



# Alton Area Masterplan

Executive Summary

Masterplan Report  
September 2014



Lead Consultants:



Consultants:



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Wandsworth Council has commissioned this vision for the Alton area which sets a direction for the 21st century.

This masterplan represents the culmination of a year of commitment and participation by residents, local organisations, service providers, institutions, elected members and Wandsworth Council officers to create a new, compelling and deliverable vision for the Alton area. Baseline investigations have been followed by public consultation on Masterplan Options and a Preferred Option, which has influenced this final masterplan.

This document summarises the main elements of the masterplan.

# The Case for Change

## The Alton Area Today

The Alton area holds a special place in the history of housing development in the United Kingdom, based on its highly influential post war concept of large residential buildings in a parkland setting.

However over recent years the estate has been exhibiting signs of stress as anti-social behaviour increases, a sense of isolation grows and signs of physical decline become more evident.

These problems have their roots in a combination of features including fundamental design flaws in the development layout, along with poorly sited and constructed residential buildings. Community infrastructure is significantly outdated and shopping and other services are very limited, thereby failing to meet the day to day needs of local residents.

In detail, design flaws include poor quality entrances to blocks, residential units overlooking refuse and service areas and the creation of areas that are insecure. Furthermore the design standards fall considerably short of today's expectations and indeed the standards set in the London Housing Design Guide.

Without intervention these issues will become more acute and the quality of life of residents will deteriorate further. The cost of maintenance and public intervention to address these and related issues will increase. Intervention is required to prevent further deterioration. Nonetheless the problems on the estate are not uniform across the entire area. Therefore there is a need to focus attention on those locations where the problems are most manifest, and where the greatest impact can be achieved.

### The Danebury Avenue Centre

The design of the Danebury Avenue Centre makes it difficult to attract a wider range of retailers which discourages residents from supporting the centre except for basic convenience needs. As a consequence the centre is under-used and there are growing issues with anti-social behaviour, litter and fly tipping.

### Portswood Place

Portswood Place also exhibits particular problems. It suffers from very poor quality public spaces and lighting, hidden spaces, anti-social behaviour, litter and aging community buildings. It is clearly a place in decline.

### Housing in Alton

Particular elements of the housing built in the area is poorly designed, thereby creating problems including issues with waste collection, deliveries, security, poor lighting and parking provision.

### Internal issues

Many of the residential buildings are in fragmented ownership, thereby responsibility for outdoor spaces is not clearly defined which creates management challenges.

### Community facilities

Most community buildings across the estate are now out dated and unsuited for the contemporary provision of health, youth, family and older peoples services. Indeed certain facilities are located on the edge rather than at the heart of the estate which restricts accessibility for local residents. In order to alleviate the problems that these issues in the built environment cause, and the impact they have upon the quality of life on residents, there is a requirement for continuing intervention making further calls on scarce public funding for a limited return. Therefore there is a need to intervene in order to prevent further decline and regenerate the estate. The starting point is to establish an inspirational vision for the Alton Area backed by specific proposals for change that can be brought forward to create a more desirable place.

The establishment of this vision and the definition of these interventions articulated in the form of a masterplan have been arrived at in close consultation with the community and other stakeholders. Specific intervention areas have been identified which require a comprehensive approach to delivering genuine and long term benefits for residents and to ensure that the Alton area can play a stronger role in meeting the needs of the wider Roehampton community.

This summary forms part of a suite of documents that include:

- The masterplan report;
- Baseline report;
- Masterplan Options report;
- Options Consultation report;
- Preferred Option report; and
- Preferred Option Consultation report.



The estate is isolated from neighbouring areas and has little presence along Roehampton Lane

Central landscape overgrown and forest like

The internal layout of some housing is unsuitable for modern needs

Some buildings lack a positive relationship to surrounding buildings, streets and open spaces

Richmond Park fenced off

Car dominated, poor quality public spaces with hidden spaces, anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping

The ageing and obsolete community infrastructure doesn't reflect today's service models

Community/leisure uses are hidden and don't support the local centre

Image © 2013 Bluesky

# How the Masterplan was Created

The masterplan was created in consultation with stakeholders, institutions, local residents and neighbours to tackle the most significant problems, guide investment in the future and help realise the full potential of the Alton area.

