

Alton Community Panel Meeting Notes

9 June 2026: Social Impact Assessment



Main aim of meeting: Inform plans for a future Social Impact Assessment on the Alton by capturing Panel views on (i) what should be measured and (ii) how consultants, once appointed, should work with the estate's communities.

Panel Members: Albert Balogun, Sandra Claringbould, Charles Einloth, Simone Johns, Orleen McIntosh, George Mills, Jo Playford, Angus Robertson.

Others at meeting: **Alton Renewal Team:** Kate Batchelor (Head of Place Programme), Jo Baxter (Community Engagement & Cultural Coordinator), Charlotte Rowlands (Project Assistant) & Anna Singleton (Head of Alton Regeneration). **Architects HTA:** Martha Hiles, Lucy Smith. **Consultants Social Life:** Nicola Bacon, Fiona Smith. **Third-Party Chair:** Daisy Froud.

A. General updates, follow-up on Actions, and Panel questions and business.

1. **Local election results:** there was still no news as to what the administration change means for the Masterplan. Meetings will continue to focus on broad topics where views gathered could be useful in multiple contexts until we have enough clarity to map out a forward plan for 2026 focused on Panel priorities.
2. **Artists of new murals:** in response to a Panel request, we confirmed that one artist is an Alton resident, and that the other lives on a road that faces the estate.
3. **Recruiting younger residents to the Panel:** nine applicants applied for three positions, of whom seven were Alton residents and therefore eligible to be on the Panel. Interviews would take place on 1 July, with Jo Playford, selected through randomisation, as a Panel representative.
4. **2 July site visit to new 'Homes for Wandsworth' Housing.** Panel members were asked to confirm with Jo if they planned to join this trip to a recently completed apartment block – The Platt – in Putney, to be followed by a coffee-and-cake discussion to reflect on the design and layout of the homes.
5. **Community Panel Member item:** Angus invited all to a Roehampton Partnership meeting on 30 June – a chance to talk about next steps post elections. The new Cabinet Member for Housing was expected to attend.

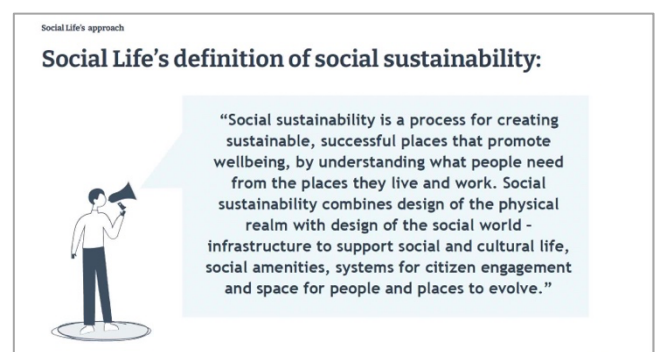
B. Understanding Social Impact Assessment (SIA)

Nicola and Fiona from Social Life explained who they are, as **'social researchers'**, the concept of **'social sustainability'**, and what a **Social Impact Assessment** is. They also stressed the value of the Brief for how the SIA is carried out, and what it focuses on, being developed with the Panel.

Detailed slides have been shared separately.

Panel questions

1. **What does 'social sustainability' mean in everyday terms?** Socially sustainable places tend to be ones where people feel a sense of belonging, know their neighbours, feel safe, and know where to go if something goes wrong. Facilities like libraries, GPs, and shared community spaces can contribute to this. The best way to measure social sustainability is through community research, asking people how they feel about an area.
2. **How does the SIA roll out over time?** Details are TBC, but approximately 200–300 people will be spoken with on multiple occasions, revisiting at intervals to capture changes in experiences and perspectives. The research framework is usually flexible at the start, then reviewed as the work progresses, in response to what is learned.
3. **How does the surveying work practically?** The exact number of people spoken with is set based on experience and an understanding of what it takes for community researchers to interview people effectively. Locations and



times are decided based on where people are likely to be. Once things are underway, the team reviews groups or areas that may have been missed. Response levels are often higher than initially expected because community researchers, who live on the estate, are able to have meaningful, empathetic conversations. This has been the case with the Alton Evaluation work that Social Life has already been doing.

