

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCILHOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17TH JULY 2024EXECUTIVE – 22ND JULY 2024Report by the Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration and the Director of Place
on the (Roehampton) Alton Renewal PlanSUMMARY

This report provides details of the Alton Renewal Plan which considers the options for the regeneration of the Alton estate alongside a wider programme of place-based Projects that will be delivered across the whole estate. The work undertaken to develop the Alton Renewal Plan builds on the insights and recommendations gathered during resident engagement in spring 2023 and the identification of clear resident priorities. This report recommends that a budget be allocated for the implementation of the Alton Renewal Plan and that further public consultation is undertaken on three principal regeneration options, details of which are set out in the report.

Progress on the delivery of the Alton Renewal Plan will be reported back to this Committee on a regular basis, including reporting back on the results of the consultation on the Homes proposal with a recommendation on a final preferred option that will be subject to ballot.

The Alton Renewal Plan (ARP) has identified significant investment in the Alton Estate and aims at bringing forward impactful projects across the estate for six defined pillars of activity shaped by residents' views. This would require a programme budget, comprising a mix of both General Fund and HRA resources investment, with revenue and capital expenditure on both a one off and ongoing basis.

GLOSSARY

AAC	-	Alton Activity Centre
ARP	-	Alton Renewal Plan
EIP	-	Early Improvement Plan
EPC	-	Energy Performance Certificate
HRA	-	Housing Revenue Account
ICC	-	Inner Circle Consulting
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 process and progress made on the Alton Renewal Plan (ARP).
- (b) Agree to support the Alton Renewal Plan, including the proposed Projects, moving forward as one delivery programme with a strong mandate for positive change.
- (c) Note the ongoing engagement and programme development process and the progress that has been made within the Place team in harnessing the Council's cross-sector teams to create a cohesive plan.
- (d) Agree to continue further dialogue with community partners and leaders over the summer including sharing the Alton Renewal Plan, identifying implementation partners, and undertaking meaningful and inclusive community engagement.
- (e) Note the case for selective demolition outlined in paragraphs 31-47.
- (f) Agree that resident engagement takes place on the Homes proposal, in accordance with best practice.
- (g) Agree that retrofit options for 117-211 and 213-243 Danebury Avenue and Allbrook House are explored.
- (h) Agree that 1-33 and 2-26 Minstead Gardens will not form part of these revised regeneration plans and instruct officers to explore the scope to include proposals for improvements as part of the HRA's future Major Works Programme.
- (i) Note and agree the proposed approach to the Retail Offer set out in paragraphs 87-101, and that any break clauses will not be triggered on regeneration grounds before April 2030.
- (j) Agree the provision of an Alton Renewal Plan budget of £5m comprising of HRA and General Fund revenue and capital, requiring positive budget variations as detailed in paragraphs 126-127.
- (k) To note further capital investment of £16.26m of HRA capital investment expected to be required to deliver the proposed housing programme and an estimated £25m of further General Fund capital investment to enable the Alton Activity Centre, Roehampton Community Hub and the new children's centre / family hub to replace 166-168 Roehampton Lane to be progressed. These investment decisions will be the subject of a further report in due course once the outcome of the consultation on the homes element of the Alton Renewal Plan is known.
- (l) Note the proposal to provide further updates on progress and delivery to this Committee on a regular basis.
- (m) In light of the preceding decisions, agree to rescind the Committee decision of Paper 20-245 to proceed with the previous Masterplan for the Alton estate.

INTRODUCTION

3. The Alton Estate stands at the forefront of the Council's agenda for revitalisation and improvement, designated as a priority area for strategic investment. This commitment is the foundation of the proposals for the Alton Estate and aims to bring genuinely affordable homes, inclusive growth, and better outcomes for local residents on the Alton Estate.

4. These proposals have been shaped by extensive engagement with the Alton community, reflecting a focus on addressing resident needs and issues. Since the decision to revisit regeneration proposals in September 2022, an ongoing dialogue with residents has identified three fundamental principles which represent how the Council will respond to the priorities of residents.
 - **Place:** After listening to the views and needs of residents and community groups, we are determined to do things differently by investing in projects which address the unique needs and aspirations of those that live and work on the Alton estate.
 - **Homes:** The Council is making a long-term investment in the estate as part of a package to deliver genuinely affordable homes for local people to ensure the Alton is a more accessible, inclusive, and affordable place to live.
 - **People:** The plan for the Alton estate is to make it a fairer and more compassionate place, this affirms the Council's commitment to supporting residents to live healthy and happy lives.
5. These principles underpin an integrated investment plan, the ARP, spanning immediate needs and long-term aspirations, encompassing place-based Projects and broader regeneration strategies. Taken together, this is a package of opportunities that will bring long-lasting positive change for the Alton.

WIDER CONTEXT

6. The socio-economic context of the area, relative to the wider Wandsworth area is helpful in understanding the rationale for targeting investment in Roehampton and specifically the Alton Estate.
7. The 2018 Alton and Putney Vale (Roehampton) Health Profile and Joint Services Needs Assessment (2021) provide comprehensive local health and wellbeing information from a variety of local and national data sources, which provide an accurate baseline analysis of the Alton Estate community.
8. The reports can be viewed in full at <https://www.datawand.info/health-profiles/roehampton/> and <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health/public-health-publications/jsna/welcome-to-jsna/> but a summary of the key findings is set out below:
 - The Alton Estate includes areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and amongst the 10% most deprived with respect to income and housing.
 - Access to public transport is considered as average to poor.
 - The estate has higher than average rates of minority ethnic and young residents.
 - Two thirds of "Children in Need" (defined as children receiving social services support) aged under 3 from Roehampton live on the Alton.
 - The rate of lone-parent households is more than double the Wandsworth average, of which over half are unemployed.
 - Young people are more likely to be victims of crime than in other areas
 - More than 50% of housing on Alton is social housing and more than 28% of homes are overcrowded.
 - Residents are more likely to be long-term unemployed than for Wandsworth generally.