The masterplanning process had four main stages:

## Stage 1: Baseline

Analysis of the Alton area, including socio economic data, design features and how the estate evolved, landscape, planning, market and technical analysis.

## Stage 2: Issues and Options

The masterplan concept was evolved through the preparation of alternative design concepts and options for the four potential areas of change. Each allowed further investigation of constraints and opportunities, as well as financial deliverability and viability.

## Stage 3: Preferred Option

This stage distilled the options into a single and integrated direction for each of the potential areas of change.

## Stage 4: The Masterplan

A comprehensive masterplan for the Alton area.

Throughout this process, the masterplan team engaged in consultation with members of the community. There were formal consultation events and processes throughout the Options and Preferred Option stages. Formal consultation periods of six and eight weeks included:

- A stakeholder workshop at the Baseline Stage
- One to one interviews with stakeholders and service providers
- An exhibition at the Roehampton Festival
- Staffed public exhibitions and drop in sessions
- A fixed Library exhibition
- A public meeting and exhibition for each consultation period
- Resident newsletters delivered to all homes in the masterplan area
- A direct door knocking campaign to meet the residents directly affected in the potential areas of change
- Questionnaires distributed regarding options and preferred options
- An online presence hosted at the Wandsworth Council website, Facebook and Twitter

- Presentations to the Roehampton Forum and the Roehampton Partnership at each stage of the process
- Stakeholder meetings with health, education and library services
- Meetings with church based and higher education institutions
- Meetings with community organisations, residents' groups and other organisations such as the Twentieth Century Society
- Meetings with statutory organisations including the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, English Heritage.

Summary booklets and presentation boards for each consultation stage, and consultation reports prepared by the Council document the evolution of this masterplan, and are available on the Wandsworth Council website.



Conversations during options and preferred option open day



# The Vision

The vision sees the Alton area as a place of housing choice for a wide range of households from tenants who regard it as amongst the best locations in the borough, to owner-occupiers who positively compare it to the wider south west London market.

The Danebury Centre will be revitalised with new shops, community services, business spaces and a new Library Plus, which could include library services as well as a community, arts and cultural offer to serve Alton residents and wider Roehampton neighbours. The masterplan will create space for small businesses to start as an aid to creating new and continuing employment opportunities for local residents. Professionally managed student units could be included.

Portswood Place will host a new landmark building at the foot of Alton Park, with a nursery and family services relocated from Roehampton Lane, extended primary health care services, a linked exercise suite, and spaces for independent non-profit community

organisations, workshop and enterprise spaces and local retail services. The focus will be on the wellbeing of the local community. A new community Pavilion including a meeting hall, café and bar facing the park will replace the Minstead Gardens sheltered residents' room. The bungalows on Minstead Gardens will be transformed and extended, allowing mainstream or sheltered housing or innovative live-work or studios. The Methodist Church can be re-provided with its placement coordinated with the whole and a sympathetic design.

The housing area between Roehampton Lane and Danebury Avenue west of the centre will see a new generation of high quality homes. Community facilities will be relocated from 166 Roehampton Lane, creating a new residential site. Existing homes will be replaced and new homes added. New homes will be provided along Roehampton Lane. Careful placement and organisation will allow buildings to step down from Roehampton Lane towards Danebury Avenue. Both sides of Danebury Avenue will see new homes. Residential buildings will be of a much higher quality, attractive and well connected to the existing street layout. Homes will be built to contemporary standards, meeting the needs of a wide range of residents.

The park will be revitalised and reinvigorated with a significant improvement of the landscape. Residents will gain from a new range of facilities and activities in the park.

