



Alton Estate Regeneration Community Engagement Strategy

Ensuring the best possible engagement with residents and stakeholders affected by the Alton Regeneration

November 2020

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Introduction

The regeneration proposals for the Alton area have evolved through a collaborative design process, involving extensive engagement with residents and stakeholders over a period of six years.

The Alton Estate masterplan was approved by Wandsworth Council's Planning Applications Committee in October 2020 and as we proceed with the regeneration process, we are refocusing our attention on grassroots engagement.

In March 2020, a paper was submitted to the Roehampton Partnership seeking views on future engagement arrangements relating to the regeneration.

The purpose of the review was stated as to “ensure that the best possible engagement processes are in place for the residents and stakeholders affected by the Alton Estate regeneration”

The Council’s Regeneration Team had looked at best practice elsewhere and considered that there was scope to apply some of those practices to the Alton, namely:

- a) putting affected residents at the heart of engagement;
- b) good resident engagement and representation during the construction phase so the impact of development can be managed well;
- c) providing space for residents to give their views generally (as opposed to set-piece consultation events on specific issues); and
- d) the role of social interaction in engagement – i.e. there are benefits of people getting together regardless of whether there is anything regeneration related to consult on or discuss.

All members of the Roehampton Partnership were asked for their comments, as were other local stakeholders and groups.

A total of 17 responses were received – either in writing or via telephone calls or virtual meetings. The feedback we received has been used to inform the development of our Community Engagement Strategy, as set out in this document.

Our vision and objectives



To harness existing community spirit, encourage people of all ages to celebrate the Alton Estate's many positive features, improve community cohesion and boost wellbeing. We want to involve local people throughout the development of Alton Green, to ensure it is well used, appreciated, enjoyed and respected.

Guided by the responses we received to our consultation paper; our objectives are to:

- a) work collaboratively with other council departments to ensure our engagement activities are aligned to identified priorities to support the health and wellbeing needs of local communities;
- b) focus activities around environmental themes including recycling and the outdoors;
- c) support a programme of inspiring and engaging creative activities, involving existing cultural groups and creative individuals;
- d) move away from formal consultation events and meetings to focus on grassroots engagement, where the benefits of participation are clear;
- e) encourage and provide greater support for community-led initiatives and activities;
- f) increase interaction with, and support for, existing community groups;
- g) help to develop existing local skills, interests and talents;
- h) encourage the involvement of those who are traditionally less likely to interact, or who may face obstacles; and
- i) draw inspiration from the calendar of national events and initiatives, so that local events reflect national and global priorities.

Engagement principles

The following key principles will be at the heart of all our engagement activities:



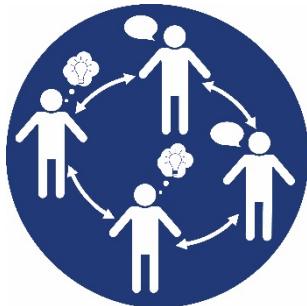
Inclusive

- Rather than inviting and encouraging participation in a formal way, efforts to engage will be much more active and informal
- The Regeneration Team proposes to increase participation in existing community activities, to facilitate conversations and information-sharing in a way that is accessible to all
- We will use spaces that are convenient for participants, with events arranged at times that also suit them, wherever possible
- Participation will be encouraged from as broad a range of groups as possible and we will actively target groups who are traditionally more difficult to engage with
- We will foster neighbourly networks and encourage cross-generational interactions
- Careful consideration will be given to safe interaction with the most vulnerable members of society, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Consideration will be given to those who lack the means or knowledge to participate digitally, to avoid exclusion
- Where possible, we will be happy to meet people within their own homes, if this is what they prefer



Collaborative

- We will encourage local residents to participate in various platforms to voice their views and share their knowledge
- We will work with other council departments to ensure our activities complement other initiatives and meet identified priorities
- We will work alongside other local organisations, coordinating our approach and sharing resources
- We will consider regional and national priorities, such as sustainability, and identify opportunities to make a positive contribution



