

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCILHOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22nd JANUARY 2025EXECUTIVE – 3rd FEBRUARY 2025Report by the Interim Executive Director of Housing and the Interim Director of Place on
the (Roehampton) Alton Renewal PlanSUMMARY

This report provides a general update on the delivery of the Alton Renewal Plan, including progress on developing and delivering project activities.

This report provides an update on the development, in consultation with residents, of new housing proposals and anticipated progress towards an estate ballot.

This report provides a detailed update on the proposals to bring forward significant upgrades and improvement to the external play space at the Alton Activity Centre and Downshire Field, which form part of the Phase 1 programme.

This report seeks to authorise the Interim Executive Director of Housing to let a main works contract for the delivery of the proposed works subject to completion of satisfactory legal and technical due diligence process.

This report recommends the approval of a General Fund capital budget for the implementation of the Alton Activity Centre improvements, to be carried out alongside the upgrades to Downshire Field which is funded through the Housing Revenue Account.

Progress on the delivery of the Alton Renewal Plan will be reported back to this Committee on a regular 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 Overview and Scrutiny 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. Authorise the Interim Executive Director of Housing in accordance with the Council's standing orders and in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Head of South London Legal Partnership to let a main works contract for the delivery of the proposed works to the Alton Activity Centre and Downshire Field on completion of satisfactory legal & technical due diligence process;
 - b. Approve positive General Fund capital budget variations of £0.2 million in 2024/25, £1.8 million in 2025/26 and £0.3 million in 2026/27 for the Alton Activity Centre; and
 - c. Note that a £4 million Housing Revenue Account capital bid for Downshire Field has been included in the Housing Revenue Account Rents and Budget Setting report elsewhere on this agenda.

BACKGROUND

3. Paper No. 24-170 approved £5 million of HRA and General Fund investment to support proposals for the delivery of the Alton Renewal Plan (ARP); a programme of place-based projects alongside consideration of options for regeneration, representing significant investment in the Alton Estate.
4. The ARP was launched in July 2024. Projects were shaped by extensive engagement with the Alton community and were split into a Phase 1 for immediate delivery and Phase 2 requiring further development. Activity is being delivered under six key objectives identified through resident engagement:
 - Community
 - Neighbourhood
 - Accessibility
 - Homes
 - Economic Inclusion
 - Environment
5. The majority of the programme is being developed and delivered by Council teams, in partnership with the community and with local stakeholders such as Roehampton University.
6. Experienced, award-winning design team HTA Design have been appointed to guide the ARP housing proposals.
7. Three community facilities are being delivered as part of an Early Improvement Plan: landscape and play improvements at Downshire Field, external playspace improvements at Alton Activity Centre and the delivery of Roehampton Community Hub.

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8. Both Downshire Field and Alton Activity Centre are now ready to proceed to implementation.
9. The Alton Activity Centre is council-owned and held within the General Fund. This now requires capital budget approval to proceed with the proposed works. The estimated cost is £2.3 million.
10. Downshire Field is held and managed within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The cost of the proposed improvements are included in the HRA Capital Bids as part of the HRA Rents and Budget Setting report (Paper No. 25-13) elsewhere on this agenda. The estimated total cost of this element of the scheme is £4 million.

ARP PROGRESS UPDATE

11. In the first 6 months of the ARP (since the launch in June), we have successfully delivered 4 projects. These projects are now operational and delivering services for Alton residents:
 - The **Family Hub** opened to the community on 2 September and was formally launched on 3 October.
 - Resident access to the **University bus service** started on 23 September.
 - A new council funded **community minibus** was launched on 23 September.
 - The launch of **Warm Packs** for vulnerable residents took place at Roehampton Library on 27 November and are now being distributed through community networks over the winter.
12. The remainder of ARP projects are in development and the updates below are divided into capital and revenue programmes.

