



April and May Board Updates from the working group and other meetings

Partnership Board 26th March

Attendees from WDCO: Jackie Myers and Adrian Essex

The Partnership Board meeting focused on the regeneration programme and the difficult economic environment affecting delivery. Berkeley Homes explained that the construction sector is under significant pressure due to reduced sales, higher energy costs, rising build expenses, and delays caused by the Building Safety Regulator approval process. Despite these challenges, Berkeley Homes reaffirmed its commitment to delivering the regeneration and noted that support from the Greater London Authority may be explored if necessary.

Hackney Council provided updates on regeneration activity, including Phase 5 consultation and tenant engagement. Door-to-door work with affected secure tenants had taken place, and the split household review is now expected after summer 2026. Progress was also reported on the procurement of a community and commercial strategy, with a contractor expected to be selected by June. Members discussed delays in opening Block D, with councillors requesting a written explanation of the causes and an indicative timeline, as concerns were expressed about the prolonged activation period.

Notting Hill Genesis updated the Board on housing delivery and service charges. Phase 4 is progressing through final specification agreements. Considerable attention was given to historic service charge delays, which were attributed to legacy financial system problems. Residents' concerns about delayed and unclear service charge information were acknowledged. NHG also noted that the Service Charge working group draft terms of reference is in development stages.

The Seven Sisters Road improvement programme was discussed and TfL's reconsideration of the Cycleway 50 route following community feedback. The Council has requested reassurance from TfL regarding its commitment to wider improvements.

A cultural programme update outlined plans for a major public art commission in Phase 4, with a £300,000 budget and a strong emphasis on resident involvement. More details on this will be presented at the May Board.

Meeting with Cllr Nicholson and Suzanne Johnson, Director of Regeneration - WDCO Governance Review 7th April

Attendees from WDCO: Adrian Essex, Jackie Myers, William Sheehy, Phil Cooke, Oonagh Gormley, Hilary Britton,

The discussion focused on the future role, governance, and structure of WDCO, particularly in the context of the continuing regeneration of Woodberry Down. It was acknowledged that the estate has changed significantly over the past decade and will continue to evolve over the next 10–15 years as regeneration progresses.

Cllr Nicholson discussed with WDCO members the concept of a future stewardship model, including whether WDCO could take on a broader place-management or community stewardship role. This could involve helping oversee communal spaces, public realm issues and community infrastructure. However, he stressed that these were exploratory discussions rather than formal proposals. There was also discussion about stewardship models elsewhere, with agreement that reviewing comparable examples could help shape future thinking, even if Woodberry Down's circumstances are unique.

There was significant debate about WDCO's current governance and operational capacity. Adrian highlighted that WDCO is increasingly being approached to deal with matters outside its original remit, yet lacks the



resources to respond effectively. He referenced a substantial list of issues requiring attention, suggesting the organisation now needs more than gradual evolution and more resources. He raised specific operational concerns, including inadequate insurance cover, trustee liability, governance ambiguity, and legal exposure. It was noted that WDCO constitution creates practical problems, such as defining all estate residents as members, which creates complications for insurance.

The discussion followed on whether WDCO should be streamlined. Some Board members raised concerns that the current board structure is too large and ineffective, with inconsistent participation. It was suggested that a smaller, more strategic body may be better suited to the organisation's future needs.

The conversation also touched on the need to attract younger residents into leadership roles. Hilary argued that reliance on retired volunteers is not sustainable long-term, and future leadership may require funded or professionalised roles, including potentially a paid chair, alongside access to legal and governance advice.

The role of residents' associations was also discussed. There was broad support for encouraging more block level resident groups, particularly in newer phases where they have been effective. However, Board members noted significant challenges establishing resident associations in the Hackney blocks, where engagement has historically been low.

The Council indicated a willingness to support WDCO through governance discussions, legal clarification, and strategic planning, although it was made clear that responsibility would remain with WDCO.

Also, practical issues were raised regarding WDCO's lease arrangements for the WDCO Office (Unit 2c Rowan Apartments), liability for health and safety obligations, and the need to ensure volunteers are not personally exposed to unreasonable risk.

Key takeaways

Operational issues: Adrian to refine and share his documented list of operational concerns for further review.

Insurance review: Review of WDCO insurance arrangements, trustee liabilities, and legal responsibilities.

Lease for the WDCO office: Council officers to work with WDCO regarding lease/licence arrangements for the current premises.

Stewardship role: Review examples of stewardship models used elsewhere to inform future options.

Resident engagement: Continue encouraging resident associations where viable, while recognising challenges in older blocks.

Council follow-up: Further conversations between WDCO and council officers to shape next steps.

Estate Management Board Meeting 13th April

Attendees from WDCO: William Sheehy, Adrian Essex and Gita Sootarsing

The Estate Management Board meeting focused on ToR, public realm maintenance, infrastructure projects, community safety, and future planning for Woodberry Down.

A significant part of the discussion centred on the unresolved issue of funding the maintenance of Woodberry Down's public realm and landscaping. Hackney Council explained that the original proposal to fund these spaces through ground rents is no longer viable due to legislation abolishing new ground rents from July 2022 (this only applies to Public spaces from Phase 3 onwards).

There was also discussion about the definition and ownership of public realm spaces. Questions were raised about residents being asked to contribute towards repair costs for features such as the water feature in



KSS1, despite these being perceived as public amenities. A map showing which spaces are public realm and which have been or will eventually be adopted by Hackney was requested for clarity.

Berkeley Homes also clarified that the legislative changes of ground rents only applies to Phase 3 onwards, while earlier phases remain subject to charges. It was confirmed that 60% of ground rent income goes to Hackney Council, with further clarification requested on the remaining 40%.