Responsive

- Communication will be via a variety of methods based on residents' and service users' needs and two-way
- Engagement will be regular, sustained and ongoing throughout the regeneration
- We will recognise existing groups and initiatives and focus on joining or enhancing the conversation rather than starting a new one
- We will foster trust and familiarity with the community and be open and transparent
- We will recognise skills and talent that already exists and provide support to encourage it to develop and thrive
- We will encourage people to provide feedback and will follow up on suggestions – demonstrating where ideas have been taken on board, or explaining why it has not been possible to pursue other requests
- Levels of participation, participant feedback and the effectiveness of activities will all be monitored, measured and reported at least once a year, so that continuous improvements can be made to the ongoing engagement programme



Meaningful

- Objectives and opportunities will be communicated clearly, websites will be kept up-to-date and we will continue to produce and distribute newsletters on a regular basis
- We will ensure that participants benefit from engagement activities – broadening horizons, improving skills, increasing knowledge, and reducing loneliness and isolation
- We will endeavour to identify and engage with the people who are likely to be most interested in, or affected by, specific aspects of the regeneration
- Activities will respond to local interests and priorities – e.g. recycling / upcycling, nature, and celebrating the green spaces that are an essential part of Roehampton's character
- We will recognise the contribution that cultural projects – including arts and music – make in supporting health and wellbeing

These principles will apply to our engagement with any stakeholder directly affected by the Alton Estate Regeneration.

Engagement Categories

The Wandsworth Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2017/18 arranges the needs of the population, together with the potential methods of addressing those needs, into four categories – namely, Place, Start Well, Live Well and Age Well. We have chosen to organise our proposed engagement activities into the same categories, with a number of sub-themes. These categories and sub-themes will remain constant and pivotal in informing our future projects and engagement ideas.

1. Place



- 1.1. Ongoing community involvement in the development of the Alton Estate
- 1.2. Alignment with existing groups and awareness raising campaigns
- 1.3. Re-using and recycling
- 1.4. Celebrating the historic environment
- 1.5. Connecting people with nature
- 1.6. Bringing nature close to home
- 1.7. Community gardening
- 1.8. Roehampton in Bloom
- 1.9. Spring trail

3. Live Well



- 3.1. Activities to improve health and wellbeing
- 3.2. Promoting sustainable transport
- 3.3. Encouraging and rewarding acts of kindness
- 3.4. Roehampton Summer Festival
- 3.5. Programme of seasonal events

2. Start Well



- 2.1. Creative activities for young people
- 2.2. Connecting children with nature
- 2.3. Learning in the built environment
- 2.4. Encouraging outdoor activity
- 2.5. Activities for older young people

4. Age Well



- 4.1. Re-engaging with existing groups
- 4.2. Activities to address the needs of older people
- 4.3. Covid-secure engagement

Possible activities

We propose to develop a detailed programme of activities for the next six months and beyond.

Some of our engagement activity ideas are set out against our core engagement categories and sub-themes in the following pages.



1. Place



Key opportunities

- Celebrate the history of the estate, capturing and sharing stories
- Foster a sense of pride and ownership – our homes, our spaces, our estate
- Encourage an appreciation of nature and an awareness of the flora and fauna that live on the estate
- Discuss the impacts of littering, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour and explore opportunities to address these issues

1.1. Ongoing community involvement in the development of the Alton Estate

The quality of places makes a valuable contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities. The Alton Estate regeneration will deliver well-designed homes for existing and new residents, two new community centres with wide ranging facilities, public realm improvements and a better-connected estate with improved links and pedestrian and cycle routes. Overall, the regeneration will make the Alton a place where people of all ages want to live, work and spend time.



We will consult residents and service users in several elements of the scheme, including the Village Square, the Alton Activity Centre and other play spaces. There will also be opportunities for people to participate in projects around hoarding design and wayfinding.

1.2. Alignment with existing groups and awareness raising campaigns

All the activities we arrange can be aligned with national awareness raising campaigns, complement the existing local calendar of activities (e.g. those arranged by the Council's Public Health or Arts and Culture services, the University and other organisations) and relate to the local agenda e.g. Keep Britain Tidy's #lovewhereyoulive challenge and Plogolution (Litter picking combined with running/jogging). We want to strengthen existing community networks, support existing businesses and forge new relationships, so that new spaces and facilities are well used. We will engage with representatives from local organisations and raise awareness of voluntary and campaigning opportunities.



