

# **WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION**

## **Board Meeting**

### **MINUTES**

Thursday 20th March 2025  
7:15pm Redmond Community Centre

**Attendance:** Anne Hunte, Gita Sootarsing, Geoff Baron, Andrea Anderson, Andrea Stoica, Leonora Williams, Mina Faragalla, William Sheehy, Phil Cooke, Tina Parrott, Omar Villalba, Hilary Britton, Oonagh Gormley, Necdet Ozturk, Kalu Amogu, Barbara Panuzzo, Donna Fakes, Jackie Myers

**Partners:** Tom Anthony (BH), Gareth Crawford (LBH), Julian Rodriguez (NHG), Nikola Popovcic (NHG), Fionnuala Keane-Conley (MHDT), Cllr Young, Cllr Selman,

**Visitors:** Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

**Welcome / Apologies for absence:** Nicolas Attalides, Kristina Zagar, Francis McDonagh, Adrian Essex, Dulce Laluces, Jada Guest, Simon Donovan, Wilian Martinez, Gloria Obiliana, Shifra Appich, Livia-Jeanne Lupumba

#### **Section 0 - Introduction**

##### **1. Acceptance of minutes of 20 February 2025:**

1.1. The minutes were checked for accuracy and accepted.

##### **2. Matters Arising / Action Tracker**

2.1. Roda updated that the NHG confirmation of charges draft letter has not yet been sent to residents but is expected to be issued shortly.

**ACTION:** Roda to follow up with NHG to confirm a timeline for issuing the confirmation of charge letter.

2.2. Julian confirmed NHG's commitment to freezing Phase 3a service charges for 2025/26. However, noted that while the estimated budget will remain the same, where there may be an overspend, this would need to be recovered when actual accounts are issued to residents.

2.3. Gareth has not yet followed up with councillors about temporary housing and service provision but plans to do so. Cllr Selman reported that she and Sarah met with the cabinet lead for temporary accommodation and housing needs, focusing on concerns around rent levels for those being relocated. Roda provided a written update to the WDCO Board on meetings since the February Board, including

outcome from the meeting with the cabinet lead member. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for April.

- 2.4. Cllr Young reported a meeting with the council's lead officer for temporary housing, who confirmed a special process should exist for residents moving to higher rents not fully covered by housing benefits. This process would support residents in applying for housing benefit and securing extra assistance. Roda asked if this process is being developed. Cllr Young confirmed the need has been agreed, but the process itself has not been finalised.
- 2.5. Omar emphasised that rent increases take effect in 10 days, and support for affected residents is urgently needed, as letters have already been sent.
- 2.6. Roda followed up with Michelle regarding the satellite community space. Michelle confirmed it will be in Phase 6.
- 2.7. Roda contacted Kristina about the Block D priorities from the WDCO Awayday. Kristina agreed to take lead but cannot provide an update until the upcoming Block D meeting next Monday. Roda will follow up with her afterwards.

**ACTION:** Roda will ask Kristina for a written update on the Block D meeting for the April Board.

- 2.8. Roda circulated the report from the Partners Awayday.
- 2.9. Tom reported that Berkeley is awaiting confirmation from Hackney regarding their approach to community events. Once received, meetings will be arranged with MHDT. The agenda is expected to mirror last year's events.
- 2.10. Tom noted that Trevor provided an update from Berkeley's legal team regarding the window fault. Multiple factors contributed to the window detachment, with no single cause identified. They have outlined proposed remedial works, which are currently being finalised. Work is expected to begin mid-June.

**ACTION:** Roda to follow up with Trevor for a breakdown of the causative factors identified by Berkeley's.

- 2.11. Tom noted that Stav has been out of office but will provide figures on local and disabled employment at Woodberry Down upon return.

