

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 17th April 2025

7:15pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance: Geoff Baron, Leonora Williams, William Sheehy, Phil Cooke, Hilary Britton, Oonagh Gormley, Necdet Ozturk, Kalu Amogu, Donna Fakes, Adrian Essex, Dulce Laluces, Gloria Obiliana, Phil Cooke

Partners: Tom Anthony (BH), Gareth Crawford (LBH), Julian Rodriguez (NHG), Nikola Popovic (NHG), Cllr Young, Cllr Selman,

Visitors: Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

0.1 Welcome / Apologies for absence:

Tina Parrott, Anne Hunte, Francis McDonagh, Kristina Zagar, Jackie Myers, Mina Faragalla, Andrea Anderson, Andrea Stoica, Barbara Panuzzo, Livia-Jeanne Lupumba, Omar Villalba, Gita Sootarsing, Willian Martinez, Shifra Appich, Simon Donovan, Jada Guest

1. Acceptance of minutes of 20 March 2025:

- 1.1. Adrian emphasised the need for coherence in the minutes and requested for the minutes to be reduced and to be more concise.

2. Matters Arising / Action Tracker

- 2.1 Please see the attached written update from partners covering all actions for more detailed updates.
 - Phase 3A rent & service-charge letters (NHG): The 2024/25 confirmation charge letters were issued to residents on 28 March 2025.
 - Historic service-charge review (NHG): NHG Board sign-off is expected next week, with a presentation planned for the May Board.
 - Window-detachment remedial strategy (Berkeley): The engineer's final report is imminent; procurement will follow and a concluding statement on causation will be issued.
 - Local / disabled employment data (Berkeley): GDPR restrictions prevent release of current figures: a new data-capture system is planned for Phase 4.
 - Wind-mitigation solution (Berkeley): Costs were received on 7 April; internal approval is under way, with a further meeting arranged later this month.
 - Block D and MillCo lease - community-space obligations (Hackney): Unit marketing is under way; fit-out should begin shortly (three-month programme), and a meeting with WDCO reps is scheduled w/c 21 April. The draft lease requires engagement with community groups and provision of flexible, low-cost space where possible (no dedicated rooms).
 - Newsletter delivery (Hackney): Newsletters were hand-delivered by council staff; the delivery list has been shared.

- West Reservoir landscape plans (Hackney: Plans were circulated to ITLA and the Board on 8 April.
- District Heat Network meeting (Hackney & BH): A meeting is being arranged for May/June (date to be confirmed by Berkeley).
- WDCO internal actions: The housing report is progressing; resident issue-logs are ongoing; the governance paper has been circulated and discussed.

2.2 The items listed below still require further information or remain **outstanding actions:**

- Berkeley will arrange a District Heat Network meeting in May-June.
- NHG to deliver written presentation on the outcome of the historic service-charge review at the May Board (pending NHG's internal approval).

3. Section 106 Presentation:

- 3.1. Tom Anthony from Berkeley deliver the presentation, he noted that the Section 106 (S106) agreement is a legally binding document that secures commitments from the developer, deemed necessary to mitigate the impacts of a planning application. It is an agreement between Berkeley and Hackney Council. The term "S106 agreement" refers to its basis in Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. This Act outlines the terms under which Berkeley is required to provide, facilitate, or fund infrastructure, services, and other measures. These provisions may apply to both on-site and off-site developments. The agreement can also impose restrictions, such as preventing Berkeley from commencing work on-site until an employment and training programme is in place.
- 3.2. A S106 agreement may only be used for three purposes:
 - To control how the land is used and developed.
 - To require the developer to undertake certain actions, such as delivering affordable housing or a play area.
 - To require the developer (Berkeley) to make financial contributions to fund provisions that cannot be delivered on-site, such as roads, schools, or local services.
- 3.3. The "Three Tests" ensure that each S106 obligation is fair and reasonable. An obligation must meet all of the following criteria to be included:
 - It must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
 - It must be directly related to the development – for example, a S106 agreement for Woodberry Down cannot be used to address issues in Dalston or Old Street.
 - It must be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 3.4. This ensures that any S106 obligation directly benefits the Woodberry Down community. For instance, instead of building a GP surgery, Berkeley contributes funds towards healthcare services, and Tom ensures these contributions are allocated to GP facilities within the local area.
- 3.5. Hackney Council has developed a Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2020), which outlines the types of contributions

developers could be expected to make. These are specific to Hackney and are typically calculated using formulas based on square metres, number of homes, and type of housing.

3.6. Several factors influence the calculation of specific obligations:

- Size and type of development – Larger developments usually have greater impacts, requiring higher contributions.
- Location – Different areas of Hackney may have different priorities and needs, which can affect both the nature and scale of contributions.
- Viability – The Council assesses the financial viability of each development to ensure that the required obligations are proportionate and do not undermine the feasibility of the project.

