

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision**(1) That the sale of the following surplus properties be approved:**

- (i) 27 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RB
- (ii) Storage unit at Boswell Place, Bedford MK40 2PX
- (iii) Storage unit to rear of 101-103 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RR
- (iv) Former Highways Depot, Lowson Lane, Riseley MK44 1SN
- (v) Garages at Howard Street, Kempston MK42 8EA
- (vi) Land to the rear of 13-21 Midland Road, Bedford MK40 1PL

(2) That the Head of Regeneration, Property and Local Economy be authorised to arrange the sale of the properties at the Robinson & Hall auction on either 10th December 2025 or 25th February 2026.**2. Date of decision**

31 October 2025

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1 The properties have been identified as surplus to operational requirements and are not considered suitable for long-term investment purposes.
- 3.2 All properties have limited rental /capital growth prospects and do not meet the Council's expected investment performance target. Some are in a dilapidated state of repair needing significant capital expenditure, others are in tertiary locations with limited occupational demand or have legal/planning issues which reduce value.
- 3.3 The level of expenditure to bring three of the properties back into repair or to redevelop for alternative uses is not justified based on current market values.
- 3.4 The vacant properties are exposed from a security risk perspective and challenging to manage.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

- 4.1 The retention of the properties in their current vacant/unmodernised condition is not a viable option due to management challenges, and potential for further security issues /break ins/vandalism to occur.
- 4.2 The use of Council funds to repair and modernise the properties has been considered but rejected due to the excessive expenditure required to bring the properties up to a standard under which they could be brought back into beneficial use. In addition, anticipated future rental income would not be sufficient to justify the expenditure.

4.3 The retention of the buildings for income generation has been considered but rejected due to the limited rental growth prospects/investment potential.

5. How decision is to be funded

The sale of the properties will be administered by the auctioneers, with oversight from Property Services team. The sale of the properties will generate capital receipts, and all associated costs of sale will be met from these. Minimal legal resources will be required in preparation of the legal documentation pack. The sales will be undertaken in accordance with industry standard auction terms and conditions, which require minimal input from in house legal resources.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Not Applicable

Signed 

Date: 31 October 2025

Name of Decision Taker Mayor Tom Wootton

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published:3 November 2025.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:11November2025.....

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Mayor

Date of Report: 31 October 2025

Report by: Head of Regeneration, Property and Local Economy

Subject: PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS PROPERTIES BY AUCTION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To seek the Mayor's approval to commit to the disposal of the following assets, which would afford the opportunity of an improved return on investment on the recycled capital. The assets are surplus to requirements, and either offer limited growth prospects, or are dilapidated and causing security issues:
- (i) 27 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RB
 - (ii) Storage unit at Boswell Place, Bedford MK40 2PX
 - (iii) Storage unit to rear of 101-103 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RR
 - (iv) Former Bin Store, Lowsdon Lane, Riseley MK44 1SN
 - (v) Garages at Howard Street, Kempston MK42 8EA
 - (vi) Land to the rear of 13-21 Midland Road, Bedford MK40 1PL
- 1.2 In order to demonstrate best consideration through an open and competitive disposals process, it is proposed that the properties be offered for sale at the forthcoming Robinson & Hall Auctions on 10 December 2025 or 25 February 2026.
- 1.3 The sale of the properties through auction should ensure that capital receipts are received by the end of the financial year 2025/2026.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mayor is asked to consider and, if satisfied, to:

2.1 Approve the sale of the following properties:

- (i) 27 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RB**
- (ii) Storage unit at Boswell Place, Bedford MK40 2PX**
- (iii) Storage unit to rear of 101-103 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RR**
- (iv) Former Bin Store, Lowsdon Lane, Riseley MK44 1SN**
- (v) Garages at Howard Street, Kempston MK42 8EA**
- (vi) Land to the rear of 13-21 Midland Road, Bedford MK40 1PL**

