

CABINET – 21ST JANUARY 2010

Report of the Director of Housing and Health

ITEM 7 REVIEW OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

Purpose of the Report

This report proposes, and seeks endorsement of, the order of priority and the timescales for detailed reports to be submitted to Cabinet on the options to address the long term sustainability of the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes.

Recommendation

That Cabinet endorses the Sheltered Housing Review Priority List and proposed timescales set out in table 2 of this report, for sequencing future reports on the schemes.

Reason

To ensure a strategic approach is taken to prioritising sheltered housing schemes for further investigation.

Policy Context

The Council's Older Person's Housing Strategy aim to "Ensure older peoples' housing meets needs and aspirations" is the context for this report. The Action Plan requires that a review of current local authority older persons housing provision is undertaken and a long term plan is developed for each scheme.

The recently approved (Dec 09) Leicestershire County Council Extra Care Housing Strategy 2010-2015 states that Extra Care will be developed in the County through a strategic approach involving District Councils and the Homes and Communities Agency. Developing Extra Care is a priority identified within the Supporting People Five Year Strategy (currently under review) as well as an action within the aforementioned Older Persons Housing Strategy.

The LCC Extra Care Housing Strategy identifies upgrading existing Borough Council sheltered housing to meet the requirements of Extra Care Housing as one of the key delivery opportunities.

Background

Cabinet, at its meeting on 29th October 2009 approved the Housing Asset Management Strategy (min 97).

This identified three key areas where investment is required to ensure the future sustainability of Council stock.

- The need to deliver the overall decent homes programme
- Addressing the issue of Non Traditional (PRC) dwellings
- The increasing issue of existing sheltered accommodation no longer being in demand

Appendices 1 and 2 of the Strategy provide up to date information by way of the Decent Homes Delivery Plan and the report on Non Traditional (PRC) Dwellings to ensure a strategic approach is taken to decision making and major future investment requirements in relation to the Council's housing assets.

Similarly, Appendix 3 of the Strategy is an executive summary of the preliminary findings of the sheltered housing review that was undertaken to deal with a number of emerging concerns with:

- low demand
- High turnover
- Difficulties in letting void properties, resulting in increased void periods
- Inflexibility of accommodation in terms of access and adaptability

The specific aims of the review were to:

- Highlight investment requirements to ensure existing social housing continues to meet the needs of older people addressing the problem of long term and hard to let voids throughout Sheltered Housing stock
- Inform investment decisions in new housing provision or services
- Promote choices of accommodation for older people

The Council's sheltered housing properties are generally located within schemes. Furthermore there are a significant number of alarm linked properties for older people together with a number of "elderly plus," properties that although not on hard wired alarms are able to receive a warden service through telephone based lifeline alarms. Sheltered Housing Courts (Cat 2 schemes) are usually blocks of flats with shared communal facilities such as a common room and laundry where all residents are older people. The Council's existing sheltered housing stock consists of a large proportion of bed-sit accommodation which is generally viewed as the least popular accommodation type by residents. It is these bedsits that present the Council with the highest level of voids amongst older persons housing stock.

The Council owns 15 sheltered housing schemes across the borough covering a total of 489 dwellings and in order to prioritise schemes in relation to the need for intervention a scoring matrix was developed focusing on factors such as demand, current service provision, suitability, and maintenance expenditure. A desktop assessment for each

Sheltered Housing scheme was then carried out with Service Managers and the schemes were placed in priority order for further investigation.

The table below shows the number and type of accommodation in each scheme, together with the current (Jan 2010) voids status. Appendix I to this report illustrates the location of each scheme.

Table I Scheme Accommodation Type and Current Voids Status

Scheme	Bedsits	Flats	Bungalows	Voids Jan 2010
Aingarth, Loughborough	14	12	-	7 (2F,5BS)
Arnold Smith House, Shepshed	10	13	-	3 (1F,2BS)
Babington Court, Rothley	20	8	-	8 (1F,7BS)
Beresford Court, Shepshed	4	31	-	3 (2F,1BS)
Dudley Court, Sileby	16	18	-	4 (4BS)
Durham Road, Loughborough	-	-	29	0
Fielding Court, Loughborough	24	22	-	7 (7BS)
Gray's Court, Barrow	-	17	10	0
Longcliffe Road, Shepshed	-	20	8	2 (2F)
Martin Court, Anstey	46	5	-	12 (1F,11BS)
Riversdale Court, Birstall	16	8	-	3 (3BS)
Sorrel Court, Mountsorrel	22	11	-	5 (1F,4BS)
St Michaels Court, Thurmaston	21	1	-	6 (6BS)
St Pauls Court, Syston	-	24	-	0
St Peters Court, Syston	29	1	-	2 (2BS)

Scheme visits and findings

A site visit and appraisal has been carried out for each Sheltered Housing scheme. The appraisal focused on a number of different factors including scheme layout, appropriateness of design and physical quality of accommodation, access and development opportunities.

Sheltered scheme visits and inspections enabled the major shortfalls of each development to be identified and highlighted possible options for scheme improvements.

