



Paper No.

25-174

## Cabinet

### Title

Alton Housing Renewal Proposals

### Cabinet Member for

Housing

### Details of Executive Director

Dave Worth, Interim Executive Director of Housing  
Paul Moore, Interim Director of Place (Fixed Term)

### Recommendation/s:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- A) Note the proposed design, layout and scale of the new housing proposed for the Alton Estate.
- B) Note the proposed provision of community and retail facilities.
- C) Note the programme of consultation and co-production which has supported development of these proposals.
- D) Note the proposed timeline and procedure for resident ballot, including the recommended ballot area.
- E) Approve the progression of the estate renewal proposals to resident ballot in Autumn 2025.
- F) Delegate the development and approval of a Landlord Offer based on the development proposals and housing offer terms set out below and in the Appendices to the Director of Place and Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.
- G) Delegate any further decisions required to ensure a timely progression to a resident ballot to the Director of Place and Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.
- H) Subject to a successful outcome from the ballot, approve the development and submission of a hybrid planning application for the scheme and delegate approval of its submission to the Director of Place and Executive Director of



Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

- I) Note the provisional budget and sources of investment to deliver the scheme and the expected financial parameters for investment.
- J) Note that some costs and funding sources are yet to be fully determined and secured.
- K) Note that a further report will come to Cabinet in Autumn 2025, updating on housing viability modelling and seeking approval for General Fund capital investment in the Community Hub Civic Building and the Portwood Place development.

## Reference to council Priorities

### This decision contributes to:

#### A fairer Wandsworth

- Work towards ensuring all local people have a genuinely affordable place to call home.

## Glossary

ARP - Alton Renewal Plan  
 EIP - Early Improvement Plan  
 EPC - Energy Performance Certificate  
 HRA - Housing Revenue Account  
 LPA - Local Planning Authority  
 RCH - Roehampton Community Hub

## Details

### BACKGROUND

1. Paper No. 24-170 agreed to support proposals for the delivery of the Alton Renewal Plan (ARP); a programme of place-based projects alongside consideration of options for housing renewal, representing significant investment in the Alton Estate.
2. The options appraisal identified a range of interventions from doing nothing beyond the agreed Early Improvement Plan to implementing the Masterplan



consented in March 2022. The appraisal identified that a new people-focused proposal which reduced overall levels of demolition but increased the number and proportion of social homes delivered through redevelopment represented best value, once non-financial impacts were considered.

3. Experienced, award-winning design team HTA Design were appointed to guide the ARP housing proposals.
4. Over a nine-month period starting in August 2024 HTA have worked in consultation with the Alton community, officers and councillors to develop a set of proposals which meet key criteria established at the outset of the project: a revised housing scheme with a substantially increased proportion of affordable homes, improved community facilities and infrastructure and a new fit for purpose retail parade.
5. This paper updates on the scheme design and proposals to secure resident approval and GLA investment via a ballot.
6. It outlines the broad financial implications of the scheme and anticipated sources of funding.
7. It further provides a brief update on the overall progress of the Alton Renewal Plan.

## **HOUSING RENEWAL**

8. HTA Design were appointed to lead the development of the housing proposals following a competitive tender process and started work in August 2024. Their work thus far has comprised survey/discovery, consultation and design phases. Consultation and design have run in parallel to support an iterative process which has seen proposals refined in response to resident views and priorities.

## **SURVEY/ DISCOVERY OUTCOMES**

9. The discovery phase generated significant engagement from Alton residents, offering considerable insight into the benefits and challenges of



living on the estate. At a technical level, the survey highlighted some of the unique characteristics of the Alton, such as its unique topography, to which scheme design needs to respond.

