

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday 21st July 2022

7.15 pm Redmond Centre

Attendance

Philip Cooke	William Sheehy	Elaine Gosnell
Andrea Anderson	Adrian Essex	Geoff Bell
Lesley Benson	Kalu Amogu	Eoghan Mitchell
Kristina Zagar	Ngozi Obanye	Mina Faragalla
Hilary Britton	Philip Dundas	
Oonagh Gormley	Euphemia Chukwu	
Jason Morgan	Jacque Knowles	

Guests Included

Hermione Brightwell, Jaime Powell, Cllr Sarah Young, Jane Havemann, Nichola Hudson, Sarah Fabes, Neil Coils

Simon Slater, Roda Hassan

Section 0 - Introduction

0.1. Apologies for absence

0.1.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

Jackie Myers, Leonora Williams, Barbara Panuzzo, Colin Boxall, Caroline Selman, Miriam Burke, Trevor Hughes

0.2 Minutes and Matters Arising

0.2.1 The board agreed the minutes of June 21 and the action tracker circulated. Councillor Young still hadn't heard from Streetscene regarding the Residence Tower window health and safety. Elaine confirmed she had spoken to Colin Bright about implementation of local lettings policy. Jane Havemann confirmed that she needed to liaise with Gilbert Stowe, head of housing services on opening council office and coordinate with NHG.

Section 1 - Partner Updates

1.1 There were questions regarding the window that fell from Residence Tower, a tenant living in a flat that had the window permanently closed for health and safety reasons complained about the heat this created in the flat and meant the room couldn't be used. Despite promises she

had no idea when repairs to the windows would be carried out. Board members asked Berkeley Homes for a more detailed update, as that given to the board was the same as previously, i.e that remedial work needed to be carried out to a number of flats and a report was being considered by Berkeley Homes centrally. Jaime was unable to give further information but would check the next day with her Directors as Trevor Hughes was off work with Covid.

1.2 The resident also raised the issue that both Lifts in Residence Tower had been out of order due to the heat. Board members wanted to know why this was allowed to occur considering the tower is 28 storeys high. Again, Jamie was unable to comment on operational matters.

1.3 Further observers raised housing management issues including the continuing sewerage problem in Woodbury Grove North. Colin Boxall confirmed that the report from their independent consultants had been submitted to Berkeley Homes for consideration. Board members felt that both Notting Hill Genesis and Berkeley Homes were taking too long to deal with this issue. It was noted that there had been continuing problems of sewage blockage since the flats were first built.

ACTION: ITLA to email Berkeley Homes on the issue of the failure of the window in Residence Tower and the continuing sewage problems in Woodberry Grove North. Jaime Powell will endeavour to get a prompt response from Berkeley Homes senior management.

1.4 There was discussion by the Board as to how they could be kept up-to-date with ongoing management issues that had a strategic impact on the regeneration. Some board members wanted Rendall and Rittner to attend the meetings. Others suggested quarterly Board meetings could focus on housing management, alternatively, that the active resident associations across the estate should meet to discuss relevant issues of concern. The ITLA stressed the need for Residents Associations to feed into the board so that discussions by partnership working groups such as the Service Charge working group were more meaningful and relevant.

ACTION: ITLA to share Resident Association details across resident associations so they can make their own liaison arrangements.

1.5 Jaime was asked if the townhouses on phase 2 had been sold as yet she confirmed that they had all had been sold but not necessarily completed and occupied. She also agreed to de-aggregate the phase four planned number of properties by tenure,

1.6 There was a discussion on the heating system for Woodberry Down. Board members felt that the pay-as-you-go heat meters were inadequate; that too many NHG tenants received estimated bills from Insite and queried why there was a tenure differential over increased charges for heat. Neil Coils explained that NHG senior management hadn't yet agreed increases for heat charges unlike Berkeley Homes, who were due to increase the heat charges again in August. All board members were unhappy with the lack of a cap on heating networks and were concerned about transparency of bills. They wanted, whilst waiting for the community interest company between Berkeley homes and Hackney Council to be set up, some interim measures to be adopted by all the operational partners to ensure no one suffered from

fuel poverty in the winter. Jane Haverman from Hackney Council agreed to take this issue back to their specialist consultants and partners and see how the Heat Network Working Group could discuss and intervene in these concerns. Cllr Young had raised issues with the Mayor regarding differential charges in blocks and affordability concerns

ACTION: LBH to discuss with partners issues around affordability of heating and Heat Network Working Group to report back to September Board.