- The estate has lower life expectancy and higher rates of learning disability and serious health conditions than borough average.
 - There is a higher rate of residents aged 65+ compared to the borough average.
 - There are higher than expected rates of dementia and hip fractures given the age profile of the estate.
 - Demand for improved accessibility (physical and affordability) of community spaces.
9. Many of the issues outlined above were raised in terms of residents' feedback on changes they would like to see and consequently in the proposals in this report.

ESTABLISHING THE PRIORITIES

10. Paper No. 22-253 agreed that both the objectives and options for the Alton Estate regeneration be reviewed in light of the (then) new administration's priorities, not least to increase levels of affordable housing.
11. In early 2023 a comprehensive resident and stakeholder engagement process was undertaken to better understand the 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.
12. Two drop-in events were held on the estate which attracted around 50 attendees. Roundtable events were also held on an invitation basis to explore a number of topics in more detail. A total of 30 people attended these events. In addition, over 500 survey responses were received, a response rate of over 10%, predominantly from Alton Estate residents.
13. Paper No. 23-177 considered and agreed a revised set of objectives for the Alton Estate (set out below) and reported that these would be used to inform the development of options for the estate:

Theme	Objective
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved community facilities (particularly library/GP services) • 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 • Improved 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/greenspaces
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14. In response to the above, the Council has recognised the need for sustained and coordinated action across the estate. The Alton Renewal Plan aims at bringing forward projects, investment and activities across the estate, delivered through Council cross-team working and in partnership with other community-based organisations and strategic partners, organised across the six key objectives identified through the resident engagement:
- Community Facilities
 - Neighbourhood
 - Accessibility
 - Homes
 - Economic Inclusion
 - Environment
15. Taken together, these objectives represent the opportunity to embed a coordinated and long-term investment programme that harnesses the Council's resources efficiently and effectively, leverages community partnerships, and engages residents and stakeholders at every stage of the process. This work lays the groundwork for a resilient and thriving Alton Estate community.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

16. Work this year across Council teams has shaped a broad and impactful programme across the six objectives, with a series of connecting projects that respond to the resident priorities and are ambitious, yet deliverable for the Alton Estate. Some of these are summarised against the resident pillars below:

Community Facilities: aims to improve infrastructure and services in the Alton Estate. Key initiatives include enhancing health and well-being through local assets, upgrading the Alton Activity Centre and Downshire Field, creating a new community hub, launching a community grants programme and updating the Family Hub at 166 Roehampton Lane (with the intention of replacing it with a new facility at Portswood Place as part of a People-focussed Proposal approach (see para 58 below). These efforts aim to improve health outcomes, enhance access to community services, foster social connections, and support community cohesion.

Neighbourhood: focuses on enhancing safety, engagement, and infrastructure in the Alton Estate. Key initiatives include introducing a Community Safety Support Officer, promoting local identity through wayfinding signs and heritage trails, artistic projects, a lighting strategy, improved refuse and recycling services, and maintaining estate roads and footways. These efforts aim to build stronger community connections and improve the living environment.

Accessibility: focuses on improving connectivity and transportation within the Alton Estate. Key initiatives include advocating for better bus services and for 20mph on parts of Roehampton Lane, introducing a community shuttle bus, making the University of Roehampton shuttle bus service available free-of-charge to local residents, creating new cycling support programmes, pedestrian environment

improvements, enhanced access to Richmond Park, and car club subsidies. These efforts aim to facilitate active travel, improve access to employment, and provide more transport choices.

Homes: focuses on delivering new homes and enhancing existing housing infrastructure within the Alton Estate. Key initiatives include constructing 40 new Council homes above the Roehampton Community Hub, the Fontley Way Development, a project adjacent to Farnborough House, and the Bessborough Road Development and the development of a new people-focussed proposal for new and replacement homes. Collectively, these initiatives aim to improve the public realm, provide safer environments, and meet diverse housing needs.

Economic Inclusion: aims to enhance cultural engagement, employment support, and community assets in the Alton Estate. Key initiatives include cultural programmes, linked to the London Borough of Culture, to address health inequalities, Work Match employment services and shopfront improvements. These efforts aim to improve employment opportunities, create vibrant community gathering spots, increase footfall, and promote community pride and cohesion.

Environment: focuses on enhancing the natural environment and community resilience within the Alton Estate. Key initiatives include creating a wildflower meadow and distributing Warm Home Packs to improve energy efficiency. These efforts aim to support low-income households, enhance biodiversity, and foster community pride and cohesion.

17. To deliver the projects identified, indicative costs of £5m (capital and revenue) is anticipated. At this stage costs are indicative and are subject to further testing and refinement over the coming months. Funding has been identified from a number of existing approved General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets.
18. Whilst many projects have been clearly defined, several will require shaping through further dialogue with the community and key partners. Standing-up an impactful delivery programme will require momentum and a degree of flexibility. This can best be achieved through a broad Alton Renewal Plan programme budget, based on the above.
19. In response to the above, the ARP commits to significant investment in the estate across the six priorities identified through resident engagement which together comprise the recommendations in this paper.
20. A particular focus is given in the next section to the priority theme of Homes as this requires extensive additional work and resident engagement to derive the preferred option going forward.

Framework for monitoring and evaluation of projects:

21. We will use a robust framework to assess and monitor the impact of the programme in the next phase of works and allow the Council to have an informed view of the long-term socio-economic benefits and future carbon savings of their investment. This framework will quantify the value of the wider social, economic, and environmental benefits of the entire portfolio of projects using open source, peer-reviewed data. It baselines the economic and social landscape through tested statistical methodologies and predicts the impacts of investment.

22. The framework will serve as an evaluation matrix to inform decision-making and secure project support by demonstrating detailed environmental, commercial, community, and social benefits. Adopting a whole system approach to sustainability, the framework will further demonstrate how improvement projects are meeting broader strategic objectives for the Council, helping to grow resilient and thriving communities. Council officers are currently in discussions with Roehampton University to explore the potential for their support and collaboration in this monitoring and evaluation.

