

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 19th March 2026
7:15pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance: Adrian Essex, Oonagh Gormley, Hilary Britton, Donna Fakes, Phil Cooke, Jackie Myers, William Sheehy, Kalu Amogu, Andreaa Stoica, Necdet Ozturk, Gita Sootarsing, Ann Hunte, Dulce Laluces, Leonora Williams, Andrea Anderson, Geoff Baron, Francis, Mina Faragalla

Zoom attendees: Kristina Zagar, Omar Villalba, Barbara Panuzzo,

Partners: Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Young, Cllr Selman, Mayor Caroline Woodley, Sarah Moore (LBH), Gareth Crawford (LBH), Lewis Cooper (LBH), Sarah Fabes (BH), Tom Anthony (BH), Julian Rodriguez (NHG), Nikola Popovcic (NHG), Jada Guest (NHG), Simon Donovan (NHG)

Visitors: Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

Welcome / Apologies for absence: Ekaterina Andreeva, Tina Parrott, Livia-Jeanne Lupumba, Gloria Obiliana

Introduction

1. Acceptance of minutes 19 February 2026

1.1. The minutes were checked for accuracy and accepted.

Matters Arising / Action Tracker

1.2. Tom confirmed that he is awaiting a response from the Estates Team regarding William's query on the issue of unopenable windows and the cleaning strategy for future phases.

ACTION: Tom to liaise with the Estates Team and provide a response to William's query regarding the window cleaning strategy for future phases.

Update provided by BH at the Liaison Meeting: For future phases, the fixed panel will be limited to approximately 20–25 centimetres, smaller than the full width of a ruler, allowing residents to reach and clean the bottom fixed pane. This means they will no longer have the large fixed panes seen in earlier phases, as BH is moving away from that approach.

All openable windows will open inwards to enable easy cleaning. From a safety perspective, each resident will be provided with a key operated fastening system, allowing windows to be secured safely while also giving residents the ability to release the fastening for cleaning purposes. Windows can then be pulled inwards for access.

1.3. Sarah Fabes confirmed that residents from outside the Woodberry Down estate have been invited to participate in the consultations.

1.4. In response to a query about whether the library space would be considered as part of the Ground Floor Strategy, Hermione confirmed that the Commercial and Community Asset Strategy will review all existing and pipeline spaces across Woodberry Down.

- 1.5. Jada advised that she is reasonably confident that payment adjustments will be applied where outstanding accounts show deficits. Hilary stated that she was not satisfied with this response, noting that residents would not be paying adjustments for 2023/24 and 2024/25 until 2027/28, effectively covering shortfalls across multiple years at once. She emphasised that residents should not have to wait until the following year to recover deficits.
- 1.6. Jada responded that NHG is unable to apply previous years' balances to 2026/27 accounts at this stage.
- 1.7. Jada confirmed that NHG will be fully up to date by September 2026, with no outstanding accounts remaining. Hilary then asked why adjustments could not be applied in September. Jada clarified that service charge adjustments for all tenures, including leaseholders, are applied annually in April.
- 1.8. Roda asked whether NHG could review this approach for leaseholders, as they would be required to pay lump sum adjustments.

ACTION: Jada to confirm whether there are mechanisms in place to adjust leaseholders' (shared owners') service charge accounts mid-year, once actual service charge accounts have been issued.

Update from Jada (NHG): I can confirm that leasehold service charges can be adjusted once the actual accounts have been served.

- 1.9. Cllr Sarah Young asked whether the WDCO Board should include a standing agenda item on service charges for discussion with R&R at future meetings. The Chair agreed that service charges would be discussed with R&R but not at the Board.
- 1.10. Jada confirmed that the CCTV audit report has been delayed and will be shared with WDCO by 20 March.
- 1.11. Berkeley confirmed that the lifts are not of the same specification. Hilary clarified that her concern related specifically to the quality and resilience of the lifts. Tom responded that a range of lift types is used depending on building height, and that resilience is largely dependent on maintenance. The Chair noted that there is evidence suggesting that certain lift types are failing more frequently than others.
- 1.12. The rationale for the heat network upgrade has been circulated.
- 1.13. The Doodle poll for the Public Forum has been circulated.
- 1.14. Tom advised that there is currently no confirmed timescale for convening the District Heat Network meeting.
- 1.15. Simon Donovan confirmed that MHDT would be open to making the Redmond Community Centre available over the Christmas period, subject to sufficient volunteer interest. Jackie asked who the intended recipients of the Christmas dinner would be. Simon responded that it would be open to all, with a particular focus on elderly residents. Cllr Sarah Young suggested engaging with the Woodberry Down Community Club to draw on their previous experience of organising Christmas dinners.

