

## The Cabinet

**6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 3.30pm  
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Eling (Leader of the Council - Chair);  
Councillors Carmichael, Costigan, Gavan,  
Hackett, D Hosell, Khatun, Moore and Shackleton.

**Apologies:** Councillors E M Giles, Rollins, Trow and Underhill.

**In attendance:** Councillors Ahmed and P Hughes.

### Strategic Items

11/19

#### **Revenues and Benefits Policy Framework 2019/20 (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC01/02/2019)**

The Leader of the Council, in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Core Council Services, sought approval of the Revenues and Benefits Service's policy framework for 2019/20.

The policy listed from 2018/19 and carried over to 2019/20 included:

- Corporate Debt Recovery Policy;
- Council Tax Award of Discount Policy;
- Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy;
- Discretionary Housing Payments Policy;
- Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (NNDR);
- Local Welfare Provision Policy;
- Non Domestic Rate Hardship Relief Policy;
- Joint Policy for Establishing Eligible Support and Accommodation Charges;
- Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery Policy.

## The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Changes proposed to the policy framework were as a result statutory changes. Due to a change to the Council Tax Base and the ability to pass an empty home premium of 200% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 for homes empty for over two years, the Council Tax Award of Discount Policy 2019/20 included the following changes:

- from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 onwards, a 100% 'premium' would be applied for homes empty over two years, generating a Council Tax charge of 200%;
- from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 onwards, a 200% 'premium' would be applied for homes empty for over five years, generating a Council Tax charge of 300%;
- from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 onwards, a 300% 'premium' charge would be applied for homes empty for over ten years, generating a Council Tax charge of 400%.

The NNDR Discretionary Relief Policy 2019/20 was amended within the policy framework to include a new Retail Discount for occupied retail properties with a rateable value of less than £51,000 in each of the years 2019/20 and 2020/21.

The value of discount to be applied would be one third of the bill and had to have been applied after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs funded by Section 31 grants had been applied. In order to qualify for the relief, the hereditament should be wholly or mainly being used as a shop, restaurant, café or drinking establishment and therefore hereditaments which were occupied but not wholly or mainly used for the qualifying purpose would not qualify for the relief.

The Chair of Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities enquired as to how many empty properties there were in Sandwell and noted policies within the framework, such as the 200% premium would bring properties back into use and address some of the re-housing and homelessness issues within the Borough. In response, the Leader reported that at the time of the meeting, there were 2,075 empty properties within Sandwell of which 392 had been empty for over two years. The number of empty houses was in constant flux, particularly within the rented sector, but there were still too many empty houses within Sandwell.

## The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

The Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board stated that the input from Scrutiny had led to a presentational and formatting change making the process more consistent and easier for both customers and staff to read.

In addition, the Chair was pleased to see the continuing offer of Discretionary Rate Relief in addition to Mandatory Rate Relief for many voluntary organisations, charities and community amateur sports clubs all of which provided a lifeline to communities in delivering services that the Council could not necessarily afford to provide in the current financial climate of austerity.

The Chair of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board questioned whether case studies could be given to residents relating to moving elderly relatives into care at what was typically a distressing time for all involved.

In response, the Leader of the Council reported that he was pleased with the work undertaken in developing the policy framework and noted the impact community groups and the voluntary sector had in delivering services to the communities of Sandwell. In relation to the provision of case studies, there were none, as each case was considered on its merits as services looked at the level of care and support given as well as the level of rent which was eligible for Housing Benefit. The police would enable closer working with Adult Social Care to ensure residents received the appropriate level of support.

**Resolved** that the Revenues and Benefits Service's Policy Framework 2019/20 be approved.

12/19

### **Business Plans 2019/20 to 2021/22 (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC03/02/2018)**

The Leader of the Council sought approval to the Business Plans 2019/20 for referral to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for a further detailed review.

The overall budget framework had been presented to Council in January and the budget for the Council was balanced, with some savings still to be made for the 2021/22 financial year, dependent on announcements regarding central government funding.

## The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Members noted that many Council services remained intact amidst a period of financial austerity.

The Chair of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board praised the Leader for attention to detail around the Council's perspective and emphasised the role of the Scrutiny function as a critical friend in the process, ensuring the Council's budget remained balanced.

The Leader of the Council stated that the Council budget and business plans were the ownership of Council, and not Cabinet and that the role of scrutiny as a critical friend was important to residents and service areas within the Council to ensure the budget balanced and their critical eye picked up on issues others involved in the drafting of the budget may have missed.

