

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 18th July 2024

7:30 pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance: Jackie Myers, Phil Cooke, William Sheehy, Geoff Bell, Kalu Amogu, Eketartina, Leonora Williams, Tina, Dulce, Adrian Essex, Oonagh Gormley, Hilary Britton, Kristina Zagar, Barbara Panuzzo, Donna Fakes, Jacquie Knowles,

Partners: Jada Guest, Mica Joseph , Isobel Pierce, Michelle Pearce, Carol Boye, Jaime Powell, Tom Anthony, Sarah Fabes, Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Selman, Cllr Young

Apologies: Andrea Anderson, Mina Faragalla, Omar Villalba, Doreen Cox, Gloria Obilana, Maggie Lewis

Section – Introduction

0.1 Minutes reviewed for accuracy and accepted.

0.2 Matters arising:

0.21 NHG sent out letters regarding Vital billing from the heat team, but the quoted credit refunds were inaccurate, necessitating the issuance of correction letters. Roda noted that the main issue is still a lack of clarity and has previously suggested including a statement with the letters to explain the account reconciliation process. Residents received differing credit refunds without details on how their accounts were adjusted. Mica proposed a meeting to resolve these issues, but Adrian felt that Roda's notes and actions were already clear and that additional meetings were unnecessary. He emphasised that any outstanding questions should be addressed directly.

ACTION: Jada and Mica will arrange for this to be discussed with the billing team.

0.22 Jada provided an update that an estimated timeline for the service charge review has been given to WDCO, and the communications will be shared with them for feedback in September. Roda explained that WDCO members from NHG blocks

want the opportunity to review the unallocated costs and invoices that NHG recently discovered, as these will likely impact the outcome of the review. The review should take place before any communication is sent to residents and before the final accounts are agreed upon.

0.23 In response to Adrian's question about whether NHG is willing to write off the extra costs identified as an error on their part, Mica confirmed that they are not willing to write off any costs.

0.24 Jada has contacted Ekaterina and Leonora regarding their personal service charge questions.

0.25 Hermione reports that there are currently 4 unallocated properties in Phase 3A and 14 unallocated homes in Block 3B. So far, it has not been possible to match expressions of interest with these properties. The team is focused on finalising allocations and moves for Phase 3A in September and will next review the remaining allocations. Tenants in Block 3A have received a letter from the Decant team informing them that NHG will be in touch soon. The NHG introductory letter is scheduled to be sent to all these tenants during the week commencing 22nd July.

0.3 Action tracker:

0.31 Berkeley stated that there is no timeline or update on when the window report will be available. Geoff expressed his frustration, pointing out that it has been over two years without any explanation as to why the window fell out in Residence Tower. Jaime clarified that the report is with their legal team and cannot be shared until it has been reviewed and cleared. Tom added that once an update is available, Trevor will be invited to the Board meeting. Hilary emphasised that the priority is receiving assurance that the existing windows are safe, while she understands the need to see the report.

0.32 Roda reported that she received an update from Isobel indicating that Hackney is unable to provide the out-of-phase split household presentation at the Board meeting because the policy team has not provided the necessary update. Instead, a separate meeting with WDCO members will be scheduled for August or September at a date convenient for WDCO. Cllr Nicholson noted that while there was an intention to deliver this presentation, delays have occurred due to the election, and they are now working to address these delays. Cllr Nicholson noted that officers will present this to the members before it is discussed at a workshop with WDCO.

0.33 Eilane emphasised that the current policy is a key incentive for secure tenants, ensuring they benefit from regeneration efforts. She argued that there is no need for a workshop or policy review, noting that the policy was updated two years ago to streamline access to this incentive. Eilane expressed concern that the out-of-phase split household policy for social housing tenants might be altered due to this review, stressing that initial promises were made to maintain the policy

unchanged. She clarified that the policy was not conditional but understood to be based on availability.

0.34 Cllr Nicholson assured that this is how the policy was agreed upon with officers and reaffirmed that the Woodberry Down project remains unaffected by any future considerations regarding split households. Although the policy may not be applied elsewhere in the borough, its long-standing commitment ensures it remains in place for Woodberry Down. Geoff highlighted this as an opportunity for WDCO to uphold the policy and invited any dissenting opinions from the WDCO Board. The lack of disagreement indicated a unanimous consensus in support of Eilane's position on preserving the policy in its current form.

0.35 The local and overseas sales percentage for Phase 3 is not something Berkeley can pull together quickly, as it comes from a number of different sources. In the interim, they recirculated the information provided from February whilst they updated it.

