

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 16th October 2025
7:15pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance: Hilary Britton, Mina Faragalla, Oonagh Gormley, Ann Hunte, Barbara Panuzzo, Omar Villalba, Nected, Kalu Amogu, Phil Cooke, William Sheehy, Ekaterina Andreeva, Andreea Stoica, Gita Sootarsing

Partners: Tom Anthony, Julian Rodriguez, Nikola Popovic, Gareth Crawford, Cllr Sarah Young

Visitors: Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

Welcome / Apologies for absence: Donna Fakes, Tina Parrot, Nicholas Attalides, Francis McDonagh, Jackie Myers, Leonora Williams, Andrea Anderson, Adrian Essex, Dulce Laluces, Gloria Obiliana, Livia- Jeane Lupumba

Introduction

1. Acceptance of minutes 18 September 2025

1.1. The minutes were checked for accuracy and accepted.

2. Matters Arising / Action Tracker

- 2.1. Oonagh gave an update on the sailing course. With support from Better, she managed to secure 10 free sailing course places for Woodberry Down teenagers. NHG assisted by contacting residents and successfully signed up 11 young people from Woodberry Down to take part. Oonagh proposed sending a card to Beth from Better to thank her for reserving the places.
- 2.2. Hilary enquired whether the School Road Safety team would be assessing the pedestrian crossing in light of the ongoing building works. Cllr Sarah Young updated that she had emailed the Streetscene team regarding the positioning of the hoardings and whether they were affecting safe crossing.

ACTION: Cllr Young to ask the Streetscene Team to carry out an assessment of the pedestrian crossing.

Update from Cllr Young: Berkeley's have now made some changes to the positioning of the hoardings and also added some warning signs. The council's school road safety lead will also inspect early next week to look at the safety of the junction for children going to and from the schools on Woodberry Grove. She'll report back her findings to Roda to pass on to WDCO Board.

- 2.3. Jada emailed Roda to report that the first drop-in session for residents had taken place to discuss the outcome of the historical SVC review. The session was held on 15 October from 3–6pm and was attended by 16 residents, who provided positive feedback.
- 2.4. Simon and Roda also received similar feedback from residents in NHG managed blocks, who were pleased with the outcome of the review. Jada added that NHG will be holding another morning drop-in session on Wednesday 22 October from 7:30am to midday.

- 2.5. Hilary asked for clarification on the split household being potentially challenged as Cllr Nicholson previously updated that recent legal advice indicates the current local lettings policy may expose the council to potential legal challenge from individuals outside Woodberry Down. Hilary asked whether this was just the split household element of policy or other aspects? Gareth responded that it is the split household element of policy which is potentially a problem but it could possibly have wider implications. Cllr Sarah Young added that the council have been reviewing how to make the out-of-phase split household policy work since 2022. However, upon reviewing the out-of-phase policy, questions emerged on how the policy worked overall and how it fitted within the Council wide allocations policy. No decision has been made and the proposals will come to WDCO before there is a consultation.
- 2.6. Cllr Sarah Young stated that the split household policy is under review, including getting legal advice on whether they can continue with the policy and if they have the homes available to carry on with the policy and what is the answer if they do not.
- 2.7. William asked if there are people who have not been rehoused who might not be able to get a split household in future and have already been approved for a split household? Cllr Sarah Young responded that there are people who have already made an application for split household and had their application approved. She noted that this would be taken into account during the review process as Hackney recognised that families were relying on the decision and have made life decisions based on the split household applications.
- 2.8. Cllr Sarah Young, also, clarified that any proposals will come to the WDCO Board before a decision is made on the split household review. Gareth informed the Board that he would be working with council officers to produce something for WDCO. This was a commitment made at the meeting between Cllr Nicholson and the WDCO Chair.
- 2.9. Cllr Sarah Young added that there were two commitments made at the meeting with the Head of Regeneration, Director of Regeneration and Cllr Nicholson, Caroline Selman and Gareth - 1) people whose split households are 'in progress' currently should be progressed and 2) a small number of exceptional cases will be considered separately by the exceptional cases panel and will not go through ordinary process. Roda asked how this panel was constituted, Cllr Sarah Young responded that the panel might involve the homelessness team, mental health team, social services and will be led by the Regeneration team, including DART, but who will be involved depends on individual cases.

ACTION: Hackney to present any proposals for changes to the split household policy to the WDCO Board before any decision are made.

Updated from LBH: This is confirmed, see point 2.5.