Capital ARP projects:

Project	Update	Programme
Pillar 1: Community facilities		
Alton Activity Centre Play & Access Improvements	See the paragraph below (no.24)	
Downshire Fields Play Improvements	See the paragraph below (no.24)	
Roehampton Community Hub	See the paragraph below (no.22)	
Pillar 2: Neighbourhood		
Wayfinding and Heritage Trail	The project brief has been combined with the two projects below and a consultant team will be in place in January 2025 to commence the work.	Programme to follow.
Gateway Artwork into Alton	As above.	As above.
Leisure Centre Walkway	As above.	As above.
Murals & Public Art Wall	A brief has been written to send out to Roehampton artists. This will be managed under the same public programme as the projects above.	As above.
Provision of Refuse and Recycling Bin Enclosures	Bins enclosures ordered. Phased installation programme.	Complete Jan - Nov 2025

Maintenance works to estate carriageways, footways	Phase 1 - very poor areas Phase 2 - poor areas Ongoing review of areas that may fall into poor categories.	Complete Jan – Apr 2025 Apr 2025 +
A Lighting Strategy and Lighting Interventions	Lighting Strategy. Lighting Interventions.	Jan – May 2025 June – Oct 2025
Pillar 3: Accessibility		
Quiet cycle routes	Consultation of proposed cycle routes. Report to Nov Transport Committee. Consult on proposed improvements. Proposals to Transport committee. Phased delivery of routes.	Complete Complete Mar-Apr 2025 June 2025 Jul – Dec 2025
Pedestrian environment improvements	Study of pedestrian environment issues. Develop delivery plan. Deliver improvements.	Complete Dec – Feb 2025 Mar – Sept 2025
Improved access to Richmond Park	Approval of the Royal Parks planning application needed to proceed with work on a path to the proposed new park entrance. Planning application was submitted in August 2024. Some further information has been requested from the applicant. Likely to be reported to Richmond Planning Applications Committee but not before March 2025.	tbc
Car Clubs	In development. Meeting with operators to be confirmed.	tbc
Pillar 4: Homes		
Housing Above Roehampton Community Hub	See the paragraph below (no.22)	
Housing Regeneration Programme	See the paragraph below (no.14)	
Fontley Way development	Homes for Wandsworth programme. 14 new council homes now complete and residents have moved in.	
Land adjacent to Farnborough House	Homes for Wandsworth programme.	
Bessborough Road Development	Homes for Wandsworth programme.	
Pillar 5: Economic Inclusion		
Community and Cultural Hub in Focus Hall	Extensive refurbishment works are planned for the building and a public consultation on the proposals has been carried out. Refurbishment works on site.	Feb - Apr 2025
Shopfront Improvements on Danebury Avenue	Consultant team in place January 2025.	Programme to follow.

Revenue ARP projects:

Project	Update
Pillar 1: Community facilities	
Community Wellbeing Activation	Freelance support is in place; they are making local connections and mapping opportunities for physical activity and wellbeing on the estate. Delivery programme and outputs are in development.
Community Grants Programme	In development. A mapping and cross-department review of grants being offered in Alton is taking place.

