

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012/2013 REPORT NO. **46**

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Cabinet, 18th July 2012

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

Agenda – Part 1	Item: 16
Subject: Alma Estate Regeneration Programme	
Ward: Ponders End	
Cabinet Members consulted: Councillor Oykenner and Councillor Goddard	

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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. Consultation on the Planning Brief for the South Street Area is due to begin by the end of 2012.
- 1.2 The delivery of the Alma project is a significant undertaking for the Council but one that has the potential to transform one of the most deprived parts of the Borough into a vibrant and more desirable place to live.
- 1.3 The Alma Estate has been identified as forming part of the next phase of the Council's ambitious estate renewal programme which has seen excellent progress towards achieving a start on site on both the Highmead and Ladderswood projects.
- 1.4 Extensive consultation has been carried out with residents of the Alma estate which has demonstrated very strong resident support for a redevelopment proposal.
- 1.5 The report recommends the approval of the Alma regeneration scheme and an allocation of funding from the Housing Revenue Account.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the consultation process that has been undertaken and note the outcome of that process.
- 2.2 Notes the earlier decision taken on 22nd March 2012 regarding the ownership of replacement social housing on the Alma estate.
- 2.3 Authorises the commencement of the Alma Regeneration Programme in accordance with the contents of this report.
- 2.4 Authorise the issuing of Ground 10 and Demolition Notices under the Housing Act 1985 in respect of all tenanted properties in the red line in Appendix 1.
- 2.5 Authorise the purchasing of all leasehold properties in the red line in Appendix 1 under the terms of a Compulsory Purchase Order using HRA funding identified in the Super Part 2 Report.
- 2.6 Authorise the project funding identified in the Super Part 2 Report delegating authority to the Director of Health, Housing and Adult Social Care and the Director of Finance, Resources and Customer Services to authorise expenditure on consultants, as required, to help enable the proposed development.
- 2.7 Authorises the appropriation of the “Academy Street” site to the Housing Revenue Account for market value to enable the delivery of new affordable housing on this site.
- 2.8 Authorises the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, under delegated powers, to approve the appointment of a building contractor to construct the “Academy Street” site.
- 2.9 Authorises a decision to be taken on the disturbance allowance approach, under delegated powers, to the Director of Health, Housing and Adult Social Care and the Director of Finance, Resources and Customer Services.
- 2.10 Agrees to delegated approval of decanting plans to the Cabinet Member for Housing.
- 2.11 Notes that Enfield Homes will cease to re-let void properties on the Alma estate; however, empty properties may be used to meet Housing Need in other ways during the development of the estate renewal scheme.
- 2.12 Notes the intention for Enfield Homes to prepare an interim programme of works to upgrade housing blocks in later phases, delegating the approval of the same to the lead Member for Housing.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Alma project land is located in the South Street area of the Ponders End ward. The project land is adjacent to Ponders End station provides trains into Liverpool Street. The land recommended for development is 6.9 hectares large.
- 3.2 The strategic planning context for the project will be provided by the South Street Planning Brief and the North East Enfield Area Action Plan ("NEEAAP"); consultation on both is due to begin in 2012.
- 3.3 The Alma development land, referred to in this report, includes the following housing blocks: 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. The project also includes land south of South Street and adjacent to the new Academy School referred to within this report as "Academy Street". The development land is shown at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 The existing approach to the South Street area is set out in the draft Ponders End Framework for Change document which set out a plan for regenerating the Ponders End area. The approach in the document sought to retain and restore all blocks as well as making public realm improvements and activating the base of the towers.
- 3.5 Since the preparation of the Framework for Change the Council was approached by residents expressing a desire to see more comprehensive improvements to their quality of life.
- 3.6 In September 2011 a report was approved by Cabinet to consult residents of the Alma estate on the potential regeneration of the estate. The outcome of the initial consultation exercise, explained in more detail in this report, indicated a high level of support for regenerating the estate.
- 3.7 Consultation workshops were held with residents during October and December 2011 which provided an opportunity for residents to give their view on what improvements they would like to see.
- 3.8 In April 2012 a letter was sent to all secure tenants on the estate confirming that they can choose to preserve their secure tenancy status by either moving to a new property on the redeveloped estate or off the estate.
- 3.9 The final Test of Opinion was completed in June 2012; the result indicated that a significant majority of residents favoured comprehensively regenerating the Alma estate.
- 3.10 Following the extensive consultation with Alma residents and due to the considerable regeneration benefits that the programme will

achieve, the report recommends that Cabinet approves the initiation of the Alma Regeneration Programme.