A network of new and improved streets, cycle paths and footpaths will connect the Alton area to its neighbours and surroundings. A new direct pedestrian connection to Richmond Park will be created. There will be significant investment in pavements, street lights, landscape and street furniture on Danebury Avenue. Increasing the frequency of the 72 bus service to relieve overcrowding is recommended along with K3 route improvements. The bus stand on Danebury Avenue at Portswood Place will be relocated further to the west. Pedestrian crossings will be upgraded at Danebury Avenue where it meets Roehampton Lane to allow people to enter and leave the estate more easily.

In response to the Alton area's current challenges, a set of headline objectives were set to guide the masterplan:

- Improve the two local centres and the services they offer
- Improve or replace poor quality buildings
- Strengthen existing community buildings and create new facilities within local centres
- Re-connect streets, centres, communities and open space to the surrounding area
- Repair streets, public spaces and pedestrian links to make them more convenient and usable
- Extend a high quality landscape throughout the Alton area
- Reveal the highest qualities of the estate's heritage features
- Provide new job and training opportunities for local people



View of the Library Plus with the Village Green in the foreground



View of the Town Centre from Roehampton Lane

# The Masterplan

The redevelopment includes a renewed Alton Park, an updated public realm, new homes, replacement and additional retail, new community facilities and student housing.

Overall, the masterplan proposes:

- 750–800 new homes including houses, maisonettes and apartments, which include the replacement of 323 existing homes
- 5,000sqm of retail space
- 400sqm of dedicated workspace
- 5,500sqm community uses
- Potential for up to 400 student units

## Danebury Centre

- New shops and community facilities
- A new focus at the village green, creating a beautiful public space with a café linked to an extended library and community offer
- New, high quality housing
- Managed student housing
- New pedestrian crossings at Roehampton Lane and Danebury Avenue
- An attractive new public square connecting Danebury Avenue and Whitelands College
- Upgraded pavements and public areas on all streets
- New buildings ranging between 5 and 9 storeys above street level

## Portswood Place Centre

- Signature new community facilities
- Spaces for local convenience, a pharmacy and a small café
- Facilities for non-profit organisations and faith groups working with residents
- Workshop spaces for training, non-profit and small business activities
- Spaces for residents clubs
- New homes at the Mount Clare site and the transformation of the bungalows into improved accommodation
- New streetscape on Danebury Avenue
- A new landscape integrated with the design of a transformed Alton Park
- Relocation of the bus turnaround

## Roehampton Lane: High Quality Homes

- A new generation of homes that meet today's needs and standards
- New outdoor spaces, gardens and outdoor amenity spaces on each block
- Upgraded pavements and public areas on all streets
- Upgraded public spaces connecting to the Danebury Centre
- New buildings ranging between 4 and 6 storeys above street level

## Central Landscape

- A transformed Alton Park with links to Richmond Park
- A new pedestrian and cycle loop around the park and encompassing Portswood Place
- Transformed spaces around and under the Highcliffe slab blocks

## Connections

- New pedestrian and bicycle connections across the area
- Upgraded pedestrian crossings
- Potential new routes for buses
- Upgraded pedestrian and cycle access at the west end of Danebury Avenue, linking to Priory Lane



# Focused Interventions

## Four Key Areas of Change

In responding to these issues, the masterplan will create more attractive and welcoming centres, better housing and open spaces, with a wider range of shops and services for Alton residents and the wider Roehampton area.

The Alton area can provide a greater range of facilities and services to better meet the needs of residents and the wider community and bring more visitors to Roehampton to support the local economy. There is the opportunity to create new homes and a better place to live on a day to day basis.

There are four priority areas for intervention and the ambition for each is described below.

### The Danebury Centre

Through planned interventions a cleaner, more attractive, more active and safer place can be achieved. More people will visit the centre. New shops that meet today's retail needs can be provided. A wider range of shops and services will be available close to home

for residents. Service areas can be better managed and secured. There is an opportunity to create a better and more diverse Danebury Centre to meet the needs of residents and others.

### Portswood Place Centre

New community facilities at Portswood Place will provide a fuller, more efficient range of services in a more welcoming setting for residents. This can have direct benefits on child development, family life, adult health and the wellbeing of all people in the community throughout their lives.

