

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ASSETS, CULTURE AND HOUSING
CABINET MEMBER**

ADAPTED ACCOMMODATION PILOT

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposal for an adapted accommodation pilot to provide new homes for clients who require a major property adaptation.
- 1.2 The key points of the report are as follows:-
- A pilot scheme has been developed between North Lincolnshire Council and North Lincolnshire Homes to make better use of available resources to support people with disabilities and their families.
 - The pilot project will deliver seven new fully adapted homes on small infill plots across Scunthorpe and Brigg.
 - There is an opportunity to secure Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Grant Funding through a competitive bid process.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 There is a growing demand for adaptations to residential property funded via Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). This is due to the impacts of an ageing population, longer life expectancy of people with disabilities and an expectation that people will be able to remain in their homes for longer with or without the support of specialist care services. Each year the number of applications for major property adaptations such as two storey extensions is increasing.
- 2.2 The council receives a set amount of mandatory funding each year towards the provision of DFG's from the Government as part of its statutory duty. This funding grant is now received as part of the Better Care Fund (BCF) that was introduced via the Care Act 2014 as part of a £220m national allocation. Funding is currently ring-fenced for 2015/2016.
- 2.3 The council approves a discretionary amount of supplementary funding towards DFGs as a top-up for projects that exceed the mandatory cost threshold of £30,000.
- 2.4 A DFG grant helps towards the cost of adapting a home to enable a disabled person of any age to continue living there. A DFG is carried

out following a recommendation by an Occupational Therapist (OT) that adaptations are “necessary and appropriate” to meet the needs of the occupant. An assessment is then completed to ensure that it is “reasonable and practicable” to carry out the relevant works having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling.

- 2.5 Any adult or child who is registered or eligible to register as disabled can apply for a DFG. Tenure is irrelevant. A DFG is potentially available to owner occupiers and tenants of registered providers and private landlords.
- 2.6 A grant can provide for improved freedom of movement into and around the home and/or to provide essential facilities. This can include:
 - Widening doors and installing ramps;
 - Installing wet rooms;
 - Building new bedrooms; and
 - Installing Stair lifts.
- 2.7 The council is currently dealing with thirteen applications for extensions progressing via the traditional DFG process. There are another fifteen applications for extensions pending with each on average likely to cost between £60,000 and £65,000 to deliver.
- 2.8 North Lincolnshire Homes have worked in partnership with the council over the past few years. They have helped fund and progress DFG related work when an applicant is living in one of their properties. This partnership approach has worked well, providing additional resources in response to the ever increasing demand for DFG projects.
- 2.9 Officers have worked with the specialist OTs to identify the number and detailed needs of residents with disabilities, who are likely to require a DFG funded two storey extension to their existing residence in the near future.

The Pilot Project

- 2.10 Based on the principle that a significant disabled adaptation is costly, time consuming and often represents a less than ideal compromise due to existing property constraints, a pilot project is proposed with the aim of delivering seven new, purpose built, fully adapted homes for rent.
- 2.11 If a client has been assessed as eligible for a DFG, we cannot refuse to provide a mandatory grant of £30,000 or assume that applicants would wish to move to a more suitable property. We do have discretion over the approval of top-up council funding above this level however. Experience indicates that many clients wish to remain in their own home, close to their existing support networks. However, this pilot would provide another option for consideration by applicants.
- 2.12 The council will have secured nomination rights to the homes in question to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of clients who would otherwise require a major property adaptation. A legally binding

nominations agreement and allocations process will apply. North Lincolnshire Homes will own and manage the seven properties. They will allocate them to clients in line with the nominations agreement. The allocations process will include a 'step down' provision for allocations to other clients who require adapted accommodation in the event of low demand from the priority client group.