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

10. Building on the consultation outlined in January's committee paper, a further series of public events were held over late February and early March. This included:
  - a well-attended (more than 140 residents) drop in at the Family Hub which updated on both housing proposals and Alton Renewal Plan projects.
  - a further drop in at Roehampton Library focused on the housing proposals.
  - a targeted session at the Alton Arts Hub for those residents most directly impacted by the housing proposals, i.e. those with homes proposed for redevelopment.
11. Work has also continued with groups of residents who have a particular focus on Alton life, for example by introducing the proposals to the Youth Advisory Panel and by establishing the Access and Inclusion Steering Group, comprising residents with mobility needs. The newly established Community Panel (see paragraph 40 below) will further strengthen our ability to involve residents in the design of new homes and facilities.
12. Our Roehampton were commissioned to deliver a survey of community organisations to understand the amount and type of space they need to deliver services to the Alton community. Consideration has also been given to location, allowing services to be based close to their main user community and for those with similar clientele to co-locate wherever possible.

## DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

13. An Executive Summary of HTA's full design proposals is provided as Appendix 1 to this report. They are focused on four areas:
  - i. **Danebury Neighbourhood:** New homes replacing blocks on Harbridge Avenue and Kingsclere Close, with a central green square. A community square/ events space immediately west of



Allbrook House (current ramp and carpark location). A new block of homes to the north of the square with additional ground floor retail/ community space.

- ii. **Danebury Retail Parade:** A replacement retail parade with flats above, providing space for a larger supermarket and improving access and visibility for the Roehampton Sports and Fitness Centre.
- iii. **Portswood Place:** A new community facility providing space to relocate the services currently based at 166/168 Roehampton Lane and the Danebury GP Practice.
- iv. **166/168 Roehampton Lane:** Two new blocks of flats and a terrace of family homes.

14. The designs address the priorities identified by the administration and the community for the Alton and respond to the unique opportunities and constraints of the estate's existing architecture and topography:

- Between 600 and 650 homes, a net increase of 425-475 once demolition is taken into account.
- 57% affordable housing across the new developments, taking into account the social homes provided within the further advanced Roehampton Community Hub scheme.
- A new larger supermarket at least equivalent in size to the previous Co-op store.
- Significant new outdoor community spaces supporting diverse activities including gardening, events and markets.
- Community and family activities relocated toward the centre of the Alton and away from busy roads.
- A variety of community spaces and facilities allowing council and third sector to maximise their provision to Alton residents.
- Improved permeability, shortening and enhancing routes between key locations on the Alton and from within the estate to bus stops and other facilities along Roehampton Lane.
- Enhanced accessibility and navigability for people with mobility challenges, smoothing gradients and widening pathways.
- Block footprints and heights which respond to the sloping terrain (avoiding split levels or plinths).



- Building layouts and design which offer a contemporary reflection of Alton West's original design principles: including inline balconies and enhanced green landscaping.

15. A programme has been put together which allows for a resident ballot on the redevelopment proposals to commence in September 2025.

### **CARBON IMPACTS**

16. All parties involved in bringing forward the scheme are mindful of the potential carbon impacts of new developments. Steps are being taken to both reduce embodied carbon within the proposed development and to ensure that building and landscape designs are responsive to current conditions and robust to further change. A full environmental impact assessment for the development will be prepared alongside the planning submission.

### **COMMUNITY BENEFIT AND SOCIAL VALUE**

17. The scheme directly delivers significant community benefits to Alton residents both by improving the quality and volume of social homes on the estate, by enhancing local infrastructure and by creating facilities which will support service delivery in line with current standards and expectations. It has been designed in consultation with residents and service providers from the public and community sector.
18. Additionally, the parallel delivery of wider aspects of the Alton Renewal Plan are supporting residents across diverse priorities ranging from access to jobs and transport to personal health and fitness.
19. Finally, the Council will seek social value commitments from all its delivery partners and has already secured local benefits from the contracts let to date. A number of these focus on work experience and careers advice based around the built environment opportunities created through the scheme.



