**File: CORPWDBHDM160316.WMA  
Duration: 0:50:42  
Date: 06/04/2016  
Typist: 690**

START AUDIO

Dan Massie: We will start off. My name is Dan Massie. I'm the senior development manager here for Berkeley Homes at Woodberry Down.

My role within the business is to do all the land and planning functions, as we call it. Which really spans from dealing with our legal agreement with the partnership to getting planning consent.

Because of the nature of this site, because it’s ongoing for another 25 years, it also involves all the community liaison, the political liaison, and our partnership liaison. I suppose that’s where I principally deal with the interface, with David Mooney at LWT.

Also, as part of my remit within the business, it’s across all regeneration opportunities that we look at, basically, to lead on those. So it isn’t purely Woodberry Down, albeit that’s a large chunk of my day.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: That is my involvement. I don’t know if you want me to go into any more detail on any of those.

Interviewer: I wondered if you could talk about the importance of that liaison role, and your experience of that, and whether that is central to enabling this to be successful for the various parties involved?

Dan Massie: We’ve really, with the partnership, worked very hard over a considerable period of time, to get the regeneration going. We broke ground in 2009. In fact, it’s seven years today that we started.

Interviewer: [Congratulations 0:01:33]. (Laughter)

Dan Massie: Thank you. (Laughter)

Before we started there was probably at least a decade of the residents here being talked to about regeneration. By the time we got involved, we first walked around the site in 2004, people were highly sceptical about what was going on, and that anything would actually change at all.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: So, bedded into our development agreement, but also in the way we’ve just operated from day one, is to do as much as we can to work with the community, and all of the partnership groups, to make this a success.

If I describe that a bit further, in our development agreement, for example, we have a design committee. It’s formed of 12 members.

The partnership here, the formal partnership, is ourselves, Hackney, Genesis Housing Association. We have six people on that design committee. Then the Woodberry Down Community Organisation also have six people, so they have strong representation.

The design committee reviews everything from the design of homes, open space, the public realm, the whole lot. So there is a community input, aside of planning consultation, into the very fabric of what’s actually happening in the regeneration.

Then there are the other discussions we have at a partnership level, with the community organisation, with Manor House Development Trust, and the list just goes on.

We have a roundtable with the Cabinet member for Hackney, which happens on a quarterly basis. We have Woodco board meetings, which we turn up to and give reports on, on a monthly basis. We have community infrastructure groups which meet, district heating groups which meet, security groups, operations.

There is just a lot of consultation and work we do with all of our partners. I think that’s down to the success, we think, of what’s happened to date.

We’ve not had any problems, for example, from a business perspective, promoting planning applications, or getting things done around the site, because it’s all been done with the support of the Woodberry Down Community Organisation, with our partnership groups. That’s really down to the hard work everyone has put in to consultation.

I can give you another example. We have a masterplan here, which is an outline planning permission, and we promoted detailed consent for phase three of it, which you can see a plan of behind me, last year.

As I said, aside from the planning consultation, we had 17 design committee meetings, getting down to the granular level of where plug sockets go in rooms and that sort of thing. So, we’re pretty used to it here. It is what we do.

Interviewer: Is that distinct from other Berkeley experiences? Is Woodberry unique, [do you think 0:04:45]?

Dan Massie: Not really. As a group we have other regeneration sites. We’ve got Kidbrooke Village, with the Royal Arsenal. We’ve got a new site in Southall that’s coming forward.

Regeneration isn’t new to us. The way regeneration happens is always different. For example, here it’s a single decant process. I don’t know if you know what that means, but it means we’re retaining all the residents on-site.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: Which means that we have to build affordable homes in a phase, to free up the land on the next phase. It’s partly why the programme is quite so protracted, but we also see that as being quite a big opportunity for us, in so far as it retains that community feel, and so you don’t lose that sense of identity. Whereas, on some of our sites, the strategy…

This is always done in partnership. For example, Greenwich, down at Kidbrooke Village, the housing was in such bad stock there, there was never an option to actually retain people. Everyone had to move off.