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that Directorate Business Plans be referred to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board to review for evidence of value for money and contribution towards achieving the Vision 2030 and its ambitions;
- (2) that a further report be submitted to the Cabinet on the findings of the Scrutiny Board as referred to in Resolution (1) above.

13/19

### **Proposed new Integrated Social Care and Health Centre, off Harvest Road, Rowley Regis (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC07/01/2019)**

The Cabinet Member for Social Care sought approval to the proposed development of the new Integrated Social Care and Health Centre, off Harvest Road, Rowley Regis, subject to planning consent.

Further to Minute No. 168/18, whereby the Cabinet recommended option two for the integrated social care and health centre.

Option two was the provision of an 80-bed, en-suite Centre, along with other modern facilities and support services, to be managed, operated and staffed by the Council. Cabinet also gave its support for officers to investigate fully the implications of option two and for further detailed design work, planning permission to be pursued.

## The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

The Cabinet Member for Social Care reported that these investigations were now complete and detailed design and full specification work had advanced considerably. Planning permission and consultation with local residents was to be undertaken in March.

In response to questions raised by the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, the Cabinet Member for Social Care responded that there was recognition that a skilled workforce was critical to the successful delivery of the new Integrated Social Care and Health facility as well as other housing and care developments. Sandwell was a well-respected employer and attracted a good field of candidates for care and support roles. Recent experience of increasing the STAR workforce demonstrated the Council's ability to attract people with the right skills and experience with the caring and flexible attitude needed to support excellent service provision in the future.

The Council's commitment to workforce development was valued within the market and opportunities to 'grow our own' would be developed to ensure that a workforce would support in house services and wider care and support market in the future. Work would be undertaken with colleagues in health to ensure there was the right balance of social care and health professionals, therapy and care staff to enable the Social Care and Health Centre to support residents within Sandwell to achieve reablement goals and to deliver an efficient and effective service.

**Resolved** that subject to planning consent:-

- (1) the development of approximately 0.6 hectares of land at Harvest Road, Rowley Regis, shown for identification purposes only at Appendix 1 be approved to build a new, three-storey integrated Social Care and Health Centre, to provide short-stay intermediate care for up to 80 Sandwell citizens (predominantly older adults), and associated facilities;
- (2) that subject to Resolution (1) above, the Executive Director – Resources allocate the Better Care Fund and other sums of money of investment, as detailed in Minute No. 168/18 of the Cabinet (12<sup>th</sup> December, 2018), to fund the proposed project;

## **The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

- (3) that subject to Resolution (1) above, the Executive Director – Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Executive Director – Resources and the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, prepare tendering documentation and thereafter, to procure, in accordance with the public procurement rules and the Council's procurement and financial regulations, a contractor/contractors to develop, on behalf of the Council, the proposed scheme;
- (4) that subject to Resolution (1) and (3) above, the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer enters into or executes under seal any documentation in relation to award of the contract and/or development/partnership agreement, licence, undertaking, framework joining agreement and any other agreements with the procured contractor/s, as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the proposed scheme on the site on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Executive Director – Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing;
- (5) that subject to Resolution (1), (3) and (4) above, and following practical completion of the Centre, the Executive Director – Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing manage and operate the Centre in accordance with the access and service model agreed with the Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group and Sandwell Health and Wellbeing Board;
- (6) that the land at Harvest Road, Rowley Regis, specifically the area highlighted with hatching in Appendix 1 attached, be appropriated from the General Fund to the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Directorate and the Executive Director – Resources adjust the accounts accordingly;
- (7) that the following action points, identified within the appraisal report, be implemented to reduce any risk to the Council:-

## The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

- ensure long term strategic planning is undertaken to manage potential future reductions in government funding for social care and to ensure that the operational costs of the facility can be managed within available resources;
- determine contractual arrangements for nursing staff in order to identify both short term and long term financial implications to the Council;
- that the project delivery programme is reviewed to ensure that potential delays due to required planning conditions can be accommodated without impacting on delivery timescales and that contingency plans are in place should completion of the scheme be delayed;
- that a nominated officer is identified to ensure that the project can be effectively evaluated and reported to appropriate partners.

14/19

### **Recommendations Arising from Land and Asset Management Committee (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC10/01/2019)**

The Chair of Land and Asset Management Committee presented the recommendations arising from the Committee in relation to properties surplus to the requirements of the service areas and declaring the site off St Paul's Road and Chatwin Street, Smethwick surplus to Council requirements.