ACTION: MHDT to follow up on arrangements for the Christmas dinner, including liaising with the Woodberry Down Community Club, organising volunteers, and confirming intended recipients.

No update at the moments – action is on the tracker

Presentations

2. Phase 5 proposals - Berkeley Homes:

- 2.1. Sarah Fabes provided an update on the design progress for Phase 5, explaining that Berkeley has now commenced its second round of consultations. She outlined the key planning framework, including the requirement for the Reserve Matters Application to adhere to the approved design code, development specifications and parameter plans.
- 2.2. The approved masterplan establishes the principles for demolition, the location of public open space, building placement and maximum building heights. Sarah confirmed that Berkeley remains within the agreed height limit.
- 2.3. Sarah explained that the current design includes 799 homes, just below the maximum of 801. This comprises 479 market homes and 320 affordable homes, including 176 shared ownership and 144 social rented units. She noted that Berkeley is exploring the addition of two further five bedroom social rented townhouses. The housing mix has been informed by a Housing Needs Assessment from Hackney Regen, to accommodate residents relocating from Phases 6 and 7, with a strong emphasis on larger family homes.
- 2.4. Cllr Sarah Young asked how many three, four and five-bedroom homes are included within the social rented provision. Sarah Fabes responded that there are a number of four and five bedroom homes and an aspiration to increase five bedroom provision, but she would need to confirm the exact breakdown and whether these units are included within the current consultation.

ACTION: Sarah Fabes will confirm whether the number of three-, four- and five-bedroom social rented homes are included within the consultation.

Update provided by BH at the Liaison Meeting: This information was not included on the consultation boards themselves; instead, a summary of the number of units for each tenure was provided.

- 2.5. Sarah then discussed efforts to reduce service charge costs, highlighting proposed inward opening window panels to allow cleaning from inside the building. Jackie asked whether there would be window restrictions for children.
- 2.6. In relation to sustainability, Necdet enquired whether solar panels would be included in Phase 5. Sarah confirmed that solar panels will be installed and that further assessment will be undertaken to minimise shading impacts.
- 2.7. The Design Committee has also been involved in refining ground floor layouts and improving liveability, including decisions around entrance locations. Sarah explained that entrances will be concentrated along the new estate road.
- 2.8. Andreea asked whether there would be spaces for delivery vans to park, to which Sarah responded that five delivery bays are proposed within Phase 5 to ease pressure. She added that car parking on Woodberry Down will be reserved for returning social rented tenants who currently have parking or permits, while blue badge provision will be available for market and shared ownership residents.
- 2.9. Sarah outlined the wider design proposals, including landscaping features such as a pocket park adjacent to Phase 3, a new river path to the south, and an eastern linear park with aspirations for a community orchard. To the north, there are plans to integrate with the Anchor Hanover scheme, including fitness equipment and play provision for older children. She also confirmed that the material palette will primarily consist of brick, with new tree planting and play

areas incorporated, and that all buildings will be spaced at least 18 metres apart.

- 2.10. Technical assessments are ongoing to understand how the development will affect the local environment. These include wind, daylight and sunlight studies, which will inform landscaping and building placement. A wind tunnel test will be conducted to identify potential pinch points.
- 2.11. Amanda from Friend of Woodberry Down asked how many of the 28 original residents from Newton Close would be returning to the new block Goldfinch Point.

ACTION: Roda will follow up with Anchor Hanover in response to Amanda's question relating to Goldfinch Point.

Update from from ITLA: Anchor Hanover have confirmed that at the point planning permission was granted in April 2022, there were 16 residents remaining in situ. Of these, four intend to return to the new building, and two have already moved back in.

