

NHG WDCO REPORT- February 2025

1. DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

1.1 Phase 2 Block D & B

All homes in block B are sold and occupied, whilst 1 home remains unsold in Block D which is the property currently being used as the Phase 3 show home. NHG and Hackney and Berkeley Homes are reviewing options to convert to Shared Equity due to interest from a Phase 5 resident.

1.2 Phase 3

The community space has been snagged and de-snagged by our clerk of works and is ready for completion imminently following completion of some minor glazing works. WDCO have confirmed that this space is not suitable to relocate from their current offices. NHG are currently exploring options with MHDT.

Residents have started moving in to both shared ownership and social rent homes on Woodberry Down Phase 3A. NHG will be delivering Welcome Boxes to the Social Rented residents in imminently to welcome them to their new home. These boxes were jointly funded by the Delivery Partners. Drop-in sessions for prospective residents are continuing with updated cost information available.

Currently, of the 75 Social Rented homes, 40 families have moved in and 9 are in the process of signing tenancies and booking move in dates. Of the 82 Shared Ownership homes, 41 have been sold and 10 are progressing through the pre-sale process.

There have been some teething problems with heating, but these are being worked through and residents will be offered further demonstrations if required during their 'Settling In' and/or Aftercare visits. For elderly residents there is an ability to register for credit meters and this is being communicated during the sign-up process and the above visits.

Following concern raised around Rents and Service charges for new tenants and the presentations and discussions at previous Board and Round Table meetings and working groups:

- Rents – NHG committed to commissioning an independent Jan 1999 valuation and applying any reduction in rents as a result of renewed rent calculations to existing and new tenants. These new Jan 1999 values were slightly lower than the previous indexed values, and have resulted in a reduction of rents to the 1 and 2 bed homes, but the 3 and 4 bed homes still trigger the Social Rent Cap.
- Service Charges – Following reviews of services with NHG, WDCO, LB Hackney and BHL and the ongoing S/C Working Group meetings, service charges have been reduced.

The results have been shared with WDCO and local Councillors and, on average, result in reductions of rent and service charge housing costs, depending on bed sizes, of between 5% and 16%, which equates to annual savings of between £660 and £2,173. These are average figures.

During this process residents have been given extended periods to decide on their housing offer.

Communications will/have been issued to all existing residents and future residents notifying them of the changes. Following an issue of a draft letter to WDCO, NHG are making amendments with the intention that the letter will be issued in week commencing 17th February.

Phase 3B continues to programme with completions due on the 26th June 2025. The revised Jan 1999 valuations included the 3B homes and will be used in the calculation of rent levels. Service charges are currently being reviewed in light of the negotiations for phase 3A and will be shared with WDCO and potential residents as soon as possible.

1.3 Phase 3 New Homes Survey

Members of the New Homes Team undertook some residents surveys last week with Social Rent and Shared Ownership residents, to ask their initial thoughts on their new homes. The purpose of these surveys is to inform NHG and its Design Manager of what residents like and do not like about their new homes so that these lessons can be captured and where possible applied to the design and specification of homes in future phases. The results of these visits can be shared with WDCO.

1.4 Phase 4 and Masterplan

Phase 4 is due to start on site in November 2025 in line with the CPO programme. NHG are reviewing the design elements ahead of Berkeley Home's Gateway 2 submittal which is targeted for the first quarter of 2025. Build Agreement (contract) negotiations have commenced with the Build Agreement (contract) to be entered into prior to the commencement of construction.

Following the Masterplan planning application on the 20th December 2024 and its validation by LB Hackney Planners, the earliest that it could be presented to Planning Committee would be May 2025.

2. PLACES AND ESTATES UPDATES

2.1 Service Charge Review

NHG have requested an opportunity to present the outcome of the service charge review at the March board meeting. WDCO has indicated that they will confirm whether this item will be added to the agenda after discussing our proposal at the February '*board discussion without partners*.' We will provide a written update if preferred.

NHG remains open to meeting with a small group of WDCO representatives to work through and discuss the challenges of finalising the historic accounts. This opportunity is still very much available and something we are willing to engage with.

2.2 Service Charge Budgets for 2025-26

Post-consultation communication regarding the service charge budgets for 2025-26 were sent to residents by email during the week commencing 10 February. This included:

- A list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) raised by residents during the consultation period, along with our responses.
- A 'Service Charge Explanation' document providing a detailed explanation of each charge on the estimate.

Paper copies are available at the WDCO office and the Neighbourhood Office (8 Woodberry Down).

The final budgets will be issued in March/April 2024.

2.3 Invitation to meet our new cleaning and gardening contractors.

We have invited residents and partners to meet our new contractors, *Just Ask* and *Chequers*, on Tuesday, 18 February, from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM. The session will be held at the Woodberry Down Neighbourhood Office. We want to hear residents and partners' feedback on the proposed services of our new contractors. We hope the session will be beneficial for everyone involved and will ensure all voices are heard.

2.4 WDCO Chairs' letter of complaint to our CEO

We informed WDCO that the complaint has now been formally raised as per our complaints process. However, WDCO has expressed dissatisfaction with the complaint being dealt with in this way as they expect a response directly from the CEO or his deputy. Our Head of Complaints has offered to have a conversation with the chair and/or the ITLA to explain our position and outline our intended approach. We are waiting for partners to confirm if they accept this.

3. SOCIO ECONOMIC UPDATE

We have a range of programmes and activities available for residents of Woodberry Down and are looking at the 25/26 programme.

See below for more information.

- Tutor's United are tutoring in English & Maths for years 4,5 & 6 delivered remotely on Tuesdays between 16.00-17.00. Also have paid roles available as Tutor's for University Students with a priority given to NHG residents. [Tutors United - Enabling every child to succeed.](#)
- The London Wildlife Trust have a host of free family activities across Woodberry Down around the reservoir, Coal House café and inside the Redmond Centre. [Woodberry Wetlands | London Wildlife Trust](#)

- Manor House Development Trust have a host of activities for the mid-term break for young people and families. [What's On at The Redmond Community Centre](#)
- Debt advises and welfare benefits support (in person on Wednesdays from the Community Office or over the phone or zoom) available from East End Citizen's Advice Bureau [Citizens Advice Hackney – Citizens Advice East End](#).
- Active Within continue to deliver their fitness and wellbeing classes and coaching across Woodberry Down and in the Redmond Centre. [Events | Active within](#)

4. COMMUNICATION UPDATE

The Woodberry Communications Group has now been reconvened and will produce with WDCO a revised Communication Strategy and Action Plan for 25/26. MHDT have now delivered all the key events this year and funded 4 organisations through the small grants programme.