

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 16th January 2025
7:15pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance: Phil Cooke, William Sheehy, Jackie Myers, Omar Villalba, Wilian Martinez, Anne Hunte, Anne Kelly, Shifra Appich, Geoff Baron, Leonora Williams, Adrian Essex, Barbara Panuzzo, Oonagh Gormley, Hilary Britton, Tina Parrott, Gita Sootarsing, Gloria Obiliana, Andrea Anderson

Partners: Molly Perman, Carol Boye, Dani Oldroyd, Jada Guest, Cllr Sarah Young, Cllr Caroline Selman, Sarah Fabes, Simon Donovan

Visitors: Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

Welcome / Apologies for absence:

Livia- Jeanne Lupumba, Kalu Amogu, Francis McDonagh, Necdet Ozturk, Mina Faragalla, Nicolas Attalides, Julian Rodriguez

Section 0 - Introduction

0.1 Acceptance of minutes of 12 December 2024:

0.2 Matters Arising / Action Tracker

0.21 Simon circulated LBH's written response to the Board.

0.22 Simon recirculated feedback and answers to questions sent to NHG on the Phase 3 Community Space in December. Adrian added that they subsequently sent out a paper setting out both sides of the argument earlier this week.

0.23 Oonagh asked why there were no further actions minuted from the December Board. Roda asked if there were a set of actions that were agreed and not included in the minutes. Oonagh responded that due to time pressure they did not decide on actions. Oonagh suggested looking through the December Board minutes to agree on where there should have been actions.

ACTION: The Board will discuss the Delegation of Power document as an agenda item for the February Board.

ACTION: Roda will look at the December Board minutes to identify potential action items and will email this back to the Board.

0.24 On the window report, Berkeley updated that they have identified works to be carried out on all of the KSS1 windows and this is out for tender at the moment. Further details will be provided in the Berkeley Homes report. Hillary inquired whether scaffolding will be required for the works. Sarah Fabes responded that, to her knowledge, the work may be carried out from inside the properties, though she

could not confirm if scaffolding will be necessary. Once Berkeley appoints their specialist consultant, they will review the scope of the work, assess the practicalities for each flat, and provide a plan of action.

ACTION: Berkeley will provide an update on whether scaffolding is needed for the KSS1 windows (remedial works).

0.25 Jada provided an update that NHG are still reviewing the service charge actuals for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. The NHG project team will meet in January and are aiming to provide further updates to residents and partners in February. The Chair wrote to the NHG Chief Executive on behalf of the Executive Committee in October 2024 but there has been no formal response to the Chair. Roda has chased this up with Julian. An update letter was sent to the residents and WDCO, but it did not directly respond to the Chair's original letter.

ACTION: Jada will follow up on the response to the Chair's letter to NHG's CEO in October and report back.

0.26 Hillary asked Jada for a timeline on this response. Jada responded that NHG have made significant progress in the last couple weeks and are anticipating that they will have a final outcome shortly. NHG aim to communicate to residents in February. Roda noted that NHG have provided four different timelines and they have failed to meet any of them. From the point of view of the TRAs and residents, it seems as if nothing has materialised. The Chair expressed disappointment and emailed Julian regarding the lack of response to her message, especially after escalating the issue to NHG's CEO. The matter has also been raised at the Round Table, yet no update has been given. Jada responded that NHG will provide an update in February and mentioned that the 2023/24 accounts will be available later in the year.

ACTION: Roda will amend the action tracker to include response from the NHG CEO to WDCO regarding raised questions.

0.27 Molly provided an update on when the next District Heat Network working group will be. Although they do not have a date for the meeting, Daniel from Expedition is looking to set it up. This will be arranged in the next few weeks. The Chair requested a commitment to schedule and confirm a meeting date in the diary before the next Board meeting.

ACTION: Molly will follow up with Michelle to confirm when the District Heat Network meeting will be scheduled. LBH has agreed to confirm a meeting date before the next Board meeting.