Inevitably what happened is we’re building new homes there, with people with the option to move back into them, but because they’ve settled in communities for, I don’t know, seven years now, because Kidbrooke started around the same time, you might not want to move back.

Interviewer: Sure.

Dan Massie: So, you lose that identity a little bit.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: It’s just different challenges. The site we’ve got in Southall and Royal Arsenal is very much a new community, because you're talking about derelict industrial sites.

There’s a site we’ve bid on recently, Meridian Water up in Enfield. Again, that’s an industrial site, so actually what you're dealing with there is you interface with an existing community around the edge, but not so much within the site itself, other than the businesses that operate there.

Everything we do is slightly different. It’s challenging in different ways.

What we have here, I suppose, is a quite – I don’t know how to put it, but quite an advanced structure, if you like, of consultation, that these other sites will develop as the communities grow. Whereas we’ve needed it from day one.

Interviewer: Has that been a learning curve for the company, for your team, and yourself maybe?

Dan Massie: Yes, I think it is a learning curve. We have a social sustainability agenda anyway, so as a business we test ourselves on the place-making. That is wider than just the bricks and mortar. That is feelings of neighbourliness, feelings of safety, what people like about their area, all these sorts of other issues that we actually now measure ourselves on.

I can give you a report before you go on that. We did a report about three years ago. We’re about to do another assessment. Basically, periodically we review the assessments, and then that helps us set up objectives of how we’re actually going to address particular issues.

What we’ve found with Woodberry Down, for example, when we first did the tests, was that everyone felt like they could really have a good influence on decision making, which is much higher than the national average. I think it was 90% playing against 50% or something like that.

Interviewer: Sorry to interrupt. Is that national average stats measured across the Berkeley Group, or is that measured across the industry?

Dan Massie: It’s measured from census data.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dan Massie: I can give you the literature on it. We have a framework which basically takes census data and gives us markers, so it’s very area specific, frankly, and measure it against London, and then we can measure against how we’re doing elsewhere.

It’s something that we’ve had within our business now for four years, baked in. We do it on every site. Regardless of regeneration or anything, we do an assessment before we actually purchase or acquire a site, and then we do it throughout the build process, and then do it at the end.

The idea is that we want to be the market leaders at place-making. Which gets bandied around a lot, but it’s not straightforward by any stretch of the imagination. (Laughter)

So, yes, that’s our approach to dealing with it.

Interviewer: Can I ask, linked to that, how those big bodies of water feature within that place-making?

Dan Massie: Well, they're great assets, aren’t they? That’s the developer speak. They're wonderful assets.

When we arrived at Woodberry Down it was palisade fencing down by the reservoirs. It was pretty grotty walks down the – the river paths were pretty bad, and you would only be probably going down there if you were up to no good. (Laughter)

From day one you could see the potential in, “Actually, there’s an interface here with water.” Which we know from experience not only improves residents’ quality of life but also reflects in our values. So, from a corporate perspective, we could see the value in it, which is very straightforward.

Then it came down to, “Well, how can we interact with that?” From the starting point, on the West Reservoir, it was about getting rid of the fence, and actually having – if you walk along here you can see the New River Path.

Interviewer: [It’s lovely 0:11:00].

Dan Massie: It is lovely. A better interaction with that. Get rid of any fencing altogether. Which was a whole debate in itself, and a bit of a bun fight. And actually really work on the landscaping around that edge. That was the first steps for us.

At the same time, or really very much at the same time, London Wildlife Trust had taken the lease from Thames Water.

Now, that wasn’t a straightforward thing. I think London Wildlife Trust came in to really just manage it at first. Then they were dealing with Thames Water to get them to open it up, and the culture at that time was not to open it up.

Interviewer: What sort of timescales are we talking about here?

Dan Massie: 2009 type time.