**ACTION:** Berkeley to provide data on local and disabled people employed at Woodberry Down, as requested by Elaine.

- 2.12. Gareth confirmed a split household session is scheduled for Monday with Hackney and WDCO representatives. Roda noted that the paperwork has been shared with WDCO attendees.
- 2.13. The Block D working group meeting is scheduled for Monday, 24th March.

**ACTION:** Block D working group to discuss resident communications in more detail. Hermione to follow up with MillCo on the timeline and report back to the WDCO Board.

2.14. Gareth confirmed the draft newsletter has been shared with WDCO and noted Hackney's intention to continue this practice. Oonagh raised concerns that residents in Nature View and City View have not received newsletters.

**ACTION:** Gareth to follow up on newsletter delivery (who delivers it) before the Liaison meeting.

2.15. Roda shared void statistics for Hackney blocks with the Executive Committee, but these were not discussed in relation to the Hackney report. She confirmed these figures are not currently included but will be shared regularly at Hackney Operational meetings. Roda is happy to share figures with other WDCO members on request. Gareth added that the Hackney report includes data on household movements into Phase 3a.

2.16. At the March Liaison meeting, Hermione noted an update would be circulated on detailed plans for the West Reservoir. Roda asked Hackney for a timeline.

**ACTION:** Hackney to provide a timeline for sharing West Reservoir plans with WDCO.

2.17. Gareth confirmed that most of Adrian's questions to the Cultural Development Officer have been addressed, and the written responses have been shared with the Board via the ITLA.

2.18. Gareth confirmed he will report on the timeline for the Ground Floor Strategy at the next Round Table and share it with WDCO. Cllr Young asked if a substantive update would be provided. Gareth clarified that only a timeline will be shared.

**ACTION:** Gareth to provide a timeline update on the Ground Floor Strategy to the WDCO Board following the next Round Table.

2.19. Gareth confirmed that information on unallocated units is included in the Hackney report.

2.20. Hermione provided a written update on Hackney's support for temporary tenants.

2.21. Roda forwarded the emails from KSS1 Residents' Association to Tom and Sarah, who raised the matter with the relevant team at Berkeley. A follow-up meeting with Trevor was held today.

2.22. Roda stated that before detailed design work begins on Phase 5, the Design Committee will hold a pre-meeting, which will be an ideal opportunity for WDCO representatives to raise concerns around updates and information sharing.

**ACTION:** Tom will speak to the six Design Committee members ahead of the pre-meeting to address their questions and concerns regarding updates and how information is shared.

- 2.23. WDCO continues to request later start times for meetings (e.g. 6pm for the split household session) to accommodate members' working hours. This will continue as required.
- 2.24. Mina and Adrian discussed alternatives to the WhatsApp group. Mina has set up a WDCO Discord server and is awaiting confirmation from Adrian.
- 2.25. Francis, Elaine, and Jackie met to discuss WDCO's position on the out-of-phase split household issue. A letter was drafted and circulated to the Board, with no objections. Roda sent the letter to Gareth and Cllr Nicholson.
- 2.26. Roda requested a written update from Jada on the service charge review. Jada responded that NHG could not provide a written update in time for the Board. Julian added that internal Board approval is being sought, and Jada will circulate updates next week and arrange a meeting with WDCO.

**ACTION:** Jada to provide an update next week regarding the service charge (historic service charge) review.

- 2.27. Roda asked Gareth for an update on the District Heat Network. Michelle had been in discussions with Expedition to arrange a March meeting, but it has not yet taken place.

