

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/2012 REPORT NO. **86**

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:
Cabinet, 14 September 2011

Agenda – Part 1

Item: 17

Subject: Alma Estate Regeneration Scheme – Initiation Report

Ward: Ponders End

Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Oykenor and Cllr Goddard

REPORT OF:
Director of Health, Housing and Adult Social Care and Director of Regeneration, Leisure and Culture

Contact officer and telephone number: Peter George, 0208 379 3318

Email: peter.george@enfield.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Alma Estate is located in the Ponders End ward of the Borough. Ponders End is one of the Council's priority regeneration areas and the estate is located within the South Street area. A Planning Brief is being prepared for the South Street area and the community will be consulted on the planning brief in early 2012.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to ensuring that the residents of the Alma Estate remain at the heart of future plans for the South Street neighbourhood. By consulting residents on options (including a demolition and rebuild option) to improve the estate the Council can be sure that all options have been put to the residents and the final options reflect residents' views.
- 1.3 The report explains the consultation process that will be undertaken with residents over a fifteen week period and explains the intention to take a report back to Cabinet in spring 2012 that sets out how the residents have decided they want the Council to regenerate their estate.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 To note and approve the consultation process set out in this report
- 2.2 Delegates the authority to approve the demolition (in full or part) and rebuild of the Alma Estate to the Director of Health, Housing and Adult Social Care, the Director of Finance, Resources and Customer Services, the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, subject to the outcome of the Test of Opinion.
- 2.3 Notes the intention to take a report to Cabinet in 2012, after the conclusion of the consultation, setting out plans to regenerate the Alma Estate.

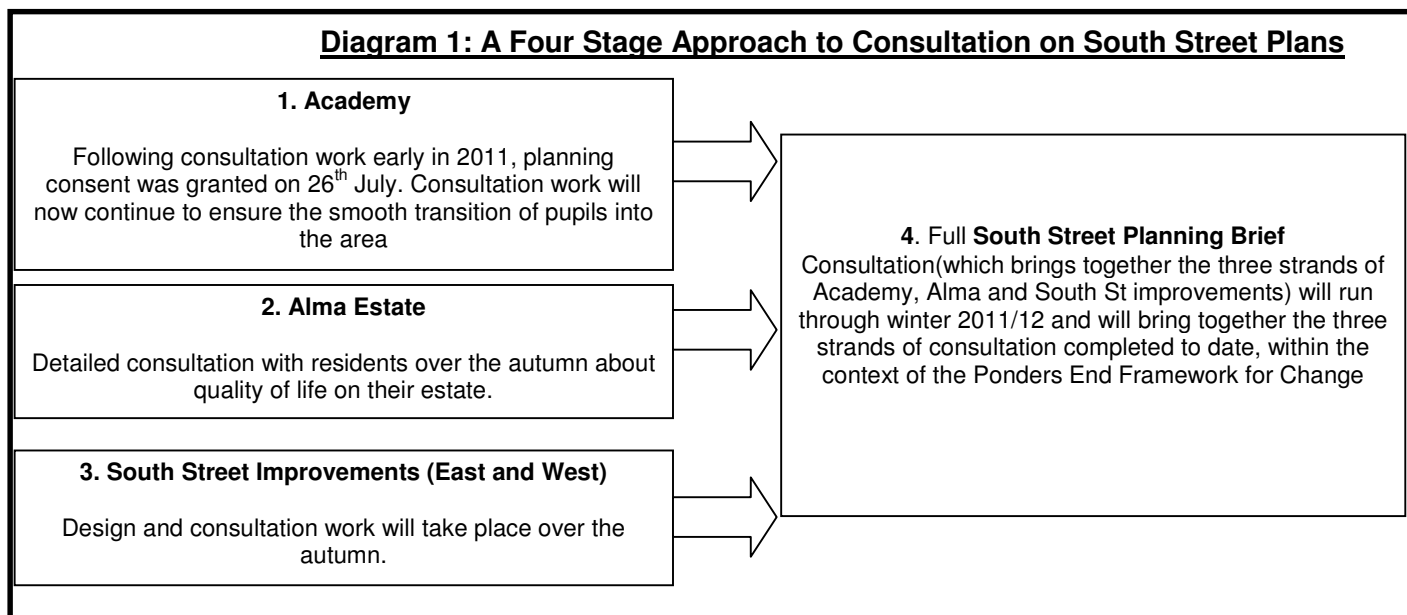
3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Alma Estate includes the following: the four Alma towers; the maisonettes and shops on South Street; the Alma Road blocks; the Napier Road blocks, Scotland Green Road block and Fairfield Close. A red-line plan of the consultation area is included at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The existing approach to the Alma Estate is set out in the draft Ponders End Framework for Change document. The approach sought to retain and restore all blocks as well as making public realm improvements and activating the base of the towers.
- 3.3 Since the preparation of the Framework for Change, it has come to light that some residents would like to see more comprehensive improvements to their quality of life. Some residents of the Alma Estate have approached the Council within recent months to highlight their support for an option that includes demolishing the existing estate and replacing the estate with a new development.
- 3.4 This report proposes that residents of the Alma Estate are consulted on all options for the estate over a fifteen week period with a consultation commencement date of 1st September. The report explains the four stages of the consultation exercise which will culminate in a preferred regeneration option for the estate.
- 3.5 The report explains that the first stage of the consultation will include a Test of Opinion to establish to what extent residents of the

