

<b>Item No.</b> 17.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 11 December 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Albion Street Project Mandate	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		Electoral ward; Rotherhithe	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	

## **FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Over the last few years there have been several rounds of public consultation on the regeneration of Rotherhithe. One of the issues repeatedly raised by local people is concern at the decline of Albion Street.

The council has responded to this in our planning policy documents that include a number of objectives for the Street. This report deals with the next stage in the process, establishing a project where we will work with the local community on a number of specific regeneration proposals. These include; looking at the opportunity to expand Albion Primary School; facilitating the appropriate redevelopment of the former Rotherhithe library building; making it easier to move around the area; and, a number of improvements to the public realm.

So that the project benefits from the ideas and energy of the whole community the governance arrangements include a central role for local representatives. Working with all stakeholders will give this project the best chance of reversing the decline of this important part of the borough.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the cabinet

1. Agrees the project mandate for the regeneration of Albion Street as set out in Appendix 1.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2. The decline of Albion Street as a commercial centre has long been a source of concern for people in Rotherhithe. This report sets out details of the mandate for a project to encourage the regeneration of the area. The project will be called the Albion Street Regeneration Framework.
3. The mandate includes information gathered during extensive public consultation and benefits from the positive contributions made by many local people. It is the intention that a high level of public involvement will be maintained throughout the life of the project.
4. The project is structured around four themes that it is envisaged will progress in two distinct phases. The first phase focuses on developing a general approach for the particular theme area; the second on delivery of that theme. Transition to

the second phase will depend on the availability of funding and where appropriate will involve local people and partner organisations in fund raising: for example through CGS bids.

5. The four theme areas are:

- Albion Primary School – to explore expanding the school to two forms of entry
- Albion estate – to respond to comments from residents and local people about the condition of the estate and whether it can be better integrated into the regeneration of the wider area.
- The former Library on Albion Street – to ensure, so far as is possible, that the site is redeveloped in a way that supports the regeneration aspirations of local people.
- Public realm – looking at a number of initiatives to improve the general appearance of the neighbourhood, way finding and links with the wider Rotherhithe area.

6. As well as extensive public consultation further work is already underway in a number of the theme areas. There is considered to be advantage in pulling all of this together in order to exploit synergies and to maximise the benefit of any investment.

#### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

7. The key issue for consideration is whether the project mandate as drafted will deliver the aspirations of local people for the regeneration of the Albion Street area in a way that is consistent with the objectives of the Canada Water area action plan.

#### **Policy implications**

8. The council's adopted Core Strategy established a vision for Canada Water as a vibrant shopping centre with high quality public realm and open spaces. The central commercial district oriented around Canada Water basin must seek to reach out to the wider Rotherhithe area so as to improve accessibility by foot, bicycle and public transport. One of the ways in which the Core Strategy suggest this is achieved is by creating a new north / south link between the Rotherhithe over ground station and the Canada Water underground station.

9. The Canada Water Area Action Plan (CWAAP) sets out in more detail the initiatives required to realise this vision ahead of 2026 and includes specific measures to promote the regeneration of Albion Street by:

- Improving pedestrian and cycle links between Albion Street and the town centre, St Mary's Conservation Area and Rotherhithe Station.
- Reinforcing the viability of the shopping parade by making sure that no more than two units are used as hot-food takeaways.
- Working with leaseholders to improve the appearance of shop fronts.
- Continuing to investigate the potential for a market on Albion Street through the Markets Strategy we are preparing.
- Seeking funding to provide public realm improvements.
- Using the library site as an opportunity to help improve the street.

- Working with governors and staff to explore the potential to provide mixed use development on a part of Albion Primary school.
10. One of the council's key housing priorities is to make all of its homes warm, dry and safe by 2014/15. Thus in 2011 the council approved a housing investment programme and strategy to ensure that works programmes and resources were targeted to meet this objective.
  11. The four theme areas from the project mandate link directly to these various policy statements and will assist the council in the delivery of important objectives. Further information on the anticipated outputs is given in the following section on community impact.

## **Community impact statement**

### **Albion Primary School**

12. Council officers will work with the governors and senior management team from Albion Primary to explore the possibility of expanding the school to meet future pupil needs.
13. There is anticipated to be a significant demand for additional pupil places in the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe planning area over the next few years with up to 8 forms of entry (an additional 240 year 7 places) required by 2016. Albion is an outstanding school and its expansion would support the delivery of local places and the resultant additional footfall on Albion Street would support the local economy.
14. The presence of the school attracts visitors to Albion Street and makes a positive contribution to the vitality in the area. Investment in the site may also give the opportunity to help address the fragmented character of the street and contribute to a coherent and consistent streetscape.

### **Albion Estate**

15. During public consultation a number of comments were received about the poor condition of the estate and problems of anti social behaviour being suffered by residents. There were also suggestions about how the estate could contribute to the regeneration of the wider area.
16. It is proposed that housing officers explore these issues with residents.
17. The initial task will be to establish the factual position on the condition of the estate and any issues being faced by residents including investment proposed under the Warm, Dry, Safe programme. If appropriate, residents will then be involved in formulating a policy response for the estate.
18. It is also likely that residents' views will contribute to the development of proposals in relation to the wider regeneration of the area, alongside other stakeholders, as a result of other more general consultation.

### **Former library**

19. The library is in the process of being sold by the council to a commercial property developer who will deliver their own scheme for the site. It is understood the

developer is in discussion with the adjoining Norwegian and Finnish Churches to deliver a scheme that enhances these listed buildings and that may include elements of their sites.

20. Initial designs indicate a mixed use block with commercial space on the ground floor and around 30 residential units above. The aspiration is to relocate the local doctors' surgery into the development, possibly with a pharmacy. This will release another site further along Albion Street, which if redeveloped has the potential to deliver further residential units as well as new retail space and public realm improvements.
21. The scheme will be delivered by the commercial developer. Officers from regeneration will support and facilitate a development that, so far as is possible, delivers the council's aspirations for the street.

### **Public Realm**

22. The Albion Street Steering Group (ASSG) has been established to promote the regeneration of the area. This hard working group of local volunteers has already carried out much good work and delivered a number of notable successes.
  - A thriving community shop has been established in one of the units in the council parade on Albion Street.
  - The ASSG was the driving force behind this year's expanded Scandinavian Christmas Market.
  - The group has been responsible for a number of successful CGS bids for public realm improvements.
23. The public realm theme will be taken forward in collaboration with the ASSG, building on the energy, ideas and expertise of the group. The project will also make sure that the views of other local people, in particular tenants and residents are taken fully into account.
24. Preliminary discussions have confirmed that there are a number of matters where the council can begin to address the aspirations of local people:
  - Carrying out preliminary design work for a small number of strategically important public realm interventions (provisionally identified as St Olav's Square, the library public square and Lower Road amenity land).
  - Developing a signage and way finding strategy for the wider Rotherhithe area.
  - Improving pedestrian and cycle permeability from Canada Water and the Thames through the Albion Street area.
  - Identifying and helping to resolve practical issues so that we can re-establish a market in Albion Street.
25. Consultants will be retained to deliver some of this work and to undertake public consultation.

### **Resource implications**

26. As explained above, the Albion Street Development Framework project will progress four inter-related work themes in two phases. Working closely with

stakeholders the first phase will identify a way forward for that theme area. The second phase is delivery and is contingent on securing funding.

27. Each of the four theme areas will, in a resource sense, be taken forward through different mechanisms as explained below.
28. Work on Albion Primary School will be progressed by officers from regeneration in collaboration with school governors and the school management team. Initial activity relating to viability testing will be funded from budgets under the control of children's services. If a solution to the expansion of the school is found the relevant decisions will be the subject of a separate report.
29. In the first instance investigations into the condition of the Albion Estate will be carried out as part of the normal housing management function and will give rise to no additional resource requirement. Subject to the conclusion of the investigation work there may be a need for further reporting and possibly funding bids. If that should prove to be the case those reports will consider the resource implications.
30. The redevelopment of the former library on Albion Street will be taken forward by the purchaser of the site as a commercial venture. The involvement of officers from the project team will be limited to supporting and facilitating a suitable development and will be funded from existing regeneration budgets. In due course a planning application will be made. This process will determine the s106 package for the site including any resources that will be used for public realm improvements.
31. It is intended to appoint specialists to support the tasks arising from improvement of the public realm, signage, way finding and access routes. The appointment will be subject to the gateway reporting process. Delivery of specific interventions will be subject to the identification of funding and if appropriate will be reported separately.
32. Over and above this theme related work the general administration of the project and work to co-ordinate the theme activity will be undertaken by officers from regeneration. This activity will be carried out as part of the normal responsibilities on the Canada Water regeneration team and will be funded from existing budgets.

### **Legal/financial implications**

33. There are not considered to be any particular legal implications arising from this report.
34. It is intended to appoint professional experts to support the tasks arising from improvement of the public realm, signage, way finding and access routes. The appointment will be subject to the gateway decision process. Based on the experience of running similar consultation exercises as part of other regeneration projects the cost of appointing the technical experts is estimated at around £50k and will be funded from regeneration reserves. The procurement process will seek the most economically advantageous tender.

### **Consultation**

35. There have been several rounds of public consultation on the future of Albion

Street stretching back over a number of years.

- Between 2008 and 2011 as part of the preparation of the CWAAP officers from planning policy carried out extensive consultation with all local stakeholders.
- In 2009 the Canada Water Consultative Forum organised a series of cafe conversations on the future of the street.
- In 2010 as part of its programme of themed meetings the Bermondsey Community Council held a public meeting and workshops looking at the issues being faced by Albion Street. This led to the establishment of the ASSG.
- In the summer of 2012 the council along with its regeneration partner at Canada Water, Canada Quays Ltd (formerly British Land Canada Quays) held an ideas forum; an open consultation event for all local stakeholders on how to take forward the regeneration of the area.

36. The outcome of this activity is the Albion Street Development Framework project the scope of which has itself been consulted on with local stakeholders, including Albion Primary School, local residents, the ASSG and other interested parties.

37. The tasks for the appointed professional experts will include public consultation on a governance structure for the project so that the views of local stakeholders are fully understood as the project moves forward. This will include consultation on specific design and issue related matters arising out of the project themes and an overarching role to make sure the themes hang together in a coherent way. The consultation exercise will also include new work, e.g. with residents of Albion Estate, where no specific consultation has yet been carried out.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Legal Services**

38. As set out at paragraph 33 of this report there are no particular legal issues arising from this report at this stage. As and when specific legal issues arise, on matters of property or planning law or otherwise, legal advice will be sought and further reports presented to cabinet (for example in the case of disposal of land) at the appropriate time.

### **Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

39. The strategic director of finance and corporate services notes that there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation. However, implementation of the project mandate will result in costs which will either be contained within existing budgets or, if appropriate, will be the subject of specific funding bids. It is anticipated that the appointment of experts in relation to the public realm work will be the subject of the usual procurement procedures and funding will be identified from the regeneration reserve.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Albion Street Project Mandate. Attached as Appendix 1.	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	James Oates 020 7525 5633

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Albion Street Project Mandate

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive	
<b>Report Author</b>	James Oates, Principal Valuer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	29 November 2012.	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	29 November 2012	