

October Board Updates from the working group and other meetings

Executive Committee Meeting 23rd September

Attendees Exec members

The Executive Committee met to review ongoing partnership activity, community engagement, and organisational priorities

- **Engagement with NHG and Local Businesses:**
Hackney is arranging a meeting between NHG directors and WDCO representatives to strengthen partnership working. Gita continues supporting local businesses, including the relocation of planters near the cafés.
- **Events and Community Initiatives:**
Grace is coordinating with partners on plans for *Winterfest* and future community events, while Adrian will follow up on half-term sailing course places.
- **Relations with MHDT:**
Concerns were raised about the Redmond Community Centre's reduced community role. It was agreed this would be raised with Miriam at the upcoming meeting on **30 September**.
- **Other Matters:**
 - The Chair reminded members of their declaration regarding public appearances.
 - Procurement of the ITLA remains in progress.
 - The group reviewed a paper titled *Does WDCO Work?*, outlining strategic reflections on WDCO's effectiveness.

Hackney Operation Meeting 25th September

Attendees from WDCO: William Sheehy and Phil Cooke

Phase 3B Lettings

- Surplus homes rose from 15 to **22** (c.14 one-bed, 4 two-bed, 3–4 three-bed), with daily fluctuations.
- Refusals driven by unit size preferences, floor/access needs, affordability concerns (despite passing assessments), tenure/provider preferences, and late split household changes.
- Three Phase 5 cases earmarked for the remaining three beds; street parking permits available via Hackney.
- Removals contractor limited to two moves per day.

Split Household Policy

- A pause on the split household policy introduced 2–3 weeks ago has created allocation delays and confusion.
- Pre-approved cases proceed; new applications are halted pending clarity
- An exceptions report is being prepared by Decant Manager

Void Properties

- 189 total voids across Phases 4–8; 124 in Phase 4 unusable (demolition).
- Active lettable stock: 65 (Ph5:19, Ph6:21, Ph7:8, Ph8:17); 7 beyond economic repair = 58 usable for TA.
- Bedroom mix breakdown pending.

Strategic Allocation

- Meeting with Cllr Nicholson set for Monday to address the policy pause.
- If uptake remains low, up to half of Block B may move to choice-based lettings;

Split Household Meeting 29th September

Attendees from WDCO: Adrian Essex and Jackie Myers

Cllr Nicholson informed the meeting that the Council had recently received legal advice that the current Local Lettings Policy (LLP) exposes the Council to potential legal challenge from individuals outside Woodberry Down. The Barristers recommended that the Council undertake an urgent review of the policy to mitigate this risk.

Cllr Nicholson explained that he had not yet seen the full legal advice but intends to examine and challenge it rigorously before accepting any recommendations. He made clear that removing the adult child element of the LLP is not his preferred option.

He added that officers are in the process of summarising the legal advice and will present their conclusions and recommendations to councillors. Depending on the outcome, the review may extend beyond Woodberry Down, potentially leading to a wider consultation on the Council's overall lettings policy. If required, such a consultation could affect the review's timescales.

The ITLA noted that both the current and previous versions of the LLP were reviewed by external legal advisors before implementation, and ITLA recalled previous QC advice confirming the legality of the 2022 policy.

WDCO raised concerns about fairness, noting that any removal or reduction of the adult child provision would disadvantage current tenants compared to those rehoused earlier in the project. The ITLA further stressed that any weakening of the LLP policy would seriously undermine residents' trust and the credibility of Hackney Council's long-standing commitments, potentially jeopardising future progress on the regeneration programme.

WDCO also requested clarity on what aspects of the policy would be included in the review, having previously been advised that only the "out of phase" element would be reconsidered.

Next Steps

- Cllr Nicholson will work with Council officers to prepare a summary of the legal advice for sharing with WDCO.
- A timeline for the review process will also be provided once the scope and next stages have been agreed.

Partnership Board Meeting - Meeting Notes 1st October

Attendees from WDCO: Jackie Myers and Adrian Essex

Seven Sisters Road

Following introductions, the meeting began with a presentation from TfL, who outlined the challenges surrounding improvements to Seven Sisters Road and their connection to progress on the C50 Cycleway. TfL explained that the main difficulty lies in navigating the section near Finsbury Park, where modelling has shown that introducing a cycle path could delay bus journeys by up to twenty minutes.

TfL is currently developing an alternative route that would direct cyclists through the bus station, across the road into Finsbury Park by the cycle park, and then along the main carriageway parallel to Seven Sisters Road. Cyclists would eventually rejoin the route via a new, as yet unbuilt, connection opposite The Finsbury, continuing towards Woodberry Grove.



The feasibility of this plan remains uncertain, and they noted that it presents significant challenges. They suggested that the proposed pedestrian crossings along Seven Sisters Road might be constructed ahead of the wider scheme.