1.3. Re-using and recycling

There is potential to reuse materials from the demolition process with local groups e.g. turning doors from decant blocks into birdboxes, bee hotels or hedgehog homes with Roehampton Shed, or creating planters from concrete blocks.



1.4. Celebrating the historic environment



Engagement activities will respect and celebrate the historic and natural environment. A walking guide or heritage trail could be created to provide information about local history and explain how future development is planned. There is a possible opportunity to link this with work being undertaken by the Economic Development Office.

We would like to work with Arts and Culture services to build upon some of the brilliant projects that have already taken place in Roehampton – including [“Reflections on Home”](#) by Sara Heywood & Jane Watt in 2018-19 and [“Women of Roehampton”](#) in 2016.

1.5. Connecting people with nature

The parkland setting of the Alton Estate is already one of its most appealing features. We can work with the community to combat climate change, create and improve green spaces and encourage an even greater appreciation of the natural world. Teaming up with experts (perhaps from the University or from the Royal Parks), we could help residents build a wider knowledge of local species and ensure the Estate continues to provide benefits for wildlife and people.

1.6. Bringing nature close to home

The activities we arrange could help bring nature closer to home for those who may face obstacles, such as:

- An introduction to the London Wildlife Trust’s “Wildlife from your window” campaign, which features indoor and outdoor activities
- Visits from an ornithologist to demonstrate how to spot an array of bird species
- Partnership with organisations like the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, to introduce nectar-rich plants and bee boxes, encouraging interest and providing education



1.7. Community gardening



The idea of community gardening was raised by one of the existing estate residents and widely supported during community workshops that took place as part of the pre-application consultation. Positive reference was made to Putney Community Gardens on the Ashburton Estate. We could:

- Create space for existing and new members of the community to meet, learn and grow together
- Include raised beds at varying heights to promote accessibility and inclusion
- Construct beds and planters using reclaimed, found and recycled materials (perhaps involving Roehampton Shed)
- Encourage people to grow food, attract pollinators and include drought-resistant plants

1.8. Roehampton in Bloom

Creating public planters around Roehampton. This initiative could involve local groups, schools and businesses in planting and maintenance.

- Building planters (Roehampton Shed, Alton Activity Centre and other community groups)
- Planting (schools, community and religious groups, businesses)

1.9. Spring trail

Planting bulbs across the estate in the Autumn in time for Spring, particularly around Downshire Field. Bulbs could be planted alongside a "heritage trail" through Roehampton (with the potential opportunity to extend planting into the University's land and through Roehampton Village).

Will these proposed activities meet our objectives?

- ✓ Collaborative working
- ✓ Focus on environmental themes
- ✓ Support for community-led initiatives and activities
- ✓ A programme of inspiring and engaging creative activities
- ✓ Support for and increased interaction with existing groups
- ✓ Development of skills, interests and talents
- ✓ Activities to involve those who may face obstacles
- ✓ Draw inspiration from the wider calendar of events and initiatives

2. Start Well



Key opportunities

- Help young people to develop interests, widen horizons and realise potential
- Identify and support talents
- Offer clear benefits and provide structure
- Build mutually-beneficial relationships across generations – sharing knowledge, devoting attention, giving purpose
- Encourage healthy activities and patterns and reduce the likelihood of risky behaviours
- Improve mental wellbeing

2.1. Creative activities for young people

We have already involved children in the design of site hoardings and there will be further opportunities for children to apply their creative skills to the design of development signage. This could include photography projects and competitions where the winning photographs are featured around the estate, on site hoardings or on the covers of regeneration materials.

There's already a KiDS Club in Roehampton Library, where children can do colouring, crafts and games. The Regeneration Team could organise and host a craft session using recycled materials. We can also work with local youth organisations to arrange co-hosted events and boost the use of the Alton Activity Centre.