Interviewer: The feeling at Thames Water at that point was, “No, we’re not keen to open this up to the public”?

Dan Massie: Yes, for security reasons. It was just the way they ran the business, which is absolutely understandable.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: Over time London Wildlife Trust, and particularly this is mainly Dave Mooney, who has been driving this, to his absolute credit, had the vision for opening up the East Reservoir, which he then went around selling to all of the partners.

Now, we bought into this fairly quickly, because we could see the benefit and the value in it. I suppose this is manifested in the fact that outside of our 106 obligations, so we have handed over £100,000 to the London Borough of Hackney, who are then giving that to wetlands, we’ve also built the bridge, and the boardwalk, and the entrance structure to the centre.

Interviewer: [Which is lovely 0:13:00].

Dan Massie: Yes, it’s fantastic.

Interviewer: They're lovely gates.

Dan Massie: Yes. Which is to the tune of nearly £250,000.

We also worked very closely, and always have done, with David. Part of our ethos here is we like to work with our partners.

Whenever David has had issues, or wanted to have a discussion about things, we’ve had those discussions and worked together on them, whether it’s about landscaping, or maintenance, or whatever else it may be. It’s been a very easy relationship, frankly.

Interviewer: You said when David convinced Thames Water to give the lease for the reservoir that you quite quickly as an organisation-

Dan Massie: Well, no, they had the lease, but at first they just had access to just maintain it.

Interviewer: To maintain it, rather than..?

Dan Massie: It was still behind a fence. LWT could take people on and just have a walk around, but it was very limited access.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Dan Massie: After they I suppose got on the ground, and started using the space, and realising, “Wow, this is incredible, and if it was open to the public this would be quite something for Hackney”, that’s when that conversation piece started.

Interviewer: When you guys came on-board and chose to invest, you could see the benefit and the value, what do you mean by that? Who values?

Dan Massie: With all these things, for us it fitted well with the regeneration objectives.

A regeneration objective is that people will want to come and live at Woodberry Down, and that they will want to live here for a long time, and then they will make great links with their neighbours. Having something like that to enhance what you're offering, on the doorstep, clearly meets that objective.

From a value perspective as well we thought that we would invest in this. Because we feel that it will be not necessarily reflected in the fact that all of a sudden we’ve got another £5 per square foot on sales values, but as an incentive for someone to want to be here it’s a massive plus.

As a business we are quite light on our feet, and when you can see an opportunity, and it’s difficult to quantify it, but still you can really feel the value of it, then it’s obvious.

So, it fulfils quite a few objectives for us, frankly, and it’s just one of those projects that has grown legs and just run off with itself, because it’s just so exciting. You come off the Tube at Manor House, it’s a Zone 2 location, and then you're there.

You’ve walked around it, I assume?

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: It’s amazing. It really is. I think it’s going to be quite inspiring, I would have thought, for a community.

Our chairman, and our approach, has always been if people are proud of where they live they look after it. That’s always the way we have felt about things.

We take a lot of pride in what we do. We’re a business which always value-adds rather than value engineers. We try and seek that improved bottom line by spending more on something and improving it. Rather than, “Where can we take money off the bricks, or the cladding, or whatever else?” That’s always the way we have gone about our business. So it’s fitted really well with our objectives.

Interviewer: Do you think, Dan, there’s anything particular about water and water landscapes? Because a number of your regeneration sites… And you’ve explained why from a value perspective, but is there something particular about water landscapes that people take value from?

Dan Massie: Well, I suppose from a landscape perspective, and from an architectural perspective, they're devices that have been used for a long time, because they engender that sense of peacefulness. People like being by water. And I'm sure there are many studies that verify the health benefits and everything else.

It also creates an aspect which will never change, which is great.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: If you have a chance to live by these reservoirs, you know they're always going to be reservoirs. It’s going to be an unchallenged environment. Albeit, it hasn’t always been unchallenged.

Interviewer: No.

