

# Access and Inclusion Panel Notes

3rd of June 2026

**Main aim of meeting:** The meeting aimed to gather panel feedback on the Alton Estate Renewal proposals, using presentations, discussion and feedback exercises to explore how the masterplan, block layouts, home designs and accessible interiors could better support access, inclusion and resident needs.

**Attendees:** Charlene, Michelle, Alan, Susan, Pam

**Others at meeting: From the Alton Renewal Team:** Jo Baxter (Community Engagement & Cultural Coordinator), Charlotte Rowlands (Project Assistant), Jaqueline Runnalls (Housing Occupational Therapist). **From HTA:** Iain Sherman, Lucy Smith, Martha Hiles.

## Main session Presentation:

Updated masterplan drawings were presented to provide an overview of progress on the wider Alton Estate Renewal programme. Iain Sherman also shared examples from previous HTA projects to illustrate potential approaches to the design of entrances to both individual homes and apartment blocks, alongside examples of landscaping and façade treatments. Diagrammatic plans of individual blocks were shown to demonstrate potential ground-floor and typical upper-floor layouts, with it being noted that these plans were illustrative only and would continue to evolve as the design process progresses. The group then reviewed a selection of proposed residential layouts, including a one-bedroom, two-person home and two three-bedroom, five-person homes from different blocks and tenures across the estate. These layouts were discussed and critiqued by panel members, with feedback focusing on accessibility, functionality and resident experience. As part of the discussion, the Braund Mansions development, delivered through the Winstanley regeneration programme, was presented as a precedent project, with both floor plans and interior photographs used to demonstrate design approaches and stimulate discussion around accessible and inclusive housing design.

## Key points of discussion:

**Fire Safety, Cores and Lifts:** Jaqueline Runnalls outlined updated fire safety requirements, including the need for two stair cores and two lifts (a firefighting lift and evacuation lift) in residential blocks over six storeys. It was confirmed that lifts will serve all floors.

**Cycling and Mobility:** Panel members suggested the inclusion of electric charging points for mobility scooters and raised the need for mobility aid storage and accessible cycle parking. Space constraints were acknowledged; however, HTA confirmed that mobility scooter charging had been incorporated into Block A and that further work is ongoing to identify suitable charging and storage provision across the masterplan.

**Bin Storage:** Concerns were raised regarding the apparent size of bin store entrances and the accessibility of refuse storage. It was clarified that the plans presented were indicative only and that final designs would incorporate appropriately sized access points. The design team noted that bin store locations are subject to operational constraints, making convenient and practical access an important consideration.

**Refuse Chutes:** It was noted that refuse chutes are generally only used in very tall buildings due to their management and maintenance requirements. The design team advised that they are unlikely to be a viable option within the Alton Estate Renewal proposals.

**Unit Layouts:** Jaqueline Runnalls explained the distinction between M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings and M4(3) Wheelchair User Dwellings, and confirmed the requirement to achieve a 90/10 split across the development.

**Kitchen Layouts:** It was noted that not all homes will have open-plan kitchens, recognising that such layouts are not always suitable for households with young children. The panel discussed the importance of waist-height ovens in accessible homes and identified a need for double ovens in larger family homes.

**Design and Housing Needs:** Officers confirmed that residents in areas proposed for demolition had been extensively surveyed to understand housing requirements. Block A has been designed to reflect current housing waiting list data, with revisions made to wheelchair-accessible homes to better meet identified needs. The importance of moving beyond a “tick-box” approach to deliver genuinely accessible homes was emphasised.

**Lift Breakdown Provision:** The provision of two lifts per building was welcomed as an important measure to improve reliability and ensure continued access if one lift is out of service. It was also noted that new fire safety legislation is expected to strengthen lift management requirements.

**House Interiors:** The panel welcomed the consideration already being given to fixtures and fittings, including taps, basins, plug sockets, bathroom fittings and window opening mechanisms, to ensure accessibility is embedded throughout the design. Members also highlighted the importance of strengthened ceilings to enable future hoist installation, with confirmation that appropriate ceiling construction is required for M4(3) homes.

**In-Home Storage:** The need for generous storage provision was discussed, particularly for wheelchair users who may require space for multiple wheelchairs and mobility aids. Panel members agreed this should be a priority consideration within home design.

**Heating and Cooling:** Members expressed a preference for underfloor heating and raised concerns about overheating in some recently completed residential developments. The design team advised that overheating assessments, including daylight and sun-light testing, are now required as part of the design process.

**Pocket Doors:** Panel members queried whether pocket or sliding doors could be used as a space-saving measure between kitchens and living areas. HTA explained that these doors can create challenges relating to acoustic separation, fire safety, thermal performance and emergency operation, and are therefore not generally preferred.

**Balcony Doors:** Members discussed the type of doors proposed between living spaces and balconies, suggesting sliding doors as a potential option. Jaquel Runnalls advised that sliding doors can be difficult for wheelchair users to operate and that appropriately sized single-opening doors are generally preferred to maximise accessibility.

**NEXT MEETING: TBC**

Feedback 02 - Inside the home

Alton  
RENEWAL PLAN

Send us  
your  
thoughts!

Discussion points

What is most important for accessible home layouts?

How do you feel about open plan or separate living spaces?

What are your thoughts about accessible service areas - storage, washing & drying?

What are your thoughts about accessible bathrooms?

Alton Masterplan - A&I meeting - June 2026