estate support a regeneration scheme that achieves the comprehensive demolition and rebuild of the estate.

4. THE ALMA ESTATE CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the future of the Alma Estate is shaped by the residents of the estate. The Council would like the consultation exercise with residents to be undertaken in partnership with residents. To achieve this aim, Council officers have held a constructive dialogue with the active community groups in the area who have advised the Council on how the consultation should be managed.
- 4.2 Throughout the fifteen week consultation of the Alma Estate, as well as during all stages in Diagram 1 below, the Council will continue to engage and update the Alma Residents Association, the Vision Team and the Ponders End Development Trust.
- 4.3 Consultation with the Alma Estate is governed by the South Street Consultation Plan. Consultation with residents of the Alma Estate is the second stage of four stages of consultation, as illustrated by the diagram beneath.



- 4.4 Consultation on the Oasis Hadley Academy has been held over recent months in the lead up to the planning committee on 26th July where planning consent was granted. Stage Two of consultation on the South Street Plans is the Alma Estate. Consultation with residents of the Alma Estate also has four distinct stages as set out in the table overleaf.

Stage	Dates of stages	How we will do this	Why we are doing each stage	What we want to know at each stage of consultation
1	1/9/11 – 21/9/11	Feedback card and door knocking	To help us prepare the main consultation	Your likes and dislikes about the Alma estate? What do you think about demolishing and rebuilding the Alma estate?
2	26/09/11 - 31/10/11	Workshops and meetings with the community	To help us put together a list of priorities for the Alma estate	What is your view on the following four topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Community facilities • Play spaces • Crime & anti social behaviour
3	01/11/11- 30/11/11	Workshops and meetings with the community	To work with the Alma residents to put together solutions for the priorities identified	How can the Alma estate change to solve the issues identified?
4	01/12/11 - 19/12/11	Exhibitions and meetings with the community	To present options that have been put together by the Alma residents	What do you think about the final options?

- 4.5 The outcome of the first stage of the consultation will ascertain whether a complete demolition and rebuild option is preferred by the residents and therefore define the scope of the consultation exercise for the subsequent stages.
- 4.6 Some representatives of the Alma Residents Association have approached the Council within recent months to highlight their support for an option that includes demolishing the existing estate and replacing it with a new development.
- 4.7 The Council has listened to the views of these residents and has taken a decision to test to what extent there is wider support amongst residents for demolishing the estate. It is advantageous for the Council to learn at an early stage of the consultation if residents are supportive of demolition because it will allow the Council to develop initial plans to be shaped in consultation with residents during Stage 3 of the consultation.

- 4.8 The Council will seek to ascertain the levels of support for this option by writing to all residents on the estate from 1 September 2011. The letter to residents will include a feedback card that will invite residents to indicate to what extent they agree with demolishing and rebuilding the estate.
- 4.9 Council officers will work in partnership with local residents to door knock residents of the estate and interpretation services will be arranged as necessary. The internet and social media will be utilised in order to improve response rates.
- 4.10 Where residents express support for demolition a Delegated Authority Report will be prepared seeking approval to procure the demolition of the estate. An alternative outcome may be that only a section of the estate is supportive of a demolition option, in which case the authority will only be sought to demolish this part of the estate.
- 4.11 Where residents do not support a demolition option then this option will not be included as an option in the subsequent stages of the consultation (unless the cost-benefit analysis strongly supports a demolition option). The consultation will then concentrate on how works can be undertaken to the existing estate to improve the life of residents.
- 4.12 Where the outcome of the consultation is uncertain or inconclusive, for example, because response rates are low or opinions are divided, it is proposed that the demolition option should remain open for a more in depth discussion at Stage 3 of the consultation.
- 4.13 The outcome sought from the consultation exercise is a plan that will regenerate the Alma Estate that is shaped by residents of the estate. The final option will then form part of the South Street Campus Planning Brief.