Dan Massie: That’s quite a key benefit. I think it’s mainly from those experiences of people with the way they interact with it. People like living by it.

If you're down here on a sunny evening this New River Path is absolutely packed.

We have the schools who come down, the \_\_\_[0:18:53] School here, who spend – on these New River steps they're always down here at lunchtimes and things, in the summertime.

It’s not necessarily just for the reservoirs. Wherever we put in water features in our business, around anywhere, frankly, it’s just something that attracts people. People like the sound of it, the touch of it, the feel of it.

We’ve recently completed a public square in Central London, on Leman Street by Goodman’s Fields, and that has a significant amount of water element to it.

Now, you're in the heart of the city there, and again that’s a public square, and people are just attracted to it, to spend time there and relax.

Interviewer: Which brings me on to – well, there are two things there that spark my mind, in terms of what you’ve just said. One of them I will come on to, in terms of – no, let’s address that one first – identity.

How you feel they feature in the identity of the site for you and for the community. How the opening up of the reservoir to the public contributes to a sense of identity.

Dan Massie: I suppose the sense of identity here is quite localised. The amount of times I have taken people around Woodberry Down and they have gone, “Wow. We never knew these were here.” (Laughter)

Unless you live nearby, or you're visiting to go to the West Reservoir Centre, actually the sense of identity with them is really quite local. Which is strange. But for a long time they have been so closed off that you can lose places easily.

Interviewer: Yes. [In play times 0:20:50].

Dan Massie: Yes, exactly. I think probably from opening them up that will help.

I think the other thing is that with a sense of identity we’ve only really known the north shore of it, really, from a public perspective.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: With the East Reservoir people will get to know it much more intimately, because they will be able to walk around it every day, and I'm sure it will become a regular route for people. The West Reservoir is still a bit of a locked-up best kept secret. I'm sure that’s come out in discussions.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: Over time I'm convinced that will not be like that. I'm sure that will be opened up as well, but if you don’t have public access to something then it’s lost in the public consciousness, really.

So, I would say the sense of identity with the reservoirs here, and the water, is very localised to the people who know about it.

Interviewer: Yes. Which, as you say, is interesting, given such a densely populated urban part of London, where they are such remarkable assets, and in such contrast to the surrounding area. It is interesting.

That moves me nicely on to the next question, which is around the increasing role of non-public organisations, shall we say, bringing the environment into public access, so the growth of POPS – privately owned public space.

Dan Massie: Yes.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on that? That there is an increasing role for the private sector in opening up the environment [Crosstalk 0:22:46]?

Dan Massie: It’s not the only issue. There’s an increasing role. Developers, if we had talked about social sustainability 10 years ago, everyone would have thought you're not quite on-message, or you're having a bit of a Jerry Maguire moment, frankly.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: Because resources are so stretched now with local authorities, we find ourselves doing all sorts of roles that we might not have done previously, especially around consultation about the provision of services, whether it’s schools, whether it’s healthcare, or public open space.

The conversations we end up in now, on those sorts of topics, are way beyond what we would ever expect to have to think about.

Interviewer: Really?

Dan Massie: Yes. We get involved in the nitty-gritty of these issues, because frankly there aren’t the resources elsewhere to deal with it.

When it comes to privately owned public space, and you can look across our group, and again there are advocates for the opposite of our position, but we believe in densification. And as a return on that densification you get really good, high quality, public open space. That approach is something we use across the business.

Here at Woodberry Down we did a re-masterplan process, which got consented in 2014, which you can see here. That increased the home output of the regeneration by over 1,000, but increased the open space provision, compared to the old masterplan, by 30%.

We absolutely believe in the value of really good open spaces. We’ve got Spring Park here, which is 1.6 hectares. That’s going to open up, the first part of it, this year. We’ve got [parks 0:24:49] up here, which has opened up the green. There was already a green here. We just remastered it as we were doing this site.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: We’ve got two more public parks here, phase 3 and phase 5, a public park up in phase 7, and we will try and get any other green spaces. There’s also one here in phase 6. We really believe in the value of those high-quality spaces.