3. Partner Updates:

- 3.1. **Berkeley:** Tom updated that there were no health and safety incidents on site, Phase 3 will conclude this month and Phase 4 demolition will commence on 1st December. The building regulations approval will be next year.
- 3.2. **NHG:** Julian updated that NHG have completed the final social rent home for Phase 3 and the Phase 4 programme is due to start mid-year 2026. In Watersreach and Reservoir Apartments The heating and hot water upgrades are progressing well and NHG hope for this to complete by the end of October with the HRUs and radiators replaced, but there is work to be done in the plant room which will need to dig up pathway on Watersreach and Reservoir. NHG are waiting to hear back from Hackney before starting works.

- 3.3. The billing transition is in motion and has gone to Insight. Residents are now waiting for their Insight bill. NHG will update residents on the billing the next day.
- 3.4. NHG managed to do the meter reading remotely and they are waiting to hear from network team for an update on issues at Watersreach and Reservoir. Oonagh asked if unit rates are different now that people have moved billing company. Roda responded that the unit rate is the same and should have no impact on residents.

ACTION: NHG to provide an update on the meter reading in Watersreach and Reservoir.

Update from NHG: The update was provided at the Operational meeting on 18th November.

- 3.5. Jada updated that NHG are spending a huge amount on clearing bulk waste in their blocks and has asked WDCO for ideas on how to improve this. Hilary proposed looking at the tenancy agreement if residents must take their rubbish out responsibly. William raised that residents are not aware of cost implications and suggested improving ways of getting this across. Cllr Young proposed poster campaigns across the blocks. Oonagh proposed recharging residents.
- 3.6. **Hackney:** Gareth updated that Phase 4 has been vacated and was handed to Berkeley in September. From now on, Hackney will be reporting on Phase 5 vacant possession.
- 3.7. Hackney is currently working on housing needs in Phase 5 and have done more survey work focusing on Phases 6-8 to understand their housing needs. Hackney is also working with Berkeley on the programme for Phase 5 and interaction in terms of when vacant possession is needed and the build programme for Phase 4.
- 3.8. Phase 3b in the process of being occupied at the moment. There are 15 homes in Phase 3b which remain unallocated and Hackney are doing work to get more Woodberry Down tenants into these homes.
- 3.9. Gareth updated on the Commercial and Community Assets strategy (Ground Floor strategy) that he has put together a draft brief for an external consultant. This has been released to partners, including WDCO, for consultation and is expecting comments and feedback by 21st October. The next step will be to procure an external consultant to complete work and produce the strategy.
- 3.10. Hackney is expecting completion and handover of the initial Block D fit-out works by the end of October. After handover, there will likely be business-specific further fit-out works carried out by businesses who occupy before it is ready to start being used. This will likely be in the first quarter of 2026.
- 3.11. TfL provided an update on Seven Sisters Road at the Partnership Board meeting. Hackney is expecting for TfL to come back in 2026 with proposals to look at.
- 3.12. Mina enquired about Phase 3b and raised that initially the plan was the 15 surplus units were due to be released on Choice Space Lettings on October 6th. He felt it was disheartening this was even a consideration as the Board has discussed the details of how many properties are built, only to have these properties go to residents off the estate. There is due to be a panel meeting next week to discuss a number of cases (application to move Phase 3b moves) in more detail, Mina raised it would be useful for WDCO to know: Who will be attending the meeting, who the key decision-makers are, which criteria will be used by the panel to reach decisions, and what happens when a case does not fit neatly into policy? What appeals process is in place for residents who do not feel the outcome is favourable/will cases be considered outside of the policy?

- 3.13. Gareth responded decisions made will be in line with Hackney's policies. In terms of who makes decisions, a Director level officer within Hackney will be in attendance and will make decisions.
- 3.14. Mina added that as a last resort staggered release should be a consideration and Woodberry Down residents should have first priority.
- 3.15. Cllr Sarah Young asked why properties have not been taken up and if anybody had been refused a property and what reasons were properties being turned down by existing tenants on Woodberry Down estate. Gareth responded that units have not been released to Choice Space Lettings and Hackney are reviewing instances where interest has been expressed by Woodberry Down tenants and that there may be a better outcome by the next meeting.
- 3.16. Roda raised that there are residents who have submitted applications to move into Phase 3, but if their application includes a split household, they are currently not being considered for Phase 3B due to the ongoing pause on the split household policy.
- 3.17. Cllr Sarah Young responded that, during a meeting earlier this week, she was informed that these split household cases should be progressed. She will follow up to clarify why applicants are being told that properties remain empty because people cannot move in as a result of the policy pause. She will seek a clear answer on this, as her understanding is that these residents should be allowed to move. Cllr Young added that properties currently remaining void are likely due to other reasons, such as not meeting applicants' medical needs or issues of affordability.