5. THE REGENERATION OF THE ALMA ESTATE

- 5.1 The outcomes from the fifteen week consultation exercise will be preferred options for the Alma Estate. A second report will be taken to Cabinet seeking approval to implement the regeneration proposals endorsed by residents.
- 5.2 The priority is the delivery of a regeneration scheme for the estate that improves the quality of the accommodation for the Alma residents and achieves more environmentally sustainable housing. This could be achieved either via an upgrade of the existing stock, a total redevelopment or a partial redevelopment and retention option.
- 5.3 Prior to seeking Cabinet authority the Council will work up in more detail the regeneration scheme for the estate. Where a demolition

option is chosen by the residents, plans to decant and compensate residents will have to be determined and approved.

- 5.4 The Council will ensure that all works will be phased to minimise disruption to existing residents and a detailed phasing programme will need to be agreed.
- 5.5 The Council understands that undertaking physical works is only a small part of successfully regenerating a place and that social and economic regeneration initiatives must also be implemented to truly improve the life chances of residents. The scope of the consultation reflects this because it seeks views on community facilities, play spaces, community cohesion and crime and anti social behaviour.
- 5.6 The report to be taken to Cabinet in spring 2012 will describe a comprehensive regeneration scheme for the residents of the Alma Estate that will include a programme of physical, social and economic regeneration proposals.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The main alternative to consulting residents on the future of their estate is to undertake basic decent homes works.

Basic Decent Homes

- 6.2 This option involves improving the estate to a basic Decent Homes standard and includes internal works only. This option is currently unfunded and would not bring the regeneration benefits that the area needs.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The main reason for approving the recommendations within this report is because the approach of consulting residents prior to making major decisions is consistent with the Labour Administration's policy of widening the decision making process to incorporate the views of the local community. It is also consistent with the government's Localism agenda.

8. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

8.1 Financial Implications

- 8.1.2 The potential costs for the consultation of tenants will be funded from the HRA balances. However, it is expected that this cost and other costs relating to the development of the site will be recouped from the potential capital receipts generated from the development of the site.
- 8.1.3 A comprehensive option appraisal will be completed to determine the various options and their viability.

- 8.1.4 One of the consequences of the move towards self-financing of the HRA is the amount of debt repaid to government will be adjusted to take account of planned demolitions. If a Delegated Authority Report is prepared recommending the demolition of all or part of the estate Finance will need to estimate the impact on the amount of debt due to government.
- 8.1.5 The development of Alma estate will therefore need to be considered within the overall framework of the HRA reform and the Council's wider regeneration strategy.

8.2 Legal Implications

- 8.2.1 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that local authorities have power to do anything they consider likely to promote or improve the social, economic or environmental well-being of their area or the persons resident therein. Therefore the Council has a discretionary power to pursue a course of action if it is considered likely to have social, economic or environmental advantages in the area. In exercising such a discretionary power, Members need to take into account all relevant (and no irrelevant) considerations. This will include the financial implications of the proposal. Therefore, in the context of the present report, Members will need to be satisfied that the consultation process will lead to local social, environmental or economic benefits and is an effective use of public funds.
- 8.2.2 Once the consultation process has been completed and the Council moves in to a development phase the Council must procure contractors and development partners for the preferred option in accordance with the Council's constitution, in particular Contract Procedure Rules. In addition, the legal agreements will need to be in a form approved by the Assistant Director (Legal Services).

8.3 Property Implications

- 8.3.1 If the outcome of the of the consultation process supports regeneration of the estate a dedicated resource will be required to work up and consider options for the regeneration. Because of the large scale of the project it is likely the resource required would need to be full time and will need to be complimented by external consultants

9. KEY RISKS

- 9.1 The main risk associated with the contents of this report is that the consultation exercise undertaken does not succeed in engaging a sufficient number of Alma residents. This risk has been mitigated by undertaking to door knock all households, in partnership with the Alma Residents Association.

10. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

10.1 Fairness for All

10.2 The proposals for the Alma Estate ensure fairness for all members of the local community by consulting the community on major proposals for the area, and taking on board the views of all sections of the community, prior to the Council taking a decision on the future of the housing stock in the opportunity area.

10.3 Growth and Sustainability

10.4 Growth and sustainability are central to the proposals for the Alma estate. The final proposal will boost growth in terms of increasing the supply of quality residential housing and retail space in the area (whether by refurbishing or rebuilding). Furthermore, all options will prioritise environmental sustainability, including improving the energy efficiency of the residential buildings and promoting recycling and sustainable transport.

10.5 Strong Communities

10.6 The proposals will aim to involve the community in the decisions that will shape their area and foster a greater sense of community cohesion in the area.

11. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There will be significant performance management implications depending upon which option is chosen. Once a preferred option has been identified the impact on performance management should be analysed.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no health and safety implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 – Alma Estate red-line plan