

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCILHOUSING COMMITTEE – 21ST JUNE 2023EXECUTIVE – 17TH JULY 2023Report by the Director of Housing and Regeneration on the Alton Regeneration
(Roehampton)SUMMARY

This report provides an update on proposals to review the Alton regeneration and recommends that revised objectives are agreed to inform the development of options for future public engagement.

The Director of Finance comments that the Housing Revenue Account business plan has previously made provision for significant investment in the Alton Estate regeneration project totalling £105 million. Despite the uncertainty over the way forward for the scheme the provision remained in the Housing Revenue Account business plan for which the latest update was approved in January 2023 (Paper No. 23-08) with significant elements of the previously proposed regeneration scheme remaining in the capital programme. Existing budget approvals will be revisited in September 2023 as part of the next Housing Revenue Account business plan update.

Any costs arising from the development of future proposals will need to be met from within the existing approved budgets, or new Housing Revenue Account or General Fund budgets will need to be approved at the appropriate time.

GLOSSARY

HRA	-	Housing Revenue Account
LPA	-	Local Planning Authority
RCH	-	Roehampton Community Hub

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Housing Committee are recommended to support the recommendations in paragraph 2. If they approve any views, comments or recommendations on the report, these will be submitted to the Executive or the appropriate regulatory and other committees for their consideration.
2. The Executive is recommended to:-
 - (a) Note the outcome of the engagement process and agree the revised objectives for the regeneration set out in paragraphs 8 to 21;

Alton estate – next steps

- (b) Note the progress being made on the Early Improvement Plan as set out in paragraphs 22 to 40;

BACKGROUND

3. Paper No. 22-253 agreed to terminate the procurement process to find a joint venture partner for the delivery of the Alton Masterplan Regeneration and to review the objectives and options for improvements to the Alton Estate. The report also authorised officers to explore options to bring the building known as “Block A” forward as a stand-alone scheme and to investigate the scope to bring other improvements to the estate forward.
4. Paper No. 22-353 agreed that officers commission initial design and other technical work and consultation necessary to submit planning applications for improvements to the play spaces at Downshire Field and Alton Activity Centre and the building currently known as “Block A”. As a shorthand, proposals for these three sites are referred to as The Early Improvement Plan.
5. As part of the process to support future development of options, an extensive public engagement process was undertaken to help understand residents’ priorities and how they view the area at present. The findings of this exercise are set out in more detail below.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

6. In 2018 an Alton and Putney Vale (Roehampton) Health report was published to “provide a baseline analysis to support the assessment and evaluation of changes to health and wellbeing over the course of the regeneration programme; as well as to inform the development and targeting of community level interventions”. A full copy of the report can be found at <https://www.datawand.info/health-profiles/roehampton/>
7. The report drew on the available data to give the most representative picture of local health and wellbeing possible, using a range of local and national data sources, and presented its findings categorised in line with the Wandsworth Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2017/18 – namely, Place, Start Well, Live Well and Age Well.
8. Some key headline findings of the report can be summarised as follows:

Place:

- The Alton and Putney Vale includes areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and amongst the 10% most deprived with respect to income and housing.
- Nearly 40% of Alton Residents come from Black and Minority Ethnic groups compared to 30% across Wandsworth.
- Considerably more 16-29 year olds and fewer 30-44 year olds live on the Alton than the Wandsworth average.
- Access to public transport is considered average/poor.
- There is above average satisfaction with the local area but below average sense of belonging and neighbourliness.

Start Well:

- 21% of residents are aged 0-15 years old.
- 15% of households on the estate are lone-parent households, which is more than double the Wandsworth average of 6%. Of these lone-parent households, 55% are not in employment.
- Two thirds of “Children in Need” (defined as children receiving social services support) aged under 3 from Roehampton live on the Alton.
- Eastwood Children’s Centre exceeds Ofsted target for engaging targeted families.
- Crime figures show that young people are more likely to be victims of crime than in other areas.
- Young people have limited access to social opportunities in the immediate area.

Live Well:

- More than 50% of housing on Alton is social housing.
- 28.2% of houses are overcrowded.
- Life expectancy on the Alton is lower than the Wandsworth average.
- Men spend up to 6.6 fewer years in good health and women up to 4.9 fewer years than the borough average.
- There are more people registered with learning disabilities and serious mental health conditions living in the area than in other areas in Wandsworth.
- Residents are more likely to be long-term unemployed than for Wandsworth generally.