2.2 Authorise the Head of Regeneration, Property and Local Economy to arrange the sale of the properties at the Robinson & Hall auction on either 10 December 2025 or 25 February 2026.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The properties have been identified as surplus to operational requirements and are not considered suitable for long-term investment purposes.**
- 3.2 All properties have limited rental /capital growth prospects and do not meet the Council's expected investment performance target. Some are in a dilapidated state of repair needing significant capital expenditure, others are in tertiary locations with limited occupational demand or have legal/planning issues which reduce value.**
- 3.3 The level of expenditure to bring three of the properties back into repair or to redevelop for alternative uses is not justified based on current market values.**
- 3.4 The vacant properties are exposed from a security risk perspective and challenging to manage.**

3. THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Council has instructed Robinson & Hall Auctions to inspect the surplus properties. Following recent site visits, the auctioneers have provided initial advice as to sales pricing. A detailed marketing report is expected shortly. Preparation needs to commence imminently to put together the necessary legal packs in time for some of the properties to be included in the auction scheduled to take place on 10 December 2025, with other properties to be offered on 25 February 2026, subject to approvals.

5. DETAILS

- 5.1 27 Tavistock Street, Bedford (Appendix A) is an end of terrace Edwardian building of red brick construction with more modern rear extension, located in a secondary trading position on Tavistock Street. A ground floor lock up unit is leased to a hairdressing salon, with the rear ground and first floors accessed via side entrance is leased to a charity for office use. The leases have 18 months and 4.5 years to expiry, and the current rents are maximised at £15,900 pa with limited growth potential. There are no longer term development opportunities or other operational benefits to warrant the retention of the property. The auctioneer has recommended a guide price of £120,000.
- 5.2 Storage Unit at Boswell Place, Bedford (Appendix B) is a basic 659 sq ft single storey lock up store of brick construction on a fenced site of 0.04 acres. The property is leased to a private individual for a further 37 years at a rent of £3,550 pa. The property has no utility connections, limiting future rental growth. The auctioneer has recommended a guide price of £40,000.
- 5.3 Storage Unit to rear of 101-103 Tavistock Street, Bedford (Appendix C) is a basic 1,496 sq ft single storey lock up store of brick construction with asbestos roof and no yard/parking. Leased on a short-term tenancy at will at £564 per month. The unit has no water/wc facilities, is now in poor repair, with the Council liable for repairs. There are no longer term development opportunities or other operational benefits to warrant the retention of the property. The auctioneer has recommended a guide price of £25,000.
- 5.4 Former Bin Store at Lowsdon Lane, Riseley (Appendix D) is a detached warehouse unit of concrete frame construction and asbestos roof. The unit is 3,746 sq ft, in poor condition and vacant. The site is a security/management risk. The adjoining site to the rear has a right of way across the entire yard area which restricts use (and future potential for alternative uses), and the current planning consent is Sui Generis for depot use only, not industrial /storage. The auctioneer has recommended a guide price of £100,000.
- 5.5 Garages at Howard Street, Kempston (Appendix E) is a collection of 9 dilapidated brick garages in a predominantly residential area. The site has been vacant for considerable time and is a security/management risk. The site is 0.06 acres and has potential for redevelopment for residential use but no planning consent at present. The auctioneer has recommended a guide price of £180,000.

- 5.6 Land to rear of 13-21 Midland Road, Bedford (Appendix F) comprises 2 parcels of land totalling 0.14 acres to the rear of Edinburgh Woollen Mill on Church Square. The land (together with building constructed by a former tenant) is held on a ground lease until 2057 at a rent of £1,575 pa without further rent review. The auctioneer has recommended a guide price of £10-15,000.
- 5.7 If all properties achieve their guide prices, the total capital receipt generated by these sales will be between £475,000 and £480,000. Selling the properties would result in a reduction in current income of £27,800 pa, however, this can be adequately managed by increasing income through the ongoing active asset management of the wider investment portfolio.

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 6.1 The retention of the properties in their current vacant/unmodernised condition is not a viable option due to management challenges, and potential for further security issues /break ins/vandalism to occur.
- 6.2 The use of Council funds to repair and modernise the properties has been considered but rejected due to the excessive expenditure required to bring the properties up to a standard under which they could be brought back into beneficial use. In addition, anticipated future rental income would not be sufficient to justify the expenditure.
- 6.3 The retention of the buildings for income generation has been considered but rejected due to the limited rental growth prospects /investment potential.

7. KEY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal Issues – relevant legal power

The Council has a statutory duty under Section 123 of the 1972 Local Government Act to obtain best consideration from property disposals. Disposal by auction is a means of ensuring the Council meets its statutory obligation in this regard.