**ACTION:** Gareth to confirm when the District Heat Network meeting will be scheduled.

### **3. Partner Updates:**

- 3.1. Gareth provided the Hackney update, noting that they have 23 leaseholders remaining in Phase 4: 16 agreed (green), 7 in negotiation. There are 9 Temporary Accommodation households, and 4 secure tenants left, 2 are allocated to Phase 3a, 1 accepted an alternative offer, and 1 is being supported to find a suitable option.
- 3.2. Hackney's sole CPO objector has withdrawn, cancelling the 29 April inquiry. The CPO is now confirmed.
- 3.3. He also provided an update on the Design Committee and working groups. Design work for Phase 5 is due to commence, with the design team currently being procured. The split household meeting is scheduled for Monday. Work on the Ground Floor Strategy continues, with an update expected following the Round Table on 17 April. Berkeley is due to begin fit-out works in Block D in April.
- 3.4. The masterplan, submitted in December, is under statutory consultation. TfL's Seven Sisters Road presentation was shared with WDCO. TfL must resolve Cycle Way 50 proposals before detailed design can begin. Engagement is planned for summer 2026.
- 3.5. Planning permission for West Reservoir was granted in May 2024. Procurement is underway, with contract award expected in March. Works will focus on access improvements and refurbishment of the leisure centre. William asked when the West Reservoir works will complete. Cllr Sarah Young confirmed contractors were appointed last week and will begin within 6 weeks.

- 3.6. Cllr Selman expressed concern over the delay in the Ground Floor Strategy, which risks leaving Phase 4 underused. Gareth confirmed Hackney will maximise use. Tom noted the masterplan includes no new commercial space beyond what was presented last year. He also noted that a Section 106 obligation requires the Council to decide on the library use within 12 months of Phase 4 construction starting.
- 3.7. Tom provided the Berkeley update, he reported that there were no accidents or incidents in the period. Phase 3 nearing completion: balconies on B3/B4 underway, landscaping started. Remaining affordable units to be handed over to NHG in June. Local labour accounts for 18% (31 workers).
- 3.8. Berkeley aims to start Phase 4 by late summer/early autumn. Public and WDCO feedback on the masterplan is expected soon.
- 3.9. Ann asked which businesses are moving into Phase 3 units. Tom confirmed a supermarket and gym, with fit-outs beginning soon. Other unit negotiations are ongoing.
- 3.10. Necdet asked for updates on the ground floor wind issue. Tom said several options have been discussed with consultants, one of which is being costed. Berkeley will consult their technical and operations teams.

**ACTION:** Berkeley to report back on the wind issue after internal review.

- 3.11. Friends of Woodberry Down asked about community space. Tom confirmed Block D fit-out starts mid-April, with opening expected this summer. Phase 3 includes a 50m<sup>2</sup> satellite community space (outside the main centre) managed by NHG. Phase 4 may include a library, subject to feasibility. The masterplan allows 950m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space, which could include another 50m<sup>2</sup> community space and a re-provision of The Edge.
- 3.12. Cllr Young reminded that the Block D lease required space for Friends of Woodberry Down, Woodberry Aid, and similar groups. Andrea Anderson added Woodberry Aid had yet to meet with MillCo. And Friends of Woodberry Down confirmed that they have been advised that they will not be offered a space in Block D
- 3.13. Leonora stressed community inclusion was a key MillCo requirement. William said Friends of Woodberry Down struggle for space, especially in summer when The Edge is in use by schools.
- 3.14. Sarah asked Hackney to clarify lease requirements for MillCo regarding community space.

**ACTION:** Gareth to review MillCo lease terms and confirm obligations for community space for Friends of Woodberry Down and Woodberry Aid.

- 3.15. Finn reported that MHDT is exploring better coordination between Lydia's Lunch Club and Friends of Woodberry Down, as there is currently some overlap between the two. Friends of Woodberry Down confirmed that Tuesdays are their preferred

day, with attendance reaching up to 60 people. They are also currently trialling a Friday session, which has around 25 attendees and is growing.