Interviewer: Is that something that you're unique in the industry?

Dan Massie: No, we’re not unique, but at the moment there’s a debate about, “Well, you could achieve the same densities, but with terraced housing, for example.” Which is great, but your trade-off is then you don’t get the public open space.

Interviewer: Your motivation for having public open space is what?

Dan Massie: I suppose it’s a sense of identity. It comes back to quality of people’s lives, homes, viewpoints.

Views are really important issues. “What can I see out of my home?” We deal a lot with Woodco and the design committee about the equity of views.

We want a tenure blind development, and part of that discussion is about the equity of who gets the best views. So, we talk about these issues, and try and, between the partnership, balance it fairly.

Interviewer: Sorry, to be clear, the essence of that conversation is a balance between new private homes [Crosstalk 0:26:40]?

Dan Massie: Exactly. Social rented homes, shared ownership homes, yes. Who gets the best views? How many of them do they get? All of that sort of debate. There are some very real pragmatic requirements, I think, for space, distance between blocks, overlooking.

Interviewer: Right to light and..?

Dan Massie: Yes, those sorts of issues, I suppose, but mainly around quality of life. We invest very heavily in them to make sure they're very high-quality.

This door has got a life of its own. (Laughter)

Interviewer: That’s an interesting shift, isn’t it, as you said? I guess you're the first person I think, and it makes sense that you're the first person to bring that up, because it’s not just public open space that developers are getting involved in now.

Dan Massie: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think there is – well, firstly I guess what do you think that adds to the local community, that you are here, and are keen to be engaged in those conversations, where previously you wouldn’t have been?

Dan Massie: I think from a community perspective I would have thought it’s useful because of the nature of what we are. We are delivery focused. If something comes into a conversation then always, to us, it’s about delivery. “How can we deliver it?” Which might be a slightly quicker approach than traditionally.

I think one of the things that has been a good learning point for us at Woodberry Down is that we’re not necessarily wanting to be masters of everything. Because that’s not right.

So, community. We’ve worked very hard with Manor House Development Trust and Woodco. Frankly, as part of our legacy here, when we’ve finished phase 8, and we pack up and go home, the effect on the community should be zero.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Dan Massie: It should just be business as usual. The Manor House Development Trust is well entrenched, and their networks are working well, and the groups are working well. Woodco have their representatives. “Berkeley Homes? Who are they?” That’s kind of, for us, where we want to get to.

Interviewer: That’s when you’ve done a good job?

Dan Massie: Yes, exactly. We can’t be behind everything, we can’t back everything, but working with the right people, and supporting them where we need to, so supporting Manor House Development Trust deliver their objectives.

Or, if it’s to do with public open space, having those conversations with Hackney Parks early on about design, and specification, and maintenance regimes, and all the rest of it. Securing funding for the ongoing maintenance. All of those sorts of things, which we have control of, we can do.

Interviewer: You can put that, I guess, succession in place?

Dan Massie: We can put that in place. Exactly.

Because, as I say, we want this to be an ongoing success, a sustainable community. Not the community that it was, which was a ground-breaking estate regeneration in the 1930s and 1940s, which required lots of maintenance, and as housing policy shifted things fell apart, frankly. That’s not the story we’re creating here for Woodberry Down \_\_\_[0:30:21].

Interviewer: You don’t want to repeat that cycle of [shine and then decay]?

Dan Massie: Exactly. Which was a reliance on public money, frankly.

Interviewer: I suppose you’ve already outlined that there, to some degree, the counter to what you’ve just said. The risk of private organisations, the private sector, being so heavily involved in civic services.

Dan Massie: Yes.

Interviewer: What is the risk, potentially, of that?

Dan Massie: It’s not always in our expertise, frankly, to deal with it. Local authorities are very well set up to deal with these things. Still are, where they have resources. And they have the expertise.