PRIORITY THEME - HOMES

SITE CONTEXT - CHALLENGES

23. Through the engagement undertaken, residents of the estate identified the need for more homes to be provided on the estate to address housing need and current overcrowding. In determining the best way to meet this need, a review of the options has been undertaken which responds to the very specific site context of the estate.
24. The core area of the focus for the housing options is referred to below as the Project Area and is shown edged red on the plan attached at [Appendix 1](#).
25. The housing in this part of the estate is generally of a standard typology seen in several other neighbourhoods across the wider Alton Estate, and by modern standards faces a number of challenges:
26. **Space standards:** the majority of units in the Project Area are two-storey, three bed maisonettes, designed to accommodate five people with an average floor area of 77 sq m. The below summary table compares the average size of existing homes across the Project area with the Mayor of London's minimum space standards for comparable sized modern units:

Total number of units	Number of bedrooms	Number of bed spaces (persons)	Number of storeys	Av floorspace (sq. m)	GLA minimum space standard *	% difference
16	1	2p	1	41	50	18%
133	3	5p	2	77	93	17%
11	3	6p	3	107	108	1%
17	4	7p	3	107	121	11.5%

27. **Overcrowding:** Although overcrowding is a significant issue across the borough, records held for tenancies (both secure and temporary) in the Project Area indicate that based on known housing need¹ 47 households (26.7%) are overcrowded.
28. **Open space:** All lower floor units have access to either a private or communal garden/yard, however the majority of upper floor units have neither a balcony nor access to communal gardens.

¹ housing need was calculated for secure tenants by projected housing need in 2025 and for TA tenants as at Nov '22

29. **Accessibility:** The units are split level maisonettes and very few have level access, with most blocks being accessed via steps. No blocks have lifts. The inherent issues make access for those with mobility issues or pushchairs extremely challenging.
30. **EPC data:** The Council holds EPC data for most of the units within the Project Area, 6% of which have EPC ratings of E, 55% D and 39% C. It is reasonable to assume a similar distribution across other similar properties.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEMOLITION

Housing

31. In addition to the issues described in the preceding section, the housing in Harbridge Avenue and Kingsclere Close faces some additional specific challenges, which are set out in the following paragraphs and further illustrated in [Appendix 2](#).
32. The topography of the area between Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane is particularly challenging, with a significant slope down from Roehampton Lane.

Danebury/Harbridge Avenue

33. The blocks are of a standard housing design which was not adapted to reflect the topography of this part of the estate and the challenges it creates. This has resulted in residents having to negotiate a series of steps and ramps to overcome the level changes.
34. Where ramps do exist between Danebury and Harbridge Avenue, they tend to average between 1:10 – 1:14 gradient, which is steeper than the 1:20 gradient that is usually recommended and are a barrier to many people with a mobility impairment. Harbridge Avenue presents particular challenges for pedestrians, especially for those with limited mobility, due to the level change between the pavement and the road on the south side and the lack of any appropriate access. On the north side, although the pavement gradient is gentler, there is no pavement access on to Ellisfield Drive, effectively creating a dead-end and forcing all pedestrians to use the road.

1-115 Danebury Avenue Shopping parade

35. The Project Area also contains the main shopping parade on the estate, consisting of 16 units and containing a variety of chain and independent shops.
36. From the 2023 engagement residents gave a clear indication that an improved retail offer, in particular a larger supermarket, is a high priority.
37. Units 1-19 Danebury Avenue have already been identified for demolition to enable the construction of the new Roehampton Community Hub.

Case for demolishing 31-115 Danebury Avenue

38. This block is located at the top of Danebury Avenue and is a key gateway site into the estate, alongside Allbrook House and the new Roehampton Community Hub. This contains retail units.

39. Demolition and replacement of this block would ensure a more complete scheme, more in keeping with the new RCH and Village Square.
40. Resident and stakeholder engagement has consistently indicated that improvement to retail is important. Replacement of the existing shop units would improve the physical quality of the shops and enable consideration of both the size and quantity of retail units on the estate.
41. In addition to the retail units this block also contains 32 residential units, which face similar challenges set out in paragraphs 26-30 above. Whilst retrofit could help to improve EPC ratings, the other issues can only be addressed through demolition and replacement of these homes.
42. The former proposals showed new shop units in a block opposite. Whilst this block (Block N) no longer forms part of the current proposals, there is scope for replacement shops to be provided under the proposed new blocks on the north side of Danebury Avenue, as shown in [Appendix 3](#). This will ensure that there is scope for retailers to move once, and for the Council to maintain its previous approach to the shops (considered further below at paragraphs 87-101) can remain unchanged.
43. New business space with homes above would also be built on the existing site of 31-115 Danebury Avenue, providing additional retail space and also additional business/community space

Summary of the case for demolition

44. Given its cost, disruption and environmental impact, demolition is a last resort. However, it is considered that there remains a case for demolition in some limited areas for the following reasons;
 - (a) The housing quality issues (particularly size and access) cannot be addressed through refurbishment.
 - (b) Accessibility – access to units and navigating this part of the estate for residents with mobility issues or pushchairs is very challenging.
 - (c) Issues of overcrowding for households currently in 3 bed units can only be addressed by building larger homes.
 - (d) Only demolition can address some of the fundamental issues residents have raised, for example, – new retail on Danebury Avenue, better north-south access and general improvements to accessibility.
45. Using the above criteria suggests that the following blocks could be considered for demolition as part of any revised proposals:
 - 1- 28 Kingsclere Close
 - 1-31 Harbridge Avenue
 - 33-83 Harbridge Avenue
 - 85–115 Harbridge Avenue
 - 2-32 Harbridge Avenue
 - 34-84 Harbridge Avenue
 - 31-115 Danebury Avenue
46. Conversely applying these criteria the following blocks could be considered for retention:

- 1-45 Allbrook House
 - 117-211 Danebury Avenue
 - 213-243 Danebury Avenue
47. The proposals presented in this report reflect this approach. It should also be noted that delivery of the proposed new Children’s Centre and Family Hub at Portswood Place would require the demolition of 2a Minstead Gardens and 1-14 Portswood Place and the Danebury Practice at 351-351a Danebury Avenue

HOMES - OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

Approach of options development

48. The previous Masterplan for the estate, that received planning permission in March 2022, would have delivered 1,108 new homes of which only 24% were affordable and would have demolished 288 units. We have listened to residents and understand that these proposals are no longer acceptable. In addition, our recent analysis of the previous masterplan proposal indicate that they would have been unaffordable as an option to deliver with a £51.8m ask of the HRA (as outlined in Paragraph 66). As such, the report recommends that the decision to proceed with the previous masterplan, (Paper No. 20-245) is rescinded.
49. Instead, the Council recognises that any new Homes proposals for the estate need to respond to the priority themes and objectives identified through resident and stakeholder engagement (as outlined above) and the administration’s objective to increase both the net number of additional social rent homes and the percentage of affordable housing. Proposals must also seek to minimise the amount of land lost for private development.
50. As such, the Council now wants to work with residents to develop options for a genuine mixed-use development with a combination of new homes and community uses, shops, business space and improvements to open space and public realm.

2-26 and 1-33 Minstead Gardens

51. Proposals to extend the sheltered housing bungalows at Minstead Gardens were developed as part of the original arrangement with Redrow but sat outside the “red line” of the former masterplan’s planning permission, as separate listed building consent is also required.
52. A number of significant challenges exist with this site, particularly in terms of their heritage status and the location of some important trees, and with no existing planning permission in place it is not proposed that they should form part of any revised regeneration proposals.
53. This does not, however, preclude these bungalows from forming part of a future Major Works scheme at some point in the future and it is recommended this is explored.

PLACE AND COMMUNITY ELEMENTS OF THE HOMES PROPOSALS

54. Throughout the engagement process, there has been considerable support for a range of improvements to existing community and open spaces, as well as for new community and business space.
55. A set of proposals have been developed which are included in the ARP and would be enabled through the Homes proposals being proposed. For ease of reference these are summarised in the table below (a map indicating relevant locations can also be found at [Appendix 3](#)).

Location	Description
Roehampton Local Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing retail parade - Roehampton Library and Green - 1-29 Danebury Avenue 	Improved retail including new retail units along Danebury Avenue, provision of a larger supermarket, integrated into an enhanced local centre, fronted by the proposed Roehampton Community Hub, which will contain a new Library alongside youth and community space.
Portswood Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-14 Portswood Place - 2a Minstead Gardens - Minstead Gardens Club Room - Danebury Practice, 351-351a Danebury Avenue 	Deliver a new nursery/children's centre/family hub (to replace 166-168 Roehampton Lane) and community building, offering an exemplar family hub of health, wellbeing, under-fives education and social services from a single location The location would also provide a modern, replacement club room and new accommodation for the Danebury Practice.
Alton Activity Centre play space	Refurbishment of the Alton Activity Centre play space is already planned. This scheme has recently received planning consent and will be brought forward as part of the Early Improvement Plan (EIP). There could also be scope to deliver an enhanced youth/community offer from the AAC building to improve the scope and number of services the building can offer, subject to agreement with the current tenant.
Downshire Field	Landscape enhancements and play space upgrades are planned. designed to preserve and improve a key area of open space in the heart of the estate. This scheme has recently received planning consent and will be brought forward as part of the Early Improvement Plan (EIP).
Roehampton Parish Hall	There is scope to deliver a variety of community, arts, cultural, voluntary services from one location once existing staff are relocated to the Roehampton Community Hub.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

56. Based on the priorities identified through engagement and the subsequent appraisal undertaken on the existing units, approval is now sought to proceed on the basis of:
- Delivering the Early Improvement Plan.
 - Undertaking an appraisal on a new people-focussed Homes proposal that will be developed in consultation with residents and, subject to engagement showing support for a proposal, will be taken to resident ballot for final decision.

Early Improvement Plan

57. The principle of undertaking some elements of works as part of an early improvement plan has already been agreed (Paper No. 22-353). This plan will deliver the Roehampton Community Hub and improvements to AAC and Downshire Field, including:
- 40 new Council rent homes above the Roehampton Community Hub (10 units demolished)
 - Partial Alton Community Offer:
 - Roehampton Community Hub
 - New Village Square
 - Upgrades at AAC and Downshire Field Improvements
 - Scope to re-purpose Roehampton Parish Hall for community use
 - Re-purposing the former library, for example, as a larger supermarket

A new, people focused proposal

58. To deliver against the principles established through resident and stakeholder engagement, and on the assessment undertaken on the existing housing blocks on the estate, the Council is now proposing to appoint a design team to develop the design of a new people-focussed Homes proposal that would deliver new and improved homes on the estate along with wider social, economic and environmental improvements and infrastructure that meet the following requirements:
- Over 650 new homes (over 50% affordable).
 - 178 units demolished.
 - Retaining as many existing council units as possible.
 - New retail units as part of replacement of the existing units on Danebury Avenue and additional new units on the north side of Danebury Avenue.
 - Place and Community elements.
 - Improved connectivity between Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane.
59. The design would be developed in consultation with local residents and stakeholders leading towards a preferred option and resident ballot before a decision is taken to proceed.
60. In line with best practice, the options appraisal will also include the option of 'Do Nothing' which would result in the delivery of the Early Improvement Plan and the Council's planned maintenance works only.

