

WDCO Report June 2024



1. DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

1.1 Phase 2 Block D & B

All homes have sold (except one in block D retained to use as a show flat for Phase 3). This is a temporary solution to help residents visualise the homes until the new show flat is handed over in June 2024.

1.2 Phase 3

Phase 3 build programme is progressing well, and the first handovers remain on track for September 2024. NHG visited the Phase 3 show flat on the 5 June to view and accept quality standards. These are currently being dressed ready for viewings that will start on 29 June. This will allow interested buyers the opportunity to see what the new homes look like and improve the customer experience.

NHG are continuing to review options for the community space and the potential occupiers. This includes; MHDT and a visit with the Hackney Cultural Lead took place on 23 May to view the space and review suitability. As the space is 60sqm, the options for the intended occupier are quite limited. The design has been finalised and meets the PDA requirements. MHDT are currently reviewing costs to run the community space and will prepare a business case which sets out their proposals. We understand WDCO want input into the community space and will provide more details in due course.

1.3 Phase 4 and the Masterplan

The Phase 4 planning application was approved by LB Hackney's planning committee on 08 May.

The 2024 Masterplan submission was shared with NHG and LB Hackney in April and NHG had fed back their comments which Berkeley are working through to address. The comments are primarily around; height, density, sun light/ day light and estate servicing arrangements to ensure the best quality homes for our future residents and affordable service charges.

2. SOCIO ECONOMIC UPDATE

2.1 Business start-up course funded by NHG

Since the last update, this pilot course has been completed with great success. For 5 weeks over April and May, The Rebel School delivered the business startup course in the HCD business incubation space at 8 Woodberry Down (above The Gym). The course was aimed at anyone who has thought about starting a business to earn some money doing what they love - no matter anyone's background or circumstance.

The course gathered huge interest with an initial 72 residents registering. Over the 5 weeks an average of 25 residents attended the weekly sessions, exceeding our targets.

We are working with LBH's Hackney Impact programme on how the attendees can be supported through their extensive programme including an area of support being offered is free desk space at 8 Woodberry Down to help incubate and grow businesses for 6 months. The Rebel School will provide a full evaluation in the coming weeks, which we can update the WDCO Board on the outcomes and the next steps for this programme.

3. OPERATIONAL UPDATES

3.1 Woodberry Grove North Sewage System

D&L (below ground sewage pipework contractor) and New Haden Pumps (sewage pump installation contractor) have met with NHG staff on site. The new pumps are planned for installation at the end of June. In the meantime, D&L are taking more maintenance responsibility from ECG to improve the service and remove the possibility of flooding that has occurred recently.

Enhanced maintenance of the sewage system continues at no cost to residents whilst these works are completed.

4. PLACES AND ESTATES UPDATES

4.1 Vital Energi Billing

Andy Lord, NHG's Director of Compliance, has provided a separate update on this.

4.2. Service Charge

We have conducted a review of service charge accounts (covering 2021-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23) and found significant variances, indicating that certain costs, such as compliance, M&E, and maintenance, were not charged in previous years. This has created a discrepancy between the estimated charges and what residents have been billed. The impact varies depending on the estate or block, the services received, the equipment in place, and the tenure type. As a result, the review was more extensive than anticipated.

We have been collaborating with colleagues across the business and are now at the stage of presenting our findings to the leadership team for decisions and final approval. This may result in additional work if further analysis is required. Once we have the necessary information, we will prepare communications, and the final version will be shared with WDCO for approval. We will share timeline for this at the board.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

The Woodberry Communications Group has now been reconvened and will be producing in consultation with WDCO a revised Communication Strategy and Action Plan. The first draft of the new strategy will be ready by September 24.