



# Understanding Woodberry Down

February 2020





# About this report

This report explores the experiences, attitudes and everyday life of residents living in Woodberry Down in Spring 2019, 10 years into the Woodberry Down Estate regeneration programme.

The research was commissioned by Notting Hill Genesis, working in partnership with regeneration partners Berkeley Homes (who co-funded the research), Hackney Council, Woodberry Down Community Organisation and the Manor House Development Trust. It repeats elements of earlier social sustainability assessments commissioned by Berkeley Homes in 2013 and 2017.

This research draws on a social sustainability framework developed by Social Life, which captures how the built environment and local services promote community life, residents' perceptions of belonging, wellbeing, and relationships with neighbours and between people from different backgrounds. It also explores if people feel that they can influence local decisions and how they come together to take action to improve the area.

## METHODOLOGY

### A mixed-method approach was used. This included:

- **a door-to-door survey of 438 households** - carried out by independent research company, ComRes. This survey sampled a representative sample of residents by tenure living in the older estate and new buildings. Approximately 15% of all households living on Woodberry Down were interviewed.
- **20 semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders** - including the police, local business owners, employment projects, schools, services for children, young people, and older residents, health & wellbeing projects, and regeneration partners
- **street interviews and focus groups with 46 young people** - these took place at the Edge Youth Hub and in streets surrounding the estate, carried out by Kaizen youth engagement specialists
- **a site survey** - carried out by Matter Architecture to explore how the built environment is supporting wellbeing and community life
- **a review of official data** - including census, crime, benefits data and Understanding Society Survey data.

## DATA COMPARISONS

The data has been analysed by tenure and compared wherever possible to results from previous surveys carried out in Woodberry Down, to Hackney Council surveys, and to “comparable areas”, to put the findings in context.

“Comparable areas” are neighbourhoods which share similar characteristics, based on national survey and census data. This method has been developed by Social Life.\*

# OF RESIDENTS  
INTERVIEWED  
**450**

# OF  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
INTERVIEWED  
**46**

# OF  
STAKEHOLDERS  
INTERVIEWED  
**20**

SITE  
SURVEY

# OF  
HOUSEHOLDS  
INTERVIEWED  
**438**

\* For more on this method, see [www.social-life.co/publication/understanding\\_local\\_areas/](http://www.social-life.co/publication/understanding_local_areas/)



