

# **WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION**

## **Board Meeting**

### **MINUTES**

Thursday 15th May 2025  
7:15pm Redmond Community Centre

**Attendance:** Kalu Amogu, Donna Fakes, Hilary Britton, Oonagh Gormley, Barbara Panuzzo Leonora Williams, Phil Cooke, William Sheehy, Ann Hunte, Nicolas Attalides, Geoff Baron, Willian Martinez, Gita Sootarsing, Francis McDonagh, Jackie Myers, Necdet Ozturk

**Partners:** Tom Anthony, Julian Rodriguez, Jada Guest, Gareth Crawford, Cllr Caroline Selman

**Visitors:** Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

#### **Welcome / Apologies for absence:**

Guy Nicholson, Tina Parrott, Kristina Zagar, Mina Faragalla, Andrea Anderson, Omar Villalba, Dulce Laluces, Shifra Appich, Livis- Jeanne Lupumba, Nicolas Attalides, Steffan Zuncke, Adrian Essex

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Chair addressed the Board about the recent incident and extended WDCO's deepest condolences to the family, friends, and neighbours of the 87-year-old resident who lost his life. The Chair reassured everyone that safety remains WDCO's top priority and confirmed that NHG and R&R are working closely with the Metropolitan Police and the Safer Neighbourhood Team to review CCTV coverage, improve lighting in key areas, and consult block representatives on further security measures. R&R has also introduced an additional daytime patrol to increase visibility and support the on-site management team. The Chair also noted that a suspect has been arrested and that there is no evidence the estate is now less safe than before.
- 1.2. Residents who feel unsettled are encouraged to speak to the police, NHG, Hackney Council, or R&R. A community safety meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, 20th May, at 7:15 pm, where residents can raise questions and hear directly from the agencies involved.
- 1.3. Acceptance of minutes of 17 April 2025: The minutes were reviewed for accuracy and approved.

#### **2. Matters Arising / Action Tracker**

- 2.1. Gareth shared an analysis of how S106 funds have been spent under each category which was circulated to the Board earlier this week.
- 2.2. Gareth updated that he has confirmed the internal approval process in Hackney.

- 2.3. Roda circulated the written questions and answers from NHG to the WDCO Board.
- 2.4. Roda and Adrian collated feedback from the April Board for Geoff to prepare and draft comments to review at the May Board.
- 2.5. There was discussion on the different NHG reports which Hilary and Oonagh would review and consider the next steps to come to the Executive Committee. Roda has not yet shared the follow-up documents with Hilary and Oonagh and will do so.

**ACTION:** Roda will share the documents with Hilary and Oonagh

- 2.6. Roda circulated the Cultural Programme/Strategy presentation from the Round Table to the WDCO Board.
- 2.7. Roda updated that Trevor Hughes (BH) will be providing a concluding statement from Berkeley's legal team on the window report.

**ACTION:** Trevor will send the concluding statement on the window report from Berkeley's legal team to the WDCO Board.

- 2.8. There was a request for the District Heat Network group to meet and for the feasibility study that Hackney commissioned Arup to carry out to come to the Board. Gareth updated last month that Berkeley will be arranging the working group meeting for May/June. Tom added that Berkeley had a meeting with Expedition, who arranged the previous District Heat Network working group meeting two years ago, and will update with a timescale once Berkeley receive dates. Gareth raised that this meeting could slip into July to ensure that partners have all the necessary information for the meeting.
- 2.9. Jada updated that NHG have completed the review for the historic service charges and are due to present the outcome at the June Board. WDCO have requested for this to be a written presentation to allow the Board members to ask questions and for this to be provided a week in advance.

**ACTION:** NHG to provide the presentation on historic service charges one week in advance of the June Board.

- 2.10. Gareth reported that Hackney met WDCO on 24 March to discuss the split-household review, during which WDCO representatives provided detailed comments and feedback. Jackie, Francis and Elaine subsequently drafted a letter, and Gareth confirmed that Hackney has taken on board the points raised both in that letter and at the workshop. The next step will be a formal consultation with residents over the summer. WDCO asked that this be clearly communicated, as many residents are confused about the review process and the timing of the consultation. Roda relayed concerns from residents in later phases who fear losing the split-household offer, as well as from households interested in Phase 3 who share similar worries. She therefore requested that Hackney (a) include an update in the next newsletter and (b) send a letter to residents in the older blocks explaining the current position and confirming that a consultation will take place.

### **3. Partner Updates (see attached written updates):**

- 3.1. **MHDT:** Simon Donovan outlined the proposal to merge MHDT with LDT. MHDT has raised over £12 million for Woodberry Down in the past 17 years but

struggles to secure larger grants; LDT can access funding more easily but its accounts are weak. A merger is therefore seen as the best route to strengthen future fundraising.

- 3.2. **Governance and consultation:** Simon noted that solicitors have advised in favour of a merger. All trustees have agreed that MHDT should explore the option and formal discussions are under way with the Charity Commission and key Hackney stakeholders. A public consultation will be held over the summer before any final decision is taken.
- 3.3. Simon acknowledged residents worries about:
  - possible loss of focus on Woodberry Down;
  - continued WDCO oversight; and
  - local representation on the merged board.
- 3.4. He confirmed that:
  - MHDT would continue monthly reporting to WDCO;
  - funds earmarked for Manor House would remain ring-fenced;
  - the merged charity would retain strong local representation; and
  - quarterly public meetings could be held to keep residents informed.
- 3.5. Simon confirmed that MHDT's income comes from community-centre hire, grant bids and consultancy. Daily operations, the website, newsletters and local employment programmes would all continue unchanged after a merger. A current lottery bid focuses on energy-saving projects, and MHDT is liaising with the Safer Neighbourhood Team after police identified high robbery levels in the area.
- 3.6. Board Members queried the benefit to WDCO and highlighted the lack of space for community activities. There were a number of follow up questions:
  - Further engagement – William asked whether MHDT will continue talking to residents; Simon confirmed that further discussions are planned.
  - Purpose of the merger – Hilary questioned the benefit, suggesting a merger could distance MHDT from Woodberry Down. Simon replied that both charities share the same regeneration objectives and that MHDT already reports to WDCO and delivers events locally via LDT.
  - Funding sources – Ann queried how MHDT is financed. Simon explained income comes from community-centre bookings, grant applications and consultancy work on other projects.
  - Value to WDCO – Oonagh asked what advantage the merger offers to WDCO, noting that many room hires involve outside organisations. Simon emphasised that hire fees simply cover running costs and do not generate profit.
  - Gita highlighted the current shortage of space for local groups; Hilary added that cultural, social and community needs should be considered together when planning facilities. The Board members asked that Matt Jenner (cultural strategy), together with Hackney Regen Team, Berkeley and NHG, be involved in these discussions.
  - Roda update on upcoming meetings regarding the cultural programme – she reported that Mat Jenner (LBH) wishes to discuss the cultural programme and that the London School of Architecture, working on a temporary pavilion for the Hidden River Festival, have also requested a meeting with WDCO.
  - Cllr Selman urged WDCO to distinguish clearly between the cultural strategy and the wider socio-economic regeneration strategy. She also asked whether a merged trustee board would retain strong local representation, noting that LDT's current board is less local than MHDT's. Simon confirmed that local representation is essential and that WDCO representatives already sit on the trustee board. Board members and Cllr

Selman highlighted lack of community space and asked that cultural, social and socio-economic issues be addressed together.

**ACTION:** WDCO has asked to be included in discussions with Mat Jenner, LBH, Berkeley and NHG on the cultural strategy and the provision of spaces for community groups.

**3.7. Hackney Council (Update provided by Gareth)**

- 3.8. He updated that Phase 4 vacant possession is on track for early September and the CPO notice period runs until September.
- 3.9. The Phase 5 decant strategy will be coming to the June Board.
- 3.10. Phase 3a: 14 of 75 social-rent homes still unallocated; five nominations progressing, four advertised on Choice-Based Lettings (CBL).
- 3.11. Phase 3b: 42 social-rent homes complete in June; move-ins expected from July.
- 3.12. Roda asked what the strategy is for surplus homes and how are WD tenants prioritised before it goes on CBL?

**ACTION:** Gareth to circulate surplus-home allocation strategy (including TA priority).

- 3.13. Chair also asked if long-term TA households on the estate would receive higher priority for any surplus homes.
- 3.14. Hilary noted that future phases need adaptable bathrooms to suit more tenants. And the highlighted that this need to be considered in the Phase 5 detail design.

**3.15. Berkeley (Update provided by Tom Anthony)**

- 3.16. He reported that Phase 3 completion is due end July; blocks B4/B5 ready 12 June. Phase 4 start-on-site targeted for autumn 2025. He also noted that the Masterplan committee date has been delayed and a new date is expected for July.
- 3.17. Block D fit-out delayed slightly pending insurance sign-off.

**3.18. NHG (Update provided by Julian Rodriguez)**

- 3.19. Julian reported on Phase 3:
  - Phase 3b snagging is under way; occupations planned late June/July.
  - Lessons-learned group (NHG, WDCO, R&R, Berkeley, Hackney) improving move-in process; draft service charges issued early Apr.
  - Phase 3b drop-in (7 May) gave residents individual rent & service-charge figures.
  - NHG have also prepared welcome boxes and there is a demonstration flat in Phase 3a for incoming residents.
- 3.20. He also updated that the historic service-charge review is in progress; written report to WDCO in June.
- 3.21. Hilary asked if Phase 3b residents received final rents and charges? She also highlighted that social-housing residents struggle to contact the partner organisations (NHG and R&R). She stressed the need for a more effective communication channel for social-housing tenants. Julian confirmed the rents figures were issued and the service-charge figures were provided at the drop-in session on 7<sup>th</sup> May.

**ACTION:** Julian will feedback Hilary's concerns over NHG improving contact for social housing residents.

**ACTION:** Julian will reissue the individual rents for social rent homes in 3b to WDCO.

**4. Board discussion without partners:**

- 4.1. Masterplan response: Geoff presented a draft response, reflecting the Board's April discussion of the masterplan paper.
- 4.2. Oonagh felt the draft captured the debate well but should state that the Board supports the masterplan only with serious reservations. The Board agreed to this wording.
- 4.3. Omar (via Oonagh) objected to the proposed density in Phase 6. The Chair also raised concerns about the impacts on the public realm and biodiversity, and indicated she would not support the current proposals. Francis noted the masterplan proposes demolishing the semi-detached houses to the north of Woodberry Down, with supporting documents describing them as "damp". Residents dispute this claim. It was confirmed that Board members may submit individual comments if they hold a different view.
- 4.4. Oonagh proposed that WDCO should speak at the planning meeting to set out the conditions it expects to see.
- 4.5. Andreea Stoica highlighted the risk of overshadowing and loss of privacy, particularly for ground-floor social-rent homes.
- 4.6. The Board asked Geoff to add a table showing how density has risen in successive masterplans.
- 4.7. Further amendments agreed:
  - **Paragraph on unit numbers** – The sentence under "These plans ask for permission to build up to 3,083 homes" will be revised to read:  
"However, given current market uncertainty, WDCO fears that the total number of homes could change as later phases are built over an extended timeline."
  - **Wind-tunnel testing** – Hilary proposed adding:  
"The wind assessments carried out so far have not been able to accurately replicate the wind conditions caused by the existing new blocks, residents have little confidence in any further wind tunnel assessments or their results"
- 4.8. Geoff asked if the final document could be posted on the WDCO website. The Board agreed to wait until it has been submitted to the Council before it is in the public domain.
- 4.9. Subject to the above changes, the Board approved the response. The speaker for the planning committee will be confirmed once the meeting date is set.

**ACTION:** Roda and Geoff to incorporate the agreed amendments and circulate the final draft of the masterplan response.

- 4.10. **Motion: Proposed changes to elections rules:** Oonagh explained that, because the AGM now takes place in June, the existing requirement that Board members must have served for one year before standing for the Executive Committee would prevent members co-opted the previous September from putting themselves forward. She therefore proposed that this rule be waived, provided those members attended the last AGM.
- 4.11. The motion seeks to revise the Executive Committee election rules in three areas: eligibility, candidate presentations, voting procedure.
- 4.12. As Adrian was absent, Oonagh accepted two amendments suggested by the Board:
  - **Candidate presentations:** Each candidate may address the Board for two minutes. A written statement (maximum 500 words) may also be submitted

from the point of nomination and *no later than three days before the election*. The Returning Officer will circulate all statements to Board members.

- **Voting procedure:** After nominations close, votes may be submitted by *Board members who are unable to attend the AGM* to the Returning Officer via email, and the votes will remain confidential.

- 4.13. The Board noted that secret ballots currently apply only at the AGM; a separate motion will be brought forward to cover voting at other meetings.
- 4.14. With the two amendments incorporated, the Board approved the revised election rules and adopted the motion.

**ACTION:** Roda to update the motion and circulate it to all Board members.

- 4.15. **Update from working group meetings:** Roda circulated a summary of recent working-group meetings.
- 4.16. **Discuss Cultural Development Program/Cultural Strategy:** Roda circulated documents on the art strategy, cultural strategy, Mat Jenner's presentation, and the London School of Architecture's proposal. At the Executive meeting, Adrian asked that WDCO discuss these matters in more depth and appoint Board members to lead on the cultural strategy.
- 4.17. The Chair noted that artwork produced by the primary school, London Wildlife Trust, and Hackney Council is currently displayed at N15 because Berkeley says it cannot be accommodated on site. She questioned why it could not be shown at Woodberry Down and suggested incorporating it into the cultural strategy. Roda added that Mat Jenner wishes to arrange a meeting and that the Executive Committee has proposed this cultural programme session be held as a public meeting.

**ACTION:** Roda will propose for the cultural strategy meeting with Mat Jenner to be a public meeting.

5. **Naming of Block D:** Roda reported that Kristina had suggested WDCO feedback ideas for the naming strategy of Block D.

**6. AOB:**

- 6.1. Cllr Selman reminded the Board that there will be a meeting with the police on Tuesday 20 May at 7:15pm at the Redmond Centre.