7.2 Policy Issues

Guidance issued by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MCHLG) requires local authorities to dispose of assets that are surplus to requirements in order to release public sector assets for more productive use, supporting growth and efficiency. The Council's recently approved Corporate Asset Strategy identifies the need to generate capital receipts as one of the key drivers for determining the best use of Council property assets and disposing of surplus property is a means of ensuring that Council property is used to its full potential. Disposing of surplus properties also directly assists delivery of the Council's Capital Investment Strategy by providing capital receipts to funding needs for approved Capital Programme.

7.3 Resource Issues

The sale of the properties will be administered by the auctioneers, with oversight from Property Services team. The sale of the properties will generate capital receipts, and all associated costs of sale will be met from these. Minimal legal resources will be required in preparation of the legal documentation pack. The sales will be undertaken in accordance with industry standard auction terms and conditions, which require minimal input from in house legal resources.

7.4 Risks

- (i) There are minimal risks associated with the successful sale of the properties, as all future liabilities and ownership issues will be transferred to the purchasers.
- (ii) There is a risk that the properties fail to sell at auction. This would mean that proposed capital receipts would not be realised, and that further costs will have to be incurred to re-offer the properties at auction or to dispose of them through alternative private treaty sales.
- (iii) The risks of retaining the properties are far greater, in that several will require considerable expenditure to prevent further deterioration, and there is also a high level of risk attached to security of the properties as they are vacant and likely to attract break-ins/vandalism. Those which are currently income producing offer limited potential for growth and are likely to reduce in value in future years.
- (iv) There is an additional market risk if the properties are not sold, as the sales market may deteriorate in the future due to economic conditions and the cost/availability of property finance.

7.5 Environmental Implications

There are no immediate or direct environmental implications arising out of the recommendations of this report.

7.6 Equalities Impact

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. A relevance test for equality has been completed. The equality test determined that the activity has no relevance to Bedford Borough Council's statutory equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relation. An equality analysis is not needed. It should be noted, however, that disposing of properties by way of public auction is a fair and transparent method that will be open to all.

7.7 Impact on Families

There are no immediate or direct impacts on families arising out of the recommendations of this report.

7.8 Community Safety and Resilience

These properties risk attracting vandalism and criminal activity so sale of these properties will bring the properties back into use and address this at the same time as removing the need for the Council to maintain security at each of the sites.

7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing

There are no immediate or direct impacts on health and well-being arising out of the recommendations of this report.

8. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

8.1 The following Councillors and Officers/teams have been consulted in preparing this report:

Portfolio Holder for Finance
Corporate Leadership Team
Finance
Legal Services

8.2 All comments received have been taken into account in the preparation of the report.

9. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

9.1 Not applicable

10. CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

Report Contact Officer:	Margaret Birtles, Manager for Asset and Development
Declarations of Interest by the Report Author:	N/A
File Reference:	Not applicable
Previous Relevant Minutes:	Not applicable
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	<p>Appendix A: Plan – 27 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RB</p> <p>Appendix B: Plan – Storage Unit at Boswell Place, Bedford MK40 2PX</p> <p>Appendix C: Plan – Storage Unit to rear of 101-103 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RR</p> <p>Appendix D: Plan – Former Highways Depot, Lowsdon Lane, Riseley MK44 1SN</p> <p>Appendix E: Plan – Garages at Howard Street, Kempston MK42 8EA</p> <p>Appendix F: Plan – Land to rear of 13-21 Midland Road, Bedford MK40 1PL</p>