## **RESIDENT OFFER**

20. In establishing the Alton Renewal Plan the administration committed to a housing offer at least as good as that made under the previous regeneration scheme. The key principles of the offer terms for tenants and homeowners are provided as Appendix 2 to this report and summarised below:
21. All council secure tenants and resident leaseholders or freeholders of blocks proposed for demolition will have the opportunity of a new home on the Alton or within the local area, with equivalent security of tenure. After those rehousing needs are met, priority for new homes will be given to council secure tenants currently resident on the Alton. Under-occupying tenants will be given first priority, to free-up existing larger homes for family occupation.
22. This prioritisation will be delivered via a Local Lettings Plan.
23. Council temporary accommodation (TA) residents in the blocks proposed for demolition will be offered alternative TA which addresses their family priorities with respect to location wherever possible. Should their position in the queue allow, we will consider whether we can make a permanent offer to TA residents.
24. The Council will provide secure tenants, TA tenants, resident freeholders and leaseholders with advice, support, and assistance throughout the process with the aim of ensuring that they understand the options available to them, are able to fully consider those options and make the right decision for their needs and circumstances and avail themselves of their preferred option. This advice, support and assistance will be provided in accordance with relevant national, GLA and council policies and guidance.

## **BALLOT PROCESS**

25. The administration has undertaken that it will secure resident agreement to the proposals through a ballot before starting the main renewal programme. A successful ballot, defined as a simple majority of those casting a vote, is



also a condition of securing GLA Affordable Homes Programme grant to support the cost of providing homes for social rent.

26. To secure grant eligibility, ballot area boundaries require agreement with the GLA. After discussions with the community and with the GLA housing team the area will comprise the whole Alton Estate.
27. Under GLA terminology the proposals made to residents by the Council are collectively known as the 'Landlord Offer'. The ballot will offer a simple 'yes or no' vote on the Landlord Offer. The Landlord Offer comprises:
  - The broad vision, priorities and objectives for the estate regeneration, including information on:
    - Design principles of the proposed estate regeneration.
    - Estimated overall number of new homes.
    - Future tenure mix.
    - Proposed associated social infrastructure.
  - Details of the full right to return or remain for social tenants living in homes that are to be demolished.
  - Details of the offer for leaseholders and freeholders of homes that are to be demolished.
  - Commitments relating to ongoing open and transparent consultation and engagement.
  - A map showing the boundary of the estate.
  - A map showing the boundary of the proposed regeneration (if this is different to the boundary of the estate).
28. The Landlord Offer will present HTA's design proposals in a way which is straightforward for residents to understand, while offering sufficient detail to support them in making a properly informed decision.
29. Eligible voters comprise:
  - Social tenants (including those with secure, assured, flexible or introductory tenancies named as a tenant on a tenancy agreement dated on or before the date the Landlord Offer is published).
  - Resident leaseholders or freeholders who have been living in their properties as their only or principal home for at least one year prior to the date the Landlord Offer is published and are named on the lease or freehold title for their property.



- Any resident whose principal home is on the estate and who has been on the local authority's housing register for at least one year prior to the date the Landlord Offer is published, irrespective of their current tenure.
30. The Council intends to appoint experienced consultants Civica to support the administration of the ballot and ensure it is conducted according to GLA guidelines. The Council will also engage with the GLA to confirm its satisfaction with the offer terms and process.
  31. Prior to the ballot opening the Council will conduct a voter verification exercise, supported by Civica. Residents will be advised whether the Council believes them eligible to vote and will have the opportunity to query or correct information held by the Council. Any amendments to the voting register proposed by residents will be subject to checking by the Council. Residents are not obliged to respond and in the case of a nil response the Council and Civica will issue ballots on the basis of the eligibility set out in the initial letter.
  32. Once verification is complete the ballot will be run over a period of five and a half weeks comprising a two-week information period and three and a half week voting period. The Landlord Offer pack will be sent to eligible residents two weeks prior to voting opening. This will include details of the renewal proposals and the resident offer, and information on how to vote. Eligible residents will have the option to vote online, by telephone or by post. Civica's systems ensure that each eligible voter can vote only once. Voting will open on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September and close on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October.
  33. Prior to the ballot we will be conducting a local communications programme designed to raise awareness, increase turnout and clarify the content of the proposals. This will follow GLA guidance not to unduly influence the outcome of the vote but will clearly set out the regeneration outcomes which will be delivered should the ballot be successful.
  34. It should be noted that putting these proposals to ballot implies a commitment on the part of the Council to deliver the programme of improvements set out in the Landlord Offer.



