

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 11th December 2025
7:15pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance: Hilary Britton, Oonagh Gormley, Adrian Essex, Ekaterina Andreeva, Mina Faragalla, Phil Cooke, William Sheehy, Ann Hunt, Livia-Jeanne Lupumba, Dulce Laluces, Francis McDonagh

Partners: Jada Guest, Julian Rodriguez, Simon Donovan, Cllr Young, Gareth Crawford

Visitors: Simon Slater, Roda Hassan

Welcome / Apologies for absence:

Kalu Amogu, Donna Fakes, Tina Parrott, Jackie Myers, Barbara Panuzzo, Leonora Williams, Nicolas Attalides, Gita Sootarsing, Geoff Baron, Omar Villalba, Kristina Zagar, Andrea Anderson, Tom Anthony, Sarah Fabes, Cllr Caroline Selman, Ameera Hassan

Section - Introduction

1. Acceptance of minutes 20 November 2025

- 1.1. Elaine clarified that she was seeking confirmation on Berkeley Homes' additional statement on the windows in the action tracker.
- 1.2. Hilary corrected item 5.10, noting that the Partnership Board meetings were changed from every six weeks to every three months, with the understanding that an additional Partnership Board meeting could be requested if needed, should an urgent matter arise that requires escalation.

2. Matters Arising / Action Tracker

- 2.1. The safety barrier on Seven Sisters Road was raised with TfL at the Partnership Board meeting. Hackney Council and TfL discussed making improvements to the crossings along Seven Sisters Road, and Jackie raised the issue of adding safety barriers at the corners. Partners agreed to take this forward to the next TfL meeting.
- 2.2. The District Heat Network meeting has not yet been arranged. Cllr Sarah Young has spoken to Hackney's Energy Team, who are happy to meet with WDCO to discuss the work on the District Heat Network.

ACTION: Gareth to follow up with Tom on progress regarding the District Heat Network.

Update from Tom Anthony, BH: I am still unable to give a comprehensive update on the DHN. I understand this will be disappointing, but I am still working with our technical colleagues and consultants to ensure all information is correct, available and has been fully interrogated. This has been escalated internally and we have an internal meeting at 10am tomorrow, after which I will update the Board once the next steps are clear.

2.3. Hackney provided an update in response to Jackie's questions about refusals of Phase 3 properties and the barriers preventing residents from accepting them. Cllr Sarah Young has raised further questions with the Council on why residents may have refused properties or whether those who have moved into the new homes have experienced any difficulties. The Council is preparing a response.

ACTION: Hackney to provide a response to WDCO's questions on affordability, equality and accountability before Christmas.

Update from Hackney: LBH's response to WDCO's queries on affordability, equality and transparency will be provided by the end of January.

2.4. The split household review policy is planned for summer 2026, and Hackney will continue to update WDCO on its progress. Cllr Sarah Young clarified that the policy remains in place for families who have applied, or will apply, for a split household.

ACTION: Hackney will continue to update WDCO on how the split household review is progressing.

Update from Hackney: See Hackney Board report for update.

2.5. Hackney also provided an expected timeline for Block D. They aim to agree a lease with Millco by the end of February 2026. The lease will then be formally signed and completed once Millco has finalised its own arrangements with end users, with the building expected to open in early Spring 2026.

2.6. The Chair requested that Hackney provide dates for the works at the West Reservoir. Roda has written to Ian Holland with follow-up questions asking for a timeline and is awaiting a response.

2.7. Berkeley updated that the demolition contractor, Alpine, has been instructed to retain architectural features from the Phase 4 blocks, including the tiled building name signs. However, some may suffer damage during removal.

2.8. NHG confirmed that they will arrange evening drop-in sessions regarding the move to Insite, so that more residents are able to attend.

2.9. Hilary and Oonagh have arranged a preliminary Resident Associations meeting for 12 December.

2.10. Berkeley provided a response on the window tracker, including an explanation of what they mean by legal privilege. They also issued a shorter update stating that the windows have now been made safe through initial remedial works, with further works planned. Berkeley will provide a timeline for these.

3. Partner Updates

3.1. **Hackney:** Gareth explained that the number of residents moving to Phase 3B is reported differently by Hackney and NHG, as Hackney's figures are more up to date.

3.2. Gareth also provided an update on the Commercial Community Assets Strategy (formerly the Ground Floor Strategy). Hackney is taking longer to finalise the strategy due to receiving varied feedback from partners, but they hope to begin procurement in the new year.

3.3. Simon Slater raised concerns regarding Phase 5, noting that the Council intends to agree and complete a decant strategy so Phase 5 can enter decant in 2026. He questioned why this is necessary given that Phase 4 homes will not be ready until 2029, which could mean tenants and potentially leaseholders would need to undergo double decants while waiting for Phase 6 homes. Gareth clarified that Hackney has not yet set out the strategy or options and stressed that double decanting will not be the only solution.