Section 1

1. Partner Updates (see attached written updates)

- 1.1. **Berkeley** updated on health and safety: other than the KSS1 window incident, there was a small fire in block B2 in Phase 3. This was contained by Berkeley onsite staff. The London Fire Brigade also came on site to check if the building was structurally sound and there was no irreparable damage. The cause of the fire is being investigated. The investigation is ongoing, and Berkeley will provide further details.
- 1.2. The building fit out in Phase 3 is progressing and the next handover will be block B3 in February of this year. Berkeley is finishing up blocks B4 and B5, which

will be the last of the shared ownership and social rented flats. Berkeley is still on target to complete Phase 3 in its entirety by July this year.

- 1.3. Regarding Phase 4, Berkeley will update their papers once the update on the CPO is provided.
- 1.4. On the masterplan, Berkeley submitted the outline application on Phases 5-8 on 20th December. This is currently going through a validation process from Hackney's planning team. Berkeley should be in receipt of a letter confirming validation this week and will update WDCO as soon as they know.

ACTION: Berkeley will update WDCO on the outcome of Hackney's planning team validation letter for the masterplan outline application.

- 1.5. Berkeley still has apprentices and graduates on site and their local labour is at 19%. In terms of sales and marketing, Berkeley have sold 290 market flats out of 341, and have just over 50 to go.
- 1.6. Sarah noted that Berkeley will be meeting with delivery partners to mobilise funding for community events this year. Once they have an understanding of what each partner can contribute, Berkeley will look to see what events to go forward on for this year.

ACTION: Berkeley will provide an update in February on funding for community events.

- 1.7. Elaine asked Sarah about the proportion of properties sold abroad. Sarah responded that she will look at the updated statistics in the last quarter.

ACTION: Sarah will review updated statistics on the proportion of properties sold to overseas buyers in the last quarter and provide an update.

- 1.8. Sarah updated that Berkeley met with RWDI and asked to see what interim solutions to be put in place around Nar and Drury. Berkeley also asked Fabric and RWDI to go over the landscaping plans for Phase 4. Berkeley got permission for Phase 4 and will then need to submit detailed conditions, including the landscaping condition, which looks at the permanent wind mitigation measures. Berkeley will then meet with Nar and Drury members and come back to the WDCO Board to show what the options look like.

ACTION: Berkeley will review options with WDCO after a meeting with Nar and Drury to discuss the landscaping condition.

- 1.9. William raised at the design meeting that WDCO had previously been told they could observe the wind tunnel testing in person to better understand the process. He asked if this was still an option. Sarah responded that she would follow up on this, as the previous wind tunnel testing has already taken place. Berkeley will now rely on RWDI's existing data and computer analysis for further work. However, she suggested that when Berkeley begins the design work for Phase 5 in the spring, they could invite WDCO Board members and the design committee to visit Milton Keynes to observe a wind tunnel test.
- 1.10. **NHG:** Dani provided an update on behalf of Julian. She reported NHG has secured 30-35 sales for residents who have moved in. The next handover, scheduled for June 2025, will include an additional 82 homes.
- 1.11. Regarding the service charge, the final review has been completed, but it is unclear whether it has been distributed to WDCO. Roda confirmed that this

information was shared during the Service Charge working group meeting, in which WDCO members also participate.

- 1.12. Dani noted that NHG committed to obtaining an independent review of rents, which NHG has now received and is currently being assessed by the rents team. Julian has also committed to holding both a rents review meeting and a progress review meeting with the rents team.
- 1.13. She reported that the community space will be ready in a few weeks and requested a final decision on whether WDCO intends to take the space.
- 1.14. Oonagh requested a clear timeline for the rent review, as residents must make their decisions by next Friday. Dani responded that she could not provide an exact timeline but expects NHG to have more clarity by early next week. Oonagh emphasised the urgency of the matter and suggested extending the decision deadline.

ACTION: Dani will follow up on Oonagh's concerns regarding the review of rents and approaching deadlines for residents.

- 1.15. Omar raised concerns that residents moving to Phase 3 still do not have complete clarity on their final costs, including rent, the recently reduced service charge, and the newly released council tax bands, which show an increase. He emphasised that residents cannot make informed decisions without a full breakdown of their financial commitments.
- 1.16. Shifra supported Omar's point and asked when NHG would inform residents of their updated costs, given that people are already moving in. Dani responded that service charges are set by the operations team and promised to take this concern back to them.