All scheme findings and resulting development options were discussed with representatives from Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing (CNH) under the categories listed below:

1. Decent Homes works

These are items that are ultimately required under the Decent Homes programme such as new kitchens, bathrooms and windows. Funding is only available subject to a 2 Star allocation following the Audit Commission inspection taking place in February 2010.

2. Small scale scheme improvements

These are items that would not necessarily ensure long term demand for a scheme but may make the scheme more attractive to some potential occupiers and improve the quality of life for existing residents. Items could include installation of lifts and conversion of storage rooms into mobility scooter storage.

3. Scheme re-modelling

These are major scheme improvements that are intended to address the low demand for units within each scheme; options include converting bedsits into self contained 1 bedroom flats.

4. Site redevelopment

In some instances the most viable option to address long term demand might be the complete demolition of a scheme and the subsequent development of a more appropriate purpose built scheme or the disposal of a site altogether.

Future Proposals

The review has highlighted the potential investment required to ensure the Council's existing Sheltered Accommodation continues to meet the needs of older people. Scheme options have been broadly identified in consultation with Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing and at this stage they are for further investigation only. Further investigation on each individual option will enable accurate costs to be established and full appraisals and viability assessments to be undertaken.

It is important to note however the potential impact on sheltered schemes in Charnwood of the Leicestershire County Council Extra Care Housing Strategy 2010-2015. The Strategy reveals that in order to make a significant impact on the numbers of residential care admissions approximately 500 additional Extra Care places would be needed in Leicestershire by 2015. The characteristics of Extra Care combine the best aspects of residential care homes and sheltered housing with the independence of living at home.

The preferred model of Extra Care in Leicestershire will be mixed tenure. Investment will come from private housing providers as well as the rented housing market. This will cater for people who might already own houses and wish to retain their assets. There are three ways this can be taken forward over the next five years:

- Improving the existing Extra Care Housing schemes to ensure that they offer real alternatives to residential care and securing nomination rights to existing schemes for the County Council.
- Developing plans with providers to build new Extra Care Housing.
- Working with District and Borough Councils to upgrade existing sheltered housing to meet the requirements of Extra Care Housing.

Both remodelling and redevelopment of existing schemes may provide opportunities to develop extra-care accommodation.

At an early stage of the Sheltered Housing Review joint appraisals were carried out with the County Council to identify potential opportunities to deliver further Extra Care units. Initial findings of that assessment identified Fielding Court in Loughborough as having potential for upgrading to an Extra Care Housing model and St Peter's in Syston as a possible remodelling or new build initiative.

Consultation

The key recommendations of the Housing Asset Management Strategy were discussed with the Tenant Representatives Group on 16th December 2009. Details of the Sheltered Housing Review will be discussed at the Senior Citizens Forum on 19th February 2010. The issue of consultation with and engagement of existing residents and stakeholders in the lead up to detailed proposals being presented to Cabinet on a scheme by scheme basis is a key stage of the process due to the potential sensitivities of the recommendations and the over riding need to be mindful of, and respectful of their needs and concerns.

Furthermore the outcomes of the current countywide Older Persons Housing Needs and Aspirations study will inform any decision made as this will have identified wider views on the future of older persons housing provision.

Consultation linked to the rolling programme of each scheme review and report will therefore be extensive and timely and full use will be made of the Tenant Participation structures in CNH.

Timescales

It is proposed that further investigation into scheme options is carried out in line with the priority list and timescales set out in the table below.

Table 2 - Sheltered Housing Review Priority List and proposed timescales

Priority	Scheme	Timescale	Sheltered Housing Report
1	Longcliffe	Short term	Pages 30-35
2	Babington	Short term	Pages 36-44
3	Aingarh	Short term	Pages 45-52
4	Dudley	Short term	Pages 53-60
5	Fielding	Short term	Pages 61-68
6	Martin	Medium Term	Pages 69-77
7	Beresford	Medium Term	Pages 78-79
8	Sorrel	Medium Term	Pages 80-93
9	St Michaels	Medium Term	Pages 94-101
10	St Peters	Medium Term	Pages 102-109
11	Arnold	Long Term	Pages 110-115
12	Riversdale	Long Term	Pages 116-123
13	Durham	Long Term	Pages 124-128
14	St Pauls	Long Term	Pages 129-133
15	Grays	Long Term	Pages 134-138

Short Term:

It is anticipated that detailed investigations will be completed and options presented to Cabinet in a rolling programme for schemes occupying priority positions 1 to 5 over the period from March 2010 to March 2011.

Medium Term:

For schemes occupying priority positions 6 to 10 detailed investigation will be completed and presented to Cabinet by end March 2012.

Long term:

These schemes (11-15) are not considered a priority in terms of addressing sustainability, therefore detailed investigation and Cabinet papers will not be completed until March 2013.

Whilst it is proposed that further investigations into scheme options will be carried out in line with the priority list and timescales set out above, implementation of the options will not necessarily progress in the same order. Implementation will be subject to a number of factors including availability of funding, outcomes from tenant consultation, stakeholder interest, securing necessary planning and building regulation approvals etc.