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Increase after school provision	An audit of the wraparound need has been carried out and data shows that the offer currently meets demand. However, a need has been identified to improve access for children with SEND within the existing provision. This will be explored with providers in 2025.
Pillar 2: Neighbourhood	
Alton Community Safety Officer	Recruitment is underway with interviews taking place in January 2025.
Increase VCS Community Capacity	Recruitment is under way for a new VCS Community Capacity officer.
Pillar 3: Accessibility	
Campaign for better buses	Regular meetings with TfL are in place. Team is negotiating with and advocating on behalf of Roehampton residents to improve the bus services in the area.
Cycling support	Bays for e-bikes and e-scooters will be installed Dec – Feb 2025. Engagement with Roehampton primary schools on cycling is taking place until June 2025. Cycle parking on the Roehampton estates is being reviewed, additional cycle parking to be delivered in March 2025.
Pillar 5: Economic Inclusion	
Work Match	Outreach officers are in Alton 2 days a week and Job Centre Plus will commence outreach work in Alton in 2025. Job fair "Employ Wandsworth" 9 May 2025 at Whiteland's College (Roehampton University). "Connect to work" a new employment support service targeted at those with health conditions is in development and will commence in Autumn/Winter 2025. Various training sessions are taking place across 2025.
Cultural Programmes for Alton Residents	Alton Arts & Events Manager has been recruited and will be in post February 2025. Programme to follow.
Supporting creativity in Roehampton schools	Schools programme has commenced.
Later opening businesses on parade	In development.
Community and Cultural Hub in Focus Hall	In development to secure a community and cultural tenant to manage the building following the refurbishment works.
Pillar 6: Environment	
Wildflower meadow	Specification to be aligned with the Downshire Fields Play Improvements project and meadow sown in Spring 2025.
Community Bluescapes	Co-production project has launched and is in development. Local climate solutions will be delivered by April 2026.

13. Resident feedback suggests that projects have been well received to date. Some individual projects are collating monitoring information and the programme team are currently developing a brief for monitoring and evaluation support for the wider place-based programme. We will explore community research models and work with existing stakeholders such as the University of Roehampton. We will commission a consultant team to support in early 2025.

HOUSING PROPOSALS

14. HTA Design were appointed to lead the development of the housing proposals following a competitive tender process and started work in August 2024.

15. They have completed a detailed survey of the estate with a particular focus on the three areas identified for redevelopment: Danebury Avenue and surrounding area, Portswood Place and 166 Roehampton Lane.
16. Supported by the Alton team they have conducted several estate walkabouts and met with residents in a number of settings including with Our Roehampton and a number of local stakeholders, as well as with a local wheelchair-user resident to help the design team better understand the accessibility challenges on the estate. HTA has further visited a number of local community groups and organisations including SW15 women's network, Roehampton Partnership, over 60's cafe, Family Hub, Chantelle's Community Kitchen and the Youth Advisory Panel.
17. A well-attended "Meet the Design Team" event was held on 12th October and residents offered insightful feedback on their aspirations for the Alton, as well as getting the chance to view examples of HTA's previous work on large housing estates.
18. Further open design workshops took place on 16th, 19th and 27th November and 6th December. The first sequence of workshops has focused on the Danebury area, with further dates planned for early 2025 to look at Portswood Place and 166 Roehampton Lane. Residents and HTA colleagues will explore potential layouts and community priorities in each area.
19. A provisional programme has been put together which would allow for a resident ballot on the redevelopment proposals in September 2025. A ballot delivers on the ARP commitment to residents not to proceed without their consent and a successful outcome will allow the Council to draw down GLA grant to support the cost of new social homes.
20. To secure grant eligibility ballot area boundaries require agreement with the GLA. Discussions on the boundary are currently underway and the outcome will be reported in the next update paper.

ARP RESIDENT STEERING GROUP

21. Reflecting feedback from community members and to enhance the quality and relevance of project design and delivery we are in the process of establishing a resident steering group. Preliminary workshops to be held with residents in February will inform the group's design.

ROEHAMPTON COMMUNITY HUB

22. Design work has continued to develop proposals for a new community and residential building on this important gateway site, to deliver a replacement library, youth club, council offices, community spaces and 40 council homes.
23. A pre-app meeting was held with the Local Planning Authority on 23rd October to discuss the plans. Conversation focused on the suitability of the design given the changed context, namely that Allbrook House, directly opposite the community hub site, is no longer proposed for demolition. Design changes are now anticipated to reflect the revised setting in which the block will come forward.