35. This programme entails significant financial commitment from both the HRA and General Fund. A further report will be brought to Cabinet in the Autumn of this year, providing more detailed information on overall scheme viability and proposed phasing for the housing elements of the scheme, and seek Cabinet approval for General Fund investment in the two principal community facilities proposed. Each phase of delivery will also be subject to separate financial review and approval. Further details are provided at section 15, Cost and Financing of the Works.

### **NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING BALLOT**

36. In the event of a positive outcome from the ballot HTA will continue to develop the scheme with a view to submitting a planning application in June 2026.
37. Work will continue in parallel to develop the detailed profile of homes within the estate and to agree a phasing and decant strategy for the estate. The intention of these will be to ensure that the development maintains a healthy financial position and that disruption to residents is minimised.
38. Other strands of work include consideration of preferred delivery mechanisms for the scheme (including the appointment of development partners and appropriate contractual structures) and progressing the land assembly (purchase of land and property) required to enable the Council to progress the redevelopment.
39. Progress on these activities, which is closely aligned with considerations of phasing and viability, will be presented as part of the Autumn Cabinet report.

### **ARP COMMUNITY PANEL**

40. A Community Panel has been established to support the co-design of the scheme and allow resident input into decision making. The panel comprises 15 residents supported by ARP officers and a professional facilitator with ward councillors and Our Roehampton attending as observers. 30 residents applied for the 15 places and selection was by interview, with care taken to ensure balanced representation of different demographics and perspectives on the Alton. Of the 15 members, eight are secure council tenants, two are temporary accommodation tenants, one is a private tenant, three are



freeholders and one is a leaseholder.

41. The Panel is meeting monthly, and panel members will be paid London Living Wage for their attendance and preparation time. Officers will work with panellists to identify priority themes and projects for review. This is expected to include the next stage design of the housing proposals.

### **ROEHAMPTON COMMUNITY HUB**

42. Since the update to HOSC and Executive in January 2025, HTA have been appointed to lead the design process for the Roehampton Community Hub. This appointment supports better integration with the overall scheme and has allowed the development of a new approach to the site, responding to LPA and resident feedback.
43. The new design separates housing and civic functions, allowing for each to be located in the most suitable part of the site and ensuring that civic uses such as youth and community activity can operate outside of working hours without compromising resident amenity. Separating the two spaces enables an open configuration which maximises use of the ground floor space in the civic building, without the constraints generated by residential requirements to service individual apartments and create additional fire exits.
44. The new civic building occupies the corner of the site and supports the overall renewal of the Alton by marking the entrance to the estate and celebrating the importance of community life and shared endeavour to Alton residents. The new housing block along Holybourne Avenue means that homes are located further from the main road than in the previous design and allows for an increased number of homes.
45. The civic building will include a new library, council offices for the Alton and housing management teams and youth provision. Subject to detailed design and planning approval, the residential block should include between 50 and 60 new homes of which approximately 30% are 3- or 4-bedroom homes and 10% wheelchair accessible (including a proportion of the family homes). All the homes are proposed for Council rent.



46. To support early delivery against residents' priorities this development is subject to a separate planning process to the main housing renewal programme. The target is to submit the planning application by the end of 2025. The advanced timeline means the development has the potential to offer decant housing for the main scheme, if required.