- 3.11 One of the outcomes sought from all the physical regeneration projects being delivered in Ponders End is an appropriate mix of housing across the different sites. The NEEAAP will provide the framework for the area to ensure that the proposals for the different sites are coordinated as part of a wider strategy.

4. THE JUSTIFICATION AND VISION FOR ALMA

- 4.1 The case for regenerating the Alma estate is clear and compelling.
- 4.2 The Alma estate has been identified as forming part of the next phase of the Council's estate renewal programme following an objective analysis of all council estates in the Borough. This analysis has demonstrated that assessed against a range of criteria the Alma estate is in urgent need of regeneration.
- 4.3 The Alma estate suffers from serious problems of overcrowding with families residing in inadequately sized properties. One of the priorities for redeveloping the estate will be to address all overcrowding issues on the estate and housing tenants in appropriately sized properties.
- 4.4 As illustrated in the vision below the successful implementation of the project will result in the achievement of numerous benefits for the area. An important benefit, at a time when there is a serious shortage of homes, is the uplift in the number of new homes in the area the scheme will achieve. There will be a particular emphasis on introducing family sized homes as local market research suggests there is strong demand.
- 4.5 The estate is currently in a poor state of repair with a number of leaks inflicting the blocks, problems with balconies and cladding system, and unreliable lifts. Enfield Homes is taking action to replace all of the lifts in the tower blocks (these can be recycled and used in other high rise blocks) but all of the blocks fall short of the decent homes standard.
- 4.6 The estate, and particularly the four twenty two storey tower blocks, is incongruous in an otherwise low-rise residential area. As the DMD moves towards becoming adopted this will strengthen the case for future planning applications involving lower height developments.
- 4.7 The views of residents are paramount to the recommendation to redevelop the Alma estate. As explained in more detail below, a clear majority of the estate are in favour of redeveloping the estate including demolition, which is a vital endorsement of the Council's proposals.

- 4.8 An important justification for regenerating the Alma estate is the potential to transform a deprived neighbourhood located in a strategically important area of the Borough.
- 4.9 The vision for the Alma estate area is rooted in extensive consultation with the local community during the last three years. This vision will be tested during the preparation of the South Street Planning Brief and the NEEAAP which provide the strategic framework for the site.

Place Making

- 4.10 The aim is for Alma to be an identifiable sought after place to live as a result of the aspirational housing offer, the high performing local schools, new and improved transport links and high quality public realm.
- 4.11 The redevelopment of the area places quality of architecture and the natural environment at its core, setting the benchmark for the borough.

Housing

- 4.12 All new housing, including new homes adjacent to the Academy, will be exemplar, sustainably designed and rooted in the historic context of the area, enabling Alma to respond to the challenge of climate change. It will provide a variety of different tenures and sizes to meet the diverse needs of its residents.
- 4.13 The housing offer will focus on providing homes and an environment that is suitable for families who will choose to stay in the area.

Natural Environment

- 4.14 The Alma development will provide a green link to the Ponders End Park to the West and the natural beauty of the Lee Valley Park to East.
- 4.15 The area provides well-connected, accessible green streets, footpaths and public spaces that are rooted in their historic context and are easy to navigate.
- 4.16 The residential elements will provide a continuum of the green environment with the inclusion of green roofs, walls and winter gardens. Energy efficient buildings and a centralised energy system connecting into a decentralised energy network will aim to reduce both carbon emissions and energy bills.

Connectivity

- 4.17 Alma will provide crucial pedestrian and cycle links between the High Street, Ponders End Park, and the Lee Valley Regional Park. South Street will be improved to include a 20mph zone and footway

improvements as part of a high quality public realm. Shared surfaces will ensure that the street hierarchy places pedestrian and cycle movement foremost.

- 4.18 Ponders End station will provide good transport links across the Borough and into the rest of London. Bus stops will be located within easy access of the station providing a direct link to the local town centres of Enfield Town and Edmonton Green.
- 4.19 The station square and the existing pedestrian-cycle bridge will be creatively enhanced to create a more enticing approach into the Lee Valley Regional Park.
- 4.20 Long-established but hidden footpaths and connections will be revealed and improved to enable people to get around more easily.

Local Amenities

- 4.21 The local retail offer reflects the residential nature of the area and supports the local facilities and the needs of commuters. The local nature of the offer strengthens, and improves the viability of, Ponders End High Street.