- 3.4. Hilary asked Hackney to provide numbers on how many residents will move into the different phases and highlighted the need for all new homes to be suitable for disabled residents. Gareth confirmed that Hackney has learned from earlier phases that more properties with level-access showers are needed in Phase 5 and that designs must allow for greater flexibility. Cllr Sarah Young added that the Council has recently completed a housing needs survey and now has an accurate view of current household compositions. Hackney is also in discussions with Anchor, who recently completed a new block with London Affordable Rent homes, to explore whether a clear nomination route can be created for residents who may prefer to move into sheltered housing.
- 3.5. **NHG:** Hilary asked Julian for feedback on the unoccupied shared ownership properties. The Chair noted that the Partnership Board had acknowledged current market conditions as a risk. Simon Slater added that the three-bedroom properties were taken more quickly because Phase 4 does not include shared ownership homes for cost reasons and because most new units will be one-bedroom.

ACTION: Julian will obtain an update from the sales team on feedback regarding the unoccupied shared ownership homes.

Update from NHG: The sales team has confirmed that there are currently 32 unsold shared ownership homes, comprising one higher-value three-bedroom property with the remainder being one-bedroom units.

Market conditions have shifted, with buyers now favouring larger homes due to post-COVID lifestyle changes and the rising costs associated with moving, including stamp duty. With the average asking price for the remaining one-bedroom homes on Woodberry Down being approximately £490,000, it is comparatively high, especially when larger properties in other parts of London are available at similar price points. This is contributing to reduced demand.

Despite the slower market, there are currently seven homes exchanged, reserved or progressing through pre-sale, reflecting positively compared with other developments.

- 3.6. **MHDT:** Simon Donovan reported that Christmas presents for children will be distributed.
- 3.7. Cllr Sarah Young asked whether MHDT had received a booking request from Friends of Woodberry Down. Simon confirmed he would follow this up.

ACTION: Simon Donovan to follow up on the booking with Friends of Woodberry Down.

4. Board discussion without partners

- 4.1. **Update on WDCO priorities:** The Chair noted that relationships within the Board have been working well, and the Board agreed that there has been a noticeable improvement.
- 4.2. The Board also acknowledged the need to improve attendance at meetings and agreed to make this a priority. One member suggested introducing hybrid meetings so that more members could join from home or the office. Hilary noted that the Board would need improved equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings. The Chair has spoken to Simon Donovan, who offered to connect WDCO with IT support. The Chair also obtained a quote for replacing the carpet at the Redmond Centre.
- 4.3. The Chair updated the Board on WDCO's relationships with partners. WDCO held a meeting with NHG to address how NHG responds to WDCO's questions

and the need for clearer dates and timelines for workstreams. NHG included a response in their December report, setting out the agreed workstreams from that meeting.

- 4.4. Looking ahead to next year, the Pavilion Project will continue following its successful impact this year, strengthening relationships between WDCO, Berkeley, NHG and MHDT. Necdet and Gita are also continuing their work to support local shops and restaurants.
- 4.5. The Board proposed improving communication with new residents to introduce them to WDCO. Simon Slater suggested following up with Berkeley to organise a "Meet Your Neighbour" event, where residents could also meet WDCO representatives. The Chair reminded the Board that the Constitution requires WDCO to hold a community forum, which will take place in April. WDCO will also update its Instagram, Facebook page and WhatsApp group.
- 4.6. The Chair also update on the Partnership Board which reviewed lessons learned from Phase 3. NHG has committed to providing early estimates of service charges for Phase 4, as well as indicative rent levels. Cllr Sarah Young noted that NHG cannot guarantee future rents beyond the formula of CPI + 1%, and more accurate figures will only be available in January 2027 for prospective residents. Ann raised concerns about heating system costs and other service charges, and questioned whether NHG homes were built to the same standard as Berkeley properties. Simon Slater explained that NHG homes are built to a specification set by the housing association, and social rent tenants will not be charged for items such as a new heat exchange unit. He noted that many of the challenges relate to planning policy, including the district heating system, which follows the Mayor's London Plan. The District Heat Network working group will be involved in Phase 4 decisions, including the choice of heat provider and levels of resident involvement.
- 4.7. The Chair raised the question of whether WDCO should incorporate as a company with limited liability, noting that if WDCO were to enter into a transaction that went wrong, the financial liability would fall on all Board members.
- 4.8. Ekaterina asked whether WDCO Board meetings could include discussion of safety and ASB. The Chair explained that NHG already holds regular meetings with police and enforcement officers, and that WDCO can feed in issues raised on WhatsApp groups. Cllr Young added that there is a Safer Community Team meeting attended by WDCO Board representatives, local R&R reps, NHG, Hackney, Berkeley, the police, the CAP chair, and ASB and housing teams. Ward councillors also host a public ward forum where safety concerns can be raised, the next meeting will take place on 15th January.