offers several benefits. It improving views over the west reservoir, and provides ample space for an artificial football pitch. Concentrating children and youth facilities within Spring Park creates a quieter and biodiverse atmosphere on the eastern side.
- 4.9 Sarah shared an image of the proposed section of Phase 2 and what the pitch would look like. Board members inquired about the existing trees in the area where the pitch is being proposed. She explained that the two trees that would be removed already have planning permission to be removed, one being a category C and the other a category U.
- 4.10 She also highlighted following feedback from Design Committee, seating has been relocated to have views over pitch and be located underneath tree canopies to provide shade during summer. Existing planting have been strengthened with new planting along the new river to improve the wildlife and biodiversity potential of the new river corridor. Following feedback from female users, an informal relaxation and social space with multifunctional seating and play elements (such as a hopscotch space) has been added. Level access into the pitch and new footpaths have been created to link the Children's Centre, Spring Park and the Block D mixed use space.
- 4.11 Sarah also presented the proposed lighting and acoustic strategy for the pitch. Board members raised concerns about the height of the net and requested a higher one. Berkeley has agreed to look into this. Additionally, the Board suggested contacting the London Wildlife Trust and getting their feedback on the proposals as this will have a bearing on the wildlife. Berkeley confirmed that they have already engaged an ecologist who has conducted a bat survey on site. The survey results indicate no bat activity in the trees near the proposed pitch and Lilliput Centre. While they acknowledge that there are likely bats that run over the reservoir, there is no evidence of bat activity in the specific area where the pitch is planned to be situated. Sarah mentioned that they could discuss the proposals with the London Wildlife Trust. However, she emphasised that when they submit the application, Hackney's internal ecology team will review the proposals and assess them against policy guidelines.
- 4.12 Adrian noted that the comments made by the London Wildlife Trust or Hackney Ecology department would not be able to be seen by WDCO because Hackney does not publish those comments. Tom clarified that the committee report typically summarises public comments while presenting statutory comments in full. However, he will verify whether the information will be uploaded as per each comment or summarised.

ACTION: Tom will verify whether the information regarding the committee report will be uploaded as per each comment or summarised.

- 4.13 The Board inquired about the responsibility for closing the pitch and whether it would have a specific closing time. Tom clarified that the proposal is for the pitch to be locked at 9pm, but they are yet to determine who would be responsible for implementing this measure.

4.14 The board members inquired about the party responsible for covering the electricity costs associated with the pitch. Sarah responded that discussions are underway with Hackney to determine the payment arrangement, referencing the existing agreement for the MUGA. She assured the Board that the cost would not be covered by service charges.

5. Partner Updates

5.2. Adrian raised a point from the Liaison meeting regarding the closure of libraries for renovation, particularly Stoke Newington library with a budget of four million pounds allocated for its refurbishment. He questioned how this expenditure aligns with the feasibility study for the potential new library at Woodberry Down. Isobel emphasised that funding considerations are crucial for assessing the feasibility of the library project, and a progress update will be provided in the summer. Adrian also inquired about the allocation of additional resources to Woodberry Down to manage the expected increase in visitors from Stanford Hill Library and Stoke Newington Library following the closure of the library.

ACTION: Isobel will follow this up with Library services and will provide an update.

5.3 The Chair inquired about the Community events and highlighted the absence of the Communications meeting to discuss the events. Roda clarified that the NHG report included an update indicating progress made behind the scenes regarding the funding and organisation of community events for Woodberry Down in 2024. NHG, Berkeley, and Hackney Council have jointly committed to funding three major community events throughout the year. They will specifically reinstate the Funday in June, host the Hidden River Festival in September, and organise Winterfest in December. Additionally, a smaller funding allocation has been earmarked to support local community groups in hosting their events, such as those celebrating Black History Season.

5.4 Antony clarified that he will consult with Trevor and the NHG quality assurance team to confirm completion of all necessary checks on the windows in Phase 3.

5.5 Isobel clarified that the SSR meeting which was scheduled for February was rescheduled as there was a delay with TfL receiving updated modelling information about the scheme. The meeting is now due to take place in early April. An update will be brought back to the Board following this meeting.

5.6 Roda highlighted that William and ITLA have been communicating with NHG regarding concerns about the potential rise in service charges if NHG chooses to enlist a managing agent for overseeing the social rented blocks in Phase 3. She suggested that it would be beneficial for the Service Charge Working Group to reconvene to examine the rationale behind this decision and conduct a comparison exercise aimed at mitigating any potential increases.

ACTION: The partners will arrange for the Service Charge Working Group to reconvene to discuss Phase 3.

6. Board Discussion without partners

6.1 Roda explained that this is an election year for WDCO, with the dates still pending but likely to be in June or July. The current Board will step down in September. The Board also noted that some constituencies lack representation on the Board due to a lack of interest from potential candidates. Roda will provide the elections information to the Board in May.

6.2 The board briefly discussed the upcoming Community Forum scheduled for 11th April at the Redmond Centre at 7pm. It was noted that the website, which includes an action tracker, will be utilised during the event. A presentation introducing WDCO and the website to the public is planned. Further discussion revolved around the incentives for residents to attend the forum and reasons for joining the WDCO Board. It was concluded that these platforms offer opportunities for residents to organise, advocate for their interests, contribute to community integration, advocate for quality housing, influence regeneration, foster community spirit, and improve education, health, and infrastructure. Additionally, members emphasised the importance of attendance and assistance during the event.

ACTION: Roda will look into getting a microphone for the event.

7. AOB

7.1 There was a brief discussion about the Design Committee and whether there are any further Masterplan workshops, which left the WDCO Design Committee representatives uncertain. Geoff expressed concerns about when the results of the Public Consultation will be reviewed by the Design Committee before the presentation to the Board in April.

ACTION: Roda will email Clare to inquire about the Design Committee Masterplan workshops and when the outcome of the Public Consultation will be discussed with the Design Committee.