Working alongside Arts & Culture services, we can seek advice from theatre companies like Oily Cart, who create sensory theatre for children of all ages and abilities, to explore opportunities to use spaces on the estate or bring performances to the home.

2.2. Connecting children with nature

We can help children to develop an appreciation for nature from a young age, as well as teaching them about the environmental impacts of our behaviour. Such activities could include:

- Inviting children from local schools, including those who have previously engaged with the Regeneration Team (Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, The Alton Primary School, Ark Putney Academy, Mosaic Jewish Primary School and Heathmere Primary School) to help install bat boxes and bug hotels
- The creation of a sensory garden for children using recycled materials
- A possible link-up with the Royal Parks e.g. park walks for children, learning about nature, deer, bugs etc.
- Forest school activities – perhaps delivered in partnership with Eastwood Children's Centre for dads, mums and carers with children aged 0-4 years

2.3. Learning in the built environment

The buildings of the estate provide opportunities for learning and we could work with local teachers to develop outdoor activities to:

- Explore the history and heritage of the estate and its listed buildings
- Understand how the estate has developed over time
- Explain the concept of development design and placemaking
- Visit an operational construction site on the estate to see development in progress and understand some of the skills required

2.4. Encouraging outdoor activity

Encouraging young people to use and explore outdoor spaces on the estate to keep fit, active and improve sports skills. We can work with Enable and local sports organisations to plan activities and set challenges for children of all ages. We will also draw inspiration from the national events calendar, organising events to coincide with campaigns and initiatives like Sport Relief, National Skipping Day, National Walking Month.



2.5. Activities for older young people

There are opportunities to involve 'older young people' through activities that particularly interest this age group and through working collaboratively with local organisations, including:

- Teaming up with Roehampton Base to organise a clothes upcycling workshop, healthy cookery session or bringing in young professional guest speakers
- Creating a grow garden adjacent to the Alton Activity Centre to help to promote health and wellbeing and educate young people in food production

Will these proposed activities meet our objectives?

- ✓ Collaborative working
- ✓ Focus on environmental themes
- ✓ Support for community-led initiatives and activities
- ✓ Clearly communicate the benefits of participation
- ✓ A programme of inspiring and engaging creative activities
- ✓ Support for and increased interaction with existing groups
- ✓ Development of skills, interests and talents
- ✓ Activities to involve those who may face obstacles
- ✓ Draw inspiration from the wider calendar of events and initiatives

3. Live Well



Key opportunities

- Provide activities and opportunities for people to improve their health and fitness
- Encourage a greater appreciation of the outdoors and the opportunities offered by green spaces
- Work with the local community to ensure that new facilities are used and enjoyed
- Encourage, recognise and reward acts of kindness in the community
- Improve community cohesion
- Improve mental wellbeing

3.1. Activities to improve health and wellbeing



There are already numerous activities in Wandsworth which are designed to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. These include guided walking groups, weight loss activities and weekly classes. We aim to ensure that the Alton Estate can be included on walking routes and provide venues for regular classes and activities.

We will also work with Arts & Culture services who are already looking at the role arts and culture plays in supporting public health and ensuring that all residents lead healthy lives.

3.2. Promoting sustainable transport

The regeneration will provide better routes and links through the estate. In the meantime, we can encourage sociable walking (as described above), cycling and the use of sustainable modes of transport. Ideas include:

- Hosting an event during Bike Week, giving people the opportunity to try E-bikes, or taking advantage of training (through organisations like The Bikeability Trust)
- Organisation of bike maintenance days to carry out safety checks (where experienced mechanics check everything from wheels, brakes, gears and tyre pressure to lights, racks, pedals and saddles)

3.3. Encouraging and rewarding acts of kindness

We will encourage people to share stories about individual acts of kindness. Many local groups and individuals have provided invaluable support to the local community in recent months and we can invite nominations for a “local hero” award.