Action: Dani to follow up on when residents will be informed of the updated costs.

- 1.17. Roda noted that WDCO had previously requested this information be shared with residents at the last service charge meeting. She also raised concerns that NHG has not provided a detailed breakdown of service charges for those who wish to understand what is included.
- 1.18. Hillary highlighted concerns over energy tariffs, reporting that a shared ownership resident in Phase 3 had seen their tariff double. This resident spoke with others in the block who had received different figures. Dani clarified that NHG does not set energy tariffs. Omar added that it is essential for residents on low incomes to have this information for budgeting, even in draft form. Dani responded that a heat tariff breakdown should be distributed.
- 1.19. Roda added that Hillary's concern stemmed from the fact that the standing charges in Phase 3 are higher than those in existing blocks, and this has not been communicated to shared ownership residents. Hillary noted that residents were initially quoted 60p per day but are now being charged over £1 per day, with others receiving different figures. The Chair expressed frustration that residents are being asked to move in with so many unanswered questions, calling it unacceptable that they do not have clear information on rent, service charges, energy tariffs and council tax.
- 1.20. Oonagh requested that the minutes reflect that the service charge "correction" should not be referred to as a "reduction," as it was due to errors being rectified rather than an intentional decrease. She emphasised that the wording should not soften NHG's responsibility.
- 1.21. Cllr Sarah Young noted that WDCO had written to NHG, Guy Nicholson (cabinet lead), and senior officers to request clarity on rent reductions and the actual rent

levels. They also called for discussions on lowering rents and extending decision-making deadlines until these discussions conclude. Sarah stated that she had spoken with Guy Nicholson, Susanne Johnson, and Molly, who all support WDCO in holding these discussions. She also raised concerns about affordability, reporting that some residents had not undergone affordability assessments. She requested that this be added to the broader concerns about the lack of information reaching residents.

- 1.22. Shifra asked for a clear deadline by which residents would receive this information, expressing concerns about the ongoing lack of transparency and the disrespect shown to residents. She questioned whether there was a plan to resolve this and when the information would be sent out. Molly responded that, to her understanding, NHG would be sending a letter to every resident allocated a property, outlining their rent, service charge, and council tax obligations.

ACTION: Dani will request NHG to provide a detailed breakdown of service charges for residents.

ACTION: Molly will follow up on the letter from NHG outlining rents, service charges, council tax, and heat tariffs.

- 1.23. Roda asked if NHG could also include an extension of the deadline in the letter and the ITLA's contact information.

ACTION: NHG to include ITLA information in the letter to residents regarding Phase 4 and 5.

ACTION: Dani will confirm if the decision deadline for Phase 3 offers can be extended for residents.

- 1.24. Adrian asked NHG about changes made during the masterplan pre-application meeting on 3rd December with Berkeley, NHG, and the GLA, which WDCO did not attend. Sarah clarified that Berkeley had previously met with the GLA in May 2024 but had not returned with updated proposals. The GLA had requested an update on the application, and Berkeley presented a report detailing the reduction in homes and the increase in public space in some of the northern phases. Sarah confirmed that no further changes have been made to the masterplan since it was last presented to the WDCO Board.

- 1.25. **Hackney:** Molly provided the Hackney update, noting that as of the end of 2024, Phase 4 had 19 secure tenants, 28 remaining leaseholders, and 23 tenants in temporary accommodation. Vacant possession is scheduled for late spring 2025. Hackney is continuing to buy back leasehold properties in Phase 4. Four flats are reserved for shared equity purchase, and there are 27 remaining leasehold properties to buy back—16 agreements have been reached, with negotiations ongoing for the others. Among the 23 tenants in temporary accommodation, 10 have received offers for new homes, and 13 are still awaiting offers.

- 1.26. She also reported that moves for secure tenants began on 9th December, with 30 tenants successfully relocated to Phase 3A so far. Hackney and NHG are collaborating to facilitate the moves and support tenants, with three drop-in sessions held in early January. There are 8 secure tenants who have been allocated homes but remain uncontacted. The decant team is working with NHG to ensure these tenants are reached through home visits or invitations to meet with the teams.

