

**WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes
Tuesday 6th January 2026
7 pm Zoom Meeting**

Attendance

Adrian Essex, Gita Sootarsing, Oonagh Gormley, Hilary Britton, Omar Villalba

Visitors included

Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

Section 0 - Introduction

0.1 Welcome / Apologies for absence

Leonora Williams, Gloria Obilana

Section 1

1. Minutes of meeting 9th December 2025:

- 1.1. The Chair corrected the name for Steve Mowat.
- 1.2. The Chair noted that he did not see the action to raise the Executives' questions on the Phase 5 decant strategy ahead of the Partnership Board, and requested that Executive minutes be circulated earlier to enable timely follow-up on actions.
- 1.3. The minutes were checked for accuracy and accepted.

1. Matters Arising / Action Tracker:

- 1.1. The Chair confirmed that WDCO has received the notes on cyclical maintenance and will need to consider next steps, including whether to raise further questions. The Chair also noted that Omar had received a query from Noemi, a former Board member, regarding the poor condition of the communal areas in her block and the need for redecoration. Omar stated that, as Woodberry Down is a flagship regeneration site, it should have dedicated funding to address such issues.

ACTION: Hilary and Oonagh to raise further questions regarding cyclical maintenance. Roda to follow up on the issue raised by Noemi with Omar.

- 1.2. Grace from the Social & Economic team contacted Roda to ask whether WDCO had any specific requests for the upcoming presentation. The Chair responded that the Executives would like the team to demonstrate the work they deliver such as Active Within and to explain how this benefits the community. The

Board also requested clarity on how success is measured, what the team's remit is, and who decides what is offered.

ACTION: Roda to send Grace the Executives' questions, including clarification on the team's remit, decision-making processes, and expected outcomes.

- 1.3. Oonagh reported that the recent RA meeting was poorly attended and that there appears to be a preference among residents for having separate Resident Associations for different tenures. Hilary added that the NHG model is inclusive of all residents and does not need to be limited to owners, suggesting that WDCO could explore this model and consider having sub-groups operating under a single umbrella. The Chair noted that this approach should also take account of other NHG blocks and that NHG tenants, such as those in Watersreach, should be supported to represent themselves. Omar added that, if WDCO is encouraging the formation of RAs, moments of crisis can often be effective in mobilising and recruiting residents.

ACTION: Oonagh and Roda will reach out and coordinate another meeting with the RA's.

- 1.4. Omar proposed holding an informal walkabout of the estate during the week.
- 1.5. The Executives did not reformulate Omar's questions relating to the PDA. Omar is still awaiting Hackney's response to the seven questions previously submitted, which specifically relate to the PDA. The Chair confirmed that Gareth had provided a written update on the seven questions, focusing on the housing association compact with local authorities, and that this had been sent to Suzanne for review.
- 1.6. Gareth provided an update on Block D at the Liaison meeting but did not confirm that the lease would be signed by February. Millco is still in the process of agreeing lease terms with end users, while discussions with Hackney are ongoing.
- 1.7. The Chair raised the issue of the Phase 5 decant strategy at the Partnership Board. The Board acknowledged the potential challenges highlighted by WDCO, including the lack of clarity around needs and demand, and confirmed that these issues would be addressed as effectively as possible.
- 1.8. Omar proposed seeking further clarification from Hackney on its mitigation strategy in relation to the split household policy, particularly how households would be accommodated if the policy changes.

ACTION: The Chair to follow up with Gareth ahead of the Partnership Board regarding Hackney's mitigation strategy for the split household policy.

Section 1 - Major Topics

1. **What is Woodberry Down Community Organisation role:**
 - 1.1. The Chair asked how WDCO wishes to fulfil its role going forward and whether it should consider incorporation. He outlined four possible approaches for WDCO to become more proactive in influencing how the regeneration is delivered and addressing emerging issues.
 - 1.2. Gita suggested that holding a public forum should be a top priority for the organisation.