- 2.12. Cllr Caroline Selman asked how close the buildings would be to Seven Sisters Road, and Sarah confirmed that they will be set back approximately 8–10 metres from the pavement.
- 2.13. Concerns around wind conditions were also raised. Sarah explained that Phase 4 testing had confirmed issues with wind pinch points between Woodberry Grove and Sainsbury's, which are expected to improve once Phase 4 is complete. Necdet added that these measures should be implemented more quickly, noting that elderly residents have been affected by strong winds.
- 2.14. Elaine asked how wind planning for future phases would differ from previous approaches. Sarah responded that Berkeley has appointed RWDI, Europe's leading wind consultancy, to improve the quality of wind assessments following earlier concerns. Jackie added that previous consultants had not taken mobility issues into account.

ACTION: Sarah will raise Jackie's query with RWDI to establish whether residents with mobility issues are considered within wind assessments.

- 2.15. Sarah confirmed that she will return to the April Board to provide an update on the second round of consultations, followed by a further design update in May, and presentation of final proposals in June ahead of the public exhibition.

3. **Mayor of Hackney, Caroline Woodley:**

- 3.1. Mayor Caroline Woodley attended the Board meeting and confirmed that she was happy to take questions from the WDCO Board.
- 3.2. The discussion began with William enquiring about apprenticeships, noting that Berkeley had previously visited Skinner's Academy and suggesting that they should visit more regularly to encourage students into construction.
- 3.3. Mayor Caroline Woodley responded that Hackney is focusing on offering skills opportunities for young people, including apprenticeships and vocational training opportunities for all ages such as 'Connect to Work'. Tom added that Stav and apprentices at Berkeley have provided presentations at the WDCO Board and are currently engaging with schools and Hackney Works.
- 3.4. An observer enquired about providing more inclusive opportunities for children who have left school and are not in placements, including children with autism.

Tom explained that Berkeley's application process does not rely on CVs to ensure opportunities are open to everybody. Mayor Woodley added that Hackney's Supported Internship programme is available for 16–24 year olds with learning disabilities and/or autism, and suggested providing more opportunities at the Redmond Centre for supported internships and employment.

- 3.5. The Mayor then asked the WDCO Board how they feel the community and wider demographic has changed as the development continues, including whether families are leaving the borough due to housing costs. The Chair clarified that the WDCO Executive Committee is balanced between private owners and social rented residents for the first time, and that they are questioning the role of WDCO and whether this needs to change.
- 3.6. Cllr Sarah Young notes that the WDCO Board and Regen team have received submissions from the Orthodox Jewish community requesting the construction of additional housing for them.
- 3.7. Amanda (Friends of Woodberry Down) said there is a lack of spaces for older people in the community and currently no specific infrastructure for older people who are marginalised on Woodberry Down.
- 3.8. Ann Hunte highlighted that there is a changing demographic, with younger people moving into Woodberry Down and then moving away to find homes with gardens for their children, alongside increasing numbers of elderly and retired leaseholders.
- 3.9. Elaine asked what proportion of the new build at Goldfinch is social housing and sheltered accommodation. Cllr Sarah Young reported that according to Anchor Hanover, it is all London living rent (intermediate affordable housing), including Older People Shared Ownership.
- 3.10. Cllr Caroline Selman raised the issue of access to affordable and accessible spaces and asked what the Mayor's vision is for the Ground Floor strategy, and what role the Council will play in ensuring spaces are active rather. Mayor Caroline Woodley stated that she will look at how to encourage and support the Ground Floor strategy to be community-led. Gareth clarified that the Regen team are about to commission a piece of work to look at non-housing uses in Woodberry Down and what the best uses might be, and this will be going out to procurement shortly.
- 3.11. Necdet raised concerns about safety, particularly phone thefts at Woodberry Down, noting that this has emerged over the past 1.5 years and suggesting that increasing police presence may not be the solution. Mayor Caroline Woodley noted the phone thefts are organised crimes affecting the borough, and they are working with the police.
- 3.12. Omar then raised concerns about social housing and temporary housing rent increases, noting rises of up to 80% and the impact highlighted in the social life survey, particularly on temporary accommodation residents. He asked what information Hackney holds on the impact of affordability changes and what actions will be taken to support the community and retain residents on the estate. Mayor Caroline Woodley responded that Hackney needs to address rent conversion and reach a point where rents cover the cost of maintaining buildings. However, there is also concern that if rents are too high, people will not be able to afford to live there in the first place. The Mayor was also concerned about reliance on housing benefit and universal credit, and whether this is keeping pace with rising rents. Omar further asked for the Mayor to

explore what options are being developed for residents who are working but not receiving universal credit or housing benefit.