4. **Does an SIA develop conclusions that lead to actions? For example, to address any negative consequences of redevelopment?** It can do, and Wandsworth wants this one to generate learning that can be acted on. On a similar project in South Acton, the process led to 4 or 5 practical recommendations, including addressing loss of local shops and ensuring replacement provision was considered.
5. **Could an SIA track ‘Social Value’ (see **NEXT MEETING** below)?** It’s not something that Social Life have specifically looked at in previous SIAs, but could potentially be included.
6. **What opportunities for work could come from regeneration, and how will young people be enabled to access them?** An SIA wouldn’t identify specific opportunities but could highlight the desire for regeneration to lead to meaningful employment, and then track how well that happened. Once priorities in terms of renewal outcomes are identified in the SIA, Council officers are responsible for delivering linked actions. For employment, Social Value Commitments from contractors to create jobs or apprenticeships is one possible route.
7. **How do you ensure that an SIA has a “so what?” – that it genuinely leads to action as a result of what is learned?** The ARP Team acknowledge this valid concern. The need to identify ways that the Council *can* meaningfully act, using realistically available resources, staff and infrastructure, could be built into the SIA Brief.

C. Small Group Discussion Topics

1. **What outcomes should be priorities for the regeneration of the Alton Estate.** Groups discussed this by responding to prompts under four categories provided by Social Life.
2. **How should a consultant carrying out the SIA work with the local community and the ACP?**

See [Pages 3 and 4: ACP Priorities for the Social Impact Assessment](#) for a summary of what was shared.



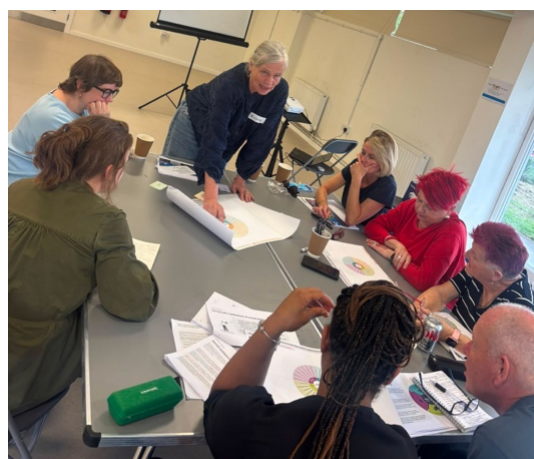
Social Life had already done a similar exercise with Council Heads of Service before the local elections.

D. Reflections and Next Steps

The ARP Team hope to be able to commission an SIA shortly but, as with all renewal work in the post-election period, cannot yet confirm plans.

Social Life will feed Panel priorities and advice into the Brief they are drafting for the Council to commission consultants to carry out the SIA. Consultants who pitch for the work will be asked to set out in their response how they will meet that Brief.

If the Panel is interested, they can review that Brief before it goes out.



NEXT MEETING: Tues 14 July, 3.30 to 6.00pm. This will focus on **Social Value: a mechanism for securing additional benefits for communities as part of renewal projects**, through additional commitments and contributions made by contractors who bid to do renewal work. Joined by a guest officer from Homes for Wandsworth, we will look at what kind of commitments and contributions residents see as genuinely valuable.

Social Life have provided a longer and more comprehensive write up (6 pages) of the workshop which can be shared with those who are interested. Just ask Jo. Notes below summarise the key themes from discussion on the night.

What outcomes should be priorities of the regeneration for...

...AMENITY AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE?

1. **A high standard of community and leisure facilities, and places to socialise and gather.** Bear in mind this will mean different things to different people. But that, overall, spaces are needed that are open to everyone and free. Spaces for young people and for women are important.
2. **Events are key too** i.e. space alone is not enough; it is the events in them that bring people together and that help them socialise. Community members need to have access and permission to run events.
3. **Access to affordable retail** including temporary access during works e.g. fears of losing the Co-op.
4. **Understanding impacts of re-locating services is important** – who can still use or access them?
5. **Digital communication** that helps people talk to each other

Note: (applies to **Social and Cultural Life** too): Alton East and West are perceived as separate places, with Block A as a physical barrier. How does an SIA manage that, and possible different impacts and perceptions based on where people live?

...VOICE AND INFLUENCE?

1. **Ensuring access to new spaces for community groups.** Some currently feel left out and forgotten; benefits of regeneration need to be equally shared.
2. **People feeling part of what's happening and seeing tangible change as a result of engagement in regeneration.** At the moment people have their say and are listened to, but this needs to be ongoing, with early community influence on decisions.
3. **Support for community-led action.** People are interested in supporting their neighbourhoods.
4. **Trust is maintained.** Important that ballot vote is respected post elections. The community would also ideally have more direct influence on new policies.
5. **Perceived value of local influence:** specific community groups could be “tapped into” e.g. the ACP, Our Roehampton, Roehampton Forum.

...SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE?

1. **Perceptions of safety, especially at night.** Including impact of lighting improvements. Perceptions of women, girls and young people in particular. These should be analysed alongside **tracked crime rates**.
2. **Perceptions of neighbourhood change.** And understanding the impacts of construction work on this e.g. road safety could be an issue.
3. **Provision of well managed public and ‘third’ spaces** (needs a clear definition) **that meet everyone’s needs.** Vital to look at construction impacts on existing spaces including informal ones (the library wall, stairs by the chip shop, benches by the bus): how are people continuing to use spaces and where do they feel comfortable?
4. **Sense of local pride & identity.** Including during construction. (See the ACP’s own Identity Principles).
5. **Impacts of phasing and decanting.** How do these affect social and cultural life, and resilience? May differ for temporary and long term residents.
6. **Impacts on young people.** What does it mean to grow up in a place that is changing?
7. **Neighbourliness and relationships.** Success might mean knowing your neighbours better, people being more friendly and open, or feeling welcome and knowing how to get involved when they move in e.g. through tenants’ associations.

...ADAPTABILITY & RESILIENCE?

1. **Impact of construction work on daily life:** concerns about transport and mobility (particularly for buses and walking), traffic (already bad), and impacts of large construction vehicles.
2. **Regenerative infrastructures** (e.g. re-greening, climate mitigation landscapes) - understanding **impact on wildlife** is important.
3. **Flexible and adaptable community spaces and buildings** - equitable access to new spaces.
4. **Parking.** Managing parking changes with construction; this is already causing resentment amongst residents.
5. **More local employment.** Connecting local employers and users.
6. **Accessible services.**

Panel advice on how consultants carrying out a Social Impact Assessment should work with...

... THE PANEL ITSELF

1. **As an equal partner.** The Panel could be involved in making sure the Brief is executed well, helping shape the research process and materials, and providing guidance on how to reach people and talk to them, including helping ensure that certain groups do not dominate the process.
2. **Through additional Panel sessions.** The Panel value in-person sessions. There could even be an ACP sub-group focused on the SIA. The consultant should check-in during sessions to ensure all members feel comfortable to share their views.
3. **Through regular communication and updates.** Not everyone can always attend in-person sessions. Reports and emails are valued too, with WhatsApp useful for small updates. The consultant will ideally set up a dynamic of friendly communication with the Panel.
4. **Involve the Panel in recruitment of community researchers** e.g. in the selection process.
5. **Through being transparent and open** throughout, including around the sharing of data. The consultant should be clear on how they interpret and share the data, reflecting on what it actually *means*.
6. **By discussing actions and next steps from what is learned with the Panel.** Who would be keen to influence those next steps.

... THE WIDER COMMUNITY

1. **Consider accessibility:** different approaches may be required for older residents and for children/young people – particularly important to reach.
2. **Using community researchers:** they are especially well-placed to carry out the work.
3. **Balance of in-person and digital activity:** door-knocking worked for the ballot, but lots of people won't answer their doors. Drop-ins can be good – human contact is valued - as can digital surveys. Phone lists also exist.
4. **Work with existing community groups and leaders – go to where people already are:** the Alton has a strong voluntary and community sector, and influential schools and places of worship, who can open up contact with networks, **BUT... don't rely on those alone.** People who don't belong to groups also need to be heard, and careful thought is needed about how to reach them.
5. **Use existing information channels.** e.g. **noticeboards** in blocks, buildings and public spaces, posters at bus stops, construction hoardings – Block A's are particularly visible. Or **community publications**, which people are more likely to read than consultant materials.
6. **Use good graphic design** so that information stands out on busy noticeboards or is read – rather than going straight into recycling – when it comes through the letterbox.
7. **Think carefully about times of day.** Around school and working hours, shift patterns etc. The consultant needs to be available at different times of the day and week.
8. **Think carefully about media and language:** people often don't read pdf reports. Videos are great: people not only watch them but share them on social media. Materials need to be accessible, use plain English and avoid technical jargon. Inappropriate and inaccessible language is *hugely* disempowering.
9. **Incentives:** use food, for example, to encourage people in.
10. **Work with the whole estate:** both Alton East and West need to be reached; not just the smaller area where the major regeneration impacts are happening.
11. **Listen!** Respect residents' views and lived experience; the people who live on the Alton. It's important that the consultant doesn't arrive with pre-conceptions or try to impose views.