The proposals reflected service views about the appropriateness of some of its existing fees and the opportunity to introduce fees for new additional services. The proposed increase and introduction of new fees would offset the increasing cost of delivering Registration related services. These arose from both in-house and external suppliers, who provided services and products which contributed to the final offers to the public.

The following properties that were deemed surplus to the requirements of the Council service areas were:-

## **The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

- Greenwood Avenue, Oldbury, B68 8JE surplus to the requirements of Children’s Strategic Commissioning;
- 57 Edgbaston Road, Smethwick, B66 4LG, surplus to the requirements of Housing and Communities;
- Riddins Mound Training and Enterprise Centre, former Sandwell Adventure Playground Association (SAPA) Play Centre and associated garage block, Applewood Grove, Cradley Heath B64 6EW surplus to the requirements of Property Services.

In relation to land off St Paul’s and Chatwin Street, at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2013, the former Asset Management and Land Disposal Cabinet Committee gave approval to dispose of the freehold interest in land there for a health centre subject to terms and conditions being agreed within a period of twelve months (see Minute No. 38/13). Officers subsequently discussed terms for disposal but the purchasers were, at that time, not in a position to progress the development and the offer to sell was subsequently withdrawn.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) confirmed there remained an on-going need for a new surgery in this area but that there were currently no privately owned sites in the locality that could accommodate the proposal. In order to meet the requirements for a new health centre, informal discussions were held with the doctors regarding potential development of the Council’s land for health-related purposes. The CCG’s Board approved the business case for development of a health centre in July 2017.

In accordance with the Council’s Land Disposal Protocol, an external agent was appointed to negotiate the terms of disposal with a view to maximising the capital receipt achievable. Discussions with planning officers indicated the site was also suitable for residential use and was the basis upon which valuations were provided and informal negotiations undertaken.

The agent acting on behalf of the proposed purchaser expressed a desire to build the health care facility with an element of residential use above and on this basis a sale figure had been agreed, subject to funding and planning approval. It was stated that the use of the site for a health facility only would achieve a lesser value.



## The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

To ensure that the land was developed with a health care provision, it was agreed that the sale would proceed by way of a Development Agreement and/or a restriction on use. It was further added that if planning permission was obtained for anything other than a health care facility with, if appropriate, an element of residential use then the Council would retain the right to rescind the Agreement and retain any deposit paid. It was further agreed that the balance of the purchase monies and transfer of the freehold would take place upon practical completion of the new health centre. Completion of the development was likely to take up to 24 months from the date planning consent was issued.

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the following properties be declared surplus to the requirements of the Council service areas as identified:-
  - (a) Greenwood Avenue, Oldbury, B68 8JE surplus to the requirements of Children's Strategic Commissioning;
  - (b) 57 Edgbaston Road, Smethwick, B66 4LG, surplus to the requirements of Housing and Communities;
  - (c) Riddins Mound Training and Enterprise Centre, former Sandwell Adventure Playground Association (SAPA) Play Centre and associated garage block, Applewood Grove, Cradley Heath B64 6EW surplus to the requirements of Property Services;
- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, the Director – Regeneration and Growth appropriate the land and premises shown for identification purposes at Appendices A, B and C from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account;
- (3) that the Director – Housing and Communities manage and let the premises referred to in 1 (a), (b) and (c) (above) as part of the Council's housing stock;

## The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

- (4) that the Executive Director – Resources adjust the accounts accordingly to reflect the transfer of the properties referred to in Resolution (1) above from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account;
- (5) that the site off St Paul's Road and Chatwin Street, Smethwick, shown for identification purposes only as edged red on Appendix D (Plan No SAM/45760/007), be declared surplus to Council requirements;
- (6) that in connection with Resolution (5) above, and to timescales for exchange of contract being adhered to, the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer dispose of the freehold interest in the land shown for identification purposes only as edged red on Appendix D (Plan No SAM/45760/007) for development with a health facility and, if planning consent is obtained, an element of residential use and otherwise on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director - Regeneration and Growth;
- (7) that in connection with Resolution (5) and (6) above, authorises the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to enter into or execute under seal, if necessary, any other related documentation in connection with the disposal of the land referred to in Resolution (5) above, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director – Regeneration and Growth;

## **The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

- (8) that the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer dispose of the freehold interest in the site referred to in Resolution (5) (above) on the open market for the best price and otherwise on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director – Regeneration and Growth in the event that the timescale agreed for the exchange of contracts is not adhered to or if the sale does not for any other reason proceed as outlined in Resolution (6) above.