- 1.27. Hillary referenced the first paragraph of the report, which states that homes will, as far as possible, be matched and offered to Woodberry Down residents. She inquired about when Hackney would decide to make all the offers. Molly clarified that homes in Phase 3A have already been offered to residents across all phases, with a mix of allocations. Once these offers are either accepted or declined, Hackney will reassess the remaining flats and prioritise Woodberry Down residents in this process.
- 1.28. Caroline raised concerns about communication with temporary tenants. She asked how Hackney is ensuring these temporary tenants are informed. Molly responded that she did not have the specifics available but would address this at the Round Table. Caroline requested a representative from the team attend the Round Table to clarify matters.

ACTION: Hackney will provide a written update from the DART team for the Round Table regarding temporary housing.

ACTION: Roda will circulate the update to the Board, who will then submit written questions for Hackney to answer in writing.

- 1.29. Molly provided an update on Phase 4 moves into Phase 3. At the end of 2024, there were 19 secure tenants and 28 leaseholders remaining in Phase 4, and 23 temporary accommodation tenants. Vacant possession is programmed for late spring 2025.
- 1.30. Hackney is continuing to buy back leasehold properties in Phase 4. There are 4 flats reserved to purchase as shared equity, and 27 remaining leasehold properties to buy back, 16 agreed, and another still in negotiations. There are 23 tenants in temporary accommodation - 10 have been made an offer of a new home and 13 are yet to be made an offer.
- 1.31. Omar mentioned that he took questions from TA tenants and they are not being provided basic services and information. Omar asked how to improve this and would appreciate questions from them to be answered to get some accountability for them.
- 1.32. Cllr Sarah Young asked Molly to break down for TA how many temporary accommodation tenants are going to secure homes and how many are going to further temporary accommodation. Sarah also asked for residents being offered Phase 3a homes whether Hackney are also able to offer existing tenants split households.
- 1.33. Roda noted that at the last Board meeting, Cllr Nicholson suggested reconvening after Christmas to review and discuss the out-of-phase split household policy with WDCO. She asked about the progress and when WDCO would be included in these discussions. Molly responded that she had met with the team responsible for housing policy, who will be drafting the local lettings policy review with a focus on out-of-phase split households. Hackney will be in touch in the next week to set up a meeting with WDCO. There will be a meeting to review policy options with WDCO and this will feed into a consultation.
- 1.34. Shifra mentioned she was told that some of the Phase 4 temporary residents received calls before Christmas advising them that they needed to move out by 31st December, and asked if there are any drop-in sessions for these residents in Phase 4. Molly replied that she does not know if there are drop-in sessions planned for temporary accommodation. Roda added that there have only been drop-in sessions for secure tenants and none for temporary housing residents. Molly noted that she cannot see why drop-in sessions should not also be offered for temporary accommodation residents.

- 1.35. Adrian had a question for Hackney on Block D but suggested asking this outside of the Board due to the meeting being 40 minutes behind schedule.

ACTION: Adrian to ask Hackney question regarding Block D.

- 1.36. Elaine raised concerns that people are struggling to access the out-of-phase split household policy and suggested that WDCO assist them. Roda responded that WDCO members had previously discussed this issue at a Hackney operational meeting, where it was identified that the difficulty in accessing early split households is due to a shortage of void properties. As a result, Hackney is reviewing the out-of-phase split household offer to address the unmet demand. WDCO has been actively raising concerns about this. Roda clarified that while Hackney is reviewing the out-of-phase offer, there are no plans to change the overall split household policy; the review is solely focused on availability constraints. Molly reiterated that the policy review applies only to out-of-phase split households and emphasised that the availability of properties on Woodberry Down remains a key factor. Hillary suggested assessing the number of residents who will reach eligibility age within the next 15 years to better understand future demand.
- 1.37. **MHDT:** Simon noted that Hillary had questions about how MHDT measures occupancy of the RCC and suggested a face-to-face meeting with Miriam to go through them. He also provided an update on the work with Matt Jenner, Hackney's Cultural Development Officer, who has been involved in planning the River Festival. MHDT aims to submit a major funding bid to the Arts Council to support the festival. Otherwise, the MHDT report stands as read.