# What we found

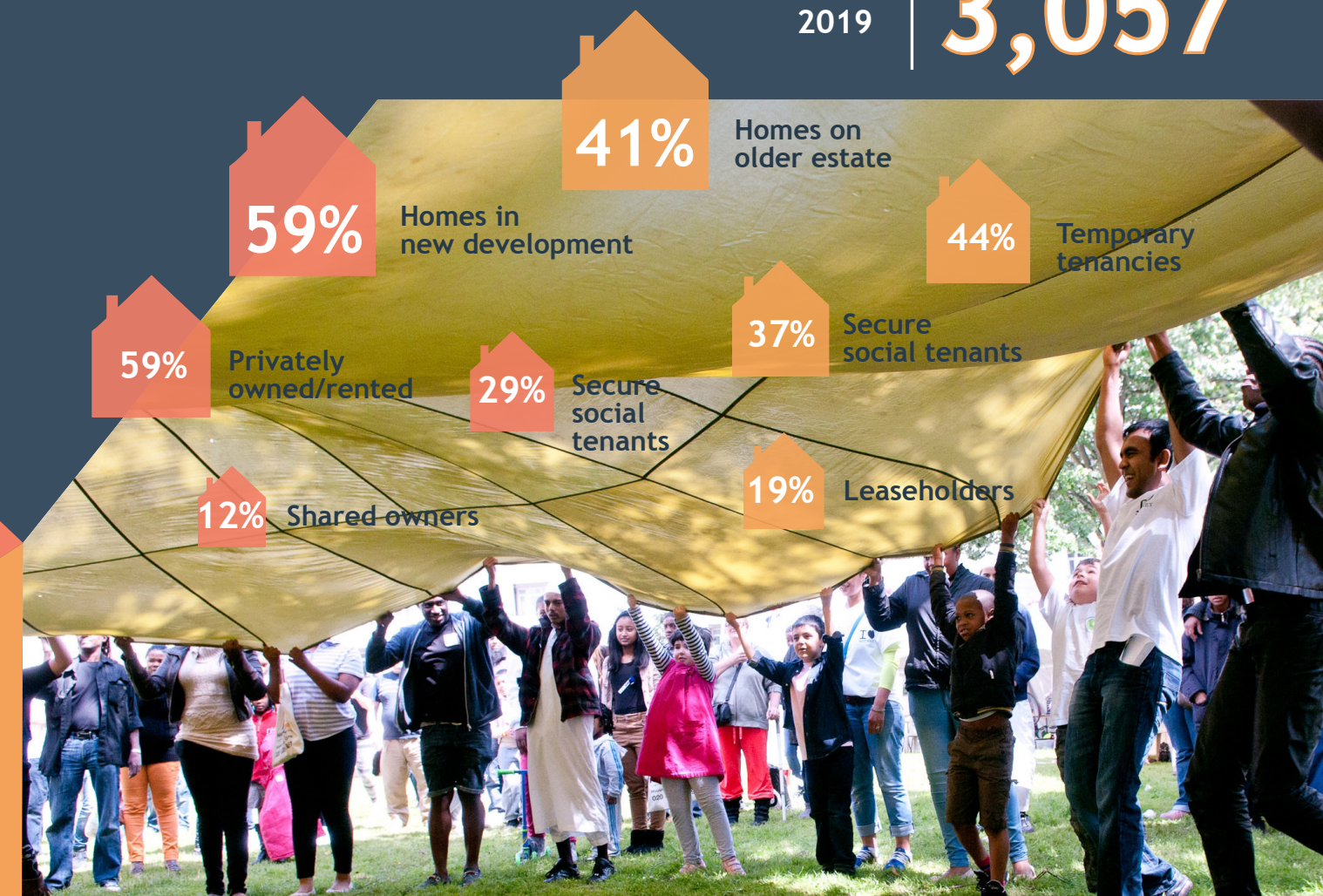
## Key findings

- Residents living on Woodberry Down report stronger neighbourliness, wellbeing, belonging and relationships between people from different backgrounds than would be expected in “comparable areas”.
- Survey responses to questions that were asked in previous years have remained strong. However, the proportion of people giving strong positive answers (“strongly agree” for example) has fallen while there is an increase in those giving more tentative responses (such as “tend to agree”).
- On some indicators, including safety, Woodberry Down residents interviewed are now more positive than in the past. Residents’ sense of influence and their willingness to take action to improve the area has also strengthened since 2017.
- Young people interviewed were less positive than adults; their satisfaction with the area, sense of belonging, and intentions to remain in the area were all lower. They were also less positive about relationships between people from different backgrounds. Their sense of influence over the area and the regeneration was lower. Some young people, especially older teenagers, had concerns about their safety.
- Residents interviewed did not identify social integration as an important problem now. They felt the estate is for the most part home to people who are comfortable with their neighbours, in spite of the very different life circumstances and experiences of different people living on the estate.
- Some stakeholders voiced fears of a divided community emerging in the future, between newcomers and long-established residents. Sometimes this was articulated as being a division between the old estate and the new development - although in practice the difference is more nuanced as most secure social housing tenants living in new properties will have moved from the old estate, and some renters in the new privately owned homes are living on low disposable incomes after paying high housing costs.
- Woodberry Down emerges from the research as a resilient community. The overall strength of neighbourliness, voice and influence and high wellbeing is a testament to the work of all the agencies active on the estate, as well as to the efforts of residents themselves, and to the effective partnership between resident groups, developers, social landlords, and community organisations.

## TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMES

IN SPRING  
2019

3,057



## The experience of people living in different tenures...

- The starkest differences in experience and attitudes among people interviewed are between people who have temporary tenancies and those living in other tenures.
- Attitudes among secure social housing tenants and private owners and renters interviewed are broadly similar when asked about belonging and local identity, sense of wellbeing, and satisfaction with facilities.
- Temporary social housing tenants were less positive on a number of indicators and reported higher levels of loneliness and difficulties managing financially, than people living in other tenures.
- Private owners’ and renters’ views on neighbourliness, and their sense of influence over decisions, are less positive than those of social housing tenants (both secure and temporary tenants).
- The small number of shared ownership tenants interviewed means it is more difficult to draw confident conclusions from their responses.