(Meeting ended at 3.57 pm)

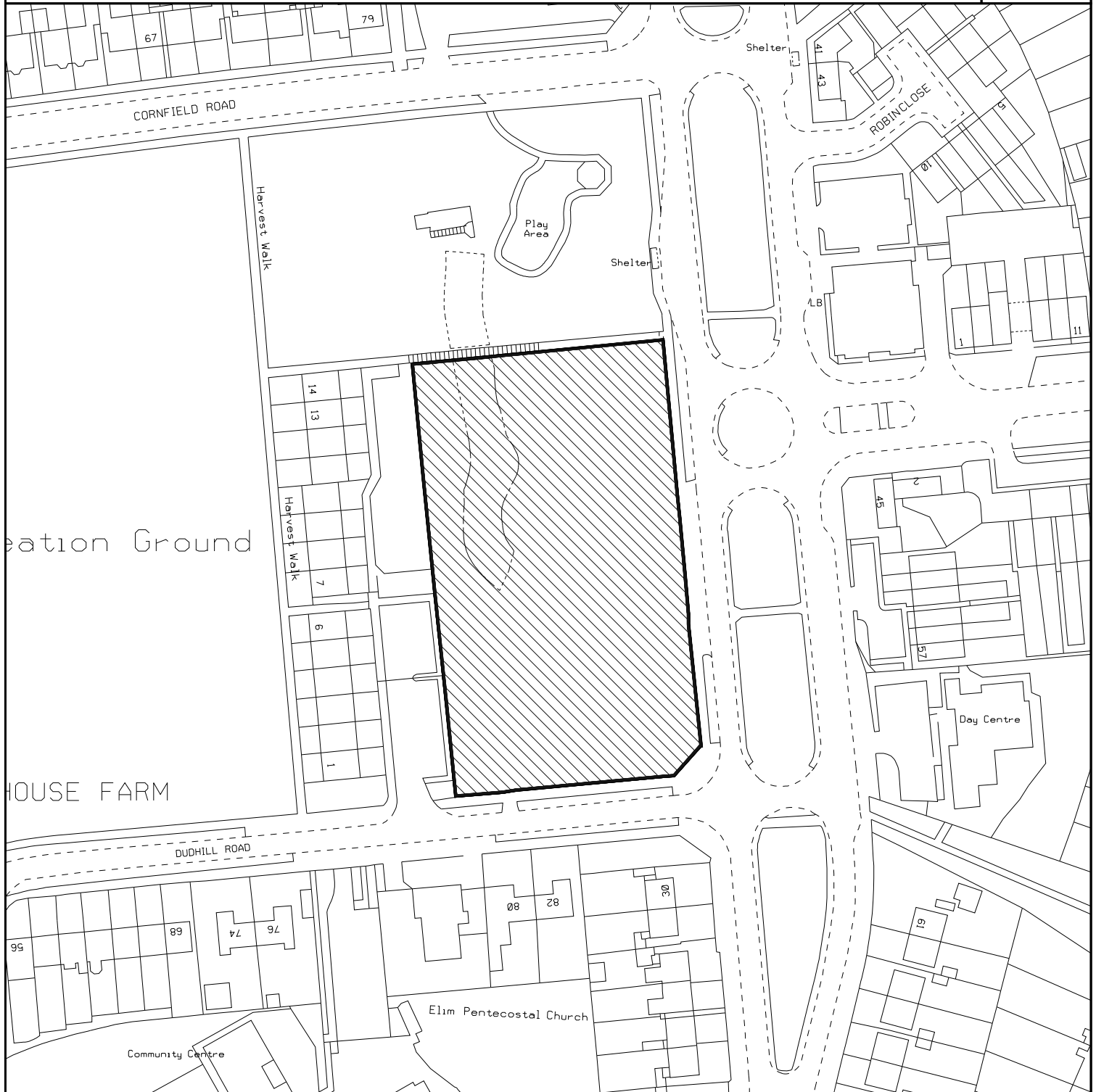
This meeting was webcast live and is available to view on the Council's website (<http://sandwell.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>).