Board Discussion without partners:

2. Phase 3 Community Space:

- 2.1. Adrian sent out a note at the end of the week outlining the context, background, and arguments for and against relocating to the new office space.
- 2.2. William expressed his support for moving to the new office noting that the current office spaces is larger but come with higher rent. He emphasised that he does not want to relocate to a temporary Hackney flat while waiting for a better option. Additionally, he pointed out that the proposed location is more accessible for those arriving by bus from Hackney. The Chair asked if NHG could guarantee they would provide a partition if WDCO moved to the new space. Roda clarified that NHG did not provide such a guarantee.
- 2.3. Adrian presented arguments against the move, stating that William's support was based on fear of missing out rather than a strong justification. He emphasised that the office should not be taken without a clear and compelling reason. Concerns included poor accessibility, as few estate residents would likely arrive by bus, the presence of a busy road with double yellow lines, and an unwelcoming layout featuring two closed doors and a large concrete structure in the middle of the room, which would not be suitable for private conversations. Adrian also noted that the space would not adequately meet the needs of WDCO. He concluded that not only was the move unnecessary, but there was no valid reason to proceed with it. Hillary added that it would be better to take the kitchen out and WDCO should specify redoing the space if they do decide to take it. Adrian raised that Roda has asked if changes could be made and NHG said no.
- 2.4. Roda noted that Hackney has confirmed WDCO will not be forced to move if they feel the space is unsuitable. Regarding potential layout changes, Hackney and NHG stated that any modifications would likely be subject to cost. Adrian reiterated that there is no compelling reason to move.

- 2.5. The decision on whether WDCO should move to the Phase 3 satellite space went to a vote, with the majority of the Board in favour of staying at the current office.

ACTION: Roda will follow up with Hackney regarding the availability of another satellite community space in a later phase.

ACTION: Roda will inform Hackney and NHG of the Board's decision to remain in the current office.

3 Outcomes of Awayday / Prep for Partners Awayday:

- 3.1. Paul shared the report, which Roda circulated again on Tuesday. Paul said if there are any comments or errors to let him know for Board members who were in attendance.
- 3.2. Andrea raised an error in Appendix 2 that her name has been omitted while Shifra's name has been added, despite Shifra not attending.
- 3.3. The Board requested for someone who was in attendance at the WDCO Awayday to proof read the report.

ACTION: Ann Kelly and Jackie will proofread the Awayday report.

- 3.4. Adrian provided a summary of the key outcomes from the WDCO Awayday, which was well received. Throughout the session, the Board found several points of agreement. A key outcome was the identification of priority areas, with Board members assigning their names to specific priorities to ensure follow-through beyond a single meeting. Additionally, WDCO emphasised the need for a more inclusive approach, ensuring that responsibilities are shared across the Board rather than being carried out by a select few, to encourage broader participation in action follow-ups.
- 3.5. The Board identified WDCO's top priorities, which was getting WDCO's house in order with Jackie, Adrian, and William responsible for overseeing it. A follow-up meeting was scheduled to discuss necessary changes and establish action points to be addressed between meetings.

ACTION: Adrian will circulate notes from the meeting with Jackie and William on "getting WDCO's house in order" to the Board.

- 3.6. Phase 3 was the second priority, with a large number of people already involved, so no additional nominations were necessary.
- 3.7. The third priority is to assess the number of social housing units being re-provided in future phases. Geoff Baron and Gloria have volunteered to take the lead on this.
- 3.8. Another priority was evaluating the current use of the Redmond Centre, as some Board members questioned whether it still functions as a community centre. Adrian discussed with Miriam and Finn the removal of certain notices, which they agreed to, and also inquired about using the kitchen and space for coffee mornings and evening events for those who work. Tina, Jackie, Adrian, Gita, Hillary, Oonagh, Donna, Leonora, and Andrea volunteered to support the coffee mornings.
- 3.9. The priority regarding Block D was also discussed, with the Chair suggesting that Kristina take the lead, as she is a member of the Block D working group.