Community Facilities

- 4.22 The new Oasis Hadley Academy opens in January 2013 providing an exciting, inspiring and welcoming environment for students. Specialising in Maths, Information, Communications and Technology, and Music, the Academy will provide a vibrant learning community for 3-19 year olds as well as facilities for the rest of the community. The admissions policy ensures that the school serves the local community, reducing car journeys.
- 4.23 The recently improved Ponders End Youth Centre providing a safe and welcoming place for young people to socialise, learn and develop the skills, confidence and knowledge to reach their potential. Providing a wide range of activities, from residential experiences and Duke of Edinburgh award, to a fun evening club programme, music, movement, dance and performing arts along with local and national cultural events, the Youth Centre reaches out to improve cohesion amongst young people whatever their interests or abilities.

Life Chances

- 4.24 Residents' employment opportunities are improved by targeted outreach, a local skills and learning resource, and ESOL classes. The capacity of local residents is developed to enable them to take advantage of apprenticeship opportunities during the construction of the new development.

- 4.25 New broadband infrastructure and telecommunication technologies ensure residents can access the internet at superfast speeds.

Management

- 4.26 An integrated management regime will ensure a high quality service across all tenures. Steps are taken to safeguard the long term appearance of the development to ensure Alma continues to be a place where people want to live.

5. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 Following on from the vision for the project there are a number of objectives that the project will aim to achieve.
- 5.2 The Alma scheme will take a holistic approach to improving the local neighbourhood; using the physical improvements as a catalyst to wider social and economic change. The project will aim to provide opportunities to meet the needs and ambitions of the local residents.
- 5.3 There are three key objectives which have been established for this regeneration project; the scheme must:
- Ensure the project remains affordable within the context of the HRA business plan;
 - Ensure that proposals for the subject area are directed by the wider regeneration and planning context
 - Ensure residents remain at the heart of the new proposals;
- 5.4 The following more specific objectives must also be achieved by the project:
- To comprehensively regenerate the area
 - To improve the life chances of residents by seeking to address social and economic deprivation amongst residents on the estate
 - Promote the highest quality of design
 - Compliance with the Council's Core Strategy and emerging Development Management Document
 - Increase the proportion of family sized accommodation
 - To achieve an early start on site
 - To achieve a more sustainable mix of housing tenures
 - To minimise the disruption to residents within, and adjacent to, the subject area
 - All new homes to comply with the London Housing Design Guide
 - To reduce deprivation and improve skills and employment levels within the subject area
 - To improve the overall quality of the physical environment

- To achieve high environmental sustainability standards, including a minimum of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4
- To support the implementation of new infrastructure that may in part be necessitated by the demands of the new development

6. RESIDENT CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Council has been meticulous in ensuring that a decision on the future of the Alma estate is not taken until the residents of the Alma estate have had their say on the future of the estate.
- 6.2 An important element of ensuring residents had a real opportunity to comment on the future proposals for the area was the appointment of an Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor (“ITLA”). The role of the ITLA is to provide independent advice to tenants and leaseholders to enable them to make informed decisions for their household.
- 6.3 Consultation with Alma residents began in September 2011. An initial Test of Opinion was held to gauge to what extent residents of the Alma estate supported demolishing and rebuilding the estate. Of the 717 households, 64% of households responded and 84% of respondents expressed a preference for demolition. Door knocking, in partnership with Enfield Homes and the Alma Resident Association (“ARA”), was carried out to increase the participation rates.
- 6.4 The Test of Opinion established that there was support across the estate for a comprehensive regeneration scheme. Following this feedback the Council organised more consultation sessions to further explore estate regeneration proposals with residents.
- 6.5 The initial Test of Opinion was never proposed as offering residents a final say on the future of the estate the purpose was more to test to what extent support for a more radical intervention existed.
- 6.6 Workshops were held during October 2011 to discuss with residents in particular the existing problems on the estate and how improvements can be made.
- 6.7 During November architect firm PRP were jointly selected by the Council and the ARA. PRP prepared a number of design options for the estate and these options were consulted upon during workshops held in December 2011.
- 6.8 The workshops held in October and December were generally well attended with over 200 residents attending overall. Separate sessions were held with tenants, leaseholders and young people and interpretation services were arranged to ensure that all residents had an equal opportunity to participate in the consultation.

