

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 18th January 2024
6:30 pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance

Andrea Anderson, Geoff Bell, Hilary Britton, Phil Cooke, Adrian Essex, Oonagh Gormley, Jackie Myers, Tina Parrott, William Sheehy, Leonora Williams, Dulce Laluces, Mina Faragalla, Maggie Lewis, Jacque Knowles, Barbara Panuzzo, Donna Fakes, Elaine Gosnell

Guests Included

Hermione Brightwell, Tom Anthony, Jaime Powell, Samantha Cheadle, Anthony Green, Jada Guest, Cllr Sarah Young, Cllr Caroline Selman, Yasmin Jiang and Nicola Bacon

Section 0 - Introduction

1. Welcome / Apologies for absence

Kalu Amogu, Euphemia Chukwu, Doreen Cox, Gloria Obiliana, Omar Villalba, Isobel Pierce

2. Acceptance of minutes:

- 2.1. The November Board minutes were not agreed in December, as it was felt that paragraph 6.2 was inaccurate. Hilary and Oonagh sent the ITLA the accurate minute to be included: "The KSS3 Residents' Association discovered that since there was no Heating Services Agreement in leases, all charges default to being service charges. This means that such costs cannot be recouped more than 18 months in arrears." They also added that Adrian's dismay should be part of item 6.1 not 6.2.
- 2.2. The November minutes have been approved and agreed.
- 2.3. The December minutes were agreed with two corrections: in paragraph 5.3, replace "phase 3" with "block D." In paragraph 8.1, it should be clarified as "the statement related to acquiring new developments, not existing."

3. Matters Arising / Action Tracker:

- 3.1. Service charges: The Chair is waiting for Omar to draft the letter regarding the service charge issue. Once the Chair receives this, she will email the Chief Executive of NHG.
- 3.2. Block D service charges: Roda confirmed that the leaseholders only contribute towards costs that they derive benefit from. For Hartingtons, this cost is solely attributable to that block and a contribution towards the estate areas around it. Berkeley is currently covering service charges for the community space (Block D). Once Millco takes over, the service charge cost for the ground floor community space will be covered by them.

3.3. The ITLA wrote to the Board members, inquiring if anyone was interested in nominating themselves for the position of Vice Chair.

Action Tracker:

3.4. Windows report: Berkley confirmed that the update on the windows report remains unchanged, with Berkeley not yet in a position to share the report.

3.5. Rodents/pest control strategy: Hackney reported that this is in progress and a meeting will be arranged with the working group.

3.6. Masterplan: Viability and Social Life presentation are on the agenda to be delivered at this Board meeting.

3.7. The Intermediate Housing presentation is scheduled to be delivered at the Design Committee on 31st January. Once it has been presented to the Design Committee, it will come to the Board in February.

3.8. TV aerial: An NHG contractor had attended on 31.10.23 and confirmed the following: "Tested the main head-end and found satellite reception was working fine but the terrestrial signal from Crystal Palace is very poor. Accessed the roof, [the] new build construction has been built taller which is now affecting line of sight to CP TV transmitter even more so than previously". NHG have noted that they will continue to raise individual jobs if a resident has no signal at all but they may need to switch to Freesat services. They will seek advice from their colleagues in the M&E team regarding options to install a taller mast on the roof. However, the contractor has stated that this will be challenging, and there is no guarantee it will improve things.

3.9. William asked who would be responsible for paying and installing a Freesat box, as this has been a recommendation from the engineer that looked at the signal issue in his property.

ACTION: NHG will look into this and confirm who will be responsible for installing a Freesat box.

3.10. WDCO have not received the buyer demographic information from Berkeley.

ACTION: Jaime will provide the buyer demographic information after the Board meeting.

3.11. Service charge: Jada sent a more detailed service charge update to WDCO, ITLA, and the Councillors on 15.01.24. Roda noted that the action was for Omar and Anthony to have a meeting regarding service charges. In the December Board meeting, Omar expressed frustration that this meeting has not happened, and Anthony has delegated this responsibility to someone else within NHG, which Omar found frustrating. Anthony noted that he is willing to take back feedback in internal communications but is trying to draw a line in defining what falls under his direct responsibility.

3.12. Tina emphasised that Birchwood residents have been billed for services not rendered, and she questioned why NHG has taken over 18 months with four different timelines for a resolution. She pointed out that despite the Tenant and Residents Association and the chair pursuing the matter through appropriate channels, there has been no resolution, prompting Omar's request for a meeting with Anthony Green.

