



Planning Application – Ref: 2019/2516

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ABOUT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
TO THE SCHEME**

May 2020



HOUSING

Q. How many more new homes will be provided?

There's a proposed increase in the total number of homes, up from 1,103 to 1,108. The total number of council homes has increased from 256 to 261, comprising 201 homes for social rent and 60 shared equity and shared ownership homes. Council homes make up 24% of the total number of new homes proposed on the application site. They account for 30% of the new homes to be provided in the detailed element of the development.

Q. Why can't you provide more council homes than you're proposing?

The delivery of new and replacement housing, of a high quality and in a variety of tenures, is just one of the many benefits of the regeneration proposals. The revised proposals maximise the provision of council housing, whilst still being able to support a wide range of other improvements.



The recent amendments to the scheme have not only resulted in an increase in the total number of council homes proposed, but also ensure that more will be delivered at an earlier stage in the development process. The detailed element of the planning application includes 75% of the council housing that will be delivered across the scheme. As the scheme will be developed over several years, there will be future opportunities to review council housing provision, with more homes delivered at a later stage, if financially possible.

Q. Why have you increased certain types of council housing?

The proposed tenure and unit mix is designed to meet the needs of existing secure tenants and resident leaseholders/freeholders who wish to continue living on the regenerated estate. The changes include more council homes for rent and increased provision of shared ownership units. All "excess" shared equity homes, which are not taken up by resident homeowners, will be made available for households via the council's usual application and waiting list process.

A further housing needs survey was undertaken in September 2019 to identify any changes in need, due to residents moving or increases/decreases in household size. The revised tenure mix reflects the latest information about residents' needs.

Further housing needs surveys will be undertaken during the course of the redevelopment to ensure evidence of housing need remains up to date.

All homes are designed to Building Regulations ADM (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable, which should provide easy access and future adaptability. While demand for wheelchair accessible housing amongst existing residents affected by the regeneration proposals is currently minimal, 10% of all homes will be designed to Building Regulations ADM (4) Category 3: wheelchair dwellings.

Q. Will you be providing replacement homes for all existing residents?

All secure council tenants and resident homeowners, who live within the application site, will be given the opportunity to move into appropriately sized new housing, according to their needs.

Q. Will the new homes for social rent be the same size as existing homes?

Replacement housing for secure council tenants remaining on the estate will be appropriately sized according to their needs and will contain the same number of bedrooms as existing properties, unless otherwise agreed with the affected households. Homes are all designed to meet or exceed modern space standards and design quality guidance, with efficient, practical layouts and appropriate ceiling heights.

The proposed number of homes for social rent has increased from 188 to 201 and the proposed amount of social rent floorspace on the application site has also increased overall. The total floorspace of existing social rent

properties on the estate is 11,158 square metres. The scheme submitted in June 2019 proposed 15,411 square metres and the amended scheme proposes 16,372 square metres – an increase of 5,214 square metres, or an uplift of 47% over existing social rent floorspace.

Q. Will the new homes be better than the existing homes?

The proposals will deliver new and replacement homes of a high standard that will offer existing residents a better quality home and place to live. The new homes will be built and finished to meet modern building standards, to ensure they are safe, well insulated and energy-efficient. The regeneration scheme will not only offer good quality living accommodation, it will also replace outdated and unsuitable retail and community facilities. These facilities and services will support the development of a successful and vibrant community.

Q. What's the difference between shared ownership homes and shared equity homes?

Shared ownership and shared equity schemes are both types of "intermediate" housing, which are defined as affordable routes to home ownership.

Shared ownership gives people an opportunity to part-buy and part-rent a home, when they may not otherwise be in a strong enough position financially to purchase a home. Shared ownership purchasers typically use a mortgage to fund the share they are buying and pay

rent on the remaining share.

Resident leaseholders, who will not be means tested, will be able to buy a new home in the regeneration area through the council's shared equity scheme. For example, if a leaseholder can afford to fund 75% of the cost of a new property the council will retain a charge on the other 25%. The resident pays no interest or rent on the 25% and only has to repay the council's proportion if the property is sold.

Q. Why are you providing fewer shared equity homes than originally proposed?

The proposed number of shared equity homes has been reduced from 45 to 29, in line with a reduction in demand for these properties, as some resident homeowners have chosen to undertake early moves. This reduction has directly resulted in the provision of more homes for social rent.

Q. What happens to the shared equity homes if existing residents choose not to buy them?

If any of the shared equity homes proposed as part of the scheme are not taken up by resident homeowners, these will be transferred to the council, to be delivered as affordable housing for rent in accordance with the council's affordable housing policy.