There is a risk there, but where it’s well-guided, where it’s done in partnership, they are all risks that can be mitigated pretty easily.

Interviewer: You said before that ten years ago the whole social sustainability agenda would have been a bit of a Jerry Maguire.

Dan Massie: Yes.

Interviewer: Is this model going to stay? Is this..?

Dan Massie: It’s part of our business. It’s at the heart of what we do, as I said, across all of our sites.

Interviewer: In terms of people-environment relations, and your role in that, which is quite integral here, and is integral in terms of the place-making debate, are there new things on the horizon? What sorts of debates are the industry having about where it’s going more generally, in terms of how it has to get involved with those sort of issues?

Dan Massie: I suppose there’s the debate at the moment, the Global Green City Forum.

Very localised to Woodberry Down, we have debates on district heating, which is a big sustainability issue, which will be coming on-stream with phase 3.

There are quite a lot of, I suppose, the environmental discussions. We’ve got Seven Sisters Road. We’re talking locally about narrowing that. There are effects of that with air pollution and things like that which need to be grappled with.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: There’s the wider issue, which is a more macro point, is there’s just no public funding anymore. There’s no grant anymore. Or there aren’t a lot of grants. So our schemes have to work harder.

Whether it’s affordable housing or schools that are put on the priority list of local authorities, the bit that generates the profit has to work harder to pay for the bit that isn’t, that is being subsidised.

We’ve always liked just really straightforward clarity in conversations. “What do you want from this site? Is it affordable housing or is it a school? Or is it two schools? Or is it a medical facility, a PCT? What is it that’s required?” Then we can hopefully make it work.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: Often there are just long lists, and this is where we get dragged into the provision of all sorts of services, but you can’t do everything. A development can’t do everything for all of London’s needs.

And it’s only a small percentage of the existing housing stock, so I think there’s a real challenge there. A new development, whilst there’s a housing crisis, we need new homes, crikey there are a lot of existing homes, which have existing facilities, and everything else.

Interviewer: Is that something that the private sector you think will turn to, as big sites like this – there are less of them, and therefore potential returns? Do you think they will turn to existing housing stock and [Crosstalk 0:34:51]?

Dan Massie: Yes, I think if you will have seen the [Savills 0:34:54] report, which came out with the prime minister’s statement on housing regeneration about a month ago, you will have seen that that is the direction of travel.

There’s a lot of land, in London specifically, that’s locked up with public bodies, which could be densified. There’s no pretty way of putting it.

You could address a lot of the housing shortage through that approach. So public-private partnerships, JVs of all shapes and forms, I'm sure will be popping up in other parts of London.

Interviewer: \_\_\_[0:35:53] [just double check].

[Background noise 0:35:56 - 0:36:19].

Interviewer: I suppose we have spoken about the reservoirs in terms of identity, a sense of place. I wondered if you could talk to me on a more – I guess, looking at the long view. You referred to it before. They haven’t always been protected, the reservoirs, and there was the Save the Reservoirs campaign in the [1980s 0:36:41].

Dan Massie: [It’s a bit warm in here, isn’t it]?

Interviewer: I wondered if you could reflect, from your perspective, how those water bodies have played a role in terms of the regeneration story of this site.

Dan Massie: They have played a role. Because I think if you had turned up and had a look at Woodberry Down, and instead of those reservoirs there was another housing estate, it would have been difficult to see the value in it. (Laughter)

How would we have generated sales from the market to cost subsidise the regeneration? You probably would have said there isn’t. (Laughter) So, from a fairly pragmatic level, they have been absolutely vital.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: Absolutely vital.

Interviewer: That’s because people want to buy a place that looks out over those reservoirs, and will pay a premium for that?

Dan Massie: Exactly. Because if you have the vision, as the partnership has had, to have these wonderful green spaces leading down to the reservoirs, this close to Central London, it’s a great story. It’s a great marketing story. It’s actually just a good lifestyle type discussion, really.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dan Massie: It’s going back to all those issues – quality of life, views, things like that.