ACTION: Gareth to respond to Mina's question regarding the appeals process and how cases outside policy will be considered by the panel.

Update from LBH: Decisions made by LBH to nominate or not nominate households to NHG can be challenged via the complaints procedure, and/or by reference to ward councillors. All cases are assessed and nomination decisions made in line with policy

ACTION: Cllr Sarah Young get confirmation that split household cases are being progressed.

- 3.18. Cllr Sarah Young updated that she will be attending a meeting tomorrow with TfL, Islington and Haringey politicians and officers to discuss Manor House and Seven Sisters Road. She will be calling for significant improvements to make Manor House a safer and more welcoming place for pedestrians.
- 3.19. Gareth introduced Hackney's new Community Engagement Officer, Sarah, to the Board.
- 3.20. **MHDT:** Simon Donovan reported that planning for Winterfest is ongoing and that a meeting will be held next Thursday. MHDT are awaiting approval for the Winterfest flyers to be distributed.
- 3.21. Simon also provided an update on the Wetlands Health Forum report. A meeting was held last Monday, organised by NHG and consultants, to discuss health priorities on the estate. MHDT will be meeting with Cllr Walker, the Council's Lead Member for Communities, as the Council is developing a 10-year strategy for the voluntary sector across Hackney.
- 3.22. The intention is to partner with the City of London's Health Board to extend Woodberry Wetlands projects across Hackney, attract additional funding, and support social activities at Woodberry Down, particularly those aimed at tackling loneliness.
- 3.23. Hackney Works is due to relocate to the office space in Phase 3, with MHDT set to take on the lease.

- 3.24. Cllr Sarah Young suggested that some of the funding for initiatives to combat loneliness could be used to support Friends of Woodberry Down.
- 3.25. Simon agreed, noting that Friends of Woodberry Down should be central to any funding bid due to their client base. He added that he is assisting them in establishing themselves as a Community Interest Company (CIC).

4. Board Discussions with partners

- 4.1. **Update from working group and other meetings:** The Executive Committee met on 23rd September and discussed ongoing partnership activities, committee engagement, priorities for WDCO and engagement with NHG.
- 4.2. There is a meeting arranged for 21st October with NHG in terms of improving their relationship with WDCO.
- 4.3. Adrian had a meeting scheduled for 30th September to discuss with MHDT about improving their relationship with WDCO and the Redmond Centre.

ACTION: Roda to follow up with Adrian on meeting with MHDT on improving relationship with WDCO and about the Redmond Centre.

Update: Please see the update in the 'Updates from Meetings/Working Groups' document.

- 4.4. The Partnership Board formally approved the terms of reference at the first Partnership Board meeting (previously the Round Table).
- 4.5. The police, Hackney and NHG did not attend the Safer Community Forum meeting and WDCO were not able to get updates on issues, such as the recent incident on 19th September. The meeting discussed ongoing security challenges on phone thefts across the estate and how information is shared. The next Safer Community Forum meeting will be arranged for 6th November.

ACTION: Roda to email Board members interested in attending the Safer Community Forum meeting.

Update: William attended the meeting on 6th November, along with Phil Cooke, who is the representative for the Safer Community Forum meeting.

- 4.6. Roda updated the Board on the first Estate Management Board (previously the Strategic Management Board). The highlights of the meeting were around Hackney looking at ways to pay for public realm maintenance as they will not have the ground rent income they previously had and this is still under review.
- 4.7. **Community services and facilities:** Gita updated that there have been comments from residents on the photo machine does not work in post office and how there are long queues before parcels are processed. Gita suggested for the Phase 4 Ground Floor strategy to move the Post Office to a new building with more space.
- 4.8. Gita also raised that the Partnership Board decided in the previous meeting not to have a business representative.
- 4.9. Gita added that Necdet wants to have a meeting with Sarah regarding the pop-ups being promoted by R&R.
- 4.10. Gita attended the open morning at Skinners today with Sarah, Hackney's community engagement officer, and had a discussion with the principal on businesses. The principal was responsive and WDCO will follow up.

5. AOB:

- 5.1. Roda updated that Leonora has applied for a WDCO debit card.

ACTION: Roda to email Board members on potential dates for a sit-down dinner on 26th November or a buffet-style dinner on 11th December.

Update: Roda has emailed the Board and they have chosen to have the dinner on 26th November.

Updates on actions from the action tracker:

1. **Window report:**
Update to be provided at the Board
2. **Split household LLP:**
Covered in the Hackney update, but no material change on the position last time.
3. **District Heat Network:**
Update to be provided at the Board