- 2.13 The new homes will be built to the latest Wheelchair Housing Design Guidance. The new homes will be between 20 and 30 square metres larger than an average home. They will contain future proofing measures such as strengthened beams to allow for the fitting of hoists. Outside space will include for level access to garden space and a covered entry space such as a car port.
- 2.14 The majority of clients requiring the level of adapted facilities that the new homes will provide would have required resources from the Council's discretionary DFG budget.
- 2.15 Working together the council and North Lincolnshire Homes have identified seven potentially suitable sites. Of these, six are located in Scunthorpe and one in Brigg. The sites in question are as follows:
- Rutland Road land triangle adjacent to number 91 Healey Road;
 - Burghley Road L shape land between numbers 19 and 25 Burghley Road; and
 - Plymouth Road land adjacent to Parkwood Primary School.
 - Land at Holgate Road, Scunthorpe;
 - Land at Sandhouse Crescent, Scunthorpe;
 - Land at Marlowe Road, Scunthorpe; and
 - End of East Parade, Brigg.
- 2.16 The first three sites are owned by the council. Plans of these sites are appended to this paper. North Lincolnshire Homes own the remaining four sites.
- 2.17 The following funding model is proposed for this pilot scheme.
- Land in council ownership (providing one plot per site) to be leased to NLH on long lease for peppercorn rent.
 - NLH land to be used at nil cost to project.
 - NLH to bid to secure HCA grant funding (average funding received from HCA in previous rounds has been £25,000 per unit).
 - NLC to contribute funding of £15,000 per unit (£7,500 to be funded through the existing Managed Housing Schemes budget and £7,500 to be funded through the Home Assistance capital programme)
 - NLH to use own resources to cover remainder of costs which are likely to be in the region of £80 - £90,000 per unit depending on unit type, size and locational factors.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The recommendation is for the Cabinet Member to approve the pilot project, including the proposed funding model described in this paper and to support a bid by North Lincolnshire Homes for HCA funding (option 1).
- 3.2 The alternative is to not approve the pilot project proposal.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1. The following applies to option one.
 - 4.1.1 Approving this pilot project will mean that the council can support the HCA bid by North Lincolnshire Homes and work in partnership to secure external funding to help residents with disabilities secure new build purpose-built adapted accommodation.
 - 4.1.2 This alternative DFG route will not proceed without match funding support from the council due to the high costs associated with building to Wheelchair Design Guidance standards.
 - 4.1.3 Approving this option will offer clients who require support to maintain their independence more options to find suitable accommodation.
 - 4.1.4 This option would provide North Lincolnshire Homes with capital match funding and the land value of the council sites to support a bid for HCA funding and would demonstrate to the HCA that the local authority supports the bid.
 - 4.1.5 New purpose-built accommodation can be created for residents with disabilities to a high standard of design quality.
 - 4.1.6 This alternative process will also help free up existing social rented family housing for other households on the waiting list as the total number of homes is increased in the social sector.
 - 4.1.7 By creating more new build accommodation the council will also receive additional new homes bonus funding of £8,100 per unit.
 - 4.1.8 Working with North Lincolnshire Homes, subject to a successful bid, will secure external Central Government funding into North Lincolnshire and the utilisation of North Lincolnshire Homes' internal capital funding.
 - 4.1.9 Two of the council sites could hold two separate plots, which could be made available as self-build adapted property for sale to residents with disabilities who do not want to rent a property but purchase one. This could result in additional income through capital receipts to the council.

- 4.2 Option 2. The following applies to option two.
- 4.2.1 There are limited apparent alternative uses for the land in question.
 - 4.2.2 New homes bonus income of £8,100 per unit would not be secured by the council.
 - 4.2.3 A bid by North Lincolnshire Homes for HCA funding is unlikely to prove successful without council support.
 - 4.2.4 The total number of DFGs completed each financial year will continue to reduce as already shown in the trend over the past four financial years from 167 in 2011/12 to 106 in 2014/15 and the average end to end waiting times will continue to increase, again as shown in the trend over the past four financial years from 35 weeks in 2011/12 to 58 weeks in 2014/15.
 - 4.2.5 This pilot offers an alternative to spending capital on adapting accommodation. Without the pilot, the seven households will have to wait for their home to be adapted. Overall the capital expenditure required to do so is likely to be 400% more.
- 4.3 In light of the above, option 1 is the recommended option.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY,IT)**

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 For every new property built the council will receive £8,100 of new homes bonus funding from Central Government.
- 5.1.2 The funding model includes £15,000 per unit of capital match funding from the council into the scheme to support the HCA grant and the capital investment from North Lincolnshire Homes.

5.2 Staffing

Not applicable.