3.13. Councillor Sarah Young highlighted that councillors have been in discussions with NHG about implementing escalation processes and improving their transparency. Anthony's suggestion is to have monthly meetings involving councillors and key representatives from NHG.

- 3.14. The Chair is still waiting for a response from the Deputy Mayor.
- 3.15. Tom noted that the clarification regarding Section 13 of the Hackney Plan is included in the Berkeley report.

Section 1 - Introduction

4. Social Life presentation:

- 4.1 The Chair invited Yasmin Jiang and Nicola Bacon from Social Life to deliver the presentation.
- 4.2 Yasmin explained the methodology of their research, which included a resident survey sampling by tenure and geography. Additionally, three youth engagement workshops were conducted, two with The Edge and one with My Place. In-depth interviews were held with all development partners, agencies working on-site, and local businesses. Walking interviews were conducted with residents from both new and old estates, offering a snapshot of their experiences. A site survey was carried out by Matter Architecture, and secondary and project data were collected from various sources.
- 4.3 Geoff appreciated the positive engagement with young people in three workshops conducted by Social Life. However, he questioned the absence of specialised workshops with other groups, particularly the elderly. Yasmin clarified that during the in-depth interviews with agencies working on-site, they engaged with organisations specifically focused on elderly people. They also captured feedback from elderly people through interviews and surveys.
- 4.4 Elaine expressed her concern that The Edge caters to a significant number of young people who are not from the Woodberry Down estate, prompting questions about its accuracy in representing the voices of young people from Woodberry Down. Nicola noted that during their discussions with young people at The Edge, they specifically engaged with those residing on the estate.
- 4.5 Yasmin explained that when analysing the data, they specifically focused on reflecting changes since the last Social Life report in 2019 in each indicator, and compared Woodberry Down to similar areas.
- 4.6 They found that in 2019, residents on Woodberry Down reported a stronger sense of neighbourliness, belonging, influence over local decisions, and overall wellbeing compared to residents in similar areas. However, there has been a significant decline in residents' perception of influence over local decisions since 2019.
- 4.7 Furthermore, perceptions of the regeneration have become more negative over time. A lower proportion of residents now agree that the regeneration has benefitted them or their family, and that the process has been inclusive of all residents.
- 4.8 In terms of safety concerns, residents are now more worried than in 2019. There is a decrease in the proportion of people who feel safe walking alone in the local area and around Woodberry Down after dark.
- 4.9 Nicola also provided a summary of the experiences of individuals in different tenures. There is a stark contrast between the experiences and attitudes among residents living in temporary tenancies and those in other tenures. Temporary tenants are more likely to feel lonely, find it difficult to manage financially, and perceive a lower sense of neighbourliness and belonging in the local area.
- 4.10 Secure tenants exhibited the most positive perceptions of neighbourliness, life satisfaction, and satisfaction with the local area as a place to live. They are also most likely to agree that people with different backgrounds get along well together.

- 4.11 Private owners and private renters were broadly similar in their perceptions of neighbourliness, life satisfaction, and satisfaction with the local area as a place to live. They are more likely to feel that they are managing financially and less likely to feel lonely but are most likely to be concerned about crime
- 4.12 The impact assessment took place amid the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, compounded by the lingering effects of COVID. Older residents, in particular, continue to feel the impact of COVID and its aftermath. Some have observed a decrease in attendance at community events for older individuals, suggesting that certain older people have not resumed social activities and are at a higher risk of isolation.
- 4.13 One of the trends they noted was the services to online platforms present a barrier for older and digitally excluded residents. Affordability came up as a new issue which poses a challenge for utilising local shops and amenities.
- 4.14 Yasmin summarised the findings in more detail based on themes, focusing on the topic of a balanced community, empowerment, wellbeing and prosperity.
- 4.15 Their research found that neighbourliness remains stronger than in comparable areas, with residents expressing a higher level of trust and more connections with their neighbours.
- 4.16 Stakeholder interviews revealed a disconnect between new and long-standing residents, potentially hindering social integration. Young people who participated in the workshops were generally less positive about their perception of neighbourliness, citing a weakening of these bonds over time due to the changes brought about by the regeneration.
- 4.17 There is a perception that there is good social infrastructure provision on the estate, but stakeholders emphasised the need for local providers to work strategically and in a coordinated manner to maximise benefits for residents.
- 4.18 Both stakeholders and residents acknowledge the significance of community events and festivals as crucial occasions for promoting local integration. These events encourage residents from different backgrounds to mix and socialise.
- 4.19 Yasmin explained that residents on Woodberry Down report a stronger sense of local identity and belonging compared to those in similar areas. Individuals over 60 are more positive about their sense of belonging and express a greater likelihood of remaining residents in the neighbourhood for an extended period.
- 4.20 Since 2019, newcomers have started to outnumber existing residents, leading to increased resident turnover, which stakeholders have observed affecting the strength of local identity.
- 4.21 Young people exhibit ambivalence toward their future on the estate, citing concerns about housing availability and cost as factors influencing their ability to stay.
- 4.22 While residents are generally satisfied with facilities on Woodberry Down, satisfaction with some provisions for children has declined since 2019. There is room for improvement to ensure that social infrastructure caters to the needs of older people, young people, and temporary tenants.
- 4.23 Certain services, such as GPs and nurseries, are operating at capacity, indicating a need for expansion to accommodate residents moving into future phases of the regeneration.
- 4.24 Yasmin continued to explain that in terms of empowerment, stakeholders noted that secure tenants exhibit the strongest influence and willingness to engage in local issues, while temporary tenants show lower levels of involvement in decision-making. In workshops, young people expressed minimal engagement with the regeneration process and local decisions, although 72% of those under 25 emphasised the importance of influencing such decisions. Overall, surveyed residents were less positive about changes on Woodberry Down than they were in