3.7. Examples of typical S106 obligations include:

- Affordable Housing – Mandating a percentage of new homes be affordable for local residents.
- Infrastructure Improvements – Funding for upgrades to roads, public transport, or educational facilities (e.g., improvements to Seven Sisters Road).
- Environmental Measures – Supporting biodiversity net gain, ecosystem protection, and water resource management.
- Local Employment and Training – Creating opportunities for local residents through job placements and apprenticeships.
- Restrictions on Land Use – Imposing conditions such as limiting occupancy to individuals with a local connection.

3.8. The Woodberry Down regeneration has committed to £23,964,843 in S106 contributions. Of this, £8.3 million has been earmarked for improvements to Seven Sisters Road, and £2.8 million represents the total financial obligations for Phase 4. Most of these obligations are index-linked, meaning their value increases in line with inflation until the payments are made.

3.9. Amanda enquired whether elderly volunteering and training fall under the Local Training obligation. Tom clarified that while volunteering may not be included, there is no age restriction for local labour and apprenticeship opportunities.

3.10. Simon Slater asked whether Transport for London (TfL) could request that the £8 million allocated for Seven Sisters Road improvements be redirected to alternative uses, such as bus stop enhancements. Tom confirmed that this is not possible, as the sums are tied to specific obligations and calculated with precision.

3.11. Adrian referenced a Round Table presentation from 4 May 2017 that mentioned two financial figures: one exceeding £25 million, and another around £24 million. He asked whether this breakdown has since changed. Tom explained that the higher figure was a forward projection based on the 2014 masterplan. The current figure of £24 million pertains solely to the Green Lanes and Phases 1–4 of the regeneration. S106 agreements for

Phases 5–8 is still under negotiation and will be added to the £24 million once finalised.

- 3.12. Amanda asked whether interest is applied retrospectively. Tom responded that the Phase 3 S106 agreement specifies £8.3 million and that the trigger for payment has not yet occurred. He added that the original cost was £8.3 million, but under indexation, the updated amount is expected to be approximately £10.3 million, which Berkeley will pay when the trigger point is reached.
- 3.13. Cllr Selman asked if NHS contributions could be used for fit-outs or improvements to existing facilities. Tom confirmed they could. He added that the NHS now typically requests funding for upgrading existing facilities, such as extensions or new GP practices.
- 3.14. Adrian queried whether Hackney's internal approval process has been updated since the 2017 document, and whether an analysis exists showing how funds have been allocated under each category.

ACTION: Tom and Gareth to obtain and share an analysis of how S106 funds have been spent under each category.

ACTION: Gareth will also confirm what the internal approval process is within Hackney.

4. Partner Updates

- 4.1. **Hackney:** Gareth raised a discrepancy in the figures reported for Phase 4 vacant possession and clarified that there are, four secure tenants remaining.
- 4.2. Regarding the Ground Floor Strategy, Gareth provided a brief background. He explained that NHG initially commissioned a study on residents' views in the area, conducted by Social Life in 2020 and updated in 2024. Berkeley subsequently commissioned a separate study, delivered by GF Commercial and CFCI Research, which focused on analysing the commercial needs of the area. A parallel strand of Berkeley's work, again with Social Life, explored the community element to inform a cohesive strategy. However, the final phase of this work—spanning 2023–2024—was never completed. This research aimed to guide Hackney on the requirements for future phases. While Hackney now has a clearer understanding of existing community and commercial facilities within the neighbourhood, there is no comprehensive research identifying the physical requirements in the area.
- 4.3. Gareth suggested refocusing the strategy from identifying new physical requirements to understanding and optimising existing assets. He proposed a three-month period to reset the focus and revise the brief by:
 - Mapping and understanding the commercial assets within the red line boundary.
 - Drafting a revised brief to complete the outstanding 2023–2024 report.

- 4.4. By the end of the summer, Gareth aims for Hackney to be in a position to procure a final report and establish a comprehensive strategy.
- 4.5. Cllr Selman enquired whether the work undertaken with CFCI and Social Life would be concluded. Gareth responded that only the first two stages of the original report were completed. The Council's current priority is to reset the brief and use the unspent budget from the final phase of research to complete the work.
- 4.6. Cllr Young asked whether the revised brief addresses how Hackney plans to attract businesses to Woodberry Down, including approaches to letting, rental levels, and business engagement. Tom responded that these points were covered in Stage 2. He acknowledged concerns that Berkeley might be pricing businesses out, but clarified that this was not the case. Rather, businesses were not approaching Berkeley. A new commercial manager has since been appointed and has successfully attracted tenants to Phase 3, a trend that is expected to continue.
- 4.7. Hilary suggested Hackney consider both short- and long-term strategies, particularly as Phase 3 has had limited impact and Phase 4 is still three years away. She proposed the use of pop-ups or short-term lets to activate commercial spaces in the interim. Tom agreed and noted that tenants are beginning to take up these opportunities, with expectations that demand will continue to grow.
- 4.8. Elaine referenced earlier community engagement, including pre-Covid suggestions such as introducing a bakery, and asked whether these ideas would be incorporated into the strategy. Gareth confirmed he would review archival material and clarified that the strategy would not specify particular retail types. Necdet added that partners should prioritise supporting local businesses in commercial units.
- 4.9. Gareth provided an update on the West Reservoir, noting that works are scheduled to commence in June, although a precise start date is yet to be confirmed.
- 4.10. Elaine asked about the split household policy review. Gareth confirmed that a meeting had been held with WDCO members and that the Chair had submitted a letter outlining WDCO's position. However, Hackney has not yet established a timetable for a formal review. A formal consultation process will begin once the review is initiated.
- 4.11. Roda asked if a written response from Hackney to the Chair's letter would be provided. Cllr Selman added that the lack of clarity is unsettling for residents and urged Hackney to issue a written response with proposed timelines to provide reassurance.