- 6.9 A final Test of Opinion was held in May 2012 to determine whether residents' preference was for a refurbishment or redevelopment scheme. A secondary question sought to determine, if a redevelopment scheme were to proceed, where residents would prefer to be rehoused.
- 6.10 The second and final Test of Opinion was held once an information booklet was prepared for both tenants and leaseholders and included information on rehousing options, compensation and project timescales. Holding a second Test of Opinion once residents were informed of their choices accords with consultation best practice.
- 6.11 The addition of an information booklet ensured that residents had the necessary information to make an informed decision for their household. The Test of Opinion literature was translated into community languages to ensure all sections of the estate had an equal opportunity to participate.
- 6.12 Door knocking was again used to improve participation rates, including the use of interpreters. The door knocking was undertaken by the ITLA for the estate. The ITLA was also responsible for monitoring the Test of Opinion process to assure the probity and fairness of the process.
- 6.13 Residents were able to return their Test of Opinion cards by freepost or at a ballot box in 100 South Street, the shop the Council has leased to the ARA (at a cost to the Council of £10,950 in foregone rent and the cost of utilities) to enable them to support the regeneration proposals. A public meeting was also held where residents could ask the Council questions. A subsequent public meeting was held specifically with the South Street retailers.
- 6.14 The final result is comparable to the initial Test of Opinion. The overall response rate achieved was 67% of households and of those that responded 78% expressed a preference for redevelopment, 20% for refurbishment, and 2% did not express a preference. All areas of the estate voted in favour of redevelopment, and there was strong support among both Council tenants and leaseholders.
- 6.15 Council tenants were also asked where they would like to be rehoused; of those that responded 38% wanted to be rehoused elsewhere in the Borough, 37% on the new estate, 13% elsewhere in Ponders End, and 12% did not express a preference. Extrapolation of this data indicates that approximately 220 council tenanted households are likely to want to be rehoused on the new development. This data assists the Council to plan the future provision of council housing but tenants' preferences will inevitably change during the duration of the programme so the Council will adopt an adaptable approach.

- 6.16 The ITLA has confirmed that the Test of Opinion process was carried out in accordance with good practice and they have endorsed the final result.
- 6.17 The consultation on the future of the estate has successfully engaged all sections of the estate and the Test of Opinions have achieved an excellent response from residents. The final result is clear: a significant majority of the estate would like the Council to comprehensively regenerate the estate. The definitive nature of the result means that recommendation 2.3 within this report carries the endorsement of residents.
- 6.18 Whilst a clear majority of residents support the regeneration of the estate the Council appreciates that the redevelopment process can cause distress amongst residents. Every resident has individual circumstances, the Council is very sensitive to this, and will ensure that officer time is invested in supporting residents through the process.
- 6.19 The conclusion of the Test of Opinion on the future of the estate marks only the first chapter of what will continue to demonstrate a sustained commitment to engaging residents on the proposals for their neighbourhood. The Council has already, in accordance with best practice, appointed an ITLA for estate residents, and will continue to work with an ITLA to maximise resident involvement.
- 6.20 During the next stages of the resident / retailer engagement process residents will be consulted on the masterplan for the estate, inform updates to the information booklet, and will be asked to produce a resident aspiration document setting out their objectives for the regeneration. The Council as a matter of course organises a panel of residents on estate renewal projects, like those on Ladderswood and New Avenue. It will also be appropriate to engage residents from the wider community, for example, on the plans for the Academy Street land.

7. NEW COUNCIL HOUSING

- 7.1 On 22nd March 2012 a decision was taken that, in the event the regeneration of the estate was approved by Cabinet, the new social housing can be owned by the Council. The development of new council housing would make Enfield Council one of only a few pioneering councils to initiate a new era of council housing.
- 7.2 The opportunity to develop new council housing has been made possible by the recent reforms to the housing revenue account ("HRA"). Until the reforms the Council's ability to develop new council homes was severely constrained; which is why the Council has previously taken the decision to work in partnership with a housing association on both the Highmead and Ladderswood projects.

- 7.3 The case for constructing new council homes is underpinned by a robust financial analysis of the impact on the HRA business plan. The work undertaken has demonstrated that the performance of the business plan is improved if the Council owns the new housing rather than disposing of land to a housing association to develop new social homes. The work on new council housing has been externally validated and confirms the business case is financially prudent.
- 7.4 The approach taken on the Alma project is consistent with the objectives in the HRA Asset Management Strategy approved by Cabinet in June 2012, meaning that henceforth the Council will aim to increase its housing portfolio.
- 7.5 This approach means that existing tenants can choose to move into a new council home on the redeveloped Alma estate whilst preserving their secure tenancy status. This position has the strong support of secure tenants living on the Alma estate.

8. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION

- 8.1 The Alma estate is located within one of the most deprived wards in the Borough and is one of the Council's regeneration priority areas. There is a high level of benefit dependency on the estate and low skill and employment levels. Addressing deprivation in the Ponders End area will be a key priority for the project.
- 8.2 The Council understands that regeneration embodies more than the development of new homes and amenities. Housing led regeneration can achieve a lot; addressing overcrowded living conditions, providing children with more space to learn, reducing energy bills, designing out crime and improving residents' general wellbeing, but it cannot deliver sustainable change to a resident's life chances without a wider programme of interventions.
- 8.3 Improving the employability of residents, removing barriers to betterment, upping the skills base, fostering community cohesion; these objectives and more are vital to revitalising a deprived neighbourhood.
- 8.4 Some of the solutions will be easier to find: better signposting of services, greater coordination of local services and new apprenticeships during the reconstruction of the estate. There is already an active community base and positive work is carried out by the Ponders End Community Development Trust ("PECDT"), Jobsnet, community groups and active members of the community. The emphasis therefore is about building upon the excellent work already carried out. However, making short-term improvements will be easier to achieve than the enduring long-term change which will be the true measure of success.

- 8.5 The scale of the challenge requires more resources. It is recommended under the Resourcing section of this report that a socio-economic officer is allocated to lead on this work. Their role will require significant partnership working with colleagues across the Council, residents, the PECDT and other key stakeholders. This person will also be expected to pursue external funding opportunities and prepare a strategy and an action plan for delivering the project's social and economic regeneration agenda.
- 8.6 The Council values the existing commercial tenants affected by the proposals. These commercial premises are already providing employment opportunities for local people. The Council will ensure that the proposals for the estate will include new retail space to allow these businesses to continue to prosper in the area and serve the needs of residents.
- 8.7 There are a multitude of reasons why individuals do not participate in the employment market. The approach taken will reflect the complex nature of this problem. The Council's approach will include breaking down social barriers and improving the health and wellbeing of residents.
- 8.8 The tenure mix, which includes 60% private housing, will improve employment and income levels in the area; however, the success of the Council's socio-economic strategy will be judged against increasing the prospects for existing residents not how the general levels of deprivation are improved by the introduction of owner occupiers.
- 8.9 It is a necessity that this work begins at the outset of the project to ensure that upon completion of the project the enduring legacy is more than bricks and mortar.

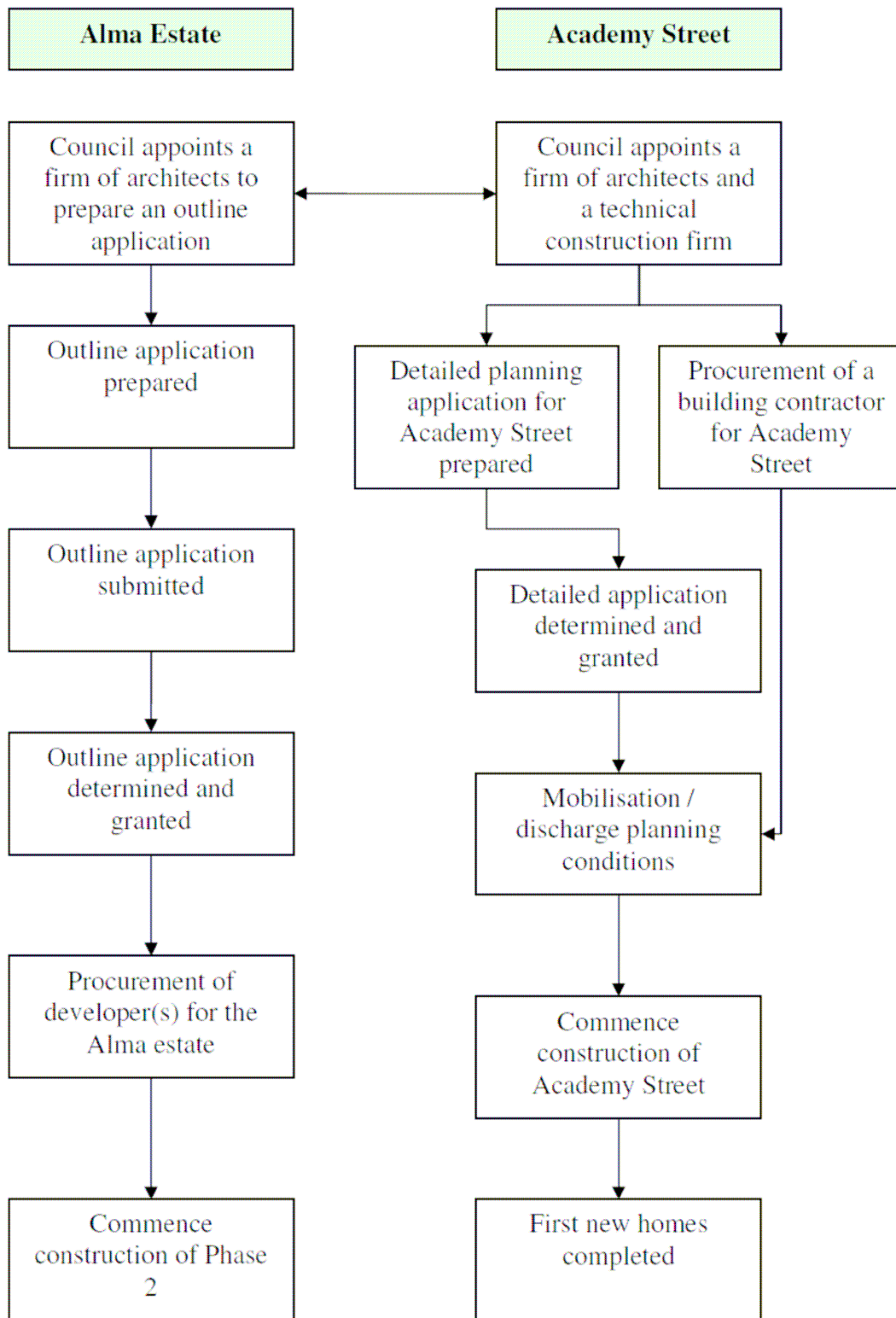
9. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCING

- 9.1 The delivery of the Alma project is a significant undertaking for the Council. It will have implications for a number of departments in both the Council and Enfield Homes. The project management and resourcing arrangements are therefore critical to the success of the project.
- 9.2 The project will be led by a senior project manager in the Development and Estate Renewal Team which is part of the Health, Housing and Adult Social Care directorate. Due to the location of the project area in one of the Council's priority regeneration areas close working with the Regeneration and Leisure directorate will be essential. The governance structure at **Appendix 2** has in part been designed to reflect the importance of cross departmental collaborative working.

- 9.3 In addition to a project manager the project will require as a minimum the following support: rehousing, leaseholder buyback, resident liaison, communications, socio-economic, project support and admin assistance. The Part 2 report sets out the exact resource requirements in more detail.
- 9.4 A project team has been established, chaired by the senior project manager, to oversee the delivery and implementation of the project. The project team includes officers from a number of teams: neighbourhood regeneration, development control, planning policy, urban design, legal services, sustainable communities, finance, youth services, transport, procurement, education, architectural services and Enfield Homes. The multifaceted composition of the project team reflects the complexity of delivering a comprehensive regeneration scheme.
- 9.5 A thorough project initiation document has been prepared for the project and been approved by CMB. A project plan is in place to manage and monitor project timescales to ensure key milestones are achieved. A risk register has been prepared to manage and mitigate risks to the project as appropriate.

10. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 10.1 The proposed development strategy is the result of an options appraisal and sign-off at the Alma project team. There are two principal objectives which govern the approach taken: a robust planning and procurement strategy and achieving an early start on site.
- 10.2 The recommended approach is depicted overleaf.



- 10.3 The preferred option advocates the Council obtaining an outline planning application for the estate and a detailed planning application for the “Academy Street” site. Architect firms of the highest quality will be sought to ensure that a scheme of real excellence is achieved. The final plan for the estate should not only

elevate the scheme as one that raises design standards, but it should reinforce the Council's reputation for promoting schemes of high architectural merit.

- 10.4 The Council will either appoint one firm of architects for both commissions or two firms of architects: one to prepare an outline application and one to prepare a detailed planning application. In the second scenario a degree of collaborative working between the two firms of architects would be required.
- 10.5 The advantages of obtaining an outline application prior to marketing the site are it provides the Council and developers with certainty that development proposals that comply with the outline will be acceptable to Planning. Obtaining an outline application also leaves open the possibility of disposing of parcels of land to different developers rather than selling the entire estate to a single developer.
- 10.6 The other main advantage of procuring an outline application is it provides the Council with a greater level of control over what is a strategically important site. An outline consent would also help support obtaining a Compulsory Purchase Order if it becomes necessary for the Council to resort to the using this contingency option.
- 10.7 A decision on whether, following obtaining an outline consent, the Council markets the estate land to a single developer or to a number of developers through the disposal of parcels of land, will be taken under delegated powers. This delegation will form part of a later report on the regeneration strategy.