APPENDIX A - 27A & 27B Tavistock Street F



APPENDIX F - Land



APPENDIX E -



APPENDIX D - Depot,



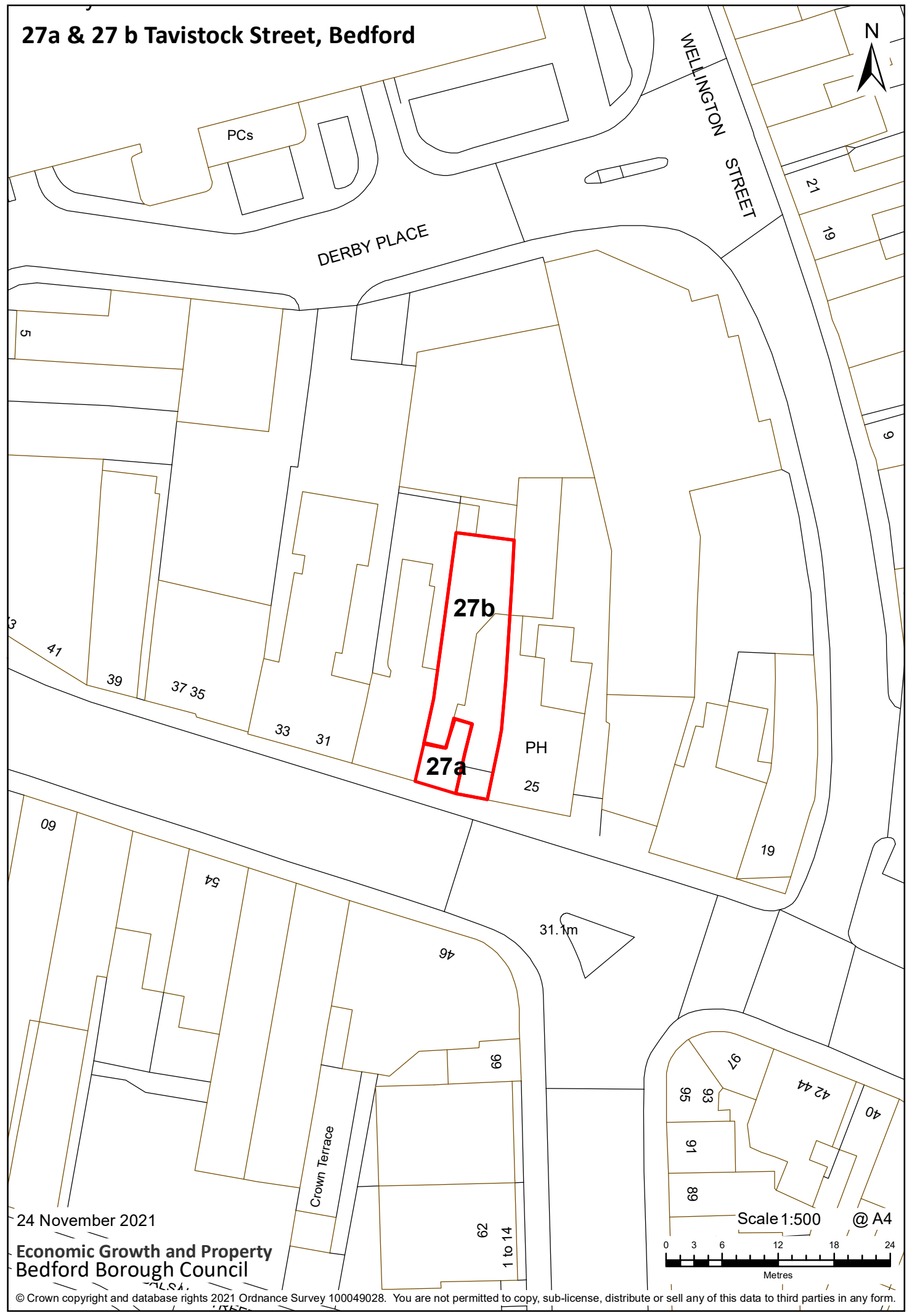
APPENDIX C - Store



APPENDIX B -

Rear 13-21 Midland RHoward Street GarageLowsdon Lane, RiseleyUnit Rear of 101-103 Boswell Place Storage