<p>Contact Officer: Andrew Grant Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3040</p>
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## **The Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

# REGENERATION AND PLANNING

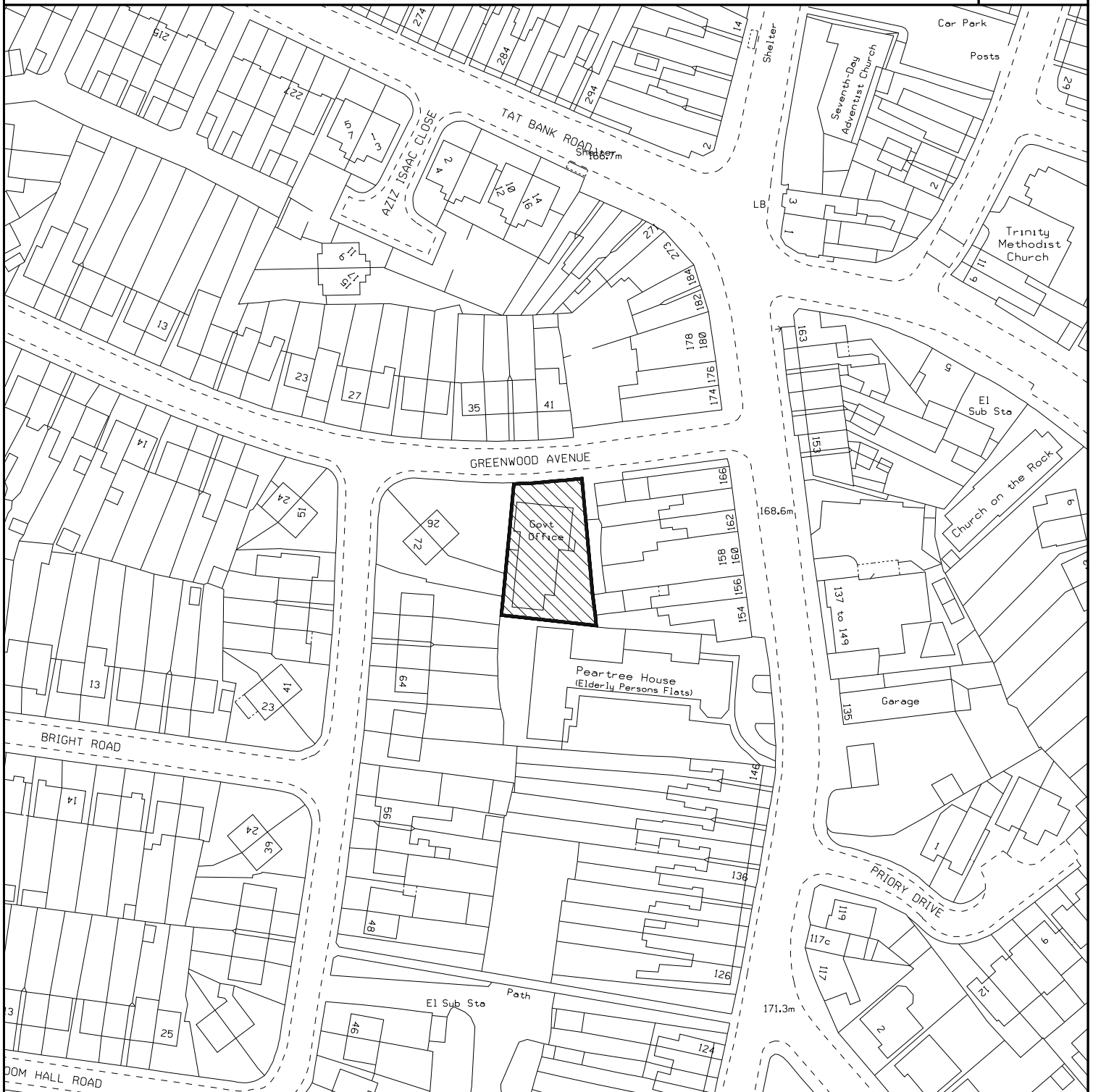
STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT




LEGEND	DESCRIPTION	SANDWELL	TERRIER
	SITE OF FORMER KNOWLE HOUSE HARVEST ROAD ROWLEY REGIS	S09687SW	323
 <b>Sandwell</b> Metropolitan Borough Council	AREA	SCALE	CENTROID
	5724.9 M2    6847.1 Y2	1:1250	396196/287446
	PLAN NUMBER	DRAWN	DATE
	SAM/22720/009	DM	29-OCT-2018
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# REGENERATION AND PLANNING

## STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT



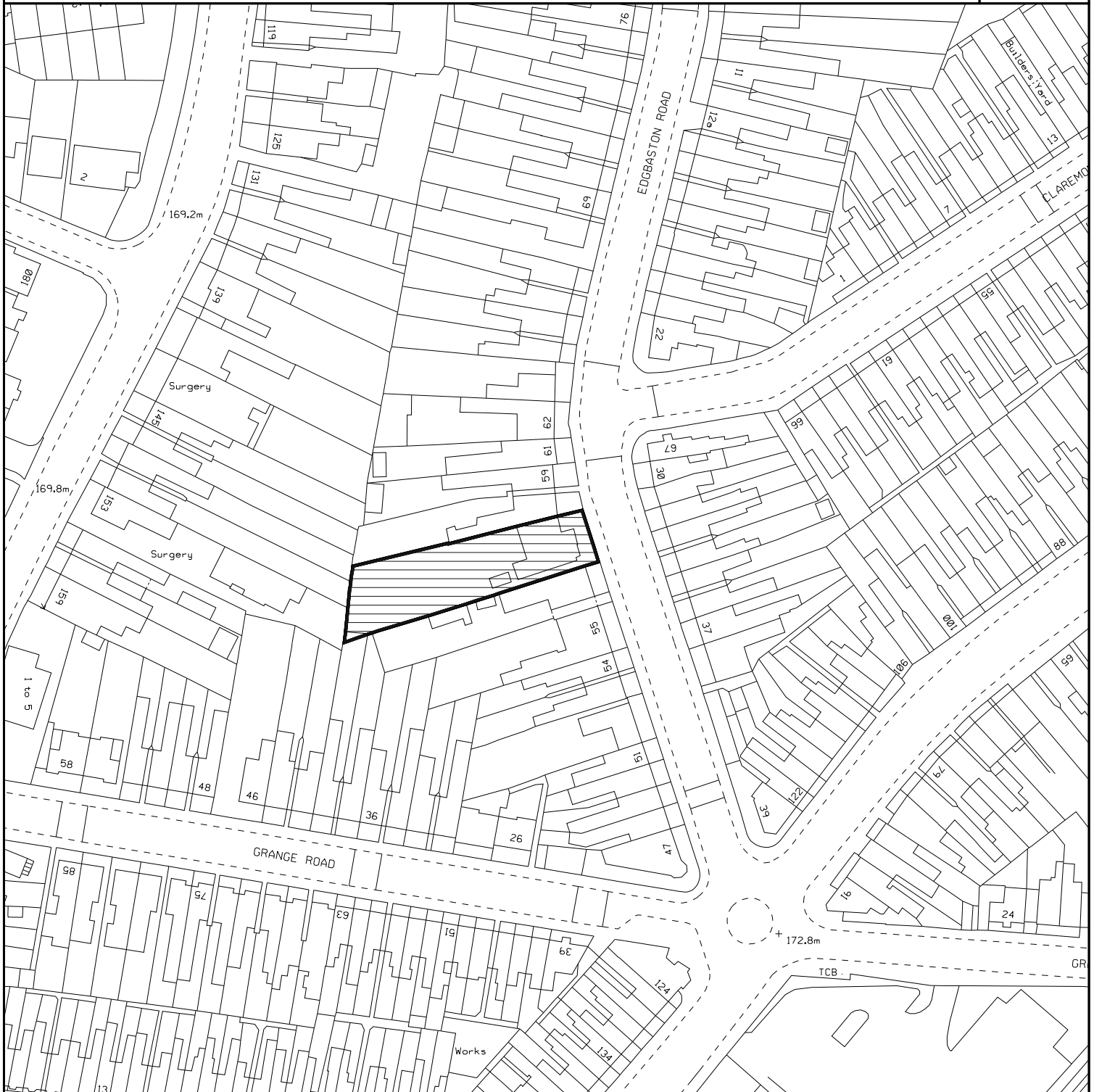
LEGEND	DESCRIPTION	SANDWELL	TERRIER
	PREMISES AT GREENWOOD AVENUE OLDBURY	SP0088SW	295
 <b>Sandwell</b> Metropolitan Borough Council	AREA	SCALE	CENTROID
	616.9 M2    737.9 Y2	1:1250	400052/288425
	PLAN NUMBER	DRAWN	DATE
	SAM/20700/006	DM	07-NOV-2018
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# REGENERATION AND PLANNING

STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT



NORTH



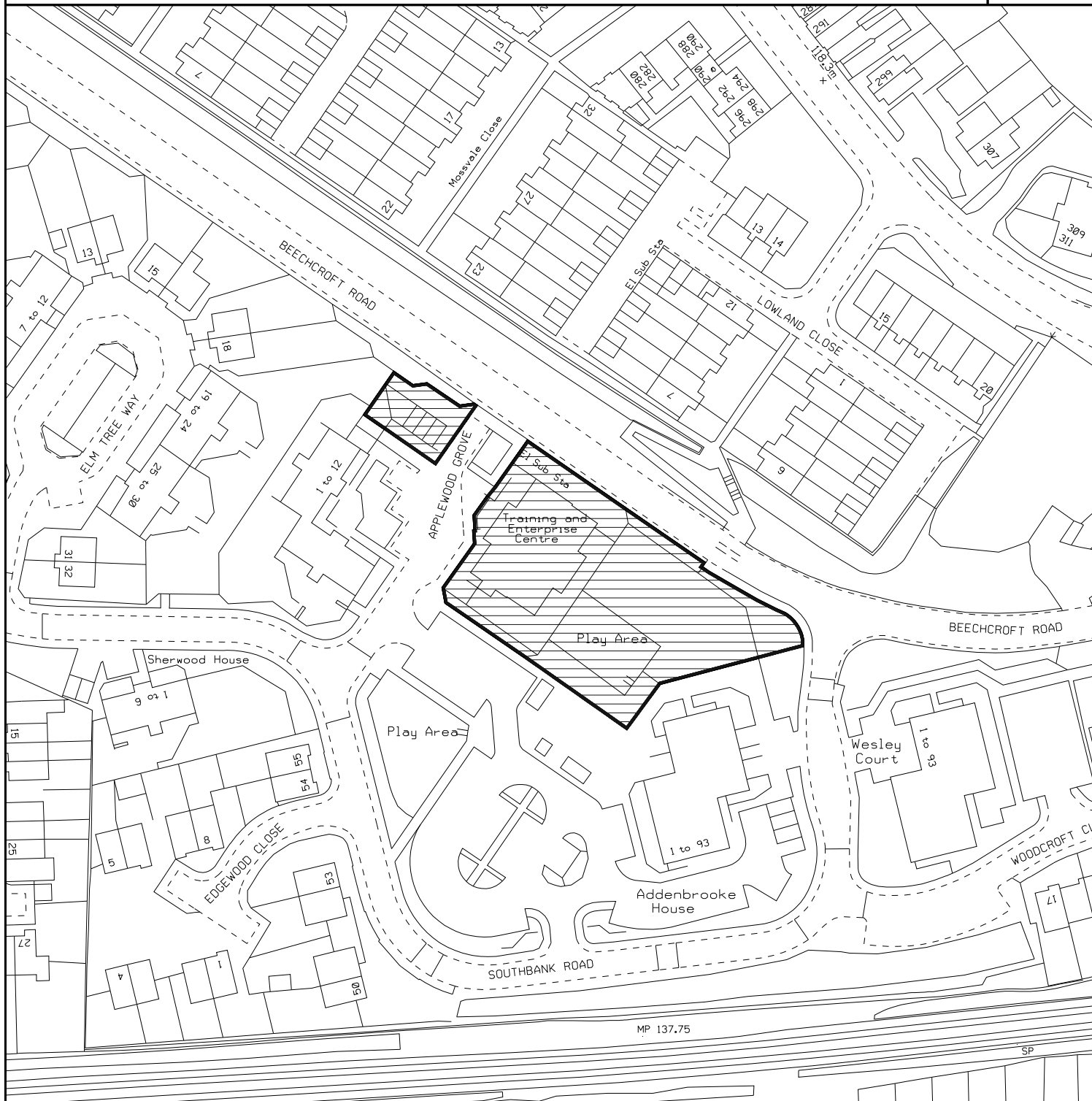
LEGEND	DESCRIPTION	SANDWELL	TERRIER
	57 EDGBASTON ROAD SMETHWICK	SP0287NW	317
 <b>Sandwell</b> Metropolitan Borough Council	AREA	SCALE	CENTROID
	856.7 M2    1024.6 Y2	1:1250	402457/287521
	PLAN NUMBER	DRAWN	DATE
	SAM/16120/002	DM	07-NOV-2018
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# REGENERATION AND PLANNING

STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT



NORTH



<b>LEGEND</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>  TRAINING CENTRE AND ADDITIONAL LANE AT APPLEWOOD GROVE  CRADLEY HEATH	SANDWELL S09585NE	TERRIER 376
		SCALE 1:1250	CENTROID 395642/285998
 <b>Sandwell</b> Metropolitan Borough Council	AREA 2880.5 M2    3445.2 Y2	DRAWN DM	DATE 10-JAN-2019
	PLAN NUMBER SAM/01605/045	THIS MAP IS BASED UPON ORDNANCE SURVEY MATERIAL WITH THE PERMISSION OF ORDNANCE SURVEY ON BEHALF OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE ©CROWN COPYRIGHT  UNAUTHORISED REPRODUCTION INFRINGES CROWN COPYRIGHT AND MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION OR CIVIL PROCEEDINGS  SANDWELL MBC LICENCE NO 100032119 2019	