Q. Will existing residents be required to move away from the Alton Estate?

Wandsworth Council has pledged to ensure that all secure council tenants and resident homeowners, who currently live within the application site and whose existing homes are proposed to be demolished, will be able to continue living within the Alton Estate and will only be required to move once.

The regeneration masterplan allows for phased demolition and construction, to minimise inconvenience to existing



residents. The phased delivery of the site will allow people to move directly from

their current property into a newly-built home – either within the main development area, or to new homes on two satellite sites within the wider estate.

Block O was previously proposed as a private housing block, but will now offer 29 homes for social rent and 6 shared equity homes. Block O is located at a key focal point of the development, adjacent to the new village square and regenerated local centre. Residents of Block O will share access to the courtyard and play space located between blocks O and N.

The regeneration project team continue to believe that Block Q will offer exceptional family accommodation with an extensive high quality courtyard garden and play facilities. Block Q also offers unrivalled access to the open space of Downshire Field, which is a quieter environment better suited for families and children to play and relax. Blocks Q1 and Q3 are included in the second phase of development. The mix of Block Q1 still proposes 33 homes for social rent and 10 shared equity homes and Block Q2 will provide 31 shared ownership homes. Block Q3 now has 39 homes for social rent (up from 36) and 8 shared equity homes (down from 11).

Q. Will the council homes be built to the same standard as the private housing?

All the units will be constructed to a high standard and the development will be "tenure blind", meaning there will be absolutely no distinction between the council homes and private blocks, in either build quality or appearance. The council has worked directly with the design team to ensure a continuity of approach across the scheme.

Q. The feedback from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and other responses received to the original proposals suggested that council homes had been "segregated in single tenure blocks on the periphery of the site". How has this been addressed in the revised proposals?

The project team has carefully considered comments made by the public and the GLA and the proposals have been amended to provide a more integrated scheme, as well as delivering more council housing in earlier phases of the development.

Council housing has always been proposed within Block A and Block Q. Whilst they are located on the edge of the main development area, they are very much integrated within the wider Alton Estate and surrounded by existing mixed tenure blocks.

Block A sits at the heart of the new village centre, which has been carefully positioned to serve as a central point for Roehampton. More homes for social rent are now proposed in Block A (35 rather than 24) and fewer shared equity homes (5 rather than 16). Direct access is offered to a broad range of community facilities, including the new library, youth centre and GP surgery, as well as a mix of shops on Danebury Avenue.



For further detailed information about the increased choice of housing and to see an indicative rehousing programme, please refer to the [Affordable Housing Statement Addendum](#) and [Revised Decant Strategy](#) associated with hybrid planning application reference: 2019/2516.



GREENER STREETS

Q. The redevelopment will result in the loss of mature trees, isn't it possible to save them?

Extensive efforts have been made to retain existing trees where it is feasible. Some tree loss is unfortunately necessary, given the broad scale of redevelopment, changes to levels within the site boundaries and the complex nature of underground services (existing and proposed). Some of the existing trees on the estate have been found

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to be in poor health, or structurally defective and need to be removed for these reasons alone.

One of the key amendments to the planning application is the retention of 29 existing trees on Harbridge Avenue. The avenue includes a range of species, predominantly lime trees. Historic England and some members of the community expressed concern about the loss of these trees on the existing character of the avenue and the retention of trees will help maintain it.

Q. Harbridge Avenue is currently uneven and difficult for pedestrians to navigate. Will the retention of existing trees prevent you from making it more accessible?

The existing uneven hard surfaces will be removed and new 2.5-metre-wide footpaths will be provided, alongside garden bed planting, to offer a better environment for pedestrians. The new soft planting will help to absorb some of the level changes in this area. Granite paving blocks, which are currently positioned at the base of trees, will be salvaged and reused at the edges of level crossing points. Seating will also be provided within planted areas, near to the stepped routes through the estate, to provide resting places.

Q. Are you proposing enough new trees to compensate for the loss of mature trees?



With the retention of 29 additional trees along Harbridge Avenue, a total of 160 trees are now proposed for removal, which is a decrease from the 189 trees originally proposed for removal. A comprehensive new tree planting strategy, which will significantly increase tree numbers on site, will compensate for the loss of existing trees. New tree planting includes 564 new trees within the public realm and 169 within private communal areas. This is a total of 733 new trees (a net gain of 573 trees).

Q. The greenness and openness of the Alton Estate contributes to its character. Isn't the loss of green spaces going to change its character?