ACTION: Mayor Caroline Woodley to review the impact of social housing rent increases on affordability for residents and to work with Councillor Nicholson to address cost and affordability challenges, including exploring potential options being developed to support the community.

4. Phase 5 Decant Strategy, Hackney

- 4.1. Lewis provided an update on the Phase 5 decant programme, outlining the current position and next steps for rehousing residents. He explained that Phase 5 currently includes 225 council units across nine mid-rise blocks, comprising 25 leaseholders, 34 secure tenants and 135 temporary accommodation (TA) residents, with the remaining units being voids.
- 4.2. Lewis described the provisional programme for bringing Phase 5 forward, which will begin with early engagement to understand residents' housing needs, inform them of the proposals and ensure their feedback helps shape the design of the programme.
- 4.3. He confirmed that Phase 5 is expected to be brought into phase in summer 2026. At this stage, Hackney will grant council tenants decant status and begin negotiations with leaseholders regarding property acquisitions in preparation for a potential Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Subject to Cabinet approval, Hackney will undertake extensive engagement with all tenures before progressing to a CPO in summer 2027, followed by the statutory process and public enquiry. A final decision on the CPO is anticipated in spring 2028.
- 4.4. If approved, residents will be rehoused into suitable accommodation, enabling Berkeley to take possession of the site for redevelopment. Lewis highlighted a key challenge in the programme, noting a gap between late 2028 when residents may need to move and spring 2030, when Phase 4 homes become available.
- 4.5. Jackie asked if Hackney will be going back to double decants. Lewis explained that Hackney is exploring this option, and to weigh up the costs. Delaying the project would cost approximately £13.5 million and impact the viability of Phase 5 and future phases, whereas a double decant is estimated to cost around £1 million. Gareth clarified this work is being undertaken to try to avoid the need for double decants. Jackie then asked for the timeline for a double decant. Lewis noted that it is difficult to confirm at this stage, but we are anticipating a gap of approximately 18 months, which is subject to change.
- 4.6. Lewis then outlined alternative scenarios being considered. Scenario 2 focuses on how to keep the community together during the disruption, including the possibility of a double decant or intermediate move, potentially using the south-western blocks (subject to further work with Berkeley). Scenario 3 explores options on the opposite side of Seven Sisters Road.
- 4.7. He added that Hackney has been engaging with Phase 5 residents over the past four weeks through drop-in sessions, door knocking and targeted surveys to understand housing needs and views on double decants.
- 4.8. Jackie asked whether temporary accommodation residents are being kept informed of these changes. Lewis responded that Hackney has written to temporary accommodation residents and invited them to the recent drop-in

session, with additional support provided by Hackney Works and the Here to Help team.

- 4.9. Lewis confirmed that Hackney will complete the current phase of engagement, analyse survey responses and present a report to Cabinet in June. This will be followed by a further round of engagement with Phase 5 residents.
- 4.10. Berkeley will be holding their consultation alongside Hackney at the Redmond Community Centre on Saturday. Berkeley and their design team will present the new proposals, while Hackney Regen will present the decant strategy.
- 4.11. Elaine asked whether the 34 secure tenants would have access to NHG vacant homes (relets). Lewis clarified that Hackney has nomination rights to available NHG relets. Gareth added stated that Hackney Council sets social rents using the same formula as NHG. Omar raised concerns there has been an 80% increase in rents, meaning people may need to increase their income to afford them.

5. **Partner Updates:**

- 5.1. NHG: No further updates since written update.
- 5.2. MHDT: Simon updated that funding has been awarded to the Redmond Centre for improvements. Funding has also been agreed to carry on with Woodberry Wetlands forum.
- 5.3. Hackney: Gareth updated that Hackney have agreed a brief for the Commercial and Community Assets strategy and will be going out to procure.
- 5.4. Berkeley: Oonagh enquired on the lighting along the Phase 4 hoarding and that this is currently dark. Tom will follow up on Oonagh's question.

ACTION: Berkeley to follow up on the question relating to lighting along the Phase 4 hoarding.