# About Woodberry Down

The Woodberry Down Estate is 10 years into a comprehensive regeneration process. At the time this research was carried out in Spring 2019, Phase 1 of the redevelopment had been completed, with Phase 2 half way through construction. A further six phases are yet to be built. By the end of the regeneration in 2035, more than 5,500 new homes will be built, replacing the 1,981 original homes. 41% of these homes will be classed as ‘affordable’ homes: 1,115 social rented, 957 as shared ownership and 110 as shared equity.

The new properties are home to people with a greater diversity of social and economic backgrounds than longer-standing residents. More people on higher incomes have moved into the new privately-owned homes. In contrast, on the older estate, properties that have become void awaiting demolition are being used by Hackney Council as temporary accommodation for families and individuals in need.

Official data from the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that deprivation on the estate is still high (amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country). The impact of changes has been an increase in inequality in the area, with a growth in numbers of people on both higher and lower incomes.

Comprehensive information about the population is only available through the 2011 census which is now nearly ten years old.

## WOODBERRY DOWN RESIDENTS

### Who did we speak to?

- 89% of 2019 interviewees reported that they had not taken part in previous surveys.
- Annual household incomes of residents interviewed range from £7,000 to over £150,000 pa.
- 26% of respondents have lived on the estate for less than one year; 55% between one and five years; 18% over five years.
- Between the 2013 and 2019 surveys, the number of white British residents fell and the number of ‘other white’ residents increased. The number of black and minority ethnic (BAME) residents remained stable.
- 44% of those interviewed have children 18 or under. Over two thirds of this group have children under five. More families appear to be living in the older estate than in the new development.
- The number of people in paid employment appears to be stable. More people are now self-employed than in the 2017 survey.
- In 2019, more new residents reported that they had moved to Woodberry Down from other parts of London, and fewer from outside London, compared to 2017 survey respondents.



- private owner
- shared owner & other
- secure social tenant
- private renter
- temporary social tenant



### ETHNICITY

20%	15%	39%	63%	33%	White British
14%	7%	11%	26%	31%	Black or black British
34%	13%	22%	3%	13%	Asian or Asian British
20%	51%	17%	8%	16%	Other white
10%	11%	0%	0%	1%	Mixed
2%	4%	11%	0%	6%	Other

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

15%	24%	13%	3%	8%	Self-employed
75%	71%	87%	31%	50%	Paid employment
0%	3%	0%	14%	10%	Unemployed
4%	1%	0%	3%	12%	Retired
2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	Maternity leave
0%	0%	0%	28%	10%	Family care or home
2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	Student
0%	0%	0%	22%	11%	Long term sick/disabled
2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	Unpaid, family business
0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	Something else

### HOW LONG LIVED ON WOODBERRY DOWN

6%	11%	11%	34%	4%	Less than six months
12%	22%	6%	18%	14%	Six months to a year
12%	33%	28%	34%	17%	One to two years
41%	32%	28%	8%	33%	Two to five years
10%	1%	17%	3%	17%	Five to ten years
20%	1%	11%	3%	15%	Ten plus years

### NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD

33%	14%	17%	29%	18%	One
29%	44%	44%	32%	26%	Two
22%	29%	17%	29%	29%	Three
8%	11%	6%	8%	15%	Four
8%	3%	11%	3%	11%	Five
0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	Six
0%	0%	6%	0%	1%	Seven

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18



\*all data from self-reported tenure

# Monitoring social impacts

In March 2019, the regeneration partnership came together to agree their shared outcomes and understand how their activities link to these. The partnership agreed five outcomes they want to achieve through their regeneration activities.

The benchmarking research explored these five outcome areas. In this report we have summarised how the themes that emerged from the research findings relate to the Woodberry Down regeneration partners' five outcomes.

## FIVE OUTCOMES



**PRIDE IN PLACE: Residents love their home & are proud of their neighbourhood.**

This dimension captures local identity & belonging, satisfaction with local facilities and with home, distinctive character and inclusiveness.



**EMPOWERED: Residents are empowered, skilled & have influence over local decisions**

This dimension captures voice & influence, quality & level of education, skills & aspirations, & residents' perceptions of the regeneration.



**BALANCED COMMUNITY: The community is balanced, integrated & cohesive.**

This dimension captures neighbourliness, the provision of social infrastructure, local integration, accessibility and adaptability.