REFURBISHMENT AND RETROFITTING

61. The new proposals involve the retention of some existing housing (see paragraph 46), which had previously been earmarked for demolition and consequently suspended from the Major Works programme. Consideration will be given to undertaking programmed improvements (including external decorations, roof renewals, lift replacements) as well as retrofitting thermal efficiency measures, where possible, to these units as part of the Council's wider housing investment programme.
62. A boroughwide programme of retrofitting is currently being designed and while a number of grants are available to Local Authorities and housing providers, there are often strict criteria around the maximum level of leaseholders per block, which usually means Wandsworth is ineligible, given the relatively high proportion of leaseholders across the housing stock. In addition, blocks within scope will be those with low EPC levels and Wandsworth blocks tend to have higher than average ratings, which places the borough in a less favourable position when being considered for grant.
63. It is therefore proposed that, feasibility studies on retrofitting are undertaken at these retained blocks, with a view to maximising grant funding.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS**Costs of delivering new proposals**

64. Recent years have seen large increases in construction costs and interest rates together with flat or falling house prices. These factors have impacted on the development industry (including the Council's Homes for Wandsworth programme). The financial context for any proposals has therefore changed considerably.
65. There remains a balance of c.£85m within the HRA for the regeneration of the Alton Estate. A series of options have been modelled by Inner Circle Consulting. This assumes GLA (Greater London Authority) grant being available for all new units and General Fund funding for the Roehampton Community Hub, improvements to AAC and Downshire Fields play spaces, and the construction of a new family hub / children's centre and other community spaces at Portswood Place, which are in the General Fund bids' pipeline.
66. Inner Circle Consulting has undertaken high-level financial modelling of each the new proposals, based on a series of assumptions at this stage, and this is presented below in comparison with the Masterplan (see [Appendix 5](#) for further details).

Proposal	Additional cost to HRA	Non-financial evaluation
Early Improvement Plan Only 'Do Nothing'	£0	19
New People-Focussed proposal	£16.26m	31
Masterplan consented March 2022	£51.76m	25

67. It can be seen that the previous Masterplan scores poorly on financial grounds as well as reducing (by one) rather than increasing the levels of Council rent homes. It also proposes higher levels of demolition with little by way of additionality in terms of affordable housing. The unaffordability of the previous Masterplan, along with its failure to meet resident priorities regarding the provision of new Council homes, has led to it being discounted as a feasible option for further consideration.
68. It should be noted that the modelling above has, necessarily, been based on the assumptions that new blocks within the revised red line create the same number of units as the units with the consented masterplan. In practice, unit numbers may fall due to the requirement for two staircases and the higher proportion of Council homes (which are larger in terms of average bed-size than private blocks). The impact of these changes would be worked through in more detail on any preferred option, but the current approach allows a comparative analysis of the options.
69. Plans showing the EIP, the new People-focussed proposal and the original are attached at Appendix 4.

Conclusion

70. A new people-focussed proposal would involve a mid-range level of demolition but secure the community benefits and reasonable amounts of additional Council homes.
71. As appraised against proceeding with the Early Improvement Plan only or the previous masterplan, the people-focussed proposal is anticipated to respond most comprehensively to the priority themes and objectives identified through resident and stakeholder engagement (as outlined in Paragraph 13) and the administration's objective to increase both the net number of additional social rent homes and the percentage of affordable housing. The detail of this appraisal can be found in Appendix 5.
72. In recognition of the above, the people-focussed proposal is considered to be the preferred approach. This paper therefore recommends that the people-focussed proposal be developed in consultation with local residents and should include a 'Do Nothing' option, in line with best practice, that delivers the current Early Improvement Plan only.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

73. A comprehensive stakeholder engagement process will be essential in order to both develop options for a people-focused proposal and arrive at a preferred option to take forward to a ballot.
74. The anticipated engagement process is as follow:
- Stage 1 – engagement around development of a people-focused option/do nothing
 - Stage 2 – evaluation of feedback to arrive at a preferred option
 - Stage 3 – Committee decision on a preferred option to be taken to ballot
 - Stage 4 – pre-ballot engagement
 - Stage 5 – ballot

75. Subject to Stage 3 being completed by June 2025, it is anticipated that a ballot will take place in late 2025/early 2026. A committee decision on the preferred option, informed by the ballot result, could then be expected in mid-2026.

LANDLORD'S OFFER

76. Paper No. 22-253 approved the withdrawal of the Landlord's Offer pending a review of objectives and options for the regeneration. In developing new options for the new people-focussed proposal, a revised Landlord's Offer will also be developed ahead of a ballot being undertaken. Whilst exact terms of a revised Resident offer will not be confirmed until the necessary consultation is completed, as a minimum the offer will meet the same terms as the previous Resident Offer and an offer will be developed for residents in temporary accommodation within the development area.

EARLY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (EIP) UPDATE

77. 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 AAC and Roehampton Community Hub. As a shorthand, proposals for these three sites are referred to as The Early Improvement Plan.
78. A planning application was submitted in March 2024 for upgrades to the external play area at AAC and play upgrades and landscape enhancements at Downshire Field. The proposals were agreed at the Planning Applications Committee on 20 June 2024. Allowing for further design development and procurement of contractors, it is anticipated that works will commence in June 2025 with an estimated completion date of March 2026.
79. The proposals have been developed following an extended period of engagement and consultation with residents and stakeholders, and in response to their feedback.
80. Particular attention has been paid to ensuring that the play spaces will be fully accessible and inclusive, and that there are areas that girls will feel safe.
81. Access to the AAC play space is currently limited to the opening hours of the AAC community building. The existing high fence, which is seen as a barrier by many, will be removed and replaced with a lower fence which will allow access to residents in line with normal playground opening times, rather than currently limited access. Youth and Children's Services particularly welcome these changes and the sense of freedom they will bring to children and young people on the estate able to access this area and intend to plan some activities around the use of these new spaces. However, an area that can be closed off around the back / sides of the AAC building will be created, to ensure the on-going viability of the services run from the AAC.
82. In addition to improved play space works will also deliver landscape enhancements, including an improved pathway network, installation of a trim trail to promote healthy, active lifestyles, enhanced meadow planting and upgrades to the planting and lighting around the Bull statue to enhance this important heritage asset.