11. PHASING AND DECANT STRATEGY

- 11.1 A phasing and decant strategy is required to demonstrate how tenants can be rehoused in an efficient manner. Approximately half of tenants would prefer to be rehoused off the Alma estate meaning the Council will need to explore suitable properties for these residents.
- 11.2 The phasing plan will set out the order in which housing blocks on the estate will be decanted pending demolition. The Council can commence the rehousing process for residents in the first block this year but residents in the final phase will not be rehoused for a number of years.
- 11.3 The phasing plan will have a significant impact on the lives of residents and therefore it is right that the release of this information is managed sensitively. The Council proposes to write to all residents after Cabinet to outline the phasing plan and explain how residents can contact the Council for further information.

- 11.4 How properties are allocated to Alma tenants will be governed by the Council's Allocations Policy. The Council is currently consulting on a new Allocations Policy which is due to be reported to Cabinet in October 2012. There will therefore be a period between late July and October 2012 when the existing Allocations Policy governs the allocation of properties for Alma tenants. During this period the project will prioritise tenants in the first phase whose housing need is not anticipated to be affected by the new Allocations Policy i.e. a single person renting a one bedroom flat.
- 11.5 The decanting of the Alma estate, which is likely to stretch over a ten year timescale, is achievable; however, this will not be without impact on the overall priorities for letting to others who wish to access social housing, or those who are already tenants but who require a move. This will be a feature of the allocation of social housing in Enfield throughout the period of the redevelopment.
- 11.6 During the early years of the project there will be an impact on the supply of homes for other households awaiting rehousing as the need for permanent and temporary moves for the Alma estate tenants who are to be decanted increases. However this will improve in later years as new build homes join the supply side and the decant demand reduces.
- 11.7 The new social housing allocation policy, planned for adoption by Cabinet in October 2012, proposes the ability to alter priorities between groups of applicants for social housing. This will enable Enfield Council to manage the pressures of the decant programme during the redevelopment period, within the supply of homes that becomes available. This will ensure that the decisions made to adjust priorities are transparently made and clearly understood by all stakeholders.
- 11.8 The Welfare Reform Bill brought in by the present coalition government will also have a number of serious implications for Alma tenants. For example, tenants with one or more bedrooms than their housing need (as defined by the Council's Allocations Policy) will have benefits cut by an average of £14 per a week for one more bedroom, and £25 per a week for two more bedrooms.
- 11.9 The regeneration of the Alma estate will take a number of years to complete meaning housing blocks in later phases will require a degree of capital investment for the interim period before demolition. It is proposed that to address this Enfield Homes lead on the preparation of an interim works proposal for the approval of the lead Member for Housing. The Council will not allow the undue deterioration of housing blocks in later phases whilst people are still living in them.

- 11.10 New commercial units will be provided as part of the scheme to replace the existing retail units on South Street. The Council hopes that all of the existing retailers will choose to remain in the area but assistance will be provided for those that would like to relocate elsewhere. The appropriate amount of retail space in this part of Ponders End will be guided by the NEEAAP.

12. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do Nothing

- 12.1 Doing nothing is not a serious option in this instance. The estate is in need of renovation and does not meet the Decent Homes standard.

Refurbishment

- 12.2 The main alternative to redeveloping the estate is to undertake a refurbishment programme. Refurbishing the estate does not have the support of residents and would not adequately support the Council's ambition to regenerate the Ponders End area. As set out in the Part 2 report, the net cost of refurbishing the estate is greater than the redevelopment option.

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

13.1 Financial Implications

- 13.1.1 Please refer to the Part 2 report.

13.2 Legal Implications

- 13.2.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with the power of general competence and states that "A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do". Section 2 sets out the boundaries of the general power, requiring local authorities to act in accordance with statutory limitations or restrictions.
- 13.2.2 S.120 Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power to acquire property by agreement for the purpose of the improvement or development of their area notwithstanding the fact that it may not be required immediately for that purpose. Where agreement can not be reached the Council does have the power under various enactments to acquire properties compulsorily. The acquisition of properties must comply with the Councils Property Procedure Rules.
- 13.2.3 When dealing with secure tenants the Council must comply with the provisions of the Housing Act 1985 in respect to the service of demolition notices and the rehousing of secure tenants.