There is an opportunity to create a revitalised and active focus that is part of the daily lives of residents. New facilities will provide a better environment for the highest quality public services and can help revive the area.

### Roehampton Lane: High Quality Homes

New homes offer the opportunity to create a cleaner, safer and better managed environment. New homes can meet contemporary standards for access, layout, heating, glazing, lighting, materials and decoration. This can create homes specifically designed to meet the needs of families with children, young people, older people and those with disabilities. Change will better organise the ownership and management of properties among Council tenants, private landlords and resident leaseholders.

### Central Landscape

The parkland landscape at Alton is a powerful setting for the buildings and offers great visual amenity across the site. However it fails to fulfil the potential as a usable park for the community. There is an opportunity to provide a much richer range of experiences in the park, to encourage a greater sense of local community ownership and help bring wider quality of life benefits to residents.





Provide higher quality site specific homes, linked to Roehampton Lane

Revitalise Danebury Avenue and Danebury Centre

2  
Portswold Place

3  
Roehampton Lane

1

Froebel College

Queen Mary's Hospital

Clarence Lane

Downshire House  
Queen Mary House  
Eastwood Children's Centre

Danebury Avenue

Moryfield Convent

Allbrook House

Marresa House

Richmond Park Golf Course

# A Revitalised Danebury Centre

The Danebury Centre will be transformed. It will become a more attractive destination, with new shops, better housing and a signature new library and cultural space for Alton area residents and the wider Roehampton community.

New youth and community service space will be provided. Public spaces will be refreshed and renewed allowing enhanced experience for all members of the community.

Space for a range of new shops will be created on each side of Danebury Avenue and Holybourne Avenue. A new mid-sized or metro style supermarket as well as space for a range of smaller shops, cafes and restaurants will be included. Better shopping services to meet the needs of Alton residents and the wider Roehampton community will be met.

A vibrant new library will update existing services and create new spaces for study and meeting. A new cultural offer will provide spaces for community arts organisations, display and gallery space and a small rehearsal, performance and screening space. This will be directly linked to a revived village green.

New shopping, the library and cultural facility will address Roehampton Lane, presenting a new face and high quality welcome to neighbours in Roehampton and a high quality gateway for residents.

Street level spaces will also host community services, including health, youth, housing and police services. Small business and workspaces will be provided to support local economic activity.

The Sport and Fitness Centre will remain in place and have a new outdoor space and public realm setting. A new public square will link it to the relocated youth services building.

Danebury Centre will provide inviting public spaces and improved pavements and streets. The village green will be transformed and provide a new setting for the library and cultural facility. A new public square will connect Danebury Avenue, the Sport and Fitness Centre and Whitelands College. Pedestrian crossings will be upgraded at Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane.

Existing homes will be replaced and

new homes added. This will include new homes above retail and workspaces and the library. Homes will be built to contemporary standards, meeting the needs of a wide range of residents. High quality entries, access to homes, efficient internal layouts, natural light and outdoor amenity spaces will be provided. Views from homes will be improved in all directions, overlooking high quality streets and public spaces.

The town centre could include focused and professionally managed student accommodation, ensuring other parts of the Alton have more permanent, year-round residents. New investment will create a cleaner, more attractive, more active and safer local centre which would be better used by local people.

The Town Centre will deliver:

- A total of approximately 250 to 275 new homes overall
- 4,300 sqm A1-A5 retail
- 400 sqm B1 employment space
- 2,000 sqm community facilities
- The potential for up to 400 student units

-  Residential
-  Community Use
-  Commercial Use
-  Service Areas
-  Conservation Area



Town Centre typical upper level



Town Centre ground floor plan

# A Revitalised Park Centre

Portswood Place will be transformed to become a focus for community activity. It will become an active, well used part of the Alton area which plays a significant part in residents' daily lives.

A new focus for facilities and a new setting for a range of community services will act as a bridge between a new Alton Park and Richmond Park. A collection of new buildings will be woven into the architectural fabric which includes both Georgian and Post War architecture. The landscape setting will be refreshed and integrated with renewal of the central parkland.