2019, with a decline in the proportion acknowledging neighbourhood improvement and personal benefits from the changes. People under 25 were least likely to believe the changes benefitted them or their family. Despite positive sentiments about the physical changes, young people stressed the need for greater efforts to ensure all residents, regardless of age or tenure, benefit from the regeneration.

- 4.25 Residents' overall health and well-being on Woodberry Down are positive compared to similar areas. Temporary tenants and social housing tenants may experience more health issues and report poorer health, yet they are less likely to feel lonely
- 4.26 Safety perceptions and fear of crime in Woodberry Down and the surrounding area have notably deteriorated since 2019. Local residents, compared to similar areas, are less likely to feel safe walking alone in the local area after dark. Young people, particularly on the north side of the estate and in surrounding areas, express concerns about walking alone at night. Despite these concerns, stakeholders generally agree that safety on Woodberry Down has improved over the years. This is related to the positive changes, such as enhanced lighting and walking paths with fewer blind spots, contribute to this perception.
- 4.27 Yasmin noted that many of the indicators of economic security have declined since 2019, with a notable increase in residents struggling financially and reporting a worsened economic situation since 2009 or moving to the estate.
- 4.28 Temporary tenants are facing the greatest economic challenges, followed by secure social housing tenants. In contrast, shared owners, private tenants, and private renters tend to have more favourable economic conditions. Among these, private renters are the least likely to report a worsened financial situation since 2009 or moving to the estate.
- 4.29 Stakeholders and residents concurred that affordability acts as a barrier to utilising local shops and amenities, highlighting the impact of economic factors on residents' access to community resources.
- 4.30 Nicola gave a brief summary of the recommendations which highlighted key areas for regeneration partners and agencies to enhance the quality of life in Woodberry Down. They emphasise diversifying representation in decision-making, particularly for underrepresented groups. Actions include mapping services, supporting community growth, focusing on the well-being of temporary tenants, and ensuring inclusivity in local services. Efforts are advised to address areas of dissatisfaction, with a spotlight on social infrastructure and community events for fostering local integration. Regeneration partners are urged to maintain their commitment to the impact assessment process for meaningful outcomes.
- 4.31 Adrian pointed out that instead of mapping and coordinating agencies, services, and community projects to enhance accessibility, there is concern that this might increase dependence. The goal should not be to reduce dependency culture. Nicola clarified that the intention was not to increase dependency but rather to address the potential for service duplication, highlighting the insufficient coordination among existing services. She acknowledged the necessity to rephrase this to better articulate these concerns.
- 4.32 Adrian emphasised that the wheel shared in the presentation only depicts one green area, indicating very minimal positive change.
- 4.33 Geoff pointed out that the reactions from shared ownership residents appear very similar to those of private owners. Nicola explained that fewer of them were interviewed, making it challenging to be confident about their perspectives. They will make an effort to highlight this aspect more in the summary.
- 4.34 Geoff also noted that GP and nurseries are operating at full capacity, and this is a consideration they all need to bear in mind. There was an assumption that the

way the regeneration was financed would provide more funds for these services as the population grew which, in his view, is not happening.