Governance arrangements for the EMB were reviewed. Proposed improvements included introducing a commercial representative, refining agenda themes, clarifying the Terms of Reference, and retaining quarterly meetings. There was general agreement that the EMB structure should become more focused and outcome driven.

Progress updates were provided on the West Reservoir works which are progressing and remain on track for completion in May, with the bridge already opened ahead of schedule. Community safety discussions noted that anti-social behaviour has remained relatively manageable, although NHG is still awaiting installation of additional CCTV cameras.

The July meeting is expected to take place in person at West Reservoir.

Public Forum 21st April

Attendees from WDCO: Open to all Board members (there were 11 board members in attendance)

The Public Forum meeting focused on resident engagement, communications, the role of residents' associations, estate management issues, and the use of the Redmond Community Centre. A significant part of the discussion centred on explaining WDCO's role. It was clear that many attendees were either unfamiliar with WDCO or had only recently become aware of it through informal channels such as WhatsApp groups.

WDCO also outlined some of its recent achievements, including activism that led to service charge review (NHG blocks), the challenging of Insite bills, securing access to previously unused parking spaces, influencing estate management discussions around CCTV and repairs, and raising concerns directly with senior partners, including Hackney Council and other delivery partners.

A major theme was communication. Residents raised concerns that information about WDCO, board meetings, elections, and opportunities to get involved is not reaching enough people. Suggestions included better use of welcome packs, notices in communal areas, improved digital communication, stronger use of resident representatives within each block, social media, and more direct outreach.

There was discussion about the role and effectiveness of Residents' Associations. Residents from established associations explained how collective organisation has helped them escalate complaints more effectively, secure meetings with landlords and managing agents, and achieve practical outcomes. Others acknowledged that creating and sustaining residents' associations can be difficult, particularly where engagement is low or volunteers are limited.

The Redmond Community Centre prompted considerable discussion (see attached the outcome from the survey). Concerns were raised that the space feels underused, expensive to hire, poorly marketed, and less community focused than in previous years. Some residents spoke positively about past activities and a stronger sense of community before Covid, while others noted that activities still exist but are not always well communicated or accessible. Questions were raised about whether the centre's purpose is to generate income or serve as a subsidised community asset.



Overall, the meeting reflected a strong appetite for better communication, stronger resident organisation, more visible community activity, and a clearer understanding of how residents can influence decisions affecting Woodberry Down.

Key themes and takeaways

- Many residents do not fully understand what WDCO does.
- Communication with residents needs significant improvement.
- Resident representatives should play a stronger communication role.
- Residents' Associations can be highly effective where active.
- The Redmond Community Centre is seen as underused and lacking visibility.
- Estate management issues remain a major concern for residents.

Key Actions / Next Steps

- Review how WDCO communicates with residents, including:
 - Welcome packs for new residents
 - Posters and noticeboards
 - Social media improvements
 - Better WhatsApp coordination
 - More visible publicity for meetings and elections
- Promote the upcoming WDCO by-elections and encourage residents to stand for vacancies.
- Residents' Association Mapping: Explore creating a map or directory showing active residents' associations and contact details.
- Redmond Community Centre Review: Further discussion on how the centre is used, affordability, accessibility, and programming.
- Community Activities: Explore ways to support residents who want to organise community activities or volunteer.

Walkabout with Hackney Mayor Zoë Garbett and Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock (Cabinet Lead for Regeneration) 13th May

Attendees from WDCO: Adrian Essex, Omar Villalba, Jackie Myers, William Sheehy, Phil Cooke, Oonagh Gormley, Hilary Britton and Andrea Anderson

WDCO members were invited by Hackney's Regeneration Team to join Mayor Zoë Garbett and Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock on an estate walkabout. During the visit, WDCO members and the ITLA provided background on the history of Woodberry Down, the regeneration journey to date, and highlighted some of the key concerns currently being raised by residents. It was an opportunity for Woodberry Down residents and WDCO representatives to raise key concerns directly with Hackney's political leadership during the estate walkabout. The discussion was constructive and ranged widely: the potential power of residents' associations; the escalating level of anti-social behaviour; the planning and design process for future phases; and the current state of play with phase four under construction. The group also visited the community centre and the local library, where the Mayor met members of staff.

Safer Community Meeting 21st May

Attendees from WDCO: William Sheehy and Phil Cooke

The meeting focused on community safety, anti-social behaviour (ASB), policing, CCTV improvements, and estate wide resident concerns across Woodberry Down.

It was reported at the meeting that residents from across different tenures reported increasing anxiety about anti-social behaviour around key parts of the estate. Specific concerns were raised about Waters Reach, Berryside, Rowan Apartments, Phase 5, Phase 3, and Park House.



Phone theft and robbery were another major issue. Whilst the police reported that official figures show some improvement, residents strongly challenged this, stating that the lived experience across the estate suggests the problem remains significant.

A detailed update was provided regarding Watersreach and Berryside, where joint work between the police, housing teams, and estate management. Police confirmed that enforcement action has begun, including tenant visits, formal warnings.

Residents also raised concerns about the former Woodberry Down Community Club, where unauthorised music events and gatherings continue to cause disturbance. Police confirmed that they have already intervened to shut down recent events, while Hackney Council is pursuing longer-term legal action, including possible possession proceedings and a closure order.

A substantial update was provided on CCTV improvements. Notting Hill Genesis confirmed that a comprehensive CCTV upgrade is underway across its blocks, including new higher-resolution cameras, upgraded recording systems, improved digital infrastructure, and remote access capability to improve evidence gathering and responsiveness. Estate management also confirmed wider CCTV mapping work is being undertaken across the estate to identify coverage gaps and future improvements.