Interviewer: In terms of when the East Reservoir is open, and we’ve got restrictions on West Reservoir but that might not always be the case, is there a risk that you're pushing at an open door?

So you will see the people that visit the LWT site are very traditional LWT members. You will get white, middle-class membership, and you won’t necessarily get some of the pre-existing communities here valuing and using that site. Is there a risk of that?

Dan Massie: Yes, I suppose it’s a risk. In terms of the work that LWT have done to inform people about it, it’s been fairly wide-reaching, and very heavily focused at Woodberry Down.

There’s been a prominent role that Woodco have always supported their objectives. They have presented at boards. David is well-known in the area.

I would say potentially, because it’s a free facility, it is accessible.

The education aspect of it, getting Skinners’ Academy involved, the primary school, everyone else, which I know they're well-informed on it, I think these are all good things, frankly.

[Background noise 0:39:44 - 0:39:54].

Dan Massie: I think, going back to the point of it being free, that’s a very important thing.

Interviewer: Yes, and I know David is deeply passionate about that. It is always a challenge with these projects, isn’t it? You put a café in there, and then the question becomes, “Who can afford to go to the café?”

Dan Massie: Yes.

Interviewer: I know they will have the same challenge, and they talk about the same challenge, at Walthamstow.

Dan Massie: Yes.

Interviewer: They have this honeypot. There will be beautiful water heritage structures. There will be fabulous cafés, and viewing platforms, etc. Then the question is you don’t want to replicate assets that could be used by people that have access to other assets. You're wanting it to be those that will get the most benefit from it will come. That’s what you hope.

Dan Massie: But one of the things we’ve always discussed as a partnership, and I think we’ve been really straightforward about on all sorts of decisions, is where the pragmatic lines are drawn. Where there is a need, for example, for revenue to be generated.

If LWT have revenue a cost of maintaining it, and they have to meet it through a revenue, then that’s just the pragmatic decision they have got to make. I think being straightforward about that is not a problem.

Interviewer: No, and I think everybody understands that in order for that to stay open and free it needs a revenue stream.

Dan Massie: Exactly, and if it’s sustainable that’s great.

Interviewer: I think one of the things we’ve been interested in, on both sites, is that they are nature reserves and not public parks, and what that means in terms of that slight shift in terms of how people behave on-site, the sorts of activities that will be encouraged.

A lot of people have spoken about people learning to respect nature, and how it’s not something that you learn about really in public parks. These will be sites where people hopefully learn to respect and engage in nature, perhaps in ways that they haven’t done previously.

That’s a particularly valuable asset in a very densely urbanised part of London, and I think that’s quite interesting for these sites.

Dan Massie: Yes, it’s a special element to it, I suppose.

Interviewer: Yes, it makes it quite unique. As an asset, that’s an interesting aspect of its identity.

Dan Massie: As and when the West Reservoir does open up you’ve got the benefit of having two areas, one which has its nature reserve qualities, and another one which will be more about public leisure, public open space.

Interviewer: Do you think that will happen in time [Crosstalk 0:43:09]?

Dan Massie: I don’t know why I'm so sure/optimistic. I just think it’s a natural succession. We’re pushing against an open door, in terms of the political will at Hackney.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: Because it’s a bit of a no-brainer. So, I'm sure over time-

Interviewer: Do you know why it hasn’t happened to date?

Dan Massie: It’s mainly been bogged down with the way the lease has been granted down, and the operator’s view on risk, and the operator’s view on having people walking around reservoirs, and managing that.

Interviewer: Even though it’s not operational?

Dan Massie: Yes. Because even if you open it up as a public open space, you’ve then got a maintenance budget all of a sudden. So I think it’s more around those issues.

Interviewer: [Yes, okay 0:44:15]. Brilliant.

My last question, and actually this is probably a bit more of a macro question, I guess.