Furthermore if opportunities arise that would suggest it prudent to re-schedule the investigations to take advantage of particular funding or other initiatives then this timetable may be revisited.

Financial Implications

Estimated costs to address each scheme will vary widely and the availability of financial resources will play a significant part in the decision making process and the subsequent programming of works and potential timeframes.

There are a number of lower cost options that could increase demand and improve sustainability in the short term, although these will not necessarily ensure that the stock meets the needs of older people in the long term.

Because of the inherent problem of minimal low demand for bedsits, the options to address long term sustainability in some of the schemes could include major conversion or redevelopment works. Whilst significantly more expensive, converting schemes into more appropriate accommodation is a potential solution in ensuring the long term sustainability of Sheltered Housing schemes.

Risk Management

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions
The risk that residents will resist proposed options	H	M	Early consultation with Tenant Representative Group and Senior Citizens Forum on general principles supplemented by detailed consultation prior to reports on individual schemes
The risk that funding is not available to implement proposals	H	H	Further investigation into scheme specific options will include a review of possible funding routes, for example early dialogue with Housing Association partners

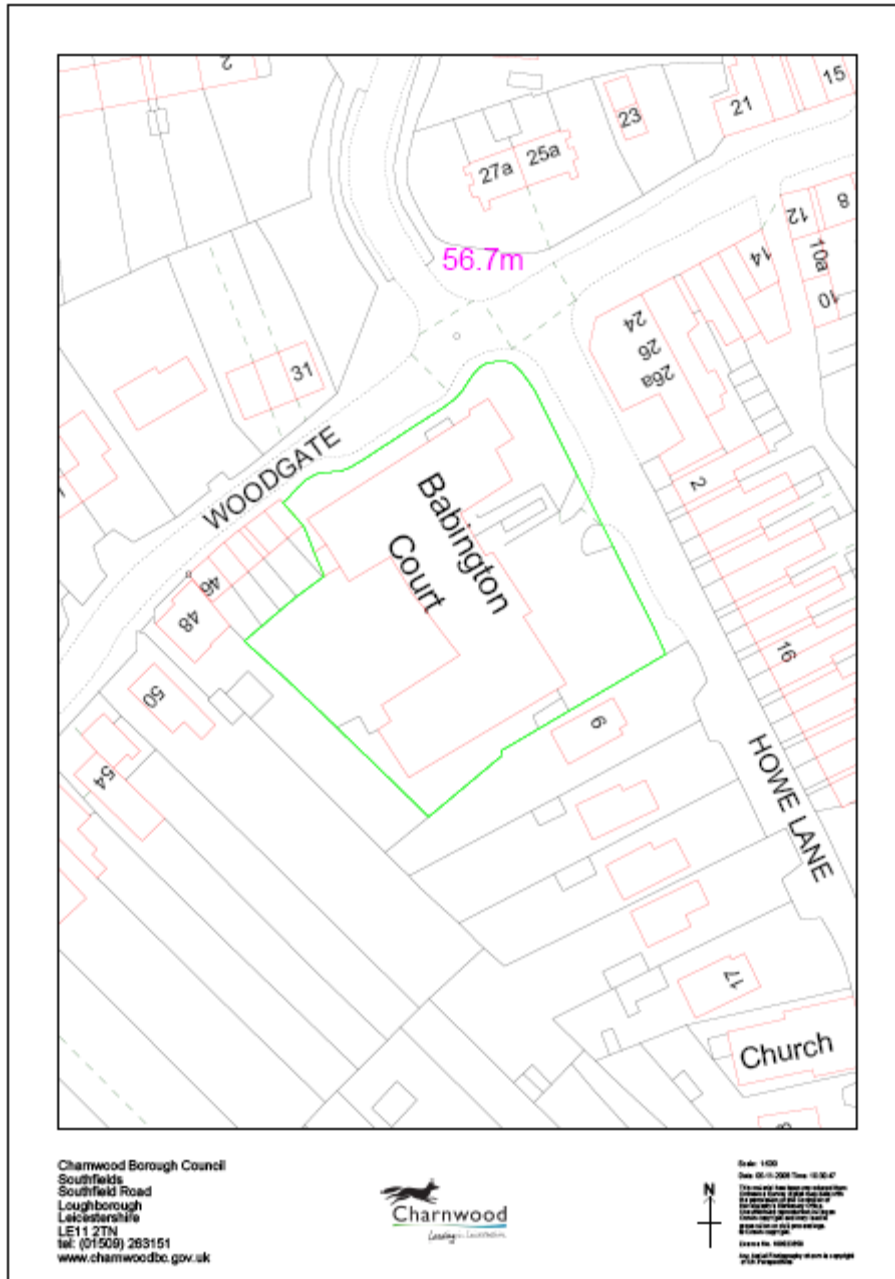
Key Decision: No

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Background Papers: Charnwood Borough Council Sheltered Housing Review
(November 2009)