A new landmark building at the foot of the park will host nursery and family services relocated from Roehampton Lane, extended primary health care services, a linked exercise suite and spaces for independent non-profit community organisations, workshop and enterprise spaces and local retail services. The ground floors will have uses that are active on weekdays, into the evening and on weekends.

These uses, including health, community, business and retail spaces will provide an active presence on Danebury Avenue.

Nursery and children's activities will be hosted on an upper floor with their own dedicated outdoor area. Spaces will be specifically designed to meet children's needs throughout the day, maximise natural light and provide direct access to play areas.

This new building will incorporate a design quality befitting its central and visible location, an innovative layout and high quality materials. It will be a source of pride for residents, service providers and their clients.

The Methodist Church and clergy house can also be replaced, siting it in context with the new community hub and reflecting the design quality and aesthetic of the entire area.

A new community Pavilion including a meeting hall, café and bar facing the park will replace the Minstead Gardens senior citizens club. This will combine community activities relocated from Focus Hall and the senior citizens club. It will be placed and oriented to address the park.

The bungalows on Minstead Gardens will be transformed. The bungalows will be extended, entirely reconfigured inside to create separate bedrooms, and have new bathrooms and kitchens. New windows will join new exterior materials. The bungalows can be used for mainstream housing, innovative live-work space or studios. Some may be retained as sheltered accommodation, but a number of new locations for sheltered accommodation could be provided across the estate.

A new role for Mount Clare could be found that could comprise community uses for the historic house or residential uses including sheltered housing within the grounds.

The landscape in front of Mount Clare House will be refreshed, with tree management to draw more light to the ground and open views and connections to Mount Clare from the park. A continuous and sinuous path will wind around the Park Centre and connect it back into the park. A pedestrian and cycle path will link it directly to Richmond Park.

The bus turnaround and stops will be relocated to the west, removing a frequent barrier between Portswood Place and the Park.

The Park Centre will deliver:

- A total of approximately 60 to 70 new homes overall
- 200 sqm A1-A5 retail
- 3,500 sqm community facilities





# Roehampton Lane: High Quality Homes

The area between Roehampton Lane and Danebury Avenue will see a new generation of high quality homes.

New homes will be added along Roehampton Lane, creating a strong and continuous frontage to the street. Careful placement and organisation will allow buildings to step down from Roehampton Lane towards Danebury Avenue. Both sides of Danebury Avenue will see new homes.

Existing homes will be replaced and new homes added. Residential buildings will be more attractive, of a much higher quality and well connected to the existing street layout. Homes will be built to contemporary standards, meeting the needs of a wide range of residents. High quality entries, access to homes, efficient internal layouts, natural light and outdoor amenity spaces will be provided. New homes will meet modern standards for heating, glazing, lighting, materials and decoration. Homes can also be specifically designed to meet the needs of young families, young people, older people, and those with disabilities. Residents' outdoor spaces will be distinguished from public spaces.

Views from homes will be improved in all directions, overlooking high quality streets, private amenity spaces and public spaces. New parking structures will be incorporated into buildings and a careful parking management regime established for residents.

This is also an opportunity to address ownership and management issues in this part of the Alton area and create a better place to live.

The existing tree stock will be retained where possible and managed to become part of a new high quality public realm. Pavements will be upgraded. New street connections between buildings will be created to allow residents to move around more freely.

New and improved private and public spaces will be created, connecting this part of the estate with its surroundings.

This proposal would involve replacing the following properties with new homes:

- 213–243 Danebury Avenue (odd numbers only)
- 1–115 Harbridge Avenue (odd numbers only)
- 2–84 Harbridge Avenue (even numbers only)
- 1–28 Kingsclere Close
- 166 and 168 Roehampton Lane

The new housing area will deliver:

- A total of approximately 375 to 400 new homes overall

-  Residential
-  Community Use
-  Commercial Use
-  Service Areas
-  Conservation Area



# A New Alton Park

The parkland landscape is a unique setting and is greatly valued by Alton residents.