5. Viability presentation (Berkeley Homes)

- 5.1 Jaime Powell introduced the purpose of the presentation and outlined its coverage, which includes explaining what a Financial Viability Assessment (FVA) is and why it is undertaken, detailing how the assessment works, and identifying who reviews it.
- 5.2 The Financial Viability Assessment (FVA) is an assessment that is submitted as part of planning applications. For instance, in Phase 4, Berkeley would have been required to submit an FVA. Its goal is to maximise the delivery of affordable housing within a proposed scheme. The assessment calculates the profit by deducting the scheme's costs from its income. Both the Greater London Authority and the Local Planning Authority accept a 20% return as an approved level of profit. In cases where this return is not met, negotiations with the Local Planning Authority are permitted to potentially reduce the required amount of affordable housing while ensuring the 20% priority return is achieved.
- 5.3 Jaime provided insight into the Financial Viability Assessment (FVA) process, highlighting that the report is produced by third-party professional consultants engaged by the applicant i.e., Berkeley. These consultants incorporate all costs and projected sales revenues, adhering to guidelines established by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. The FVA report is then submitted as an integral part of the Planning Application to both the Local Planning Authority (Hackney) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). The report undergoes two independent checks: one by a third-party consultant appointed directly by the Council and another by a third-party consultant selected by the GLA. The applicant has no influence over the consultants chosen, ensuring objectivity. Both the Council and the GLA scrutinise the report to verify that the developer is maximally contributing to affordable housing, underscoring the commitment to impartial evaluation and community benefit.
- 5.4 Tom noted that the FVA is publicly accessible and can be downloaded from the planning portal by anyone.
- 5.5 Hilary inquired about the review process of the FVA with each detailed application submission. She asked whether the consideration of adjusting the FVA for applications focused solely on private housing and social rented properties, excluding shared ownership, could be explored, or whether the masterplan's initial structure, comprising a mix of private, shared ownership, and social rented units, would still be the prevailing framework. Tom explained that this is a Woodberry nuance; while in other schemes in London, negotiation might involve only social rent and private, at Woodberry Down, the Principal Development Agreement (PDA) outlines a commitment to affordable housing.
- 5.6 Jaime outlined the elements comprising the development cost, covering build costs, infrastructure, professional fees, Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy, marketing and finance costs, stamp duty, and land-related expenses including CPO costs, decanting, and compensation.
- 5.7 Jaime clarified how market conditions impact viability, citing House price inflation in inner London, which has seen a 1.9% annual increase (9.3% since Jan 2019), and build cost inflation, with costs rising by 5.4% annually (27.9% since Jan 2019). The faster rise in build costs compared to house prices has made it challenging to meet the 20% viability threshold, resulting in more London schemes negotiating lower amounts of affordable housing. At Woodberry Down, the level of affordable housing is fixed in the development contract between LBH and NHG at 41.7% across the estate. Additionally, the developer's profit at Woodberry Down is capped at 20%.

- 5.8 Due to the unique circumstances at Woodberry Down, in Phase 2, the scheme generated a profit exceeding 20%. Any surplus beyond this threshold is set aside in a dedicated fund, ring fenced for future phases that may face viability challenges. For Phase 3, the additional funds were instrumental in addressing the Section 106 costs associated with Seven Sisters Road and supporting the construction of the Energy Centre. This surplus was crucial for both Phases 3 and 4, as they were deemed non-viable without this assistance.
- 5.9 Geoff highlighted that the 41.7% affordable homes figure, as outlined in the PDA, remains unchangeable, despite external changes that have occurred since the initial agreement.
- 5.10 Oonagh noted that the current method of counting units does not consider the bedroom sizes of the properties. She highlighted that the social rented blocks consist of larger properties. To offer a more accurate assessment of housing provisions, she suggested that, if measured based on floor space, it would potentially exceed the designated 41.7%. Jaime noted that Hackney uses a unit-based target and the GLA uses a habitable room target.
- 5.11 Tom noted that there is an overdelivery of more affordable homes in Phase 4 at 43.4%, compensating for a small deficit in Phase 2, while Phase 3 consists of 43% affordable homes.
- 5.12 Mina inquired about any concerns regarding the viability of future phases. Tom noted that a previously raised question was about the significant increase in the number of homes in the new masterplan compared to the previous one. He explained that this change is attributed to considerations of build cost and revenue. Tom expressed confidence in the feasibility of achieving the goals outlined in the new masterplan.
- 5.13 Elaine asked about the 200+ social rented homes that were lost during the second masterplan. Tom noted that this will be picked up by Hackney Council in the next round of consultations.
- 5.14 David Lammy, the MP for Woodberry Down, attended the Board as an observer and provided a brief introduction. He acknowledged the recent inclusion of Woodberry Down in his constituency and expressed the opinion that the constituency name should have possibly been revised to encompass both Tottenham and Woodberry Down.