5.3 Property and IT

Option 1 makes available the various assets and invests £15,000 per unit into the alternative DFG route. North Lincolnshire Homes will then add the capital investment and value of these sites into their bid to the HCA, making it a stronger, local authority supported bid. Option 2 retains the sites in council ownership. The council currently has no alternative intentions for the sites in question.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 6.1 Officers have completed an IIA with no issues of concern arising. In particular, the proposal will see the various infill plots developed into purpose built residential accommodation suitable to meet the needs of disabled people.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 A group comprising officers from the council and North Lincolnshire Homes have worked collaboratively to develop the proposal for the pilot project. Representatives from the Strategic Housing, Operational Housing Services and Estates Services teams all participated in developing the proposal presented for consideration by the Cabinet Member.
- 7.2 Consultation has been undertaken with the Spatial Planning team. They confirm that the suggested sites are suitable in policy terms for small scale residential development.
- 7.3 Colleagues in the Development Management team were consulted. They suggest subject to further work including highways assessment, tree surveys, detailed design and community engagement, that the principle of residential development in the seven locations suggested is acceptable.
- 7.4 Specialist Occupational Therapists in the NHS who work with families with disabled children and adults with disabilities were consulted and fully support the suggested pilot.
- 7.5 If the principle of this pilot is approved we will then consult wider stakeholder groups including the PIP Forum, Kaleidoscope, Carers Support Group and the Adult Partnership.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves option 1, including the lease of the three council sites with provision for one unit per site as listed in paragraph 2.17 above to North Lincolnshire Homes for 65 years on a peppercorn rent.
- 8.2 That the Cabinet Member approves investment by the council of £15,000 per new unit into the pilot project subject to the appropriate nomination rights being provided to the council by way of a legal agreement.
- 8.3 That the Cabinet Member supports North Lincolnshire Homes' HCA bid for specialist accommodation for residents with disabilities.
- 8.4 That the Cabinet Member receives regular update reports on progress with the project.

