

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 11 Sept 2025	Decision maker: Strategic Director of Housing
Report title:		Local Lettings Plan – Albion Street & Renforth Street	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Rotherhithe	
From:		Ricky Bellot – Housing Choice and Supply Manager	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Strategic Director of Housing is asked to approve the local lettings plan for the 39 new homes being social housing tenancies at Albion and Renforth Rotherhithe Civic Centre Albion Street London SE16 7BS and Rear of Albion Street Primary School, Renforth Street, London SE16 7JD, where up to 50% of the properties will first be allocated to existing tenants within the local area with the next 25% of properties allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty by Southwark with all remaining properties advertised to the housing register.
2. That the Strategic Director notes the further criteria applied to residents of the local lettings scheme as follows:
 - i. Residents included in the local lettings plan will be drawn from:
 - Swan Road Estate
 - Ainsty Estate
 - Adams Gardens Estate
 - Aylton Estate
 - Irwell Estate
 - Albion Estate
 - Risdon House
 - Brunel Road
 - Henley Close
 - Canada Estate
 - St Mary Estate
 - ii. Allocations will be made to homeless households owed the main housing duty. This will be a final offer of accommodation where refusal of a suitable offer may result in ending the main housing duty and the

discharge of Southwark's statutory functions in relation to the applicant's homelessness.

- iii. Prospective tenants will be required to have rent arrears of less than four weeks or £50 if claiming housing benefit at point of application and point of offer.
- iv. Households can only move upon successful completion of pre-tenancy inspection and interview as per section 5.26 of the councils published allocation scheme.
- v. Only households assessed as being in housing need (bands 1-3) will be allocated a property through the local lettings scheme. Households will be prioritised within existing priority bands and awarded priority stars in accordance with the allocations scheme.
- vi. Requests for additional bedrooms above the assessed need will not be considered, unless they are made on medical grounds that are confirmed by a Housing Solutions medical assessment.
- vii. All households will be permitted to move into new homes which are one room less than their assessed bed need for three or more bedroomed properties.
- viii. Households will not be permitted to move into new one bedroomed homes if the property is below their assessed bed need.
- ix. Households on the general register who are not within in the defined local lettings area, or owed the main housing duty, will not be permitted to move into any of the new homes if the property is below their assessed bed need.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3. In line with the council's target to produce 11,000 new homes by 2043, planning permission was granted to proceed with the development of new council homes located Rotherhithe Civic Centre Albion Street London SE16 7BS and Rear of Albion Street Primary School, Renforth Street, London SE16 7JD, Albion and Renforth site.
- 4. The development at Rotherhithe Civic Centre Albion Street London SE16 7BS and Rear of Albion Street Primary School, Renforth Street, London SE16 7JD includes 76 new homes, 39 listed as social housing that are scheduled for completion in May 2025 and August 2025, comprising of one, two and three bed flats.
- 5. All 39 properties will be listed as social housing tenancies.

6. Southwark's Housing Allocations Scheme sets out the criteria by which properties will be allocated. The scheme also provides for the use of local lettings schemes in order to meet the housing needs of tenants within a local area.
7. Demand for social housing within the borough continues to outstrip supply where there are 19,181 households registered on the housing register. Recent figures from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 the council received 3,935 applications but were only able to allocate 1,464 homes through either a nomination to a housing association or allocation of a Southwark council property.
8. One of the aims of the housing allocations scheme is to enable local tenants in housing need to remain within their communities and not to have to re-locate outside of the area to find suitable accommodation.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

9. All lettings for the new build schemes located at the Albion and Renforth site will comply fully with the local lettings provisions in Southwark Council's Housing Allocations scheme.
10. It is proposed that 50% of the initial lettings of the new homes will be allocated to Southwark Council tenants currently living on the estates set out above (see paragraph 2).
11. These lettings will be delivered to maximise the housing solutions to the local community and to deliver the Fairer Future promises, homes for all.
12. Following the initial lettings, secondary lettings up to 25% of homes will be allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty by Southwark Council.
13. Following the first round of lettings to the local area and allocations to homeless households, a second round of lettings for all remaining homes will be advertised to the housing register as a whole.
14. The Council also has considered whether there are any residents borough wide that have been affected by developments of shared ownership homes where council tenants have not had or will not have the opportunity to benefit from local lettings. There are currently no past or active shared ownership developments this applies to and therefore no additional residents have been identified to be part of this local lettings plan.

Neighbourhoods

15. The local lettings approach contributes to the council's key priorities to create and support neighbourhoods. It enables those already living and contributing within local communities to benefit from the development of homes in their area.

Narrowing the gap

16. The letting of new social homes, at social rent levels, supports residents on lower incomes to access genuinely affordable housing, improve their housing conditions and support them to narrow the gap in life chances for themselves and their families.

People powered

17. In the longer term it supports residents to put down roots and contribute to local, community powered decision making in their area. Choice Based Lettings and the local lettings process enables residents to make choices about where they want to live, enabling them to select a homes in the local community.

Policy implications

18. There are no Key policy implications or amendments required.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

19. Awarding priority to existing tenants within the estate recognises the fact that the development of new homes may cause disruption and on some occasions lack of amenities.
20. The groups that are affected and deemed able to apply for the homes as "local" tenants are the tenants living within the areas defined in paragraph 2.
21. The allocation of these homes will be conducted in accordance with the councils published allocation scheme, which is already subject to its own community impact assessment.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

23. The new affordable homes will be available to people on the councils housing waiting list. The council's equality and diversity policies will be adhered to during the letting process. An equalities Impact assessment was carried out on 11th September. No adverse findings were found as part of the findings from the assessment out as part of the planning approval process on 11th September. No adverse findings were concluded as part of the assessment.

24. This scheme follows the successful local lettings of new developments such as Pelier Street, East Dulwich Estate, Nunhead, Clifton estate, Masterman and Willow Walk.

Health impact statement

25. There are no health impact implications arising as a result of this policy.

Climate change implications

26. Rotherhithe Civic Centre Albion Street London SE16 7BS and Rear of Albion Street Primary School, Renforth Street, London SE16 7JD (Albion and Renforth site) was submitted to planning in 25 March 2025 and no Climate change implications statement was produced.
27. The scheme has PV panels installed on the roofs as part of the energy strategy.

Resource Implications

28. None.

Legal Implications

29. See the concurrent provided by the Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance at paragraphs 44 to 50 below.

Financial implications

30. None.

Consultation

31. The Communities service team, Resident Services team, New Homes Delivery team and the Housing Solutions service have been working in partnership with the local tenants, to design a Local Lettings scheme for the initial allocation of the new build scheme for Rotherhithe Civic Centre Albion Street London SE16 7BS and Rear of Albion Street Primary School, Renforth Street, London SE16 7JD.
32. These meetings have been conducted over a number of months and an agreement has been reached with the residents, tenants, and local elected members of the council for the geographical area for the Local Lettings area.
33. The consultation process for the Albion site took place between 2015 and 2020, involving a series of community engagement events aimed at gathering local feedback and addressing key concerns. An initial public exhibition in November

2016 introduced early proposals for the development, followed by a workshop in February 2017 that focused on the scale and height of the buildings and the use of community spaces. In 2020, an online consultation was held due to COVID-19 restrictions, which focused on issues such as parking, accessibility, and landscaping. The final community session, held in 2020, presented the revised designs that incorporated changes based on earlier feedback.

Throughout these consultations, residents raised concerns about building heights, parking provisions, impacts on green spaces, and maintaining affordability. In response, adjustments were made to reduce building heights, enhance green landscaping, and integrate sustainable materials. The feedback also underscored the importance of prioritizing local residents for affordable housing, which informed the final local lettings policy

34. The new homes sit in the heart of Rotherhithe, Albion Street, London, SE16 7BS and Rear of Albion Street, Renforth Street, London, SE16 7JD and will consist of the following social rented properties:

Property size	Number of units
1 bed flat	Albion Street: 7 Renforth Street: 10
2 bed flat	Albion Street:3 Renforth Street:5
3 bed flat	Albion Street:4 Renforth Street:10 (3 wheelchair accessible units)
Total	39

35. Therefore, it is anticipated 20 properties will be allocated to existing tenants of Southwark Council living within the area identified within section 2 of this report, and 10 properties will be allocated to homeless households.
As each project will be handed over at different times, 50% local lettings should be split for Albion (7 properties) first and then Renforth (13 properties) after.
36. As at the 10th of April 2025, one hundred and two households located within the local lettings area were registered on our Homeseach Bidding Scheme. 37 of those households have been assessed as having a housing need and are listed in a priority band 1-3. The priority listed households are broken up below:

Priority category	1 bed need	2 bed need	3+ bed need	Total count
Under occupiers	3	1	0	4
Management transfers	1	0	0	1
Overcrowded households	1	2	17	20
Statutory overcrowded households	0	0	0	0
Medical needs	1	1	5	7
Accessible housing requirement	2	0	2	4
Sheltered housing	1	0	0	1
Total	9	4	24	37

37. The above table shows a mixture of households compositions including 1, 2 and 3+ bedroom households. Therefore, it is anticipated these households will benefit from the new development within the local area. This includes the provision of sufficient accessible properties for the local residents in a housing need.
38. There are no sub households listed on the housing register within the identified 37 households on the Estates. Therefore, it is expected they will free up properties that will be available to other residents on the housing list.
39. As a result, there is sufficient demand to warrant priority given to tenants within the defined local area. An increase in the local lettings area for the new homes will generate unnecessary demand and likely to raise expectations above what can be delivered as part of this local lettings scheme.
40. Letters will be sent to qualifying tenants on the register in advance to inform them of the upcoming development. This will include details of the available homes, qualification criteria listed above and dates when the properties will be available on the Homesearch bidding website.
41. The local Resident Services Officer will work with the Housing Solutions service to help identify additional households within the local lettings estates that are in housing need but not registered on the Homesearch bidding scheme. Such cases will be expedited in order to permit the households to bid on the new homes.

42. The homes will be advertised in advance of the completion of the homes on Albion and Renforth Rotherhithe Civic Centre Albion Street London SE16 7BS and Rear of Albion Street Primary School, Renforth Street, London SE16 7JD, The first 50% of homes will be advertised to the local tenants, the next 25% will be allocated to homeless households while the remaining properties will be advertised once we have given the full opportunity for the local tenants to register their interest.
43. The information listed on the website will promote the features of the new build homes and ensure the full listing of the local lettings scheme is available for the households listed on the Homesearch bidding scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance

44. The Council has a duty under the Housing Act 1996 Part 6 to ensure it has a scheme for determining priorities and the procedures it will follow for allocating housing accommodation. The scheme must be framed to ensure reasonable preference to certain categories of housing applicants. In accordance with this duty, the council has in place the Housing Allocation Scheme 2013.
45. Generally, the council must not allocate council housing (or nominate an applicant to a housing provider with whom it has a nominations agreement) except in accordance with its allocation scheme.
46. It is permissible for the scheme however to contain provision about the allocation of particular housing accommodation to persons of a particular description, whether or not they come within one of the reasonable preference categories set out in the Allocation Scheme (Local Lettings Policies). Such policies must not, however, displace the system of reasonable preference in the main allocation scheme.
47. The statutory basis for local lettings policies is provided by S.166A (6) (b) of the Housing Act 1996. Further, guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government acknowledges that they may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives.
48. The council's Allocation Scheme, paragraph 7.10.1 to 7.10.4, provides that the council may decide to operate one or more local letting policies within Southwark and that a local lettings policy may be introduced, as part of a multi-agency approach with existing local communities or in partnership with Private Registered Provider landlords to take account of social factors.

49. The local letting plan in this report makes provision for allocating properties at Albion and Renforth Rotherhithe Civic Centre Albion Street London SE16 7BS and Rear of Albion Street Primary School, Renforth Street, London SE16 7JD, to existing local tenants, homeless applicants, and to applicants on the main register. The Strategic Director should satisfy himself that the need for the local lettings policy outlined in the report is defined and consistent with the provision in the council's allocation scheme for such policies.

Consultation

50. The Strategic Director is reminded the Allocation Scheme provides that local lettings policies will be reviewed on a regular basis and equality impact assessments will be undertaken including consultation with customers and communities before a local lettings plan is agreed. The Strategic Director is required take into account the outcome of the consultation when making a decision on the recommendations and is referred to the consultation section of this report.

Public Sector Equality duty (PSED)

51. The Equality Act 2010 requires the council, when taking decisions, to have due regard to the need to:
- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it.
52. When taking decisions on the exercise of council functions conscious thought must be given to the PSED, including having regard to any equality impact assessment carried out, in particular, where any possible disproportionate effects on groups sharing protected characteristics are identified, the mitigation proposed. The Strategic Director is referred to the paragraphs in this report addressing community impact section of this report.

Strategic Director of Finance

53. No comments sought.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Daniel Ferlance , Head of Housing Solutions		
Report Author	Edyta Mikulo, Housing Senior Allocation Officer		
Version	Final		
Dated	17 th April 2025		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services		Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			