6. Partner Updates:

- 6.1 Elaine requested an update on the split household situation. Hermione explained they are currently determining the best way to implement the out-of-phase split household logistically and fairly.
- 6.2 Geoff inquired about having a clear outline for the ground floor space by the time Phase 4 goes to planning. Jaime clarified that while the Phase 4 application has been submitted with a flexible definition for the space, no definite decision has been made yet, allowing flexibility for the council to decide on the library.
- 6.3 Hilary brought attention to the ongoing review of the feasibility study prepared by Arup, seeking clarification on when it will be accessible to the District Heat Network working group.

ACTION: Hermione will take this back to Isobel.

- 6.4 Hilary questioned whether the Section 106 funds intended for narrowing Seven Sisters Road could be considered for an escalator instead. She emphasised the importance of involving residents in this decision-making process.

- 6.5 Hilary also inquired about the update on the West Reservoir. Cllr Young explained her attendance at the Improvement Board, highlighting that feedback had been considered, leading to substantial changes in the proposals. The revised proposals have been published, and ongoing discussions are taking place.
- 6.6 Adrian inquired about the Block D meeting and requested a timeline. Hermione clarified that the meeting had occurred, and they are awaiting fit-out costs and specifications from Berkeley. Hackney anticipates receiving this information by the end of January.
- 6.7 Geoff pointed out that Berkeley's response to WDCO's request for clarification on street car parking is quoting and referring to what he felt was an irrelevant section of the Hackney Plan. Geoff explained that there is a specific section, L13 part NH1, which addresses Woodberry Down and states that it "will minimise on-street and off-street parking." This specific section overrides the general principle.
- 6.8 Tom explained that a site allocation within the local plan has to align with the wider local plan. While there are some grey areas within planning policy, he noted that the advice received from planning officers and design experts is to eliminate all on-street car parking. While it's technically possible to have some on-street parking in line with policy, when considered in the context of general planning benefits, it may raise concerns.
- 6.9 Geoff inquired whether this rule was changed by Hackney or if it has been interpreted differently by Hackney. Tom clarified that it is the latter; there is a grey area in policy, and Hackney has interpreted it. As per the guidance from Hackney planning, there is no on-street parking in Phase 3, and none is proposed for Phase 4 or future phases.
- 6.10 Cllr Sarah Young emphasised that there are potentially other solutions for later Phases, and she also mentioned that, to her understanding, Hackney Planning does not have an absolute hard line on this issue.

7. Board Discussion without partners

- 7.1 Phase 4: Roda reported that a summary detailing the varied perspectives shared by Board members regarding Phase 4 was circulated on Friday with the Board papers.
- 7.2 Roda highlighted that the Executive Committee felt that it is crucial for the Board to reach a consensus on Phase 4, including determining whether it opposes or supports the proposals and specifying the grounds for such a stance. Alternatively, if consensus cannot be reached, they have suggested that Board members could make individual submissions to planning.
- 7.3 Geoff proposed that either the Chair or the Executive should draft a resolution at the next Board meeting. Roda noted that the Executive Committee recognises contrasting views on various aspects of the design and has requested the Board to review the summary and agree on what should be submitted to Planning. Due to time constraints in the January Board, they are proposing a special meeting to discuss Phase 4.
- 7.4 Oonagh highlighted the potential challenges in achieving an unanimous agreement and suggested acknowledging the difficulty in finding a common view, leading to the decision to submit individual comments.
- 7.5 The Board agreed to discuss Phase 4 at the February Board and agreed an earlier start time of 6.30pm for an initial discussion on Phase 4 response to planners. If there are any resolutions presented to the Board this will be voted on and finalised in the partner-free segment of the Board.
- 7.6 Roda has requested that if any Board members have resolutions, they should send them to her so she can circulate them to the Board.

ACTION: Roda will confirm with the Hackney Planning Officer when Phase 4 is scheduled to go to the planning sub-committee.

8. AOB

- 8.1 Roda reported that the Chair emailed the Hackney Regeneration team regarding the Partnership Agreement as the Executive Committee had some concerns. During the January Liaison meeting, they received an update from Hackney which suggested that the delivery partners are still in the process of discussing the partnership agreement, and there hasn't been an agreement on the proposed changes yet. They also mentioned that Hackney is considering arranging an Awayday to delve into the details of the partnership agreement.
- 8.2 While the Executive Committee members believe an Awayday for discussing the partnership agreement and the actions from last year's Awayday could be beneficial, they were also concerned about the transparency of the process. The Chair has asked Hackney if they could share the details of the proposed changes that the delivery partners have been discussing, as the Executive Committee would like to review these and provide feedback.