

## History

The Phase 3 community space has always been included in the Masterplan and PDA as a NHG Community Space. It is NHG's responsibility to determine how the space is managed, either directly by themselves or by other community organisations.

One scenario envisioned WDCO taking over the space once their lease for the current WDCO office (Unit 2C Rowan Apartments) expired which expired last year. Currently, the lease for the existing office is on a month-to-month basis. Being a commercial unit, Hackney currently covers both rent and service charges for this space. In contrast, the Phase 3 community space would require Hackney to cover only the service charge, utility cost and repairs and maintenance cost. The Rowan office was designated as WDCO's interim space following the relocation from Phase 3 Chatterton House.

In this scenario, the lease would be structured between NHG and LBH, with Hackney sub-letting the space to WDCO at a peppercorn rent. For this arrangement, WDCO would need to provide a timetable outlining how the space has been and will be utilised. This includes activities such as ITLA advice sessions, WDCO meetings/election meetings, TRA meetings, NHG/Hackney Regeneration drop-ins, Tenants' Choice/Vital Energy bill consultations, Councillor meetings, other community meetings.

## Current Situation

1. Details of need to move from Rowan e.g., cost, long term sustainability and lack of security of tenure following lease expiry.
2. Layout was agreed between BHs and NHG as part of the PDA, see design attached. The specification always had a movable partition to create flexible private space. Handover due 22<sup>nd</sup> November. NHG to ask BH's to hold, if possible, some of the fixtures and fittings to allow WDCO to reuse of their existing furniture. This would be more environmentally friendly and also allow practical tweaking of equipment to meet identified need, e.g., smaller meeting table and a scanner to allow residents to scan material and load up to LBH and other organisations using the computers
3. Fitting out Issues still to be decided: naming of the space; blinds, window design, i.e., obscured or sun strip, actual layout of furniture.

**Below is the feedback Adrian provided following the recent site visit, which he had previously shared with the Board:**

### **Reflections on the Proposed Office Move for WDCO**

After visiting the Phase 3 Community Space, I have some concerns about the proposal to move WDCO's offices there. While the new space may offer some logistical advantages, I believe there are compelling reasons to remain in the current office.

**Unconvincing Justifications** The reasons put forward for the move - "why not?" and "it will save Hackney some money" - do not seem sufficiently compelling to justify disrupting

WDCO's operations. Rolling over the current lease seems a viable option that maintains stability.

**Potential Financial Impacts** The financial implications are unclear. While Hackney may see some savings, WDCO would not directly benefit. And the landlord, Berkeley Homes, may be negatively impacted by the change. Without a clear cost-benefit analysis, the financial rationale is not strong.

**Suitability Concerns** The new community space, while designated for this purpose, does not seem optimally suited for WDCO's needs. It is smaller, has structural obstructions, and lacks private spaces required for services like Councillor surgeries. The layout, with a confusing lobby and entry, also raises accessibility concerns.

**Disruption and Opportunity Costs** Relocating would likely cause significant disruption and require new furniture. This should not be underestimated. Additionally, reserving the community space for WDCO's administrative functions may limit its availability for other local organizations that need the space.

**Accessibiliy** - The current space is on a slip road where transport could pull up to deliver visitors, the new space is just short of the traffic lights on |Seven Sisters Road, with double yellow lines. We were told that the lobby is needed for wheelchair access. I have checked volume 2 of the 2010 building regulations and this is not true. If a non-residential building has a lobby then it must meet certain criteria, but the lobby itself is optional  
In summary, the drawbacks of the move clearly outweigh the potential benefits. I would recommend exploring alternatives or remaining in the current, more suitable office space. A more robust analysis of the pros and cons is needed to justify such a disruptive move.