- 3.16. Julian provided the NHG update on Phase 3A, noting that NHG now have around 100 residents moved in of which 50 are in the social rented units and 45 in shared ownership units.
- 3.17. Julian reiterated that service charges for 2025/26 are frozen; however, any overspend would be recovered when the actual accounts are issued.
- 3.18. In response to a previous question, Julian confirmed the welcome packs include small gifts like chocolates and tea.
- 3.19. Phase 3B, PC is scheduled for 12 June, with handover on 26 June. NHG held an internal lesson learned meeting to avoid repeating Phase 3A issues.
- 3.20. NHG had a positive meeting with MHDT on community space use in Phase 3.
- 3.21. Julian also noted that Phase 3 tenants received rent and service charge letters with incorrect figures—these were automatically-generated from outdated data. He apologised for the confusion and noted that correction letters will be sent in 10 days.
- 3.22. He also reported a Vital Energy drop-in session is scheduled for 26 March. Julian noted that cleaning and gardening service transitions are underway, with quality being restored.
- 3.23. Tina raised concerns about unresolved 2021 service charge issues at Birchwood. And despite multiple assurances, the matter remains unresolved, with also yet another 35.5% increase this year which including window cleaning for non-existent windows. She highlighted that residents are struggling financially and feel forced out.

**ACTION:** NHG to confirm with WDCO Board the status of 2021 service charges at Birchwood.

- 3.24. Julian noted that Jada and Mica emailed Roda to clarify the service charge situation. Mica intends to meet with WDCO to present findings. Cllr Young requested that Mica presents the findings to the Board. Julian will follow up, and Hilary requested written updates instead. Julian noted that internal approvals are pending.

**ACTION:** Julian to request that Mica presents (written presentation) the service charge findings to the WDCO Board.

- 3.25. Roda shared Mica's update, which stated that NHG is close to final approval and expects to update next week. Jada intends to consult WDCO on communications and how to better engage with residents.
- 3.26. Omar raised concerns about a 40% reduction in the cleaning services but a 35% increase in service charges. He questioned how this equates to improved service and has asked Jada for a meeting.

**ACTION:** Julian to relay Omar's concerns regarding the cleaning contract (reductions in frequency) to Jada, who will provide an update at the Liaison meeting.

3.27. Finn provided the MHDT update, noting that an event will be held next Tuesday at Redmond Centre with Friends of Woodberry Down, supporting residents with long-term health conditions and social isolation. There will be lunch, music, and a workshop. MHDT is also planning an Eid celebration on 12 April.

**ACTION:** Finn to follow up on Hilary's request for information on the impact the scheduled works will have on the Redmond centre.

**4. Board discussion without partners:**

- 4.1. The Chair asked whether the Board discussion held without partners should be considered confidential. Roda explained that this would require the second part of the meeting to be formally designated as confidential.
- 4.2. Hilary noted that many actions link to partner discussions and suggested the Board raise these actions directly with partners.
- 4.3. Andrea Anderson requested that surnames be included in the minutes for board members with the same surname to avoid confusion.
- 4.4. Oonagh suggested adopting an action list similar to that used by the Executive Committee. Roda noted that partners provide written updates at the Liaison meeting, and where these are sufficient, actions could be marked as complete. The Board should follow up where updates are lacking.

**ACTION:** The Board will tick off actions based on partner written updates at the Liaison meeting and follow up on outstanding actions at Board meetings.

**WDCO Awayday Priorities:**

- 4.5. **Block D:** Update on Block D will be provided in April following the working group meeting.
- 4.6. **Housing numbers:** Geoff Baron and Gloria have reviewed the housing figures and produced a report. Geoff Baron presented findings on housing numbers and tenure mix from past and current masterplans, highlighting that while total social housing numbers have increased, the number of social rented homes have not been fully replaced. The estate could see more social rent homes if shared ownership numbers were reduced and replaced with social rented units or total homes increased beyond the current proposed number.
- 4.7. Geoff noted that, depending on how the data is interpreted, the number of affordable homes (including shared ownership) has increased beyond the original target of 1,500. In that respect, the developers have met their contractual obligations. However, delivering more homes for social rent would require either increasing the total number of homes on the estate—which would raise density—or reducing the number of shared ownership homes and converting them to social

rented. He acknowledged that the latter option would require further discussion with partners and has requested permission from the Board to begin that process.