Update provided by BH at the Liaison Meeting: The lights were temporarily switched off while the new graphics were being installed, but they are being turned back on w/c 6th April. To address residents' concerns, black tape is being installed along the top of the lights to prevent upward reflection into neighbouring residents' windows.

Board discussion without partners:

6. **Phase 5:**

- 6.1. Geoff Baron updated that proposals have been developed for Phase 5 in which private housing, NHG shared ownership and social housing will be accommodated within the same buildings, with different cores. These would operate under two separate landlords and potentially management arrangements and would include shared podium spaces. Geoff noted that WDCO will need to carefully consider these proposals, including their implications for Phase 5, particularly given the differing vested interests represented on the WDCO Board.
- 6.2. Oonagh highlighted that, according to Sarah, only the podium areas will be shared, with separate entrances and lifts for different tenures. Leonora added that there needs to be clarity on which facilities will be covered by the service charge. Hilary further noted the need for clarity regarding which "green fingers" will be managed by the Council.
- 6.3. Geoff raised concerns that social tenants moving into Phase 5 may face a significant increase in costs. Roda suggested that consideration should be given

to when Berkeley and NHG set specifications for building and estate management service, and what role WDCO can have in influencing these decisions.

- 6.4. Andreea asked whether NHG is planning to manage the separate blocks. Roda responded that NHG has indicated a preference to move towards more in house management.
- 6.5. Geoff asked whether the Board wished to make a formal statement on behalf of WDCO, noting that complexities are likely to arise. It was agreed that this would be included as an agenda item at the May Board meeting, where Design Committee members will gather views from the Board.
- 6.6. Hilary suggested that WDCO should raise a point regarding the scale of Phase 5 during the public consultation.

7. **The Public Forum:**

- 7.1. Roda produced a paper on the Public Forum.
- 7.2. Skinner's Academy could not accommodate as there is a large number of people, which will require more staff on site. Roda updated the main hall at the Redmond Centre has been booked for £42-50 an hour. The Public Forum is confirmed for Tuesday 21st April.
- 7.3. The items on the early draft agenda item include: Who is WDCO? What questions/issues WDCO can help with? Looking at the successes and work WDCO has done? How WDCO can improve communication with residents? Do residents use or share the website? What additional information can WDCO provide? How the Redmond Centre can deliver more? And promoting vacancies for the WDCO bi-election. There will also be refreshments provided.

ACTION: Board members are asked to provide any feedback on the Public Forum agenda to Roda.

Update from ITLA: Following feedback, one item, Residents' Associations was added to the agenda. The agenda has now been finalised.

8. **Notice of a resolution to amend the standing orders to permit hybrid board meetings:**

- 8.1. The Chair proposed a change to standing orders to permit hybrid meetings at the WDCO Board. This will be put forward as a resolution at the next Board meeting.

9. **WDCO Finance:**

- 9.1. The Finance Report is not the final report but provides a good idea of the figures. WDCO will arrange a meeting to establish and agree the budget.

ACTION: WDCO will arrange a dedicated finance meeting to establish and agree the budget.

Update from ITLA: The year-end accounts and the 2026/27 budget will be presented at the April Board meeting.

10. **AOB:**

- 10.1. Roda has circulated a report of the other meetings that have taken place.

ACTION TRACKER

- DHN: Tom to confirm the timescale for convening the District Heat Network meeting.
 - February update from BH: BH will be reaching out for DHN Working Group availability w/c 23rd February, with a follow-up meeting likely to be held before end-March.
- Spilt household: Hackney will provide WDCO with an update on the split household review in the summer, before the review commences, including the scope of the Local Lettings Policy review.
- Phase 5 Decant Strategy: Hackney to present the Phase 5 decant strategy to the WDCO Board ahead of the Cabinet meetings in May/June.
- Simon to explore the feasibility of keeping the Redmond Centre open for residents over the Christmas period.
- Meet Your Neighbours: WDCO to follow up with Berkeley and NHG on organising a "Meet Your Neighbours" event.
 - February update from Chair: The purpose and leadership are still unclear. Traditionally these events are led by R&R and NHG.
 - Update from Hilary at the Liaison Meeting: I have not yet spoken to them directly, but we received a message advising that one meeting had been postponed. Giuseppe will arrange a replacement, and I will follow up with him. This update came through just before Easter, so I will chase this and confirm when and where the meeting will take place.