3.4. Roehampton Summer Festival



The summer festival on Downshire Field always has an “active” or “feel good” theme, offering a variety of activities and experiences for people of all ages, including: food stalls, stage performances by local groups and individuals, sports activities and competitions, children’s entertainment (inflatables, face painting, farm), council and community stalls, the Regeneration Team tent, and the Kings and Queens event organised by Regenerate Rise. The theme for the 2021 event will be the ‘Summer of Sport’, inspired by the Olympics, the Wimbledon tournament and other sporting events scheduled for next year.

3.5. Programme of seasonal events

Drawing inspiration from the wider calendar of national and borough-wide events, we will prepare a programme of seasonal activities, which could include:

- A **Christmas tree switch on** event
- A **winter festival** to bring together schools, community groups and residents of all ages for an afternoon of singing, musical entertainment, and refreshments. This could be the culmination of weeks of festive arts and crafts sessions hosted by the Regeneration team with schools and community groups.
- A **summer outdoor cinema** on Downshire field
- A **Harvest Festival** involving food stalls, competitions, games and local business and community stalls

Will these proposed activities meet our objectives?

- ✓ Collaborative working
- ✓ Focus on environmental themes
- ✓ Support for community-led initiatives and activities
- ✓ Move away from formal consultation events and meetings
- ✓ A programme of inspiring and engaging creative activities
- ✓ Support for and increased interaction with existing groups
- ✓ Activities to involve those who may face obstacles
- ✓ Draw inspiration from the wider calendar of events and initiatives

4. Age Well



Key opportunities

- Encouraging older people to increase their knowledge, develop new interests and embrace technology
- Provide activities and opportunities for people to be active, maintain mobility and confidence
- Build mutually-beneficial relationships across generations – sharing knowledge, devoting attention, giving purpose
- Bring nature and activity to the doorstep of those who face obstacles
- Help prevent loneliness and improve mental health

4.1. Re-engaging with existing groups

The Regeneration team will support existing activities arranged for, or popular with, older members of the population, including:

- Roehampton Shed - we could support activities such as the building of planters and hedgehog homes (in partnership with SW15 Hedgehogs).
- The Over 60s café - we could provide information about local wildlife populations and encourage wildlife watching and monitoring
- Knit and Natter - where materials can be donated, and items can be made for a variety of causes

4.2. Activities to address the needs of older people

- With the Wandsworth Joint Strategic Needs Assessment reporting that one in five older people are on low incomes, we could organise regular coffee mornings, lunches or afternoon tea sessions and provide information to attendees on topics of interest, such as local heritage, recycling, energy saving
- With 1 in 4 victims of recorded fraud aged 65 or over, we could run information sessions on bogus callers and fraud prevention
- With 10,000 people over the age of 65 living alone, we can arrange events and activities that are designed to combat loneliness and boost mental health

4.3. Covid-secure engagement

Covid-secure activities and methods of engagement are particularly important for elderly or vulnerable members of the population whose movements may still be restricted for some time. Our events will comply with current and evolving guidance relating to social distancing and group sizes. Activities appropriate for those who are continuing to shield, or socialise with caution, could include:

- Use of technology to host virtual tea parties and events e.g. virtual Bingo could be hosted by the Mayor of Wandsworth and delivered through the council's webcasting software. The events could feature entertainment by local children and groups
- Entertainment that could be viewed from within the confines of homes or front gardens e.g. socially distanced tutorials by gardening experts
- Street exhibitions and art (e.g. 3D chalk art on pavements) which could be viewed from different perspectives
- Street performances and music

- Encouraging local children to write letters and stories and prepare artwork for older members of the community

The Regeneration team will also support existing groups who have been impacted by the pandemic. We propose to help them re-establish their activities safely. Our ideas include offering groups temporary use of vacant spaces at Portswood Place – when they are not being used for other creative, cultural or engagement sessions.

Will these proposed activities meet our objectives?

- ✓ Collaborative working
- ✓ Support for community-led initiatives and activities
- ✓ Move away from formal consultation events and meetings
- ✓ A programme of inspiring and engaging creative activities
- ✓ Support for and increased interaction with existing groups
- ✓ Activities to involve those who may face obstacles
- ✓ Draw inspiration from the wider calendar of events and initiatives