Since the beginning of the project, the approach has been to create a greater variety of open spaces with individual characters, which will complement each other. The proposals provide higher

quality spaces with greater use, function and appeal compared to the existing spaces.

Within the application site boundary, combined public and communal open spaces across the site extend to 83,460 square metres. The regeneration proposes 88,413 square metres of open space – an increase of 4,953 square metres or 5.9%.



Q. With all the development proposed, can you really make the area greener?

The Draft London Plan (2019) seeks new developments to contribute to the greening of London. Urban greening measures proposed at Alton Green include the new trees and native planting, changing areas of grassland into wildflower meadow and the creation of new wildlife habitats on rooftops.

In the future, London Boroughs will identify the appropriate amount of urban greening required in new



developments. In the interim, the Mayor recommends a target score of 0.4 for developments that are predominately residential. The Alton Green masterplan has a score of 0.88. This exceeds the benchmark by 0.48, which represents a high level of performance.



For further detailed information explaining how the proposals will achieve urban greening, please refer to Section 2 of the **DAS Addendum** associated with hybrid planning application reference: 2019/2516. Additional information about trees and new planting can also be found in the **Arboricultural Addendum**, which forms part of the **Environmental Statement Addendum**.

EASING ACCESS

Q. What efforts have been made to ensure the development is accessible?

Improvements to the permeability and accessibility of the site have been a fundamental principle of the masterplanning process from the outset. Access experts have undertaken a comprehensive review of the proposals, to provide further evidence that the scheme follows an inclusive design approach and made improvements where necessary.

Q. How have the streets, squares and spaces been made more accessible?

Changes in levels across the estate currently limit route options for people with mobility impairments. Existing steeply sloped paths, which wheelchair users are unable to access independently, will be replaced with much shallower gradients. Many new and improved level crossings will be provided and the use of smooth, slip-resistant materials will create level and even paths.

Movement north/south through the estate will be improved using gently sloping ramps alongside stepped short-cuts. There will also be plenty of new places, along these routes, to stop, sit and rest. Car parking, cycle stands and street furniture will be incorporated carefully within the streetscape, so that pavements are decluttered and easier to negotiate. Kerb treatments will help ensure routes are safe and usable for people who are blind or visually impaired.

The proposed Village Square provides generous space for circulation and access. Stepped and curved terraces are provided on one side of the square, with step-free access to the upper level for wheelchair or scooter users. A central handrail (allowing for left or right-hand use) will enable access to the terraces from either side.

Q. Will disabled children be able to use play spaces?

Elements of sensory, balancing, climbing, sliding and spinning play will be integrated throughout the Activity



Centre play space. The Downshire Meadow play space includes various play elements to test movement range and balance, and to practice climbing and social play. There will also be areas to dig and build. Wheelchair accessible zones allow for inclusive play and a range of sensory activities including touch, smell, sound and visual, to enable all children to play together, no matter what their ability.

Q. Will parking be provided for disabled residents and visitors?

Parking for disabled residents will be provided within the residential blocks, allowing for direct, step-free access to dwellings. Designated blue-badge bays are proposed in the Urban Quarter, to serve the commercial uses. At least 5% of the total number of cycle spaces provided will be for non-standard cycle parking.

Mobility scooter stores/charging areas and ease of access to building cores for scooter users have also been considered.

Q. Will it be easy to access the commercial and community facilities?

Block A contains the new library, GP surgery, youth club and community hall, and the accessibility of this building has been planned particularly carefully, with step-free and lift access provided for each facility. Access options are offered from the Village Square and from Hersham Close and Holybourne Avenue, with a new ramped and stepped route between them. Level access will also be provided to the commercial units on

Danebury Avenue, and to facilities at Portswood Place.

In order to deliver an inclusive environment, the design team has gone beyond the minimum standards of the building regulations in the consideration of many factors. These include access to buildings, with consideration given to door widths, clearances, handles, ease of operation and glazing. To ease circulation within buildings, attention has been paid to the choice of handrails, stair treatments, corridor widths and lift specifications. Building interiors are designed to be safe, well-lit and easy to navigate, with slip-resistant surfaces, contrasting materials, and fittings that are visible and usable by people with limited dexterity. Toilets and other sanitary facilities are designed to be inclusive and to the same specification.

Q. Will residential areas be accessible?

Further adjustments have been made to the internal layouts of Blocks A, K, M, O and N to improve accessibility and waste collection arrangements. Step-free access will be provided into all the residential block entrance lobbies. Step-free access will also be provided from the residential accommodation to communal courtyards. These courtyards will be inclusive for people of all ages and abilities, with seating space and doorstep/local play spaces for young children.