- 1.3. Hilary proposed revisiting the WDCO Constitution, noting that WDCO is a representative body with the capacity to be both proactive and reactive. She raised concerns that WDCO is currently too involved in issues that residents could address themselves. Omar agreed, stating that WDCO was originally envisaged as a more strategic body, but that effective engagement with partners and being heard by NHG and Hackney remains challenging. Omar suggested that WDCO should hold partners to account, particularly in relation to outcomes for social residents.
- 1.4. Oonagh highlighted that too few people are currently carrying the workload and that greater involvement from residents in NHG blocks is needed. Omar responded that a key obstacle to recruiting residents from social blocks is a lack of trust in NHG, driven by poor performance and communication.
- 1.5. Omar reiterated that WDCO plays a vital role in enabling residents to raise issues and in holding partners to account.
- 1.6. Roda suggested holding a dedicated discussion with the Board about WDCO's future role, or alternatively using the public forum to gather feedback from residents on how WDCO can best fulfil its vision.
- 1.7. In response to the Chair's question, Oonagh noted that while the estate could function without WDCO, resolving complex issues such as those affecting Watersreach and service charges, however this would require strong, well-connected Resident Associations. Without effective RAs or Tenant Associations, WDCO remains essential.
- 1.8. Hilary raised concerns that MHDT no longer feels like part of the community and that addressing issues relating to MHDT and the Redmond Community Centre could resolve a number of wider problems. She noted that MHDT previously played a stronger role but appears to have declined, and that WDCO should review MHDT's performance. The Chair suggested an independent review of MHDT's performance against its service level agreement.
- 1.9. The Chair asked how best to encourage Board members to volunteer and contribute more actively. Oonagh suggested forming a subgroup of the Board to explore this, while Roda proposed seeking input from the full Board rather than a smaller group.
- 1.1. The Chair proposed forming a limited company and suggested that the Executives ask a subgroup of the Board to explore the feasibility and potential benefits of incorporation. Hilary raised concerns that incorporation could deter some Board members. In response, the Chair noted that incorporation would enable WDCO to apply for funding from grant making bodies.

2. **Agenda:**

- 1.1. The Chair asked whether a Board member outside of the Executive Committee would be able to organise the Public Forum in April. Gita raised that WDCO is better organised in terms of communicating with people on the Public Forum and now have structures such as the WhatsApp groups and resident Facebook groups. Gita added that NHG have a regular newsletter, similar to R&R, and that NHG have been cooperative in inserting information in their newsletter. Oonagh asked to clarify whether Billy is speaking to residents/door knocking as a WDCO representative.

ACTION: The Executives will discuss forming a group to organise the Public Forum at the WDCO Board.

ACTION: Roda and the Chair will clarify with William on door knocking exercise with the Cllr's and whether he is representing himself or as a WDCO representative.

6. **Business support:** Gita submitted notes on business support.

7. **Topics for blogs:** The Chair had minimal responses for Board members to put up blogs and work on other social media feeds. Francis McDonough volunteered to put a blog.

ACTION: The Chair will work with Francis to improve the blog and publish a post on the possible change to the bus routes.

8. **Preparation for January Board:**

8.1. A brief discussion on crime and outcomes from the Community Action Panel (CAP) meeting will be included on the January Board agenda.

8.2. A discussion on the future of WDCO and feedback from the Estate Management Board, focusing on how members wish to see WDCO operate going forward.

8.3. The Executives to propose forming a group of Board members to organise the Public Forum in April.

8.4. A review of progress on blogs and social media since the last meeting.

8.5. Two presentations are scheduled: an update from Berkeley Homes on changes to Phase 4, and a presentation from NHG's Social & Economic Team.

8.6. Roda will send the following questions to Grace in advance of the presentation:

- What does the team offer?
- What is the team's remit?
- What are they expected to achieve?
- How do they decide what to offer?
- How is the budget allocated?
- What is the overall budget?
- How do they demonstrate that intended outcomes have been achieved?

ACTION: Roda to send Grace the list of questions for the Social & Economic Team's update.

8.7. Gita advised that the Business Support item will be deferred from another Board agenda, as there is currently no outcome to report, and that the Executives will be kept updated.

8.8. Hilary asked whether WDCO should press for additional CCTV coverage at Watersreach.

ACTION: Omar to raise concerns regarding the functionality and adequacy of CCTV at Watersreach with NHG at the Ward Forum meeting.