**PROSPERITY: Residents & businesses prosper economically.**

This dimension captures the strength of the local economy, job creation, residents' economic security and employment.



**WELLBEING: Residents have high wellbeing.**

This dimension captures wellbeing, health and feelings of safety.

## THE WOODBERRY DOWN INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

In September 2019, the regeneration partners came together to review the findings of the benchmarking research and agreed an indicator framework for monitoring the impact of the regeneration in the future.

22 indicators were agreed that sit underneath the five outcomes. Each includes a number of questions which can be captured by repeating the door-to-door survey, youth survey and site survey, alongside an analysis of secondary data and data from local agencies.



# PRIDE IN PLACE

Residents love their home & are proud of their neighbourhood

## Local identity & belonging

- Woodberry Down residents report higher levels of satisfaction with the local area as a place to live, feelings of belonging, and intention to stay in the area, than would be expected in comparable areas. However, resident satisfaction across all these indicators has fallen slightly from 2017.

## Satisfaction with local facilities

- Residents report higher levels of satisfaction with most facilities than in 2017. However, satisfaction with health facilities fell over this period.
- Similar to 2017, transport and parking, shops and cafes, and local parks and the quality of the natural environment were the top factors identified as contributing to residents' quality of life in the area.

## Inclusiveness

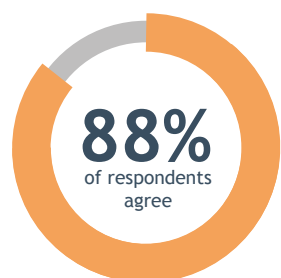
- A high proportion of residents interviewed felt local shops, restaurants, bars and pubs are welcoming and cater to people like them and their families. The Redmond Community Centre was also seen positively.
- However, there are concerns that the new retail businesses are too expensive for residents on lower incomes.

## Distinctive character

- The new buildings with different cladding materials and landscaping, juxtaposed with the older estate, help to create pockets of distinct character across the estate.
- New parks, landscaping and pathways to the reservoirs have extended nature into the new development.

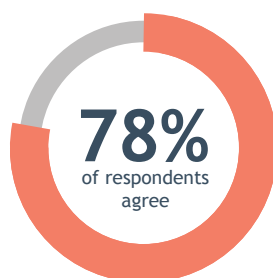
Better than comparable area

SATISFIED WITH AREA AS A PLACE TO LIVE



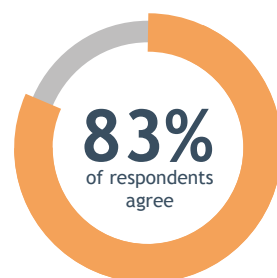
No change from 2017

FEEL BELONG TO THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD



Decrease from 2017

PLAN TO REMAIN A RESIDENT



# WELLBEING

Residents have high wellbeing

## General health

- Residents report better "general health" than would be expected in comparable areas.
- Some stakeholders voice concerns about a growth in social isolation and in the numbers of people with poor mental health.

## Wellbeing

- Wellbeing is above comparable areas. Residents' satisfaction with their life overall is higher than comparable areas, despite falling from 2017.
- More people report feeling lonely than in comparable areas.

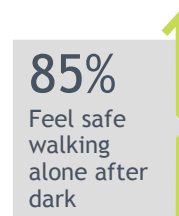
## Feelings of safety

- Residents' perceptions of safety have improved. A higher percentage of residents report feeling safe walking alone after dark in the area than in 2017. This is in line with comparable areas.
- As in previous surveys, residents report feeling safer in Woodberry Down than in the wider local area.
- Young people report a more negative experience, particularly older teenagers.
- Private owners interviewed report the most concerns about crime, temporary tenants interviewed had fewest concerns about safety.

Better than comparable area



Same as comparable area



Worse than comparable area



↑ Increase from 2017  
↓ Decrease from 2017  
■ No 2017 data  
■ No change

\* The SWEMWBS is a short version of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, which helps measure mental wellbeing. This is lower than the Hackney score reported in a 2019 (27.3).



# BALANCED COMMUNITY

The community is balanced, integrated and cohesive

## Relationships with neighbours

- Neighbourliness continues to be strong and the majority of residents believe the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well, higher than comparable areas.
- However, a number of stakeholders and young people interviewed perceived that a disconnect is emerging, or could emerge in the future, between new and longer-standing residents.