There is an opportunity to provide a greater range of experiences in the park which would make it a more popular local amenity that more local people use. The park will be refreshed and reinvigorated with a significant renovation of the landscape. Residents will gain from a new range of outdoor activities and new access.

An intentional approach will see defined events spaces, outdoor play, a woodland garden and community allotment spaces. An amphitheatre and outdoor stage can be created from the existing topography. A sequence of spaces will lead to a publicly accessible garden and enhanced setting of Mount Clare. The Georgian views and vistas that were echoed in the Alton estate park design will be revealed through active tree management. The central open space will be celebrated.

A necklace path offering a new local walking and cycling loop around the park will link this range of spaces and experiences together. Enhanced connections will allow people to access the park from Roehampton Lane and Priory Lane. A new streetscape with pedestrian priority on Danebury Avenue will encourage and allow people to cross. The bus standing will be moved further west on Roehampton Lane. A new connection to Richmond Park will provide new access for residents.





New play areas

Productive and growing areas for residents

Danebury Avenue downgraded to allow the park flow across

Outdoor amphitheatre

# Transport & Connections

The Alton area has limited points of traffic entry, a limited number of insecure pedestrian connections from Roehampton Lane and bus routes that terminate or turn around inside the estate.

Increasing commuter demand from nearby residential developments has led to overcrowded buses.

Roehampton's strategic location does present challenges. It is not positioned on rail or tube lines. Neighbouring Richmond Park and Wimbledon Common means that high traffic connecting highways flow around the area. Roehampton is more reliant on buses than many other areas in south west London.

The Alton area itself is also characterised by limited points of entry from the A3 or Roehampton Lane. The placement of traffic control barriers has also meant that Danebury Avenue acts as a cul-de-sac for traffic. Pedestrian connections are relatively limited from Roehampton Lane. Left over parcels of land, parking areas, community facilities and university buildings present an edge that does not have obvious points of entry. A number of

these paths have overgrown vegetation, ageing fences, irregular and ageing surfaces and limited lighting.

When considered together there is a need to change connectivity at a strategic and local level. This will allow residents to better access jobs and services elsewhere, have more options for getting home and create stronger connections with neighbours.

## Walking and Cycling

A network of new and improved streets, cycle paths and footpaths will connect the Alton area to its neighbours and surroundings. This will make getting around on foot or by bike much easier and safer. New and enhanced pedestrian connections will connect Roehampton Lane to Danebury Avenue via Harbridge Avenue and the park and Clarence Lane via Highcliffe Drive. A new route for residents into Richmond Park will follow the fence line to the rear of Mount Clare. Improved way-finding signs will be added.

## Streets

There will be significant investment in pavements, street lights, landscaping and street furniture on Danebury Avenue and Portswood Place. Street upgrades will be aligned to new residential development to provide a complete and integrated high quality setting. Pedestrian crossings will be upgraded at Danebury Avenue where it meets Roehampton Lane to allow people to enter and leave the area more easily. The size of the junction will be improved to create more space for people on foot, footways will be widened and the crossing position optimised.

## Buses

Increasing the frequency of the 72 bus service to relieve overcrowding is recommended.

An extension of the K3 is proposed for further investigation. This would run through the Alton area. Northbound buses would travel along Alton Road, Danebury Avenue, Highcliffe Drive and on to Barnes. Southbound buses would travel Highcliffe Drive, Danebury Avenue and on to Kingston. This route provides a north – south bus service direct to Queen Mary's Hospital, Barnes Station, Roehampton Asda, Putney Vale, the University of Roehampton's main campus and Kingston.

- 1 Limited access by Alton Primary School
- 2 Highcliffe Drive road barrier
- 3 Difficult pedestrian crossing at the Danebury Avenue/ Roehampton Lane junction
- 4 Bus stand on Danebury Avenue
- 5 Pedestrian walkway along 166 Roehampton Lane/Downshire House
- 6 Limited connection between Richmond Park and the Alton area