### **ARP PROGRESS UPDATE**

47. The renewal plan is progressing well and many of the projects are now becoming more public facing, from the appointment of two new Alton focused roles for Arts & Culture and Community Safety, to several engagement and co-design sessions. Over 150 adults and children attended an event at the end of March and created artwork that will be installed on the estate and inform a series of ARP creative public realm projects including a wayfinding and heritage trail.
48. The Couch to 5K programme was launched in March and a supportive network of residents and officers meet every Wednesday for regular walks. This people centred approach is sparking physical activity and deepening community engagement. Participant quote: "I am losing weight; this is a very important part of my week. My doctor told me to keep coming."
49. Many more projects are progressing over the spring and summer including, but not limited to, a community planting day, Employ Wandsworth taking place on the Alton Estate, Focus Hall reopening after refurbishment with an active cultural programme and the co-design of pedestrian improvements. Our appointed consultants Social Life are now working on a learning and evaluation programme for the ARP to help us see where the impact is being felt, gather stories from the community and provide feedback for actionable changes we can make along the lifetime of the programme.

### **COST AND FINANCING OF THE WORKS**

#### **Housing Proposals**

50. The housing elements of the scheme including both the main scheme and the Community Hub proposals will be financed through a mixed model



comprising:

- The capitalised rental stream from new council homes.
- The sales or capitalised rental income from new private homes **and/or** the land receipts from sites sold for private development.
- GLA Affordable Homes Programme grant towards net new socially rented homes.
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reserves and borrowing.

51. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) Paper No. 24-170 highlighted that £105m of HRA funds had been set aside to support the regeneration of the Alton, of which £85m remained as of July 2024. Further spending has occurred over the intervening period in the development of the proposals but circa £84m remains available in the approved HRA Business Plan to support the costs of the scheme.
52. A viability study commissioned to inform HOSC Paper No. 24-170 reported that a suitable housing renewal scheme could be delivered at a net cost of approximately £100m, requiring an additional £16m investment in addition to funds remaining from the original allocation. Subject to meeting GLA requirements around an estate ballot and overall levels of social housing provision, this additional investment could be met through GLA grant.
53. Specialist consultancy Arcadis has been commissioned to produce detailed financial modelling of the new proposals and inform recommendations on scheme phasing and the outcome of this exercise will be reported to Cabinet later this year.

### **Community Facilities**

54. The principal non-housing elements of the scheme comprise the proposed Civic Building which forms part of the Roehampton Community Hub proposals and the new family and community building at Portswood Place. These projects are to be funded via General Fund investment and will require capital bids.
55. HOSC Paper No. 24-170 advises estimated costs of £14m to deliver the Roehampton Community Hub together with the Alton Activity Centre (AAC) and £11m for the Portswood Place facility.



56. The AAC works are now more closely specified and a budget of £2.3m was approved through HOSC Paper No. 25-8.
57. This leaves a notional balance of £11.7m to deliver the Community Hub, noting that this funding has not yet been bid for or secured.
58. Previously the Community Hub formed the lower floors of a large block, with housing on the upper floors whereas a standalone building is now proposed to make best use of the site. This is likely to increase the cost of the building.
59. Cost consultancy has been procured to support the programme, and this will inform detailed capital bids for the Community Hub Civic Building and the Portswood Place development.

#### **Further Cabinet Report on Scheme Finances**

60. A further report will be brought to Cabinet in Autumn 2025 updating housing scheme finances and recommended phasing and seeking Cabinet approval for General Fund investment in the Civic Building and Portswood Place.

#### **Financial Approval by Scheme Phase**

61. Noting that market conditions and construction costs will change over the lifetime of the scheme, each phase of delivery will be subject to a viability review and financial due diligence commensurate with the scale of investment, prior to funds being approved.

#### **SECTION 105 RESIDENT CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS**

62. As a landlord of secure council tenants, the Council has a statutory duty to make and maintain such arrangements as it considers appropriate to consult with its secure tenants who are “likely to be substantially affected by a matter of housing management”. This duty requires that secure tenants are informed of proposals and given time to make their views known. The Council is then under an obligation to consider any representations made before making decisions.



63. A matter is one of housing management if, in the Council's opinion, it relates to "the management, maintenance, improvement or demolition of dwelling houses" let by it under secure tenancies. Therefore, proposals that involve the demolition of existing homes let on secure tenancies triggers the section 105 duty.
64. As such, the Council will need to organise section 105 consultations in accordance with this statutory requirement.
65. It is proposed that the Council's section 105 consultation takes place in parallel with the ballot. The outcome will inform the design of the scheme as it progresses toward planning and be included as part of the Autumn report that proposes the next steps on the estate renewal scheme.