- 13.2.4 Under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules ("CPR's"), the Council will be required to carry out a formal tender to procure the services of the architect(s) where the contract value exceeds £50,000. The Council should also be mindful of the EU thresholds and compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.
- 13.2.5 The award of contract to the architect(s) must be value for money in accordance with the Best Value principles under the Local Government Act 1999.
- 13.2.6 The legal agreement(s) will need to be in a form approved by the Assistant Director of Legal Services, the Borough Solicitor.
- 13.2.7 Appropriation of land to any purpose is governed by Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972, which authorises councils to appropriate land to any purpose for which they are authorised to acquire land by agreement and which is no longer required for the purpose for which it was held immediately prior to the appropriation.
- 13.2.8 It should be noted that the appropriation of land by a council by virtue of subsection 122(1) of the 1972 Act remains subject to the rights of other persons in, over, or in respect of the land concerned. Therefore a decision to appropriate land for a particular purpose does not extinguish any third party rights over the land in question.
- 13.2.9 Case law has confirmed that the decision about whether land is no longer required for a particular purpose is one for the local authority acting in good faith, however the Council is required by sub-section 122(2A) to consider objections to the Council's view on the question of whether the land is required for present purposes and not just the issue whether land not so required should be appropriated to a new purpose.

13.3 Property Implications

- 13.3.1 The proposed redevelopment of the Alma Estate presents a significant challenge to the Council. Finance and resources to support the design work, planning, and procurement will need to be in place from an early stage to allow for the ambitious development programme to be met.
- 13.3.2 Delivery of each phase of the proposed development will require the Council to provide the appointed developer with vacant possession of the land included within that phase. This can only be guaranteed if the development is supported with a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) being in place.
- 13.3.3 There are a large number of residential leasehold interests to be purchased if the proposed development is to proceed. Consideration

will need to be given to engaging an external resource to assist the Council in completing the purchase of the leasehold interests. Consideration will also need to be given to offering alternative options other than cash purchase of these leasehold interests, particularly for those residential leaseholders who wish to remain in the area.

- 13.3.4 The Council may also wish to consider the temporary re-letting of properties that have been purchased back both to help improve the viability of the scheme and to help ensure that areas of the estate continue to have significant occupation until the point where they are required for redevelopment.
- 13.3.5 Part of the proposed development site includes a block of shops mostly let out to businesses on commercial leases. Early engagement with the occupiers of these premises is required to ensure that wherever possible their needs are met.
- 13.3.6 The proposed development strategy will result in a requirement for the Council to enter into a number of Development Agreements and other associate property agreements. This will be a requirement for a significant resource to ensure the Councils commercial interests are protected when these agreements are drafted.
- 13.3.7 The proposed development site is large, and is likely to contain other property interests not referred to above. Some contingency will need to be allowed for presently unknown property interests.
- 13.3.8 It is likely that the Council will need to exercise its powers to appropriate land for planning purposes to override some property interests.
- 13.3.9 The proposed development includes for the development of homes on the land known as Academy Street in the first phase. This land is presently owned by the General Fund so an appropriation of the land by the HRA will be required if the social housing element is to be retained by the Council.
- 13.3.10 There is the opportunity to obtain an advance payment from the sale of the future income stream of the ground rental income to be received from the private sale and intermediate housing elements of the scheme. If this opportunity is taken up it would help improve the viability of the scheme. This opportunity is to be investigated further.
- 13.3.11 Delegated authority is being sought so that a sale can be completed without coming back to Cabinet if it is considered that the opportunity is worth pursuing.

14. KEY RISKS

- 14.1 A full risk register for the project has been prepared. The following summarises a couple of the key project risks.
- 14.2 Rehousing tenants and obtaining vacating possession could delay delivery of the project.
- 14.3 Deterioration in the housing market would have a negative impact on the financial viability of the project.

15. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

15.1 Fairness for All

- 15.2 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.

15.3 Growth and Sustainability

- 15.4 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. Furthermore, all options will prioritise environmental sustainability, including improving the energy efficiency of the residential buildings and promoting recycling and sustainable transport.

15.5 Strong Communities

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

16. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 A full equalities impact assessment is attached to this report at **Appendix 3** which demonstrates that the project will have an equally beneficial impact across all sections of the community.

17. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1 There are significant performance management implications for the Council to consider as a result of regenerating the Alma estate. The main implication is on the Council's housing stock which is set out within this report.

18. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 18.1 A review of the condition of the buildings has advised that repair of these buildings would require significant investment to address potential issues affecting their structural integrity and to restore and maintain the robustness and condition of the external fabric. The construction of these buildings means they are our priority for estate renewal for both practical and financial reasons.

19. HR IMPLICATIONS

- 19.1 There are a number of human resource implications to be considered since there will be a requirement to increase the project resources to deliver the report. The full implications are set out within the report.

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