Age Well:

- Around 9% of Alton residents are over 65 years old.
- 12% of households have someone over 65 living in them, compared to borough average of 9%.
- There are higher than expected levels of dementia and admissions to hospital for hip fractures, given the age-profile of the area.
- There is demand for “accessible” community space (both in terms of physical access and rental cost for community groups).

9. The report concludes in recognising the diversity of the Alton Estate and its many community resources and assets. Nonetheless the perceived sense of “isolation” of the estate and the fact that the Alton estate is more deprived than both its immediate surroundings and the borough as a whole, presents a number of challenges in ensuring that any regeneration capitalises on the opportunities for improving the health and wellbeing of individuals across their lives and also at the community and place level.

CURRENT POSITION**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

10. A comprehensive programme of resident and stakeholder engagement was undertaken between January and February 2023 to better understand the

Alton estate – next steps

community's priorities. A detailed survey was hand delivered to 4,500 homes across the Alton Estate and surrounding area exploring a range of topics to help understand resident and stakeholder views of and priorities for the community.

11. In addition to paper copies of the survey, a digital version accessed via a QR code was also made available to ensure a wider reach and ease of response.
12. Over 500 responses were received, a response rate of over 10%, predominantly from Alton Estate residents, which is a higher response rate than any previous survey in relation to the regeneration and a better response rate than would typically be expected for a survey of this nature.
13. Two drop-in events were held on Saturday 4th February at Roehampton Library and Thursday 9th February at Portswood Space, which attracted around 50 attendees.
14. Roundtable events were also held on an invitation basis on 15th February online and 23rd February in-person, to explore a number of topics in more detail. A total of 30 people attended these events.
15. A public meeting was hosted by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Roehampton Ward Councillors on 7th February, which attracted around 50 attendees.
16. Inner Circle also arranged a visit to The Base youth facility on Danebury Avenue and spoke to around 15 young people about their priorities and ideas for the area.
17. Detailed analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, has now been undertaken of all the feedback received and a full report detailing the findings can be found at [Appendix A](#).
18. The main priorities which have emerged from this process of engagement are summarised in draft at paragraphs 20 and 21 below.

OBJECTIVES OF THE REGENERATION

19. The objectives of any regeneration of the estate needs to respond to a number of factors, namely;
 - a. The feedback from the engagement process.
 - b. The socioeconomic context and challenges.
 - c. Existing and emerging Council strategies.
20. The headline objectives are clustered around six key themes;
 - Community
 - Neighbourhood
 - Accessibility
 - Economic Inclusion
 - Environment
 - Homes
21. The feedback from residents suggests that the following priorities flow from these:

Theme	Objective
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved community facilities (particularly library/GP)

	<p>services)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved shops (particularly a larger supermarket) • Improved youth facilities (particularly children’s facilities and play space)
Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved estate management and maintenance • Protection of open space • Improved perceptions around safety
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved local bus services • Improvement accessibility and movement through the estate • Support for a new access to Richmond Park
Economic Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting new shops and businesses • More skills, training and employment opportunities
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved energy efficiency of homes
Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for more Council homes and a higher proportion of affordable homes • Addressing overcrowding • Balance between the number of homes/greenspace

22. If these objectives are supported, they will then form the criteria for assessing a shortlist of options.
23. The objectives are a mix of those that could be addressed by any regeneration and those that could be tackled as part of a wider placemaking framework. This framework would require input from all Council departments, and officers will develop proposals for how this element of work could be delivered.

EARLY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

24. The previous masterplan’s proposals to improve the quality of community facilities and upgrade existing open spaces had broad/strong support through the previous consultation process and also received support when the masterplan application was subject to consultation. The recent engagement process has indicated continued support for improving community facilities, play space and open spaces. It is therefore proposed to bring forward the delivery of the building currently known as “Block A”, as well as external improvements to the Alton Activity Centre and landscape enhancements to Downshire Field, which reflect this. The extent of these proposals are shown on the plan attached at Appendix B.
25. A design team has been appointed which includes architects, landscape architects, heritage and transport support as well as ongoing planning advice.

Roehampton Community Hub (formerly known as Block A)

26. The proposed building currently known as Block A sits on the corner of Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane, marking one of the key gateways to the estate. The

Alton estate – next steps

block is currently designed to deliver a replacement library, new youth facilities, a community hall, two replacement GP's surgeries and 40 Council homes. It is felt timely adopt a more descriptive name for the building, to assist with future engagement. The proposed name is Roehampton Community Hub (RCH). The Council might consider, at a later phase, engaging with residents over the name of the completed building so this may be a holding name in the meantime.