Governance Items

The Terms of Reference were formally approved.

Dashboard Review

Discussion then turned to the programme dashboard. Questions were raised about the Phase 4 demolition being marked as amber, given that work has commenced on schedule. It was agreed that demolition should not be categorised as amber.

A proposal was made to add construction progress, dependent on demolition, to the dashboard and mark it as green. However, BH clarified that, as the build has not yet received Building Regulations approval, it must remain amber. The discussion also highlighted the need to keep the dashboard regularly updated to reflect current progress.

A question was raised regarding whether NHG's non-compliance with the Regulator's requirements posed any risk to the Woodberry Down project. NHG confirmed that it did not.

Ground Floor Strategy

The Board discussed Gareth's draft brief for appointing a consultant to develop the Woodberry Down Commercial and Community Asset Strategy (previously referred to as the Ground Floor Strategy). Jackie highlighted that most retail units in Woodberry Down currently close at 6:00 pm, leaving the area quiet and underused in the evenings.

It was also noted that several facilities and services may not currently be optimally located and could benefit from review and potential relocation.

The deadline for submitting feedback on the Community and Commercial Asset Strategy (GF Strategy) was also confirmed. It was agreed that feedback should be provided within three weeks of the Partnership Board meeting, setting the deadline as 23rd October.

Safer Community Forum Meeting 2nd October

Attendees from WDCO: William Sheehy and Phil Cooke

The Safer Community Forum discussed the recent two incidents occurred on 19 September. The first involved a knife attack on a Devon Grove resident late in the evening, which generated significant community concern. Police investigations are ongoing, and a formal report is awaited.

A separate incident took place earlier the same day near Newton Close and Kinver House, involving a group of young people pursued by police after a potential knife threat. The situation was contained within an hour, though links between the two incidents remain unclear.

Ongoing Security Challenges

Persistent mobile phone thefts continue across the estate, with offenders using public transport and e-bikes for quick escapes. Residents are sharing real time information through WhatsApp groups, while the security team is working with police to coordinate patrols.



Commercial theft at Tesco has increased, mirroring issues previously experienced at Sainsbury's. Security staff report several daily incidents, and cooperation with police patrols has been strengthened.

Infrastructure and Access Control

The Ash View car park remains a concern due to broken security gates and unauthorised use by individuals carrying out vehicle repairs. NHG is responsible for gate repairs, which have been delayed. Police patrols are expected to include this area.

Security at the MUGA has improved, with prompt lock replacements following vandalism incidents. No further access issues have been reported.

Community Safety and Communication

A new initiative is being introduced to improve residents' understanding of estate security. A document outlining patrol areas and contact details, will be distributed via the R&R portal.

Recent commercial openings, including Anytime Fitness and a yoga studio, are expected to boost evening footfall and enhance natural surveillance, contributing to overall safety.

Environmental Health

Reports of animal poisoning in Woodberry Grove North have been confirmed, with multiple cat and bird deaths attributed to poison. Residents have been notified through the portal, and additional communications are being coordinated with Hackney Council.

Community Engagement

Preparations are underway for Halloween and Bonfire Night, with increased patrols and monitoring planned to manage seasonal antisocial behaviour.

Estate Management Board Meeting 13th October

Attendees from WDCO: William Sheehy and Gita Sootarsing

Governance and Terms of Reference

The group agreed to retain the current Terms of Reference, with a plan to revisit the scope of business involvement at the next meeting. Gareth Crawford noted that the forum was originally focused on housing management, though members discussed expanding this to include public spaces and businesses.

Project Actions and Asset Management

Several updates were provided on estate and asset management. The *Lessons Learned* design committee will hold a site walk on 29 October, and the KSS3 public open space transfer has been completed. Funding for public realm maintenance remains under review following the loss of ground rent income, with senior officers exploring alternatives. Partners are developing a *Commercial and Community Asset Strategy* to guide future use of spaces, with feedback due by 23 October. Berkeley will provide a land transfer map.

Public Realm and Infrastructure

Progress continues on Seven Sisters Road and Manor House Junction, with TfL funding early feasibility work. Safety concerns were raised about hoarding near the Phase 4 site, and Berkeley confirmed temporary adjustments, relocation of the bus stop, and improved pedestrian signage.

Community Services and Facilities

Gita raised residents' concerns about the limited Post Office facilities and poor connectivity affecting residents. Hackney confirmed that any expansion or relocation would need to align with the broader *Commercial and Community Asset Strategy*.



Forward Planning

The group reiterated its role in escalating key issues across the estate and encouraged members to propose items for future agendas. The meeting closed with agreement to continue tracking progress on open actions and to revisit governance scope and asset planning at the next meeting.