Further detailed information about the accessibility of the scheme can

be found in Section 5 of the **Design, Landscape and Access Statement** submitted with the original application reference: 2019/2516. A separate **Access Statement**, which has been submitted alongside the amended plans and reports, demonstrates that the scheme designs have followed an inclusive design approach.

MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT

Q. Why has the energy strategy changed?

Regulations and policies relating to the use of energy are currently undergoing significant change. The New London Plan, the Future Homes Standard and new versions of the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) for energy performance all challenge more conventional energy strategies. The project team has therefore prepared a revised energy strategy, to respond to the latest information and address the London Plan energy hierarchy: Be Lean, Be Clean and Be Green. The new energy strategy supersedes that previously submitted in June 2019.

Q. What's different?

The previous energy statement proposed a gas-fuelled Combined Heat and Power (CHP)-led strategy. The new strategy removes CHP from the scheme and proposes to develop a low carbon, electrically-led heat network for the site. Air source heat pumps will provide the majority of the annual total heat

generation. Ultra-low NOx gas boilers (with reduced nitrogen oxide and nitrogen dioxide emissions) will assist in providing heat during periods of high demand. A new plant and equipment enclosure will be provided on the roof of Block N.

Q. How is the energy strategy lean?

Energy demands will be reduced substantially through 'Be Lean' measures to achieve the New London Plan energy efficiency targets for both residential and non-residential uses.



New homes will meet high insulation and air tightness standards to retain heat, whilst also delivering efficient ventilation. Energy efficient lighting will be installed and efforts will be made to help residents minimise their electricity consumption. Overheating prevention measures include solar control glazing, openable windows and shading due to the presence of balconies. All these measures will achieve CO₂ savings irrespective of the source of the delivered energy.

Q. How is the energy strategy clean?

A balanced strategy has been prepared for the generation and delivery of decentralised heating. To deliver heat that is both low in CO₂ and reasonably priced, heat pumps will be utilised as the primary generation source, with gas boilers meeting peak and backup heat demands. Electricity production is becoming much less carbon intensive and this trend is expected to continue. Renewable and low-carbon energy generation methods, such as wind, solar and hydro power, are making an increasing contribution to the grid, while the use of fossil fuels is decreasing. Electrically-led heating solutions, such as the proposed air source heat pump system, will be low carbon from the outset, with plans for further decarbonisation in the future.

Q. How is the energy strategy green?

Solar (PV) panels will be provided across all blocks in the development area, to generate additional electricity on site.



Further detailed information can be found in the technical appendices contained in Volume 2 of the **Environmental Statement Addendum** associated with hybrid planning application reference: 2019/2516. A **Revised Energy Strategy, Circular Economy Statement** and **Whole Life Cycle Carbon Emissions Assessment** have been provided.

WHAT ELSE HAS CHANGED?

Non-residential accommodation

The updated configuration of several of the blocks has altered the maximum amount of non-residential floorspace from 9,572 square metres to 9,377 square metres. This comprises up to 3,305 square metres of flexible commercial uses (Classes A1-A3, A5, B1 & D1), 704 square metres of office (Class B1) floorspace and 5,368 square metres of community (Class D1) floorspace. The changes in the amount of non-residential floorspace have been driven by accessibility improvements, alterations to back of house areas and the desire to ensure the best possible quality of accommodation is delivered. The quality and range of services and facilities compared to those already on the estate will continue to be enhanced as a result of the proposals. Detailed layouts are being developed in close consultation with service providers.

Landscape design and public realm

Minor adjustments have been made to the road alignments and design of the proposed Village Square in response to new utility survey and highway safety information. The landscape design at the junction between Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane has been revised, with the removal of proposed new trees from the traffic island, to provide clear sight lines. These changes do not impact any retained trees.

Bus turnaround area

In response to feedback from local residents and TfL, a bus driver toilet facility will be provided adjacent to the proposed bus turnaround next to the junction of Danebury Avenue and Tunworth Crescent. The design of this facility has been specified by TfL and it will be positioned carefully in the landscape to minimise visibility.

The westbound alighting bus stop adjacent to Minstead Gardens will be kept. A new bus stop for eastbound services will be provided adjacent to the bus turnaround, as per the original proposals. This is to prevent an increase in walking distances for older residents living in sheltered housing at Minstead Gardens.



Further detailed information about these additional changes can be found in the **DAS Addendum** associated with hybrid planning application reference: 2019/2516.