## Local integration

- The physical characteristics of Woodberry Down score relatively well.
- The provision of facilities and open spaces - particularly the Redmond Community Centre and Woodberry Wetlands - has built new links with the wider neighbourhood. There are some perceptions that the older estate has lost facilities and amenities.
- Seven Sisters Road was highlighted as a dominant physical barrier, with limited pedestrian crossing points.

## Social infrastructure

- The area is served by a variety of facilities, both on the older estate and in the newly built development. There are now health facilities, primary and secondary schools, a library, sport and play facilities, a range of shops and retail, and places of worship on or near the estate.
- There are some concerns about the provision of affordable and accessible spaces where all members of the community feel welcome, and where community groups can meet and hold events.

## Accessibility & adaptability

- Overall, the newly built areas score higher than the older estate, particularly on safety, street layout and design, accessibility and integration with wider neighbourhood. The new development and old estate score low on adaptability, with little scope to accommodate changing needs over time.



### Better than comparable area

52%

Can borrow things & exchange favours with neighbours

96%

People from different backgrounds get on well together

62%

Can go to someone in neighbourhood for advice

62%

The friendships & association in my neighbourhood mean a lot

### Same as comparable area

62%

Regularly stop & talk to people in my neighbourhood

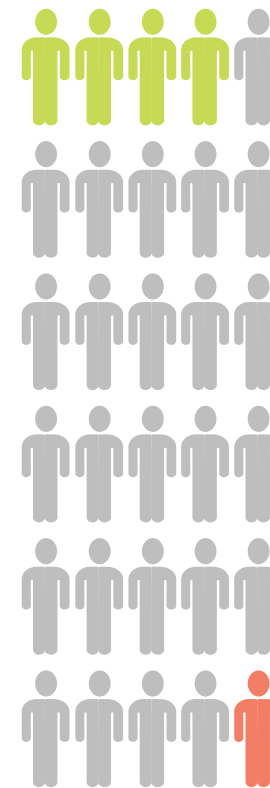
- ↑ Increase from 2017
- ↓ Decrease from 2017
- No 2017 data
- No change



## Economic security

- The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that deprivation on the estate is still high and that Woodberry Down is amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
- Despite this, fewer people report problems managing financially than in comparable areas. However, financial stress is reported by the majority of people living in temporary tenancies.
- The majority of residents report no change in their financial situation since the regeneration began. Of the minority who think it has changed, more residents say it has improved than say it has worsened.

### REPORT THEIR FINANCIAL SITUATION HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE REGENERATION



84% stayed the same

13% improved

3% worsened

## Local economy

- Some new businesses in the area are succeeding, including cafés, convenience stores, and the gym. However some businesses have struggled or closed.
- Low footfall during the day means few potential customers.

## Job creation & employment

- Creating more jobs, work experience and apprenticeships through the regeneration is a priority for the regeneration partners.
- Moving forward, future research will capture residents' perceptions of whether there are good quality local job opportunities and if residents are benefiting from partners' employment and skills interventions in Woodberry Down.

## EMPOWERED

Residents are empowered, skilled & have influence over local decisions

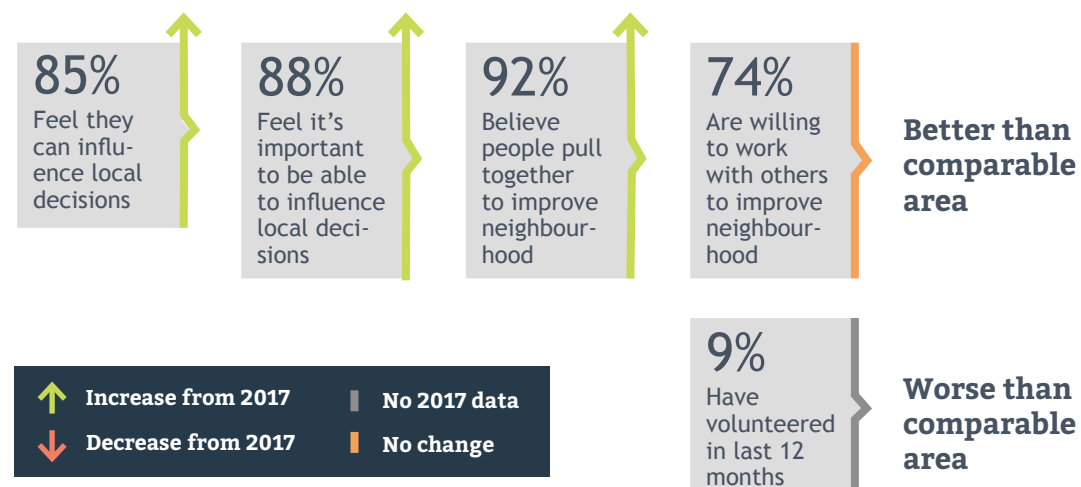
### Ability to influence & willingness to act