- 1.7** It was noted by the board that the consultation time on Phase 4 proposals had been extended until the beginning of August this was due to the late circulation of Woodberry Down news advising residents to comment and complete the online questionnaire.

2 Section 2 - Motion on Phase 4 Design Proposals

- 2.1** The Previously circulated motion from Geoff Bell was seconded by Lesley Benson to enable discussion to be held. The Board agreed an approach that Geoff would introduce his motion, board members would be able to comment rather than speak to oppose or support the motion, Berkeley Homes would respond to questions and comments from WDCO board members prior to the motion being put to the board. Jamie Powell circulated a written response to Geoff's paper for all board members.
- 2.2** Geoff stressed that he was a supporter of the regeneration i.e. total demolition and newbuild and he and his family had benefited from moving into new homes. However, he was unhappy with the proposals developed by Berkeley homes and put to the design committee for comment. He felt it broke promises previously made regarding the positioning and height of buildings on phase 4, the overall density of the development, the provision of a podium car park and a shared private garden for all residents living in that phase.
- 2.3** He felt the podium was unnecessary; that it was being provided merely to enable tenants with cars to be able to park and he felt alternative parking methods were available and better. He noted that Hackney wanted increasingly a car free development and felt that it was an over engineered scheme for a temporary, 20-year problem about parking. His view was that new blocks that had communal gardens were underutilised by residents. His preference would be for additional public housing on the site and an additional public open space rather than car parking. He noted that the town square had been reorientated north south from his previous east west position and felt it was too small. He believed that the podium led to many existing trees being removed.
- 2.4** He also stressed that Phase 4, as a stand-alone application, needed a retail, community and open space strategy to inform the design but noted these wouldn't be in place until after submission of planning application. Finally he raised his concern about the tenure distribution on the phase and felt that low cost private rent for key workers should be provided.

- 2.5** Jaime introduced her paper. She noted that there have been 33 design committees most of which had commented on Phase 4, she highlighted that the public square had been orientated north-south to provide a green link and was bigger than previously in the 2014 master plan. She also highlighted that the Mews link that would provide access from Spring Park to Seven Sisters Road where there would be a new crossing to the other part of the estate. She also confirmed that the car parking was solely for social rented tenants and for all others would be down would be a car free zone.
- 2.6** Other Board members added their views, Adrian Essex felt that the design committee was being swamped by information at too short notice and therefore unable to meaningfully comment. He also highlighted that the Board were unable to keep abreast of issues as the design committee discussions were confidential. Lesley noted that they were making improvements as they went along; stressed that the design committee members had made many comments on phase 4 and we're waiting for responses back and they had set up a detailed tracker so the issues weren't lost. One board member looked back on Woodberry Down being built as an exemplary social housing project noted the regeneration proposal is equally ambitious but felt there was a laissez-faire attitude toward social regeneration and the development of community. Hilary spoke generally in support of the current plans; she recognised the need for a podium and highlighted that the plans had looked to maintain existing trees although she wasn't sure they were all suitable for the local environment.
- 2.7** Catherine Slade, the council planner overseeing Woodberry Down, introduced herself and although couldn't comment on the proposals or the application as it was confidential, was interested in the discussion.
- 2.8** At one point there was a discussion as to whether a municipal or community building would be included as part of the flexible retail space abutting the square. This was something that a local Labour Party document had called for and may have been one of the Mayor's manifesto commitments. The Hackney Council officers confirmed that a feasibility report was being commissioned as to whether a library or similar type use could be provided in the central square. This was due to go out to tender very shortly but the outcomes wouldn't be known until after the planning application had been submitted according to the current timetable.
- 2.9** Following a long discussion, the motion was amended by Geoff himself asking WDCO to discuss options internally for different housing tenures and increases in social housing and amending the proposal on the podium to a new wording for "serious consideration to be given to it being scrapped".
- 2.10** The Motion went to a vote and was passed by 10 in favour, 3 abstentions and 2 against.
- 3.0** The final business was filling the vacancy for one Design Committee member and two representatives for the Affordable Service Charge working group. Geoff Bell stood unopposed and was elected for the Design Committee. Hilary Britton and Ilkan Ozsevin stood unopposed and were elected for the Service Charge working group.

Meeting ended 10pm.