27. Existing plans for the RCH are being reviewed and amendments are being made as required to ensure compliance with updated building and fire regulations, as well as some improvements to residential layouts, improved wheelchair accessibility to the parking area as well as improved bin storage and cycle access and storage.
28. A workshop has recently been held with Library and Youth Services on to review proposals for the building and ensure that the plans for the library and youth spaces support the emerging library strategy and remain fit-for-purpose for the needs of young people.
29. An interim design is also being developed for the Village Square to enable the delivery of significant community benefits in this space, in lieu of the Alton Practice relocating into the RCH in the short to medium term. As referenced in previous reports, the hub would require a mix of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund funding.

Alton Activity Centre

30. The Alton Activity Centre is a Council-owned (General Fund) facility comprising a single storey community building with a large external play space. The masterplan proposals included upgrade and improvement to the play space, however, the plans do not include any works to the community building.
31. The proposals for this site were the result of extensive consultation with local residents and stakeholders, including over 85 young people. The proposals include the complete redesign of the external play space into zoned areas with play equipment appropriate to different age groups. In addition, the proposals include improved landscaping and planting.
32. Any proposals would require the removal of the existing fencing to ensure greater access to the play spaces (this is a requirement of the existing masterplan planning consent).
33. The design team are reviewing existing plans and undertaking further engagement with service providers and users to ensure that they continue to reflect the needs and desires of local young people.

Downshire Field

34. Downshire Field is a large open green space sitting centrally within the Estate, which was designated as a Registered Park and Garden in June 2020. It is held and managed within the HRA.
35. Improvements to the area include completely redesigning the play space to create an informal naturalistic play area that will sit more sensitively amongst the parkland and mature trees that surround it.

36. In addition to the play space catering for all ages between 0-11 years old, aspects of inclusive play have been considered to ensure wheelchair accessible zones.
37. Landscape improvements are proposed to the main Downshire Field to include wildflower meadow areas, new pathways to connect existing blocks to the open space and a trim trail to promote healthy active lifestyles.
38. The design team are reviewing the existing proposals and will undertake engagement with local residents and stakeholders to ensure that they continue to respond to the needs and wishes of the local community.
39. Detailed review work is also required, with support from heritage experts, to ensure that any landscape design responds to the heritage sensitivities of the open space.

Planning Strategy

40. In order to deliver the Early Improvement Plan revisions to the design and adjustment to the phasing for the extant planning permission (ref: 2019/2516) are required.
41. The Council's planning advisors consider that there are a number of options to secure an appropriate planning permission, and these are being explored with the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
42. Subject to agreement on the most appropriate planning strategy, it is anticipated the planning application(s) will be submitted later this year.

NEXT STEPS

Development of options

43. Initial work has been undertaken on the development of alternative options which would form part of a second round of engagement. It is considered this work should be informed by the adoption of the revised objectives to enable each option to be tested and assessed against them.
44. Options development work will continue with the aim of bring a paper to the Housing Committee to recommend a shortlist of options to form part of future community engagement.

SUPPORTING THE WANDSWORTH ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (WESS)

45. As options are developed, their environmental impact will be assessed. They will be consistent with and supportive of the WESS and the Council's approach to sustainability in its existing and new housing stock.

COMMENTS OF THE SOUTH LONDON LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

46. The results of the Community Engagement carried out are noted. Once specific proposals in accordance with the revised objectives are put forward for decision consultation under s.105 will be required on the effect of these on residents. Such proposals will also need to take account of the requirements relating to the holding

Alton estate – next steps

powers of the parcels of land concerned which are held variously for housing purposes, general fund and open space.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

47. The Director of Finance comments that the HRA business plan has previously made provision for significant investment in the Alton Estate regeneration project totalling £105 million. Despite the uncertainty over the way forward for the scheme the provision remained in the HRA business plan for which the latest update was approved in January 2023 (Paper No. 23-08) with significant elements of the previously proposed regeneration scheme remaining in the capital programme. Existing budget approvals will be revisited in September 2023 as part of the next HRA business plan update.
48. Any costs arising from the development of future proposals will need to be met from within the existing approved budgets, or new HRA or General Fund budgets (as applicable) will need to be approved at the appropriate time.

CONCLUSION

49. The resident engagement has provided an indication of residents' priorities, and these will be used to inform and assess options as they are developed.

The Town Hall,
Wandsworth,
SW18 2PU.

BRIAN REILLY
Director of Housing and Regeneration

13th June 2023

Background papers

There are no background papers to this report.

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk/moderngov) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the democratic services officer can supply it if required.