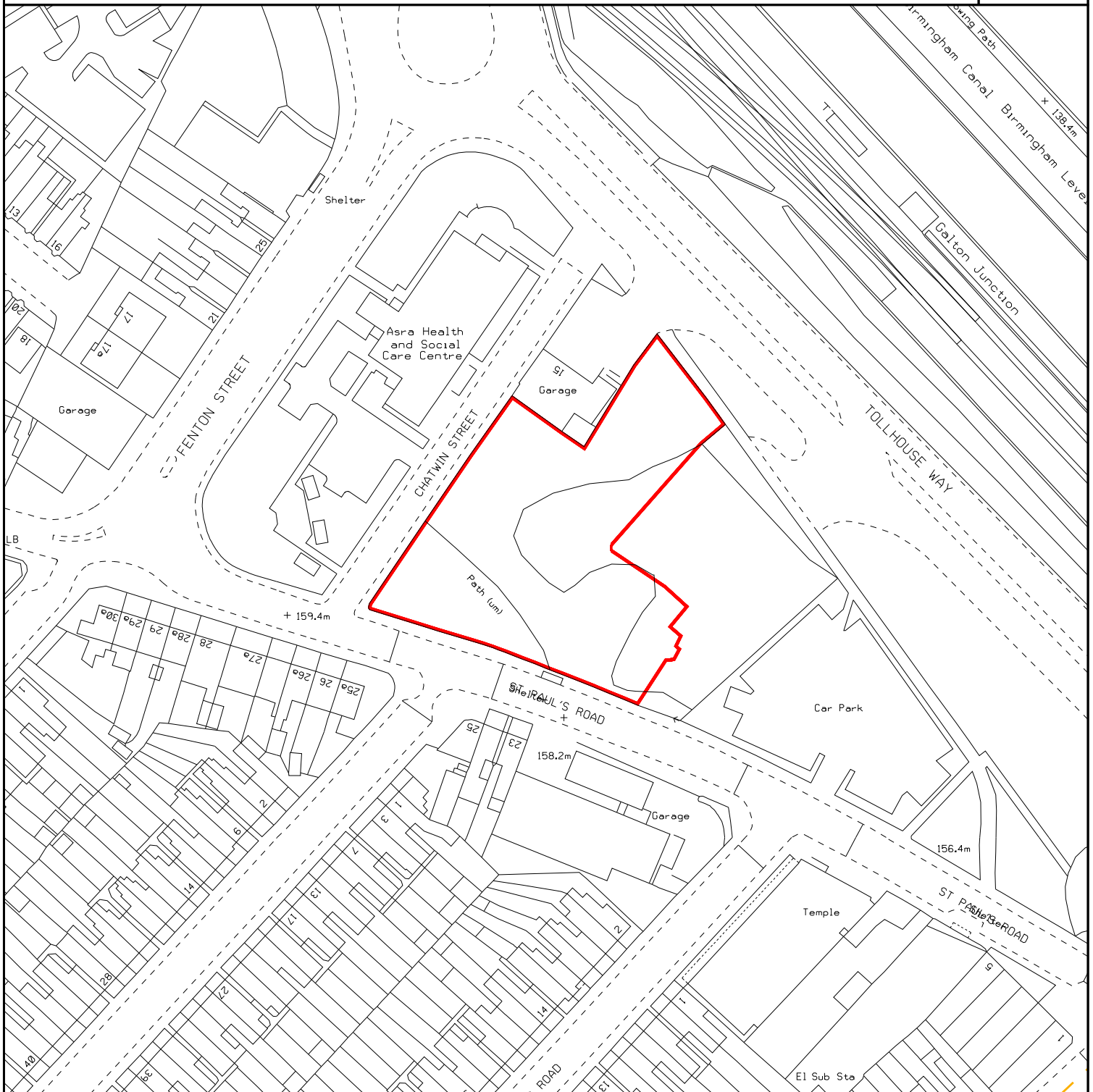



# REGENERATION AND PLANNING

STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT



NORTH



LEGEND	DESCRIPTION	SANDWELL	TERRIER
	LAND OFF ST PAULS ROAD & CHATWIN STREET SMETHWICK	SP0189SE	260
 <b>Sandwell</b> Metropolitan Borough Council	AREA	SCALE	CENTROID
	0.335 HA 0.828 AC	1:1250	401561/289065
	PLAN NUMBER	DRAWN	DATE
	SAM/45760/007	DM	11-OCT-2018
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