Roehampton Community Hub

83. Design development work is underway for the Roehampton Community Hub, which will form a separate stand-alone planning application.
84. The proposed building sits on the corner of Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane, marking one of the key gateways to the estate. The block was originally designed to deliver a replacement library, new youth facilities, a community hall, two replacement GP's surgeries and 40 Council homes.
85. Existing plans are being reviewed in response to the Integrated Care Board advising that it can no longer fund the Alton and Danebury GP Practices relocating into the new building. The replacement library and youth centre will remain part of the proposals. On this basis, alternative proposals will need to be considered for the use of the former GP space allocation and could provide business space for small business/Voluntary and Community Service (VCS) organisations as well as a base for Council staff and services. This reflects the earlier proposals which would have provided business space and a base for Council staff as part of a new block adjoining the Allbrook House site which is no longer part of the options. The plans for the Village Square will also need to be amended to reflect the Alton Practice building remaining in situ.
86. The new proposals require significant engagement with service departments who will have use of the new building and will then require the internal layout to be redesigned before any planning application can be submitted. The headlines of an indicative programme are:

Planning submission	Early 2025
PAC	Late 2025
Planning permission	End 2025
Start on site	Mid-2026
Completion	Mid-2028

APPROACH TO RETAIL OFFER

87. These proposals provide an opportunity to meet residents' desire for improved shops and businesses whilst minimising the impact on those retailers providing key neighbourhood uses.
88. In 2019 the (then) Housing and Regeneration OSC and Executive approved a proposal for a "retail offer" to ensure the Council provides support for important neighbourhood uses and to provide existing shop keepers with some comfort given the uncertainty regeneration causes.
89. The scheme will be phased to allow continuity of retail provision by building new retail units on the north side of Danebury Avenue before the existing parade of retail units at 31-59 (odd) Danebury Avenue is demolished.

90. A key part of these proposals is to improve the commercial and retail offer whilst ensuring continuity of convenience or neighbourhood uses. With this in mind, it is proposed to create the opportunity for a new, larger supermarket to be provided in the existing library, which will be vacant once the RCH is completed.
91. The Council's intention is for the new retail on the north side of Danebury Avenue to provide convenience shopping that meets the needs of the local community and the balance and nature of those uses should be informed by consultation with residents on which uses they feel should be retained or provided.
92. The best current estimate of the completion date of the new retail block is late 2032. Consultation on preferred uses would take place around two years prior to this in 2030.
93. The Council wrote to all the existing Danebury Avenue businesses in 2018 and confirmed that for those retailers that do move within the scheme (and as reported in Paper No. 18-415), the Council has committed to:
 - (a) freezing rents at the same level per square foot as the current unit at 2018 levels for the first three years of the lease. It is now suggested that that "freeze" date be two years prior to completion of the new block (i.e. 2030).
 - (b) discuss any support required for fit-out costs of the new unit including considering any compensation that may be due.
94. Each trader will have different needs both individually and for their business, and the Council remains committed to discussing potential options with each of them. In addition to a rent freeze on any new unit, the Council will explore whether any additional tailored measures might be required to support those traders whose uses are identified as required as key neighbourhood uses.
95. The Council will also develop a package of support for those traders affected by the regeneration with the aim of securing a strong and vibrant retail offer. It is too early in the process to develop these in detail at this stage but the Council's commitment to work with traders to support them is clear.
96. If residents preferred uses are known around 18 months prior to completion of the new parade, this will provide time to negotiate terms for those traders.
97. For those uses that will not relocate to the new parade, there will be at least two years before their units are required which will provide time for them to consider options in terms of negotiating to leave or relocating elsewhere.
98. Assuming a decision is taken on a preferred option that includes significant demolition, it is proposed that the Council will not exercise any break clauses or termination provisions for the purposes of the regeneration before the outcome of the preferred uses is completed (no sooner than, say, April 2030). This will provide existing retailers with certainty that they can remain in their shops until 2030 at the earliest.
99. If the above approach is approved, then a letter will be sent to traders with an update on the regeneration and outlining these proposals and inviting them to speak to officers one on one if they have any queries or concerns.

100. It should be noted that not all traders are direct tenants of the Council. Some traders hold long leases (originally 99 or 125 years) and other are sub-tenants of long leaseholders. This will affect the negotiation approach adopted, particularly for those cases where traders are not direct tenants of the Council.

101. It is hoped this approach balances the needs to existing traders with ensuring future shopping uses met the needs to the local community.

RISKS

102. As with any development project, there are some risks involved which are summarised below along with the mitigations that are underway/will be required:

Type	Risk	Mitigation
Delivery	Failure to secure planning permission for community hub and wider scheme.	Ensure early discussions with LPA and other stakeholders as preferred option emerges from engagement process. Procure the right expertise to ensure the Council has the best advice and support possible in navigating any planning challenges.
Wider support for proposals	Loss of resident/stakeholder/partner/Member support creates uncertainty	Strong stakeholder, partner and resident engagement to provide confidence in the direction and commitment to delivery, as well as regular briefings with ward and other key Members to ensure key concerns are heard and can be addressed. Ensure legitimate concerns raised via engagement are acknowledged and addressed where possible.
Financial	Negative impact of increasing build costs and wider economic circumstances	Budgets will need to be realistically set and supported by expert cost advice. Whilst general inflation can't be mitigated, cost pressures can be through competitive procurement, design changes and a sensible approach to value engineering.
External funding	Failure to secure GLA grant for all new homes	Build on the existing excellent working relations with the GLA to ensure early engagement to provide confidence around the availability of grant over the life of the programme.
CPO	Failure to secure a successful compulsory purchase order.	By ensuring a sound planning permission and adhering to both the CPO Guidance and the legislative framework, CPO risk can be reduced provided the Council obtains the right external expertise and advice and has sufficient internal expertise.

103. Risk will be monitored and managed through the ARP scheme's governance arrangements. Whilst there are clearly some significant risks, they are considered commensurate and manageable for a scheme of this size and complexity.