- 4.8. Geoff emphasised that the Board must decide whether to accept the current housing mix or advocate for change. Without a clear position, it will be difficult to make a case for adjustments to tenure or density.
- 4.9. Geoff requested the Board's permission to continue working on this priority. He also proposed exploring whether it's possible to re-balance the tenure mix between private and social rented homes.
- 4.10. The Chair added that she would not classify shared ownership as affordable, as it is not accessible to many.
- 4.11. Omar observed that the current masterplan results in 200 fewer rented social homes. He noted that planning policy requires 20% shared ownership, which may limit WDCO's ability to negotiate, as it could involve challenging GLA policy. Nonetheless, he supported Geoff continuing the analysis.
- 4.12. Hilary noted that while shared ownership was initially more affordable, it has now become largely inaccessible due to rising prices. She suggested approaching the council to explore the possibility of securing funding to convert some shared ownership homes into social rent.
- 4.13. William cautioned that NHG may oppose such a proposal. Andreea Stoica added that when residents are unable to afford rent or service charges and decide to sell, the homes are typically sold on the private market—further reducing the number of genuinely affordable homes over time.
- 4.14. Omar added that shared ownership is essential to NHG's financial model, affecting the viability of future phases. He proposed revisiting the issue once further findings are available.
- 4.15. Geoff cautioned that increasing density could lead to significant overcrowding. He also raised concerns about NHG's financial position
- 4.16. Omar suggested NHG's handling of service charges indicates underlying financial pressure. Hilary countered that it is more likely a matter of NHG trying to maximise cost recovery from residents.
- 4.17. The Board agreed to allow Geoff to continue working on the housing priority. He reiterated the need for the Board to formally decide whether it supports an increase in density.

**ACTION:** Geoff Baron will continue working on the housing priority report.

**ACTION:** Residents from NHG blocks will carry out a detailed record of dates for outstanding issues

**ACTION:** Roda will ask NHG to provide KPIs at the operational meeting.

- 4.18. **Redmond Community Centre Priority:** Thursday coffee mornings have been going well, and the window display has recently been updated. Oonagh expressed frustration with the current leaflet stacks, noting they lack clarity.

- 4.19. **Phase 3 Priority:** The Chair sent a letter to Hackney Council on 27 February regarding Phase 3 rent levels, as NHG maintains reductions are not viable. WDCO asked Hackney to investigate. Omar added that while they saw reduction for 1 and 2-bedroom units, some residents are still facing a 75% rent increase.
- 4.20. **Getting WDCO's House in Order:** The Chair reported that the Delegation of Powers has been implemented, improving decision-making. The Board agreed that this change is working effectively.
- 4.21. **Masterplan:** A draft paper on the masterplan was circulated with the Board papers for discussion. Roda also confirmed that Masterplan is expected to be presented to the Planning Committee on 7th May 2025. If the Board wishes to comment, it must do so before then. Geoff Baron will support the Chair in a redraft of the masterplan paper. Board members will provide feedback and comments on the masterplan.

**ACTION:** Board members to send comments on the masterplan to Roda.

**ACTION:** The Chair and Geoff will prepare the draft paper ahead of the May Planning Committee.

- 4.22. **The Executive Committee vacancy (election):** Roda received and circulated one nomination which was Omar. As no other Board members stood for the position, the Board agreed to elect Omar to the Vice Chair role.
- 4.23. **Block D vacancy (election):** This vacancy has been open since Philip Dundas stepped down from the WDCO Board two years ago. Block D meetings are typically held at 5pm or 5:30pm. Tina was elected to the position.
- 4.24. **The Design Committee vacancy (election):** Geoff Baron put himself forward for the Design Committee vacancy and attended the last two meetings, including interviews with the landscape architects. As no other Board members stood for the position, the Board agreed to elect Geoff to the role.

**ACTION:** Roda will arrange an induction session for Geoff Baron to meet Claire Devine, the Independent Design Adviser and Facilitator for the Design Committee.