ACTION: Gareth to discuss with Hackney the provision of a written response to the Chair's letter.

- 4.12. **Berkeley:** Tom reported that Berkeley remains on track to complete all Phase 3 homes by the end of July and expects to start on Phase 4 in autumn

2025. The Masterplan is still awaiting determination. The partners have agreed to match last year's funding for this year's community events.

- 4.13. **NHG:** Julian confirmed that Phase 3 is scheduled to complete between June and July. NHG issued the Phase 3B service-charge figures to WDCO on 11 April, and a meeting is set for next week to review them. NHG will also write to prospective residents with details of rents, service charges, council-tax bands and estimated utility costs. A show home will be opened for potential residents. Julian also noted that:
- Individual viewings of nominated properties in Phase 3B will be arranged for new residents from late May to June.
 - NHG will finalise the occupation strategy with partners in May, ahead of first move-ins on 30 June.
 - Approval of the historic-service-charge review is expected next week; Mica is anticipated to present the findings at the May Board meeting.

ACTION: Roda to circulate the written questions and answers from NHG to the Board.

5. Board discussion without partners:

- 5.1. **Masterplan Outline Planning Application:** Adrian noted that a briefing paper has been prepared by Geoff and Jackie to help WDCO reach a position on the Masterplan. Comments made at this meeting will be collated into a single document, to be refined ahead of the July Planning Committee. Board members have been asked to give two reasons explaining why they either support the Masterplan, object to it, or neither support nor object, with the aim of reaching consensus.
- 5.2. Following discussion, the Board agreed in principle to support the Masterplan but voiced concerns and decided that this support should depend on the conditions listed below.
- Density – Several members wish to place a cap on numbers of homes; a figure of 6,500 homes has been suggested. Concerns were expressed that higher density could undermine liveability, yet rejecting increase density outright could threaten overall viability. But overall, there is concern that there will be further increase in density as has the case so far in each masterplan.
 - Podiums – Objections were raised to the extensive use of podiums (particularly along the waterfront in Phase 5). Although podiums hide ground-floor servicing and avoid basement excavation, they are viewed by some as an economical build method that creates impermeable, less biodiverse surfaces. A request will be made for either no podiums or a significant reduction with consideration of alternatives.
 - Affordability – Members wish to ensure that the affordable housing to be delivered remains genuinely affordable, especially for social-rented tenants.

- Green space – Clarification is sought that the scheme complies with the required 0.4 ha per 1,000 residents. The Board also wants reassurance that contributions to open space and biodiversity will be secured through planning conditions.

5.3. It was noted that the Masterplan has already been scrutinised by Hackney planners, the GLA and the Design Committee. Any further conditions proposed by WDCO should therefore be framed so they can be attached by the Planning Committee.

ACTION: Roda and Adrian to collate today's feedback and pass it to Geoff, who will prepare the draft comments for review at the May Board meeting.

5.4. **AGM proposal:** Adrian shared a proposal to hold the AGM in June, as required by the constitution. The Board agreed.

5.5. **Discord:** Mina and Adrian suggested using Discord as an alternative communication platform that does not require sharing phone numbers. But the Board decided not to adopt Discord and instead will set up a WDCO Board Whatsapp group.

5.6. Preparation for the May Board

- Geoff will draft the Masterplan comments, drawing on the Board's feedback and today's discussion. The draft will be brought back to the Board for review and approval at the May meeting.
- NHG will provide a written presentation for the May Board on historic-service-charge review.

5.7. **Finance Committee:** The Finance Committee will meet at 6 pm immediately before the May Board.

5.8. **NHG issues log:** Oonagh asked that WDCO discuss a written document covering outstanding NHG issues. William suggested basing this on NHG's reports rather than compiling a new list and recommended focusing on recurring and incomplete items.

ACTION: Hilary to draft a note for the Executive Committee on the follow-up document.

ACTION: Roda to share NHG's report with Hilary and Oonagh.

5.9. Cultural Strategy / Community Club: Roda reported on Matt Jenner's recent Round-Table presentation.

ACTION: Roda to circulate the Cultural Strategy presentation.

5.10. **MHDT group structure:** Adrian noted that MHDT is reviewing its structure in response to sector-wide financial pressures. Adrian asked that the May agenda include a written update from MHDT covering:

- the options under consideration;
- how they are developing; and

- which option is currently favoured.
- 5.11. **Working-group updates:** Roda has circulated written updates from the Block D, Phase 3, Split-Household, Executive Committee and Hackney Operations meeting.
- 5.12. **AOB:** Roda informed the Board that Anwar has resigned from WDCO, having moved off the estate.