ACTION: Roda will email Kristina regarding Block D priority from the WDCO Awayday.

3.10. Anne Kelly and Hilary have volunteered to oversee NHG performance. The Board will make progress on these priorities and focus areas, and will revisit the remaining priorities in 3 months to assess further actions.

ACTION: At the conclusion of each Board meeting, a progress update will be provided along with actions for the next meeting.

3.11. An agenda has been shared for the Partners Awayday. Roda asked if there are any key points to relay to Hackney and the facilitator, Lisa Taylor.

3.12. Omar suggested framing the feedback as questions for Board members to contribute to, such as identifying what isn't working and what could improve. If any members have feedback or proposed changes for the agenda, Roda will send them to Hackney and the facilitator for updates.

ACTION: Roda will arrange a pre-meeting with attendees to review key points from the WDCO Awayday.

ACTION: Roda will follow up with Hackney and the facilitator for the final agenda and circulate it once received.

4 Appointment of Partner Awayday Reps - Chair plus 2:

4.1 The Partners Awayday will be held on 27th January, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. The Chair and three additional representatives will attend, the Board nominated William, Andrea, and Hillary as representatives for the Partners Awayday.

ACTION: Roda will inform Hackney that four WDCO representatives will attend the Awayday.

5 Phase 3 Rents and Service Charge Next Steps:

5.1 Omar provided an update that the service charge, council tax, and rent are the three components of the Phase 3 costs they have been challenging. Oonagh highlighted that they identified and decreased the service charge by 20%. This adjustment is considered a success and has helped ensure that partners are held accountable.

5.2 The council tax has recently been issued, and WDCO is currently discussing the significant increase in council tax for those moving into Phase 3. Omar asked for someone with experience to take the lead on this issue. Hillary suggested looking online for a list of all the block ratings for comparison. While Hillary mentioned it's not entirely clear, she offered to find a list showing how each flat in the block is rated.

5.3 Omar added that regarding rents, WDCO sent an email today asking Hackney to push for no more than a 30% increase or convergence rent, compared to either the current rent rates. Another meeting will be scheduled with the NHG and Hackney directors and Cllr Guy Nicholson, where WDCO will have a final discussion and request councillors to respond on this issue. He added that the next steps might be to send a letter to the housing minister and potentially engage with the media, as progress has not been made in the past four months.

5.4 Hillary clarified that the letter sent today refers to convergence occurring over a longer period, but it was Cllr Sarah Young who mentioned the two-year timeline.

- 5.5 Omar noted that the cost of a 4-bedroom in an existing Hackney building is £166 cheaper than a one-bedroom in a new NHG building. He also highlighted that some people in Phase 5 are choosing to wait and save up with their current rent, hoping to eventually afford a move or to relocate off the estate.
- 5.6 Hillary asked if a date had been set for the meeting with Hackney. Roda has suggested there is a Round Table meeting scheduled for next week and recommended that this could be an opportunity to hold the meeting beforehand.

6 AOB:

- 6.1. Ann Hunte shared the good news that she recently saw a movie made on the estate, though it wasn't mentioned in the cultural report. She reported that the movie was definitely worth watching.
- 6.2. Regarding the Awayday priorities, Barbara requested that partners provide an approved list of people to send to these meetings based on their remit. She suggested that if the partners are unable to send one of the three designated people, they should instead submit a written update. Adrian asked if action points from the Board could be shared sooner, rather than a week before the next meeting.

ACTION: Roda will circulate the Board action points next week.

- 6.3. The Chair noted that the Board currently receives sandwiches from Sublime for £100, which is quite expensive. Sainsbury's and Morrisons offer platters at a lower cost, with a wider selection of sandwiches, cakes, and options for vegetarians and those with gluten-free needs. The Chair asked the Board if they would agree to change the food provider, and the Board was in favour.
- 6.4. Elaine raised a concern that the organisations attending these meetings often send representatives to answer questions that they know will be asked, but the Board often doesn't know the representatives' roles within the organisation.