I'm interested in your perspective, coming from the private sector, in terms of the growing role of corporate social responsibility, and how maybe 15 or so years ago it was a little bit of an add-on, and fairly ad-hoc, and it now seems to be integral to business planning.

Dan Massie: Yes.

Interviewer: I wondered what your thoughts are as a business, and/or as a business and as a sector, on where that’s going, and how that has become quite central to the way of thinking for a business.

Dan Massie: Well, there are issues where, as we’ve discussed, there aren’t roles for the other sectors, the public sector or the third sector, to be necessarily doing any of this anymore, so there’s a role for development, and the development sector, to step in.

For us, as a business, it is core. Our sustainability agenda is absolutely core to what we’re about, and we have committed to that.

Because the best areas, wherever they may be, Woodberry Down or wherever else, have an identity that’s largely driven by the community, less about the public spaces or the homes. They become areas where people absolutely strive to live.

To do that we can’t just come along and build stuff. It’s not going to quite get us that objective. We’re going to be here marketing properties for another 25 years. Very pragmatically, our sales brochure can’t be ‘Come to Woodberry Down and live by a reservoir.’ That doesn’t work.

Interviewer: No.

Dan Massie: One thing I can also give you is a magazine called The Source, which we publish, which is very much about the local area, and kind of a lifestyle type magazine.

It will give you an idea of just trying to help people who are new, or don’t know about Woodberry Down, understand the identity of Woodberry Down, and get a sense of what it would be like to be a resident and want to live here.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: So, social sustainability wise, whatever it might be, whether it’s the schooling, or the health facilities, or whatever else, it all falls into that pot of the discussions we’re having anyway about the delivery of services. Then we can have that conversation very quickly with the partnership, and work out how we can utilise that for our marketing as well.

Interviewer: So it’s of mutual benefit?

Dan Massie: It has to be, because if there’s a mutual benefit for something that Hackney require, or the residents require, and it falls outside of any negotiation we’ve had, then there needs to be a business case to provide it.

So it’s quite important that you can keep these things as mutually beneficial for everyone involved, otherwise they just won’t happen.

Interviewer: Do you think there are subsequently any obligations that come with that mutual benefit? Do you think it generates a different type of relationship between yourselves and the partnership, or yourselves and the community? Do you think that affects that?

Dan Massie: Honestly, with Woodberry Down, because of the way it’s been set up since day one, I think that responsibility has just been inherent.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dan Massie: We have people based here on-site. We know lots of people who live here and work here, and have good working relationships, and that’s borne out of all these forums and lots of hours spent together. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan Massie: I think we have already been committed to that anyway, so I don’t know what…

Feasibly, we wouldn’t want to ramp it up anymore, because nothing would get done, because we would just be talking about it.

Interviewer: [Crosstalk 0:49:04] meetings. (Laughter)

Dan Massie: We’ve really run out of time.

Interviewer: \_\_\_. (Laughter)

Dan Massie: Exactly, yes. We’ve run out of time for that. Yes, I think we’re covering it.

Interviewer: What about the other side? Do you think the rest of the partnership feel an additional responsibility to you, because of the scale of investment from the CSR and [social stuff 0:49:29]?

Dan Massie: No. I just don’t think that’s how it works. Woodco represent their community. That’s their interest, and they're not shy about it. We understand that. We know where they're coming from. It’s not a surprise to us. Our interests are not really their interests, if you’re from a pragmatic point of view.

We have got a partner in Genesis who take on all these new homes. They're taking on homes from Hackney. If you like, their reputation, we get tarnished by them if they don’t do something right, so it’s important that we have a great working relationship with them, and similarly with Hackney.

So, yes, I think we all come from slightly different directions. Which is important. We’ve all got our own interests. I think hopefully they all understand where we’re coming from. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Yes. (Laughter)

I think they're all my questions.

Dan Massie: Okay.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time.

Dan Massie: That’s alright. No problem.

END AUDIO

[www.uktranscription.com](http://www.uktranscription.com)