ACTION: Berkeley to provide updated overseas sales percentage.

0.36 MHDT has agreed to let Woodberry Blooms to the owners of the dry cleaners in Woodberry Down to sell ice cream and decorated cakes. However, MHDT are awaiting approval from Hackney Council before they can proceed. The council has received a complaint from local businesses and is currently deliberating whether the new tenant's sale of cakes and ice cream would constitute unfair competition for these existing businesses.

0.37 The Service Charge working group meeting regarding Phase 3 is scheduled for 25th July.

1 Presentation from Jada Guest and Mica Joseph:

1.1 Mica Joseph presented on behalf of NHG, explaining that the newly established Places and Estates department focuses on managing larger estate projects, with Woodberry Down now included in this division. NHG has recognised that some of its developments have underperformed and implemented a new model last year to better address major development projects. The department manages 21 larger, more complex estates and is dedicated to estate management. The department's initial pillars include estate management, collaboration, placemaking, and consultancy and advisory. Mica outlined the department's structure, detailing where she and Jada fit within it, and explained how Places and Estates integrates into the broader organisation, with the operational team working alongside Places and Estates.

1.2 She shared that NHG's regular customer commitments are key pillars of their business strategy and also serve a distinct departmental purpose. Mica detailed the estate management strategies and clarified Jada's role within this framework. She

emphasised the need for the team to improve in bringing the right people to answer questions and ensuring that relevant information is readily available. A significant part of Jada's role is to act as an orchestrator within the organisation, facilitating communication between departments to ensure they provide the necessary services and improve estate management. Mica acknowledged that, while progress has been made, further internal work and improvements are still required. But recent actions, such as a site meeting and equipment provision like key fobs for buildings, have supported staff and addressed some of the issues. These small but essential changes, along with providing the necessary tools, aim to simplify staff tasks and enhance estate management. Mica explained that internal discussions within NHG are ongoing to identify gaps and determine necessary actions for continued improvement.

1.3 Mica acknowledged that issues such as billing and service charges are of primary concern to residents. She assured them that these issues are being addressed and that the business is being held accountable in its new roles to advance resolution. Mica explained that NHG must make a decision on the service charge figures, which will require approval at a certain level outside her remit, though it is her responsibility to facilitate this decision. She noted that the final figures, data, and any accompanying communications will be presented to WDCO members in September. She acknowledged that she understands this request was made a long time ago.

1.4 A resident reported that the trees are growing too large and are covering the view. Mica responded that they will conduct a survey to assess the trees and identify which ones need trimming to address the issue.

ACTION: Mica and Jada to conduct a survey to identify which trees are present and determine which ones require trimming

1.5 William inquired about the rationale behind the reduction in the number of housing officers. Roda clarified that the departing housing officers will be replaced, so there would be no actual reduction in staff. Roda also noted feedback from WDCO members at the Operational meeting, detailing that NHG at times informs WDCO of key decisions only after they have been made. While they understand that some decisions are business-wide, WDCO members find the lack of collaborative working and consultation before changes frustrating. Mica clarified that they have a large resident committee that they consult when undertaking major corporate restructures.

1.6 Kristina asked if there was a specific strategy for Woodberry Down. Mica responded that there isn't one in place but noted that their absolute priority was initially addressing the pump issue, and the focus has now shifted to service charges.

1.7 Eileen inquired whether NHG would be managing the dwellings in Phase 3, as it is due to be handed over. Mica responded that the management of NHG blocks in Phase 3 has not yet been agreed upon.

1.8 Eileen also asked if they knew who would be the right person to represent WDCO at Board meetings. Mica explained that NHG is a large and departmental organisation, and while the estate management team takes a holistic approach, some issues are complex and technical. She emphasised that Jada is the right person to be present, but they need to identify who else from the organisation should attend and when.

2 Partner updates: Before the partners provided their updates, the Chair thanked Isobel Pierce and Jaime Powell for their hard work and dedication to Woodberry Down, announcing that both would be leaving for new ventures and that this would be their last Board meeting.

2.1 Jada provided the NHG update, noting that the sewage system was repaired in June and will now undergo regular maintenance by their contractor, DNL. She also clarified that the upsurge issue at Birchwood was caused by cat litter being improperly disposed of in the drain, but this issue has since been resolved. She also mentioned they will provide an update on Vital Energi billing once they have consulted with the billing team.

2.2 Michelle provided the Hackney update, noting that the figures for Phase 4 were included in the Hackney report: 28 secure tenants remain, along with 77 temporary tenants and 33 leaseholders. Preparations are underway for the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for Phase 4, which is expected to proceed once formal consent is granted.