OPPORTUNITIES

104. Whilst there are manageable risks within the proposals, they also offer significant benefits (summarised below); realising these benefits will be tracked and managed alongside risks and other key programme issues.

105. The principal headline benefits include:

- Increased level of Council rent homes – tackling acute local housing need.
- Improved shopping and business offer.
- Step change in the quality of community buildings (library, children centres, nursery, youth services).
- Improvements to quality of open space and public realm.
- Better accessibility through and beyond the estate including access to Richmond Park.
- Better transport links, particularly improvements to bus services.
- Investment in existing homes.
- Social value, employment opportunities and potential for collaboration with local partners and stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

106. Comprehensive and ongoing engagement remains central to the Council's approach and, in addition to the engagement undertaken in early 2023, a comprehensive programme of community engagement has taken place over the last 14 months. This has continued through 2024 as the Leader, Ward Councillors and officers have met with key stakeholders and local Alton residents from across the community to share how the Council is responding to the needs and issues voiced by local people.

107. Engagement, including those led by the Leader, Ward Councillors and officers, include:

- 4,500+ leaflets and pamphlets delivered to local Alton Estate resident doorsteps on 8 July.
- 7 Alton Info Stall local drop-ins across the Alton Estate, delivered from 8-19 July.
- 1 Leader's Community Drop-in session at the Roehampton Leisure Centre, held on 13 July.
- A number of one-to-one meetings with key partner organisations and stakeholders.

108. The Council is committed to fostering community-based collaboration across the Alton. This includes taking a partnership approach to delivering this ambitious programme so that community partners have ownership of the programme and residents feel engaged in their community.

109. The Council has been engaging with key partners and stakeholders and will continue to build this relationship with a focus on sustained dialogue, cooperation, trust, and accountability whilst incorporating the diverse perspectives and views on the Alton.

110. The Council will continue to nurture relationships, solicit feedback, and enhance the inclusivity of all communications in order to foster a strong sense of community ownership and participation.
111. This approach to engagement will also be a central part of working with residents to help identify a preferred option and undertaking any subsequent residents' ballot. To further support the Council's approach, it is proposed that the Council;
- Procures engagement consultants to support the Council with undertaking comprehensive engagement and consultation with residents and stakeholders – this will provide capacity and a degree of objectivity.
 - Develops an "Engagement Commitment" to clearly set out what residents can expect in terms of updates and opportunities to get involved/help shape the plans.
 - Consider opportunities to develop properly representative resident/stakeholder panels to help inform proposals to ensure they meet the community's needs.
 - Consider appointing an independent advisor for residents who will be rehoused as part of any of the Homes proposals.
112. Through robust engagement with community partners and stakeholders including community groups, local businesses, youth groups, senior groups, and faith-based groups, the Council aims to ensure that these programmes are delivered efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of residents.
113. The Council will continue to nurture relationships, solicit feedback, and enhance the inclusivity of all communications in order to foster a strong sense of community ownership and participation.

NEXT STEPS

114. This report summarises the progress so far in the development of the ARP. Subject to approval by this committee, a considerable amount of activity is anticipated to take place over the course of the next six months, as summarised in the table below, bringing significant opportunities to residents living on the estate.

Anticipated ARP programme: July – December 2024

Pillar 1: community facilities	
Alton Activity Centre & Downshire Field landscaping, play improvements	Projects have been submitted for planning consent Start on site for construction April 2025. Project completion anticipated March 2026.
Roehampton Community Hub	Design work and engagement being undertaken now. Planning submission anticipated for Early 2025 PAC anticipated Late 2025. Start on site for construction Mid 2026.
: Family Hub, 166 Roehampton lane	Opens to the public in late August 2024 with the intention (to be replaced by a new children's centre / family hub at Portswood Place as part of the people-focussed proposal approach.)
Pillar 2: Neighbourhood	
Maintenance works to estate carriageways, footways	Summer 2024 – repairs ongoing.
Pillar 3: Accessibility	
New Council-funded Community mini-bus	Summer 2024 – Pilot

Expansion of University of Roehampton Bus to public use	Sept 2024 – Service begins
Quiet Cycle Routes	Begins Spring 2025
Pedestrian Environment Improvements	Delivery of improvements starting in 24/25.
Improved Access to Richmond Park	Delivery 2025
Car Clubs	Delivery through 2025
Pillar 4: Homes	
Housing Above Roehampton Community Hub	Design work and engagement to be commenced immediately upon approval of this committee.
People-focussed proposal	Design work and engagement to be commenced immediately upon approval of this committee.
Fontley Way Development	Nearing completion – July 2024
Land Adjacent to Farnborough House	Planning approval granted March 2024 Procurement of contractor summer 2024. Start on site Spring 2025.
Bessborough Road Development	Planning approval granted October 2023. Procurement of contractor summer 2024. Start on site summer 2025
Pillar 5 Economic Inclusion:	
London Borough of Culture initiatives	Delivery of some public elements such as outreach and training will start in Autumn 2024. The public programme will start in April 2025 and run to March 2026.
Economic Inclusion - Work Match	Services already in place, Employ Wandsworth 2025 to be delivered in Summer 2025

115. The Council will embark immediately on an extensive engagement exercise with residents, community organisations and other stakeholders to add further definition to the projects proposed.
116. In addition, conversations will be progressed with critical partner agencies including University of Roehampton, the Greater London Authority and Transport for London to secure their investment and support into the proposals. The University of Roehampton has already proved to be an early and fully engaged partner – with representation on several key bodies with a role on the Alton. This long-term investment has been advanced in recent discussions through direct input and support for specific projects within the Alton Renewal Plan, including enabling a Work Match presence and piloting the dual-use of the University Bus for Alton residents. Recent discussions with the University senior team have also established the potential to explore a broader programme of collaboration, which may extend into aspects of student/curricular support, access to study opportunities and research/case studies. As an early phase of work, we propose to explore the potential for the University to support a baseline/dashboard for the ARP, which will provide a platform from which to assess progress. Various aspects of the Plan will provide opportunity for student engagement. The intention is also to work with Health and voluntary sector partners, with the aim of exploring and establishing a range of integrated community-based programmes aimed at improving health outcomes.
117. Detailed delivery plans and budgets are in the process of being finalised for each project and will be coordinated within the Place Directorate. The programme management and monitoring of specific service delivery will remain the responsibility of the appropriate Executive Director to which the service relates, and budget will sit with them appropriately.

