

**WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes
Tuesday 2nd September 2025
7 pm Zoom Meeting**

Attendance: Adrian Essex, Gita Sootarsing, Hilary Britton, Omar Villalba

Visitors included: Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan, Geoffrey Baron, Phil Cooke, William Sheehy, Kristina Zagar

Section 0 - Introduction

0.1 Welcome / Apologies for absence

Oonagh Gormley, Leonora Williams, Jackie Myers

Section 1

1. **Preparation for Planning Sub-Committee Meeting 3rd September (all Board members):**
 - 1.1. The WDCO Board members discussed what Geoff will say at the Planning Sub-Committee meeting. A paper was submitted to the planning system stating that WDCO supports the application, but with a list of reservations and concerns.
 - 1.2. The Chair presented three options for consideration. Phil noted that WDCO should consider the third option and object, as they are still concerned about demolishing more flats than are being built. William agreed, stating he would choose the third option to provide a clear response and explanation regarding the imbalance between demolished and newly built flats.
 - 1.3. Gita asked if it would be possible to explore the second option. Hilary also supported option 2, noting that the number of houses was originally agreed in 2007 when the council planned a mix of social housing and private homes. This was later changed to include shared ownership that was intended to be affordable, but it is only recently that shared ownership has become unaffordable.
 - 1.4. Omar raised the issue of the 200 social homes, highlighting that while the total number of homes is increasing to 6,500, there will be fewer social homes as a result. He also emphasised the importance of focusing on affordability and considering those who cannot afford to move.
 - 1.5. Geoff proposed that those seeking social housing should reference option 2 rather than option 3, while incorporating Hilary's suggestion to include conditions on the permissions, such as a cap on the total number of homes.
 - 1.6. The Chair spoke to Oonagh, who suggested reaffirming WDCO's support while including a cap on the number of units that are ultimately built.
 - 1.7. The Chair recommended focusing on affordability, as objectors are expected to highlight concerns regarding density, the number of social rented homes, and the environmental impact. The Chair proposed option 2, in which WDCO expresses support while noting one reservation. Kristina supported the Chair's point.

- 1.8. William stated that Jackie has opted for option 3.
- 1.9. The Chair proposed reaffirming WDCO's support while emphasising the long-term threat to the regeneration. Geoff should note that the success of the regeneration depends on residents moving into affordable homes in the future.
- 1.10. Hilary suggested that WDCO refer to the written proposal previously submitted and highlight that further information has emerged, indicating that affordability is becoming a major issue. This concern is expected to worsen in later phases, as seen in Phase 3, where residents did not take up the offers for flats. Geoff will also address William's concerns in the concluding paragraph, noting both the reduction in the number of social rented homes and ongoing affordability issues. WDCO remains uneasy about residents leaving Woodberry Down due to affordability, as evidenced by uptake in Phases 3a and 3b.

ACTION: Omar will email the points to Geoff, who will incorporate them into the statement tomorrow.

Section 2

2. Minutes of meeting 22nd July 2025:

- 2.1. The minutes were checked for accuracy and accepted.

3. Matters Arising / Action Tracker:

ACTION: Roda will catch up with Omar and Jada to finalise how the KPIs will be reported.

- 3.1. Roda prepared a document for the meeting with NHG in July, outlining items that have taken years to resolve. Roda suggested continuing this by adding the changeover from Vital to Insite and issues with Phase 3 move-ins once concluded, turning this into a live document. She also included the recent historical service charges review, covering service charges for the last three years.

ACTION: Roda to revise the document in preparation for the Partnership Board, focusing on more recent issues for relevance.

- 3.2. Omar mentioned the EQIA as part of the CPO, noting that the affordability of social housing is not included within its scope. He proposed that the best approach is to focus on how Hackney ensures the community does not leave as a result. Omar has pushed the EQIA as far as possible and will write another paper addressing rents and potential consequences, challenging how Hackney plans to manage this project risk before issuing the paper to the WDCO Executive Committee.

ACTION: Omar to write a paper addressing the rents and potential consequences to challenge how Hackney will address this project.

- 3.3. William agreed to become the representative on the Estate Management Board.
- 3.4. Jackie agreed to become the representative on the Partnership Board.

- 3.5. WDCO commented on the service charge review template letters. The Chair responded to Jada, noting that these are not the letters WDCO would send.
- 3.6. The Executives spoke with Mica and Jada at the NHG meeting, who noted that things have been improving over the past 18 months.
- 3.7. Oonagh chased the sailing scholarship and is awaiting confirmation on whether there are places available during the October half term. Further information is still being pursued.
- 3.8. There was no further update from Gloria regarding discussions with St Olive's Church about benchmarking hall hire charges.
- 3.9. The Chair held a meeting with Leonora on budgeting. Roda will send the invoice request this week for the Chair, Gloria, and Leonora to review and approve.

ACTION: Roda to send the invoice request and provide the Chair, Gloria, and Leonora with the final draft for approval before submission.

4. **Preparation for September Board:**

- 4.1. **Board Agenda:** The Chair outlined the categories that WDCO needs to address: 1) focusing on priorities such as the Design Committee, Block D, and MHDT; 2) Gita arranging Friday Night Lates with Nar and Sublime; 3) Oonagh looking at sailing. The Chair emphasised that more Board members need to be actively involved.
- 4.2. Omar proposed having a forward plan in place for future priorities, including attaching milestones to the plan.
- 4.3. The Chair noted that the Partnership Board and WDCO's position on NHG should be added to the agenda as part of the forward plan. The Chair aims to have a draft ready by 18 September to present to the Board.
- 4.4. Roda updated that she has chased Cllr Nicholson regarding split households. At the July Board, he stated he would organise a separate meeting with some WDCO members, the Chair, and Elaine. Roda received confirmation of dates from the Chair, Jackie, and Elaine, and sent these to Cllr Nicholson.

ACTION: Roda will ask Cllr Nicholson to reschedule the meeting to an earlier date in September or early October.

- 4.5. Hilary proposed requesting a forward plan from Berkeley, as meetings for the Design Committee to select architects have taken place, but final approval from Berkeley is still pending. WDCO also requires a timeline for Phase 5, the Design Committee meetings, and lessons learned for future phases. Roda noted that Berkeley is likely waiting for the masterplan to be approved and submitted to planning before progressing with Phase 5 and Design Committee timelines.
- 4.6. Omar proposed requesting a Phase 3b update for the September Board, as well as a demolition confidence notice for Phase 4. He also suggested requesting a draft construction management plan, showing the route for new access to the Jewish school.
- 4.7. Hilary suggested asking partners to include a forward plan in their written reports for the September Board.

ACTION: Roda to request partners to include a forward plan in their written reports for the September Board.

- 4.8. The Board agenda will also include Partner Updates and a discussion without partners.
- 4.9. **Berkeley forward plan:** Demolition of Phase 4 and Phase 5 timeline.
- 4.10. **NHG forward plan:** Resolution of NHG issues.
- 4.11. **Hackney forward plan:** Handover of the CPO and Phase 4, move-ins for residents being decanted from Phase 5. The Chair will ask Hackney about Phase 5, including whether they are bringing this phase into decant, when the report will go to Cabinet, and what the plans are for the remaining Phase 5 residents.

ACTION: The Chair will ask Gita for dates on when the Nar and Sublime events will commence.

5. **AOB:**

- 5.1. The Chair asked whether WDCO should take the Board out for a drink at Nar and Sublime using WDCO funds. Roda suggested proposing a 'Board social' to support local businesses and provide an opportunity to catch up outside of Board meetings. However, she noted that it may be preferable for Board members to cover the cost themselves rather than using WDCO funds.