2.3 Hilary asked what will happen to the Phase 5 vacant properties once tenants are relocated to their new flats in Phase 3. Roda clarified that, to her understanding, Phase 5 properties will be used for temporary accommodation, but requested confirmation from Hackney at the next meeting.

ACTION: Hackney to confirm whether Phase 5 properties will be used for temporary accommodation once residents have moved to Phase 3.

2.4 Michelle also noted that the Phase 4 Planning Application was approved by the Planning Sub-Committee on 8th May and is now awaiting GLA approval before the final decision is issued. The target start date for the site is the summer of 2025.

2.5 The Ground Floor Strategy papers were circulated with the Board report, and members have been asked to submit any queries they may have.

2.6 The draft masterplan outline is still under review by Hackney. It was initially scheduled for submission in May; however, further review has caused delays.

2.7 For the Seven Sisters Road project, TFL is completing traffic modelling to assess the impact, using its own budget for this analysis. Funding for the project has been provided through a Section 106 agreement, and the working group is scheduled to meet at the end of July.

2.8 The West Reservoir project has received planning consent, but works have been delayed until after the summer.

2.9 William suggested that, if works are being carried out on Seven Sisters Road using Section 106 funds, the Manor House station should also be included in the project and made step-free. Geoff explained that part of the financing for the Seven Sisters Road project comes from Section 106 money. He noted that it would be valuable for the Board to discuss how Section 106 funds are allocated to understand their views on the matter. He recalled that they had previously been consulted about this and were promised £1,000 to decide on the allocation of these funds. Geoff proposed that Berkeley and Hackney involve the Board in discussions about Section 106 funding.

2.10 Adrian inquired about the Phase 3 community space, noting that the updates from NHG and Hackney were unclear. Roda explained that, in response to WDCO's request for input, NHG has suggested that WDCO submit their own ideas for the community space for consideration. She clarified that discussions had also taken place last year between Hackney and WDCO regarding the possibility of relocating the WDCO Office to the community space. Recently, Hackney approached the Chair about WDCO exploring this option for the space.

2.11 An observer asked if Friends of Woodberry Down would be included in the group using the community space. Roda clarified that, if WDCO were to submit a proposal for the space, they would need to demonstrate how the current office space is utilised by other groups and how it could potentially accommodate additional groups in the new space. She noted that no decision has been made yet and that the Chair plans to start the initial discussion at the Executive Committee meeting next week. Hilary inquired about the size of the space, and other attendees asked if it would include a kitchen.

2.12 Kristina requested an update on Block D, noting that there had been reports of delays. She emphasised that there was an expectation for the working group to convene and for stakeholder engagement to resume, pointing out that this has not yet taken place.

2.13 Cllr Selman reinforced the importance of ensuring that the fit-outs for the Block D space were tailored to the needs of the groups expected to use it. She stressed that they want to avoid a situation where, for instance, groups like the Friends of Woodberry Down cannot be accommodated due to fit-outs. She also suggested that, as part of the ground floor strategy, there should be a broader approach to developing a comprehensive plan for the Public Community Space (PCS) in Woodberry Down. This plan should not only focus on the physical space

but also address the funding requirements. Hilary added that she had previously suggested WDCO gather information about existing community groups and engage with them to understand their needs. The Chair confirmed that she would be happy to move forward with Hilary's suggestion and develop the questionnaire to collect feedback.

2.14 Amanda, from Friends of Woodberry Down, raised an issue regarding the current space at the Redmond Centre, noting that there were insufficient tables and chairs when they used the centre. Barbara shared that she had spoken to Woodberry Down Primary School about the possibility of Friends of Woodberry Down using the school as a space. These are the initial discussions that have taken place so far.

2.15 Jaime provided the Berkeley update, noting that the first residents of Phase 3 are expected to move in within a few weeks. This phase will deliver a significant number of social rented homes, with 117 units. She also reported that a decision on Phase 4 is expected shortly.

2.16 The summer screening event took place and was successful. Geoff highlighted an update from the Berkeley report, noting that Berkeley is working with the ITLA to schedule an update on the Masterplan for presentation to the Design Committee and the WDCO Board. He inquired whether these meetings would occur before the Masterplan submission. Tom and Roda confirmed that the Design Committee meeting would be held first, followed by a presentation to the Board before the Outline Masterplan planning application is submitted.

2.17 Jaime commended WDCO and the residents of Woodberry Down for their passion and commitment in bringing the community together. She announced that she would be leaving Berkeley in September and thanked the Board for their support.