118. Subject to this committee's approval of proceeding with a new people-focussed Homes proposal (as outlined in para 58), masterplanners will be appointed to undertake a detailed options appraisal and support an extensive process of resident and stakeholder engagement.
119. At the point a preferred option emerges, this will be reported back to this committee for approval to progress to commencement of a resident ballot process, currently programmed to commence towards the end of 2025.
120. This report summarises the progress so far in the development of the Alton Renewal Plan. Recognising the complexities of the broader programme, together with the scale and impact of the delivery required, consideration has been given to the best means to organise staff and programmes into a unified delivery team. Building on the successful approach outlined in this report in enabling a Place-based focus, the current Regeneration and Development Division, which covers the Housing Development team, delivering Homes for Wandsworth, and the Alton and York Road Winstanley Regeneration Teams, will be embedded within the newly-formed Place Division. The Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration and the Director of Place will work closely to ensure continued and aligned working across the delivery of these key programmes.

SUPPORTING THE WANDSWORTH ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (WESS)

121. 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.
122. The Environment pillar of the ARP is focussed on driving better environmental outcomes for the Alton Estate and will be consistent with and supportive of the WESS.

COMMENTS OF THE SOUTH LONDON LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

123. The Council has a statutory duty to obtain best value under s 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness."
124. Any procurement of goods, services or works to support the ARP must be in compliance with the Council's contract standing orders/procedure rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
125. Any communication with the public with regards to the ARP must be in compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

126. The ARP aims at bringing forward projects across the estate and categorises them across six pillars of activity. To deliver the capital proposals indicative total costs of £2.639m would be incurred utilising £327,000 of existing approved budgets. This would require capital budget approvals totalling £2.315m with the indicative annual spend profile being as follows:

Capital Projects	Total Capital Cost £'000	Existing or External Funding £'000	Capital Budget Requested			
			Total £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
General Fund	1,533	- 133	1,400	440	860	100
Housing Revenue Account	1,109	- 194	915	315	600	0
Total	2,642	- 327	2,315	755	1,460	100

127. To deliver the revenue proposals over a pilot period, total costs of £2.785m have been identified, utilising £100,000 of existing approved revenue budget. These would therefore require the approval of additional General Fund revenue budget of £2.685m to be spent over the next 2-3 years with the indicative annual spend profile being as follows:

Revenue Projects		General Fund Revenue Budget Requested				
Total Revenue Cost £'000	Less Existing or External Funding £'000	Total £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000
2,785	- 100	2,685	635	1,150	700	200

128. The exact profile of both capital and revenue spend will continue to be refined as the programme progresses to capture actual start dates for schemes/initiatives and ensure budget is matched appropriately.

129. Some of the revenue projects could be considered for continuation beyond the end of the ARP pilot period and decisions about their continuation would be required to be made at a later date once the impact and benefits have been reviewed. If extended, these projects would therefore require further General Fund ongoing revenue budget approval. Depending on the number and scope of the projects that may be considered for continuation, this could cost up to £1m per annum.

130. Confirmation of the timing of the expected and final costs, assessment of the priority need, benefits and value for money of each of the proposals and establishment of the governance arrangements will be required before officers can draw down from the approved budgets. Delegation to the Director of Place and Executive Director of Finance will ensure this programme can be flexible and nimble to deliver the required outcomes at speed whilst ensuring value for money is delivered.

Homes Options

131. The HRA business plan has previously made provision for significant investment in the Alton Estate regeneration project totalling £105m. Spend to date has been incurred over a number of years which means there is around £85m of this identified funding remaining.

132. The proposals put forward would use these previously approved resources and, for the people-focussed proposal, would require further investment of an estimated additional net £16.26m for the people-focussed proposal. This additional cost is not included in the level of borrowing currently assumed in the HRA business plan. It is estimated that to proceed now with the previous masterplan would have required an additional £51.76m.
133. As the preferred option emerges the detailed impact on the HRA will need to be assessed and cash outflow and inflow projections would need to be revised. Existing budget approvals will be revisited in September 2024 as part of the next HRA business plan update.
134. For the properties that fall outside the scope of those that will be subject to demolition it is suggested that works will be undertaken as part of the Major Works programme. The HRA currently makes provision of around £35m per annum for all capital repairs and improvements so any proposed works will need to be met from the sums available. HRA capital bids will next be brought forward for approval as part of the HRA Rents and Budget Setting report in January 2025. Anything brought forward for approval outside of that process will be considered the first call on future available resources.
135. For any elements of the EIP (and costs arising) and subsequent options put forward that are attributable to the General Fund, capital bids will be required at the appropriate time as there are currently no budgets approved for these works. The total cost of this is estimated at £14m covering both the Alton Activity Centre and the General Fund elements of the Roehampton Community Hub. Additionally, a further £11m could be required, subject to the preferred option, for the relocation of the Children's Centre in the updated scheme. This would bring the total capital cost of the General Fund elements of the scheme to £25m based on current estimates. These costs are in addition to those shown above.

CONCLUSION

136. The Council is committed to delivering a programme of major investment in the Alton estate. The Alton Renewal Plan will help keep the area special and ensure all residents have the chance to participate in the exciting opportunities their neighbourhood provides.
137. In creating the Alton Renewal Plan, the Council has listened carefully to the priorities for the estate and resident and stakeholder views will continue to shape these plans as they move forward.

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BRIAN REILLY
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PAUL MOORE
Interim Director of Place

9th July 2024

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.