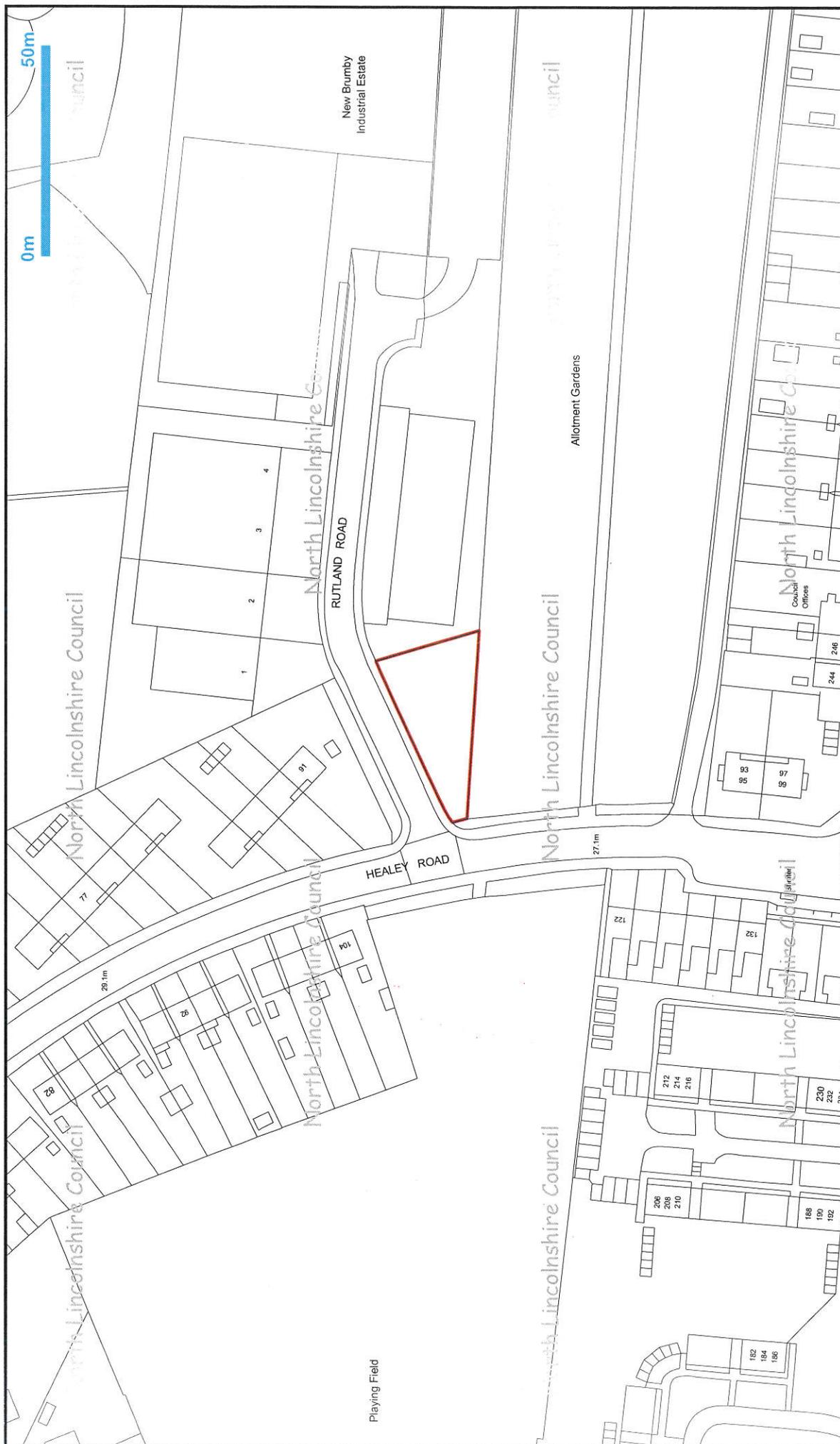
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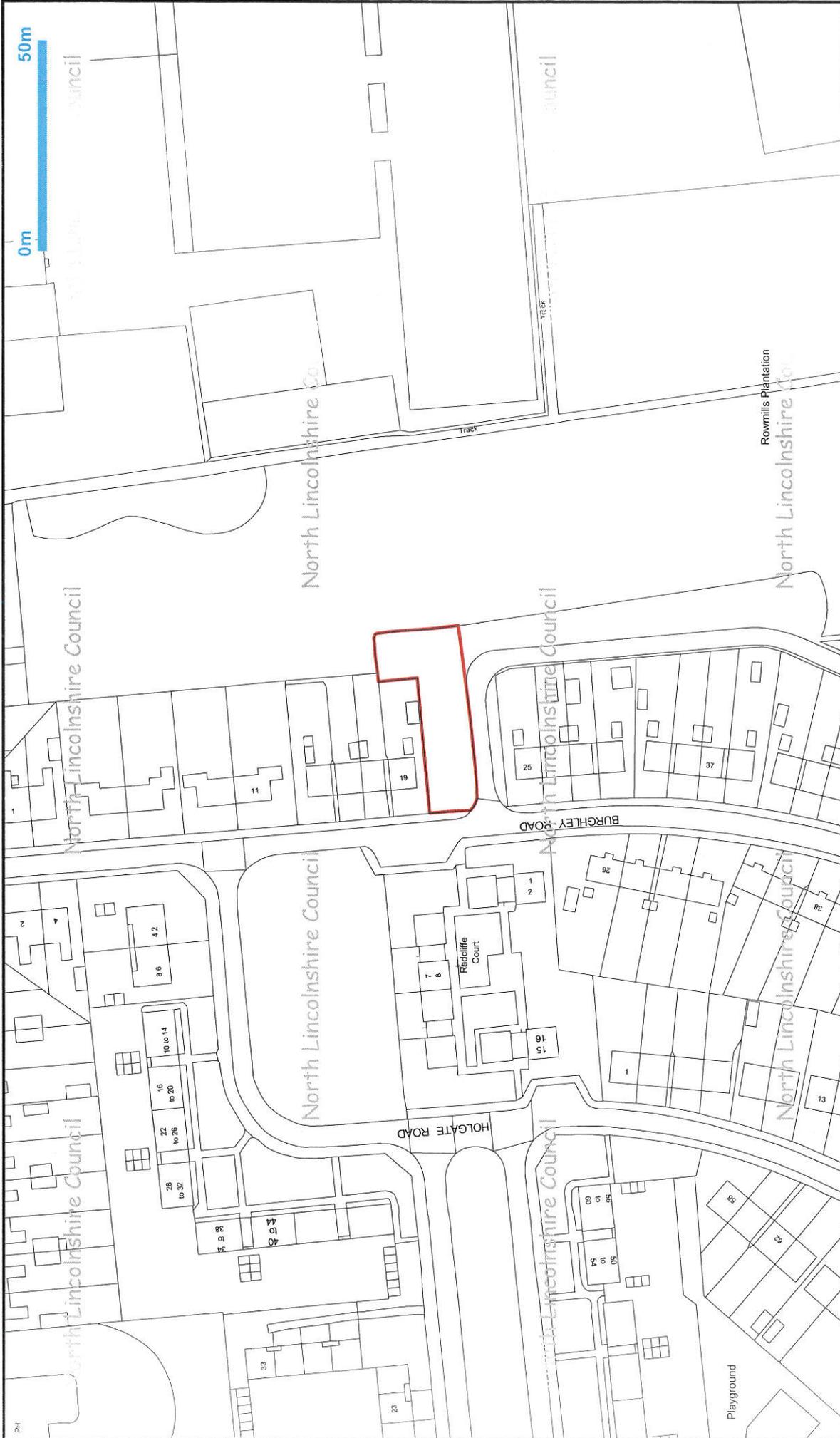
Author: Martin Ely
Date: 8 June 2015

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Wheelchair Housing Design Guide (2nd edition) 2010: Stephen Thorpe and Habinteg Housing Association.



