

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 1 st October 2024	Decision maker: Strategic Director of Housing
Report title:		Rennie Estate New Homes – Local Lettings Plan	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		South Bermondsey	
From:		Ricky Bellot - Head of Housing Solutions	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Strategic Director of Housing is asked to approve the local lettings plan for the forty nine new homes on the Rennie Estate where up to 50% of the properties will first be allocated to existing tenants within the local area and the next 25% of properties allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty by Southwark, with and all the remaining properties advertised to through the housing register.
2. That the Strategic Director note the further criteria applied to residents of the local lettings scheme as follows:
 - i. Residents of the local lettings plan will be drawn from:
 - Rennie Estate:
 - Trevithick House
 - Landmann House
 - Barlow House
 - Donkin House
 - Fitzmaurice House
 - Dodd House
 - Barry House
 - Beamish House
 - ii. Direct Offers 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 will result in ending the main housing duty and discharge of Southwark's statutory functions in relation to 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 council's published 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 or two 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 on the Rennie Estate.
- 4. The development at on the Rennie Estate includes forty nine new homes that are scheduled for completion in September 2024.
- 5. This development has a total of forty nine homes comprising of different property sizes and has been made in consultation with the local residents within the Estate.
- 6. All forty nine properties will be listed as social housing tenancies.
- 7. Southwark's Housing Allocations Scheme sets out the criteria according to 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 the a local area.
- 8. Demand for social housing within the borough continues to outstrip supply where there are 17,926 households registered on the housing register. Recent figures from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 the council received 3,935 applications while but was only able to allocate 1,464 homes through either a nomination to a housing association or allocation of a Southwark council property.

9. 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

10. All lettings for the new build schemes located on the Rennie Estate will comply fully with the local lettings provisions in Southwark Council's Housing Allocations scheme.
11. It is proposed that 50% of the initial lettings of the new homes will be allocated to Southwark Council tenants currently living on the Rennie Estate.
12. These lettings will be delivered to maximise the housing solutions to the local community and to deliver the Fairer Future promises, homes for all.
13. 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 through direct offer.
14. These lettings are in response to the escalating pressure around homelessness, rising numbers in temporary accommodation, difficulties meeting statutory duties as a result of scarcity of supply, poor conditions in available supply and spiralling costs to the council's general fund as the cost of every unit increases substantially, including increases in rates for existing provision.
15. Following the first round of lettings to the local area and direct offers to homeless households, a second round of lettings for all remaining homes will be advertised to the housing register as a whole.
16. 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 the local lettings plan.
17. Percentages of allocated properties will be rounded up to the nearest whole number. For example, 25% of forty nine properties will be rounded up to thirteen properties.

Neighbourhoods

18. 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

19. The letting of new social homes, at affordable 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

20. 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

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

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

Community impact statement

22. 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.
23. The groups that are affected, and deemed able to apply for the homes as “local” tenants are the tenants within the immediate vicinity of the estate where the property has been developed.
24. 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

25. An equalities Impact assessment was carried out on 1st October 2024. No adverse conclusions were found as part of the assessment.
26. 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

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

Climate change implications

28. The Rennie Estate development proposals were submitted to planning in January 2020 and included an Energy Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Urban Greening Assessment and GLA Carbon Emission Reporting calculations.
29. The new homes are heated using air source heat pumps and include PV panels.

Resource Implications

30. None.

Legal Implications

31. See the concurrent provided by the Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance at paragraphs 47 to 53 below.

Financial implications

32. None.

Consultation

33. 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 on the Rennie Estate.
34. These meetings have been conducted over a number of months and an agreement has been reached for the geographical area for the Local Lettings area. The local lettings area covers the Rennie Estate including the following properties/buildings:

RENNIE ESTATE:

Trevithick House
Landmann House
Barlow House
Donkin House
Fitzmaurice House
Dodd House
Barry House
Beamish House

35. During the individual consultation events held for the Rennie Estate Development, prior to the submission of planning, residents were advised of a local letting policy devised to meet the local demand.
36. The new homes sit on the Rennie Estate and will consist of the following social rented properties:

Property size	Number of units
1 bed flat	20 (0 wheelchair access unit)
2 bed flat	17 (4 wheelchair access unit)
3 bed flat	12 (0 wheelchair access unit)
Total	49

37. Therefore, it is anticipated twenty five properties will be allocated to existing tenants of Southwark Council living within the area identified within section 34 of this report, and, thirteen properties will be allocated to homeless households.
38. As at the 1st October 2024, forty seven households located within the local lettings area were registered on our Homesearch Bidding Scheme. Twenty nine 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	0	1	0	1
Management transfers	0	1	1	2
Overcrowded households	0	4	11	15
Statutory overcrowded households	0	0	0	0
Medical needs	0	1	10	11
Accessible housing requirement	0	0	0	0
Sheltered housing	0	0	0	0
Total	0	7	22	29

39. 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.

40. There are no sub households listed on the housing register within the identified twenty nine households on the Estate. Therefore it is expected they will free up properties that will be available to other residents on the housing list.
41. 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.
42. 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 the properties will be available on the Homesearch bidding website.
43. 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.
44. The homes will be advertised in advance of the completion of the homes on the Rennie Estate. The first 50% of homes will be advertised to the local tenants, the next 25% will be directly offered 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.
45. 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

46. In accordance with the requirement under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures in the allocation of its housing, the council has in place a main housing allocations scheme. The scheme gives effect to the statutory requirement to give reasonable preference to certain groups of housing applicants.
47. 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 main allocation scheme.

48. However, under s166A(6) of the 1996 Housing Act, the council may depart from its main allocation scheme and put in place local lettings schemes which prioritise particular groups of applicants for particular properties, provided the cumulative effect of such schemes does not displace the system of reasonable preference set out in the main allocation scheme.
49. Paragraph 7.10.2 of the council's current main allocation scheme incorporates a local lettings policy which provides for 50% of all allocations for 'the new London Borough of Southwark 1000 properties initiative (to be) allocated to existing tenants local to the redevelopment/new build scheme'.
50. Paragraph 7.10.4 of the Council's main scheme further provides that 'Local Lettings policies will be reviewed on a regular basis and equality impact assessments undertaken with consultation undertaken with customers and communities before a Local Lettings Plan is agreed'.
51. The law requires that consultation must be undertaken when proposals are at a formative stage and include sufficient reasons for the proposal and time for interested parties to respond. The Cabinet member is required to 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.
52. The report confirms that the proposed scheme is in line with the local lettings policy incorporated in the main allocation scheme.

Strategic Director of Finance

53. No comments sought.

Public Sector Equality duty (PSED)

54. 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.
55. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The duty also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in relation to (a) above.

56. 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 cabinet member is referred to the community impact section of this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Ricky Bellot, Head of Housing Solutions		
Report Author	Alex Herd, Housing Choice and Supply Manager		
Version	1 st Draft		
Dated	1 st October 2024		
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			