- 4.25. **Service Charge working group vacancy (election):** Roda noted that Leonora and Oonagh are the WDCO representatives on the Service Charge Working Group. Omar has also been attending regularly, with Hilary and William participating at times. She suggested it would be beneficial for Omar to remain involved while the group finalises the Phase 3 budgets. Once Phase 3 is complete, the working group will begin work on Phase 4, at which point the Board can elect a new representative to formally fill the vacancy. The Board agreed that Omar could continue to informally fill the vacancy in the interim.
- 4.26. **Constitutional working group:** The Board noted that the Constitutional Working Group has not met recently due to other priorities. The vacancy will be revisited at a later date.
- 4.27. **TfL presentation from the Round Table:** Roda shared the TfL presentation and provided a brief summary of the Round Table update. She explained that Adrian had requested this item be added to the agenda and that a WDCO Board member be nominated to lead on it. Roda informed the Board that there is a TfL-led steering group attended by Berkeley and Hackney, which is not open to WDCO Board members. Given the current lack of activity, the Board agreed there was no need to nominate a representative at this time.

- 4.28. **Preparation for April Board:** Hilary spoke to Adrian regarding Section 106, particularly its relevance to the Seven Sisters Road. The Board noted a lack of clarity around how Section 106 works and who is responsible for monitoring and ensuring that the funds are spent appropriately.
- 4.29. Hilary then spoke with Tom, who confirmed he is willing to deliver a presentation to the Board explaining Section 106 and its application. She noted that a portion of the funding is allocated to health and queried what health improvements have been made to date, how much funding is required, how much has already been paid, and what remains outstanding.

**ACTION:** Roda will email Tom to ask if he can deliver a presentation on the Section 106 agreement at the April Board meeting.

- 4.30. The masterplan will be added to the April Board agenda, as the Board will be preparing a submission for the Planning Committee.
- 4.31. Omar noted that the Planning Committee is scheduled for 7th May, and WDCO will need to be mindful of the submission deadlines. Roda added that the planning committee give registered objectors and registered supporters the opportunity to speak for up to five minutes.
- 4.32. Geoff asked whether the Board had taken a formal position of support or objection. Hilary suggested the Board may wish to support certain aspects and object to others. Geoff proposed that the Board vote on whether it supports an increase in housing numbers, as a clear stance is required to ensure standing in the process.
- 4.33. Omar replied that it is difficult to determine a position without assessing the massing and wider impact. The Chair added that the masterplan should also be evaluated in terms of biodiversity, massing, and other environmental and social impacts. The Chair and Geoff will prepare the discussion paper for the April Board.
- 4.34. Discord server: Mina updated that he is awaiting confirmation from Adrian, but the Discord server is expected to be live by April. The server will include dedicated channels for different groups. A general chat has already been created for Board members, and Mina invited suggestions for additional channels. The Chair requested that Mina present an overview of the Discord server at the April Board meeting.

**ACTION:** Mina will deliver a presentation on the Discord server at the April Board meeting.

- 4.35. Hilary enquired whether the District Heat Network Group meeting, originally planned for March, has been scheduled. Roda noted she raised the matter with Gareth and will follow up with him.

**ACTION:** Roda will follow-up with Gareth and Michelle regarding the District Heat Network meeting.

- 4.36. **Update from the working group meetings:** Written updates on the working group meetings were provided
- 4.37. **Governance proposal from the Round Table:** Roda circulated a governance paper that was submitted to the Round Table and invited Board members to send in their comments. Feedback will be shared with Hackney ahead of the Round Table in April.

**ACTION:** Roda will send a follow-up email to the Board requesting comments on the governance paper.

- 4.38. **Awayday Report:** Roda has circulated the Awayday report and will provide hard copies for those who require one.

## 5. AOB:

**ACTION:** The WDCO Board members will send any questions or points they would like Roda to elaborate on from the update from the working group meetings.