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<p>Title: Brumby Estate</p>		<p>Drawing No:</p>	<p>Version: 1</p>
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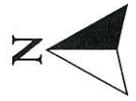


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Title: Sandhouse Crescent

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Version: 1

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Date: 22/06/2015

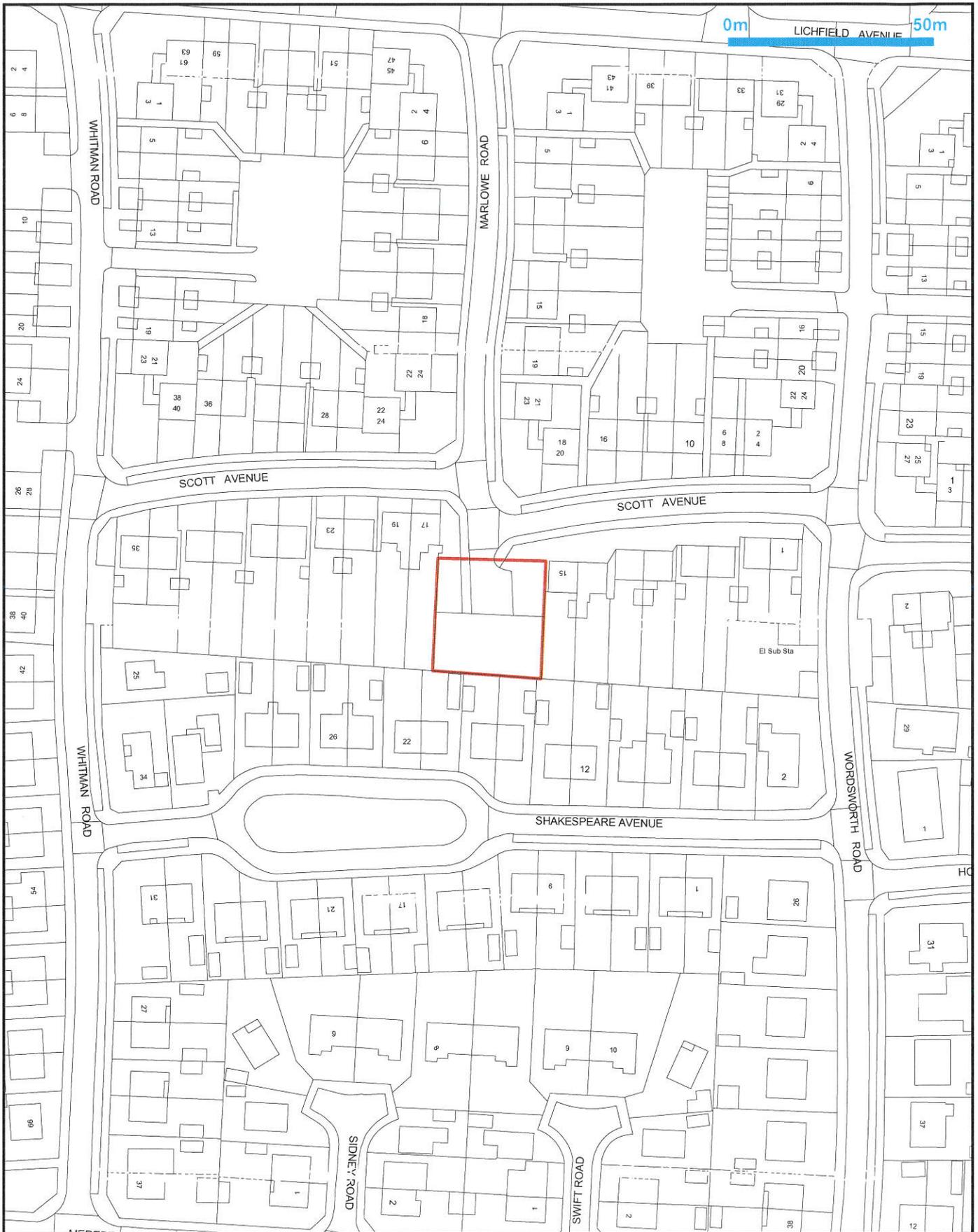
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