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ALTON ACTIVITY CENTRE AND DOWNSHIRE FIELD PROPOSALS

24. The Alton Activity Centre comprises a single storey community building with a large external play space, currently managed by a local organisation. A current image of the site can be seen at **Appendix 1**.
25. Downshire Field is a large open green space sitting centrally within the Alton Estate. The existing play area is of poor quality and no longer considered fit for purpose.
26. The proposals have been developed following an extended period of engagement and consultation with residents and stakeholders. Both areas will see fully redesigned playspace which is sensitive both to the needs of particular groups of children and young people, and to the characteristics of the Alton landscape. Proposals also include new paths, physical trim trail stations, better lighting and new seating.
27. 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.
28. Changes to the fencing around the Alton Activity Centre play space will also support access for play when the community building is closed. 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.
29. Whilst the plans do not include any changes to the existing community building, comprehensive and ongoing engagement is being undertaken with Children's Services and the current lessee to ensure that their service needs are being taken into consideration.
30. A detailed planning application (Ref. 2024/1155) was submitted in March 2024 and approved at Planning Applications Committee on 20th June 2024. Full details of the application and conditions can be found at: [Alton Activity Centre and Downshire Field planning application](#).

COST OF THE WORKS

31. The current estimated cost of the Alton Activity Centre project is £2.3 million including Council incurred fees and client-held contingency. Works to Downshire Field are estimated at £4 million including fees and contingency.
32. The table below sets out estimated expenditure timings, along with the project risk assessment at **Appendix 2** including mitigation methods.

Forecast expenditure	2024/25 (£'000)	2025/26 (£'000)	2026/27 (£'000)	Total (£'000)
Alton Activity Centre (GF)	200	1,800	300	2,300
Downshire Field (HRA)	200	3,400	400	4,000
Total Council Investment	400	5,200	700	6,300

33. It is proposed that a single contract is let to a main works contractor for both sites – thereby offering a single point of contact to residents and securing economies of scale in procurement and site management.
34. Progress of works will be closely monitored by regular site visits including monthly meetings chaired by the Council's appointed technical consultants: Potter Raper LLP.
35. Payments under the contract will be via stage payments, with certificates issued by Potter Raper once they are satisfied the claimed stage has indeed been completed.
36. See the following table for key milestone dates:

Programme Milestones	Date
Tender process	January – March 2025
Contract award / execution	May 2025
Start on site	June 2025
Completion & Handover	January 2026

37. The proposals additionally support the Council's emerging revised play strategy, with particular emphasis on accessible and inclusive play and safe spaces for girls.

COMMENTS OF THE SOUTH LONDON LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

38. In order for this project to progress, the Council will conclude property due diligence to identify if there are any impediments to the proposals and mitigate the same.
39. If the sites are identified as housing land, due consideration will need to be given to the need for tenant consultation under section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 in respect of the works to Estate open space if this substantially affects secure tenants as well as any impact on the management of the HRA. It is noted that the Council is empowered by section 13 Housing Act 1985 to provide and maintain open spaces/play/amenity areas in its borough.
40. 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."
41. 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.

COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

42. The required funding for the Downshire Field element is included as part of the HRA Capital Bids contained within the HRA Rents and Budget Setting report (Paper No. 25-13) elsewhere on this agenda. This is estimated at a total cost of £4 million.

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43. The General Fund element for the Alton Activity Centre now requires budget approval to progress the scheme as a single works package. This is estimated at a total cost of £2.3 million. Positive General Fund capital budget variations are therefore being recommended for approval. The indicative profile of expenditure is £0.2 million in 2024/25, £1.8 million in 2025/26 and £0.3 million in 2026/27.

CONCLUSION

44. The Council has committed to significant investment to improve the Alton Estate with the launch of the ARP.
45. This report demonstrates good progress across all aspects of delivery including Phase 1 project activity and the housing proposals.
46. The improvements to the play space at Alton Activity Centre and Downshire Field are a crucial part of the first phase of the ARP programme and demonstrate the Council's on-going commitment to the longer-term renewal of the estate.

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DAVE WORTH
Interim Executive Director of Housing

PAUL MOORE
Interim Director of Place

14th January 2025

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.