## **CONCLUSION**

66. The Council has committed to significant investment to improve the Alton Estate with the launch of the ARP.
67. In recommending the progression of designs to a resident ballot this report marks an important milestone in the Alton Renewal proposals.

## **Financial Implications**

68. The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan contains provision of circa £84m for capital investment into the Alton estate housing elements. This essentially being the residual balance of the previously approved scheme costs. It is expected that any revised plans are still contained within the previously approved financial investment envelope.
69. Additionally, £4.7m is approved in the Housing Revenue Account capital programme for the Roehampton Community Hub planning and design work (£700k) and the Downshire Field schemes (£4m).
70. The General Fund capital programme contains a further £2.3m for the Alton Activity Centre. As yet no formal approval has been sought for the General Fund elements of the Roehampton Community Hub. Requests for additional budget will be brought forward for approval at the appropriate



time in accordance with the General Fund capital governance process.

71. Finally, Paper No. 24-170 approved a total of £5m to progress delivery of the Alton Renewal Plan. £2.685m of General Fund revenue budgets have been approved up to 2027/28 and £2.315m of additional capital projects were approved to 2026/27.

### **Legal Implications**

72. The Council has a general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011; this is the power to do anything an individual can do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation.
73. Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 provides the Council with a duty to consider housing needs in respect of its district. Section 9 of the Housing Act 1985 provides the Council with the power to provide housing accommodation.
74. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power to do anything incidental to the exercising of any of its functions.
75. This report also identifies statutory duties in respect of Section 105, Housing Act 1985 consultation and under the Equality Act 2010.
76. In relation to any subsequent planning application, the Council (as Local Planning Authority) would assess any application as it would any other application in accordance with all statutory and policy requirements. It is therefore particularly important to ensure that throughout the process the development/corporate landowner function of the Council is kept separate from the Local Planning Authority function.
77. In making this decision, Cabinet are reminded of the general duty to take into account all relevant considerations and to disregard irrelevant ones, as well as weighing up the matters covered by the report with regard to statutory and fiduciary duties.

### **Equalities Implications**



78. In considering the recommendations and in the way in which next steps are determined and implemented, due regard to the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 is required, and in particular the need to achieve the various statutory objectives detailed in section 149(1) Equality Act 2010. This will be assessed in detail through a robust equality impact assessment (EQIA) once the needs and characteristics of the households affected are understood, and this will be reviewed and updated throughout the project.
79. Specifically, equalities will be considered at each stage of the proposals, and an Equality Impact Assessment completed as part of further Cabinet reports giving approval to the scheme. This is because the decisions regarding estate renewal inevitably led to the relocation of existing residents (potentially by legal order and compulsory purchase) and demolition of existing blocks, and therefore the equality impacts of the decisions need careful consideration.
80. In addition, if the scheme were to require a decision in respect of compulsory purchase the Council, when making that decision will need to be satisfied that any such decision is compatible with tenants' and leaseholders' human rights under the European Convention (in particular Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 Protocol 1 (protection of property)).
81. In progressing the scheme to date various initiatives have been developed with specific reference to people with protected characteristics, including the inclusive design of the two new play facilities on the estate (including a focus on ensuring that girls feel safe to play), the provision of family sized wheelchair homes on the community hub residential development and the establishment of the Access and Inclusion Steering Group. The Group's remit is to advise HTA and other partners on inclusive design for the Alton by sharing their 'lived experience' perspectives. Care has also been taken to ensure that the Community Panel is broadly representative of Alton resident demographics as well as tenure.

### **Background papers:**



There are no background papers to this report.

**Reference to any accompanying papers:**

Appendix 1 – Alton Renewal Plan – Stage 1 report  
Appendix 2 – Alton Renewal Plan - Landlord offer