- Residents have a strong sense of being able to influence decisions affecting the local area and feel that people pull together to improve the neighbourhood. These results are higher than the comparable area and 2017 survey results.
- Less than half of young people interviewed feel that they can influence local decisions. However, a higher number feel that it is important to be able to influence decisions about the regeneration.
- The percentage of residents volunteering in the last 12 months is lower than comparable areas.
- The majority of residents interviewed agreed they could influence the work of the Woodberry Down Community Organisation, a marked increase from responses given in 2017.
- Some residents, including those living in sheltered housing on the estate, feel they are not being offered a voice in the regeneration.



### Education, skills and aspirations

- Over half the young people interviewed felt that they belonged at school and enjoyed school “most of the time”. Belonging and liking school are increasingly being recognised as protective factors that support good education and social outcomes.\*
- The majority of young people interviewed indicated they felt “very positive” or “quite positive” about their future prospects, over half plan to go to university or another form of higher education.



98%

AGREE NEIGHBOURHOOD HAS IMPROVED IN LAST 5 YEARS



97%

AGREE CHANGES HAVE BENEFITED 'ME & MY FAMILY'

96%

AGREE REGENERATION HAS BEEN INCLUSIVE & REPRESENTATIVE

87%

AGREE THEY CAN INFLUENCE THE WORK OF WDCO

### Perceptions of regeneration

- The majority of residents interviewed are positive about the changes taking place in Woodberry Down and feel they and their families have benefited from the regeneration.
- Residents give positive responses to questions exploring whether the regeneration process is inclusive and representative of all residents, and that the neighbourhood has improved in the last five years.
- However, significantly more residents interviewed reported that they “tend to agree” rather than “definitely agree” with these positive statements.
- Most young people interviewed feel that the changes taking place in Woodberry Down are good - a quarter state that they feel safer in the area as a result of the changes. There were divided opinions about whether they had benefited.
- A number of stakeholders working on the estate believed that the complexity of social issues they are tackling will not be resolved simply through the regeneration programme alone and some of the most vulnerable and socially isolated residents may not be accessing available services.

## Conclusion

- Overall, this research finds that Woodberry Down residents have relatively strong levels of wellbeing, neighbourliness and voice and influence.
- It highlights that residents from different backgrounds are experiencing change in the area unequally. Addressing deprivation and wider socio-economic conditions will be important in improving outcomes for all residents.
- The partners have agreed to repeat this research over the course of the regeneration, to understand and monitor the social impacts of the redevelopment in future years.

\*Bonell C, Beaumont E, Dodd M, et al. Effects of school environments on student risk behaviours: evidence from a longitudinal study of secondary schools in England. J Epidemiol Community Health 2019; 73:502-508.



## SOCIAL LIFE

Social Life was set up by The Young Foundation in 2012 to work on innovation and placemaking. All our work is about the relationship between people and the places they live. We work in the UK and internationally.

## THIS REPORT

This research was carried out by Social Life researchers, with inputs from Kaizen on the youth survey and Matter Architects on the built environment site assessment. ComRes, an independent market research agency, carried out the door-to-door residents survey.

[www.social-life.co](http://www.social-life.co)

@SL\_Cities

## THE WOODBERRY DOWN PARTNERSHIP



The London Borough of Hackney delivered the early masterplan and they are the current local planning authority.



The Woodberry Down Community Organisation (WDCO) represent all residents and those working within the community, is elected by residents, and acts as their negotiating body.



Notting Hill Genesis is the appointed registered social landlord for the new affordable housing.



MHDT is a social enterprise which runs art, employment, health and youth projects from the Redmond Community Centre, and aims to ensure that the community has the resources to influence and determine its own destiny.



Berkeley is Hackney Council's appointed developer partner, with responsibility for delivering the new homes and facilities.