



WDCO Chair Annual Report 2024-2025

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to our partners and all stakeholders for their unwavering dedication and collaborative efforts throughout the year.

I also want to begin by expressing my thanks to the entire WDCO Board. Your continued hard work, commitment and determination have been instrumental in making WDCO an effective and valued voice for our community. The progress we've achieved would not have been possible without your energy, diligence and persistence.

Since our last AGM, we have made significant strides on several fronts that directly affect our residents:

WDCO worked to challenge and scrutinise the rent levels in Phase 3. Through consistent advocacy, we successfully brought both Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) and Hackney Council to the table to review the proposed rents. Thanks to this pressure, and the use of independent valuations commissioned by NHG, a number of corrections and reductions were made to the rents in 1 bedroom and 2-bedroom social rented properties in phase 3. These improvements simply would not have occurred without WDCO's determination to demand accountability and fairness.

In parallel, WDCO carried out a thorough review of the Phase 3 service charge budget. This review uncovered numerous errors, many of which were subsequently corrected. These corrections ultimately led to a reduction in the final service charge budget – a tangible outcome that directly benefits our residents.

It is clear that our partners must adopt a more forward-thinking and proactive approach to planning, rather than continuing to react only when issues are raised by residents. While we had hoped to achieve more substantial rent reductions across the board for all Phase 3 residents, the progress made represents a significant milestone in our ongoing campaign for fairness and equity. It is a clear demonstration that persistent, resident-led advocacy can achieve meaningful results – and we remain committed to building on this work. I would particularly like to thank Omar, Hilary, Shifra and Oonagh for their hard work and contributions on this matter – their attention to detail, perseverance and dedication were absolutely vital.

One of the most positive moments of the year was our successful Board Away Day. It allowed us to reflect, re-energise, and set clear priorities for the months ahead. While not all goals have been met just yet, we have made excellent progress, laying the groundwork for continued action.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Geoff and Gloria for their hard work and the insightful paper they produced on housing numbers. Their research

provides a vital foundation for considering how – or if – we might increase the number of social rented homes in Woodberry Down without increasing density, and in a way that respects the viability of the overall project. We hope to build on this work and bring our partners into meaningful discussions around these ideas.

While we await the formal presentation of the Masterplan to the planning committee, the Board has taken a formal position on the proposals, reflecting our continued focus on representing resident interests at every stage of the process.

In Phase 3, private residents, social housing residents and shared owners have been moving into their new homes over the past 11 months, with final move-ins expected this summer. While this marks a significant milestone, we also recognise the delays in Block D, where progress has been slower than anticipated. However, we are hopeful the space will be opened this year, with fit-out works currently underway by Berkeley Homes.

Throughout the year, we have remained engaged with the Council, Berkeley and NHG on critical issues, including service charges, housing quality, and the wider regeneration agenda. Our regular meetings have ensured that resident voices continue to shape the direction of the regeneration.

We have seen some changes in our partner organisations this year. We were pleased to welcome Gareth Crawford, Head of Regen who has joined Hackney Council's Regeneration Team to cover Molly Perman's role during her maternity leave. We look forward to continue working with him.

At the same time, we bid farewell to some long-standing members of the Hackney decant team. I want to express our gratitude to Lesleyanne Forman and Paulet Weekes for their many years of dedicated service. Their commitment to residents during the decants process has been invaluable, and their departure marks the loss of a great deal of experience.

Although there is still much work to do, we should be proud of the progress made over the past nine months. Our efforts have reaffirmed WDCO's role as a vital advocate for residents and a constructive partner in the regeneration process.

As we look to the future, WDCO remains resolute in its mission: to represent, support and amplify the voices of Woodberry Down residents. We will continue to work closely with our partners to ensure that the regeneration delivers fair, inclusive, and lasting outcomes for our community.

On a personal note, this AGM marks my final report as Chair of WDCO, as I will be stepping down from the role. However, I will continue to serve on the Board and remain fully committed to supporting the work of WDCO and our shared vision for Woodberry Down.

Once again, I would like to extend my thanks to all of our partners for their continued collaboration and commitment. And to my fellow Board members –



thank you for your unwavering support, dedication, and tireless efforts on behalf of the community. It has been a pleasure to serve as Chair.