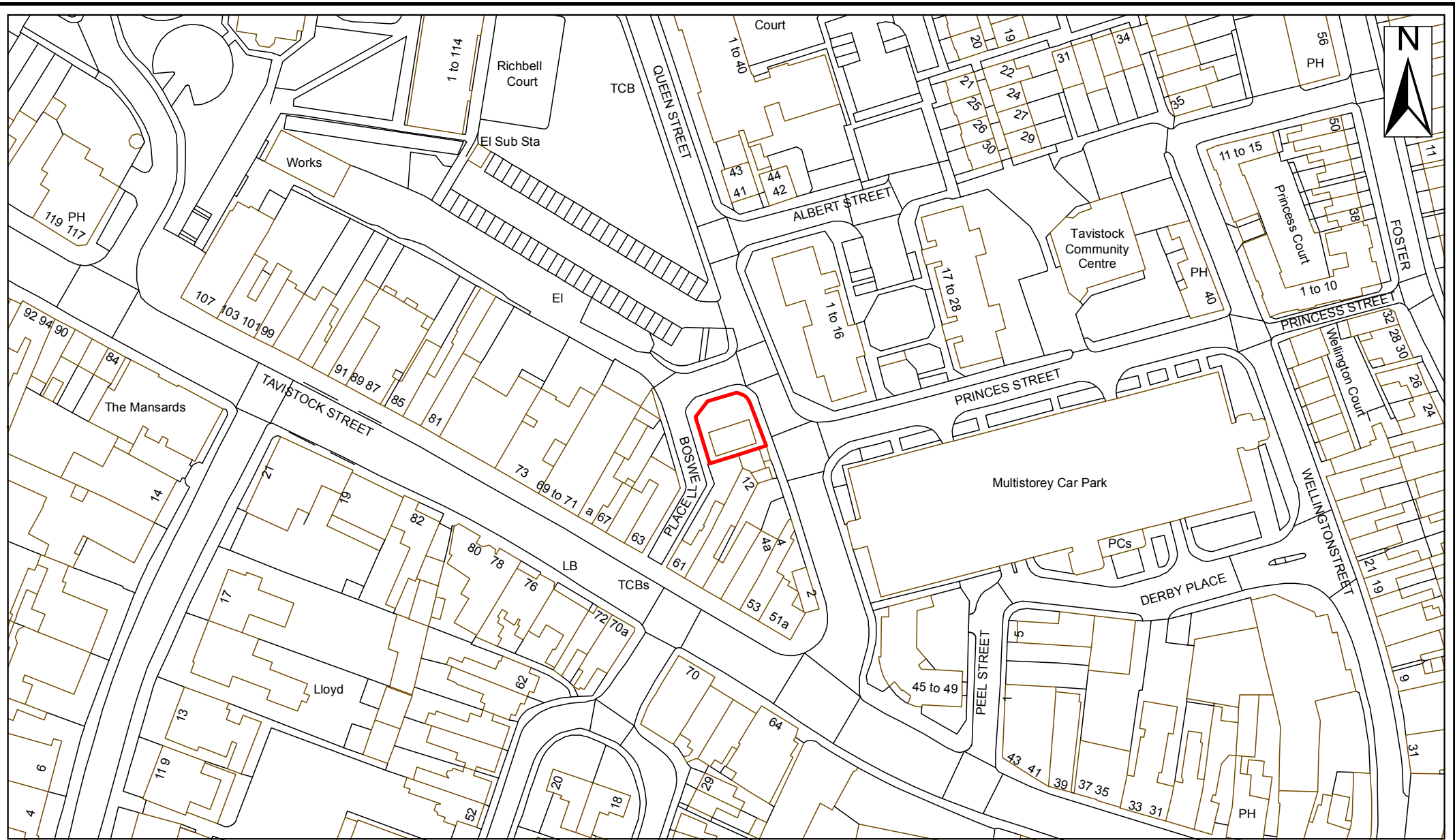
27a & 27 b Tavistock Street, Bedford



24 November 2021

Economic Growth and Property
Bedford Borough Council

© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100049028. You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.



© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100049028.
You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data
to third parties in any form.

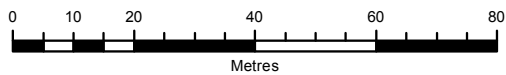
Scale 1:1,250
@ A4

Drawn By: LJW
Date: 12 September 2018

Unit at Boswell Place, Bedford



Property Services
Bedford Borough Council

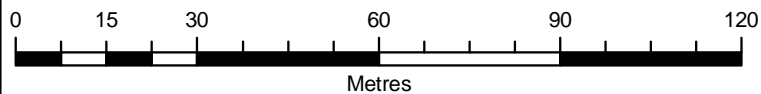




© Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100049028.
You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data
to third parties in any form.

Scale 1:1,250 @ A4

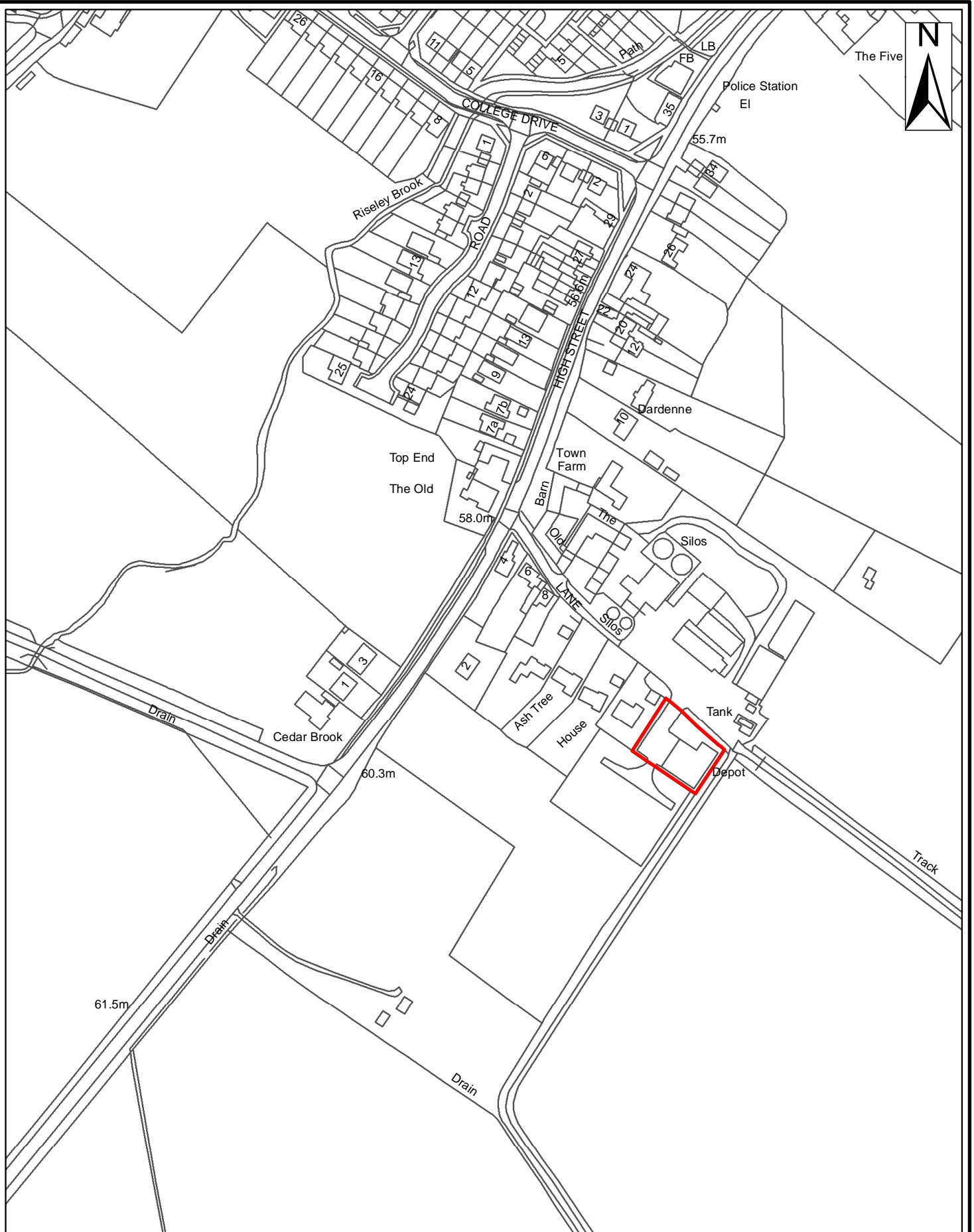
Drawn By: LJW
Date: 10 September 2013



Building rear of 101-103 Tavistock Street, Bedford



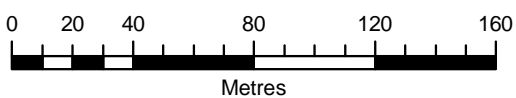
Property Services
Bedford Borough Council



© Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100049028. You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

Riseley Depot, Lowsden Lane, Riseley

Scale 1:2,500 @ A4

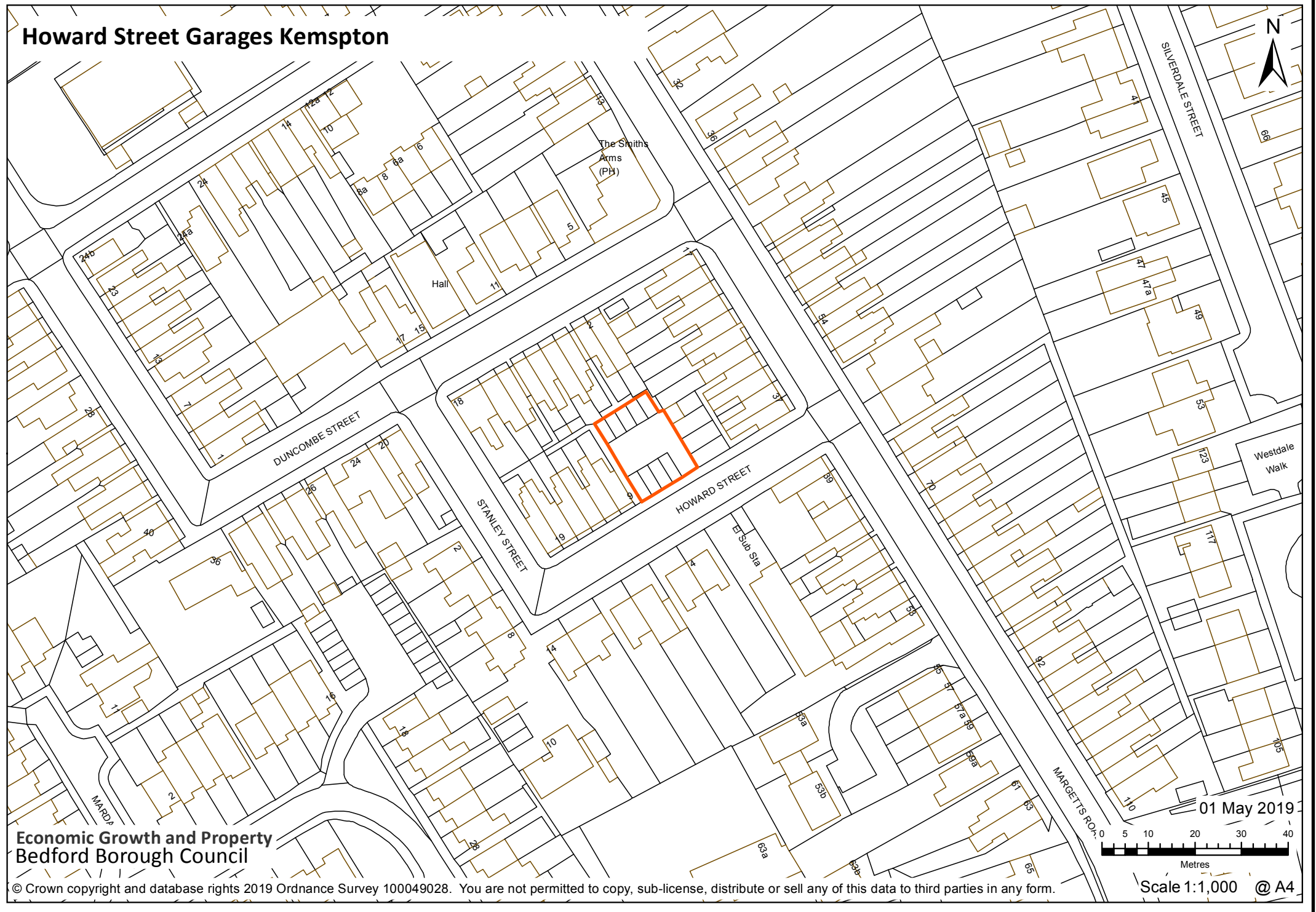


Drawn By: LJW
Date: 10 September 2013

Property Services
Bedford Borough Council



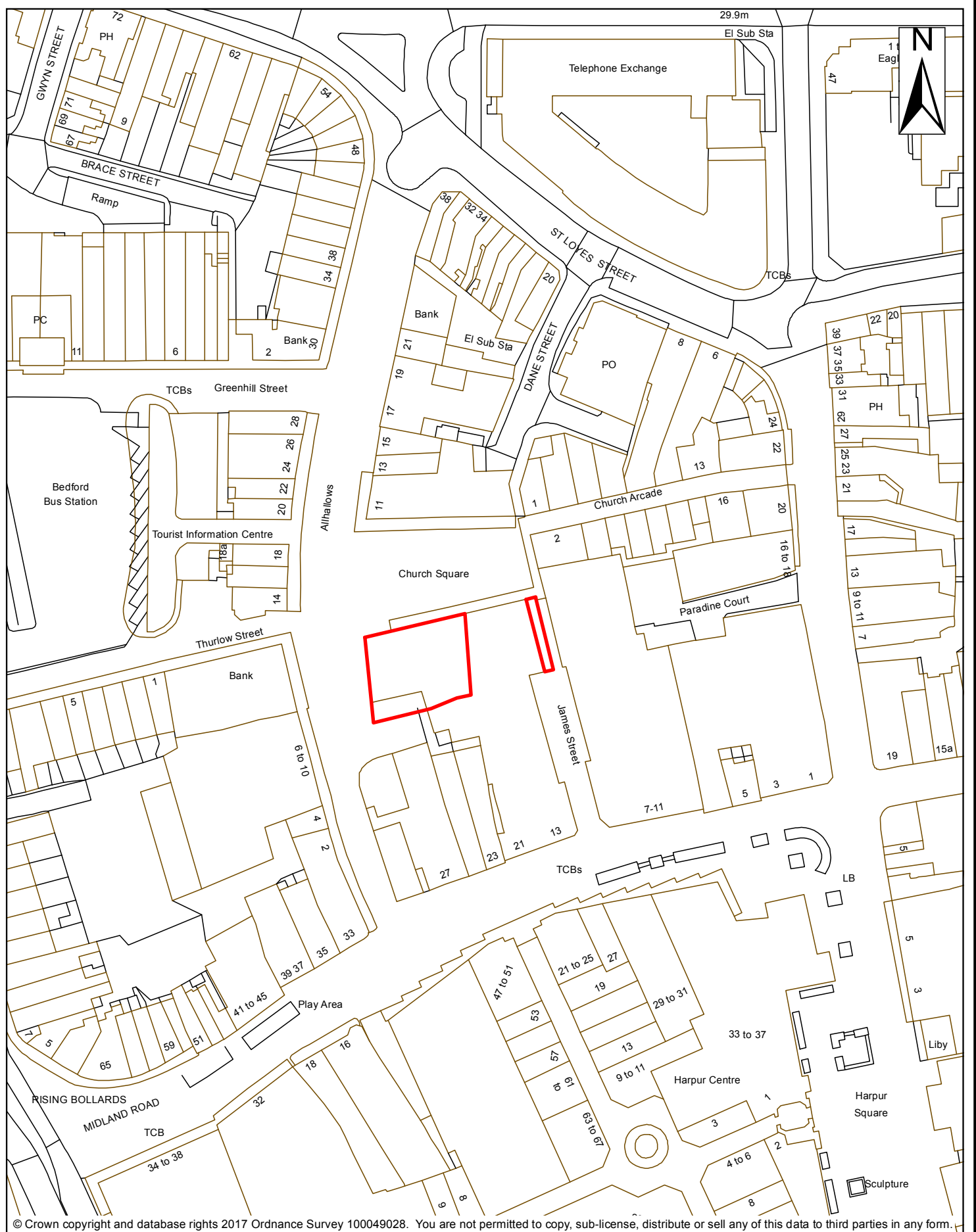
Howard Street Garages Kemspton



Economic Growth and Property
Bedford Borough Council

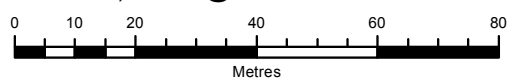
© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100049028. You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

01 May 2019
Scale 1:1,000 @ A4



Land Rear of 13-21 Midland Road, Bedford

Scale 1:1,250 @ A4



Drawn By: LJW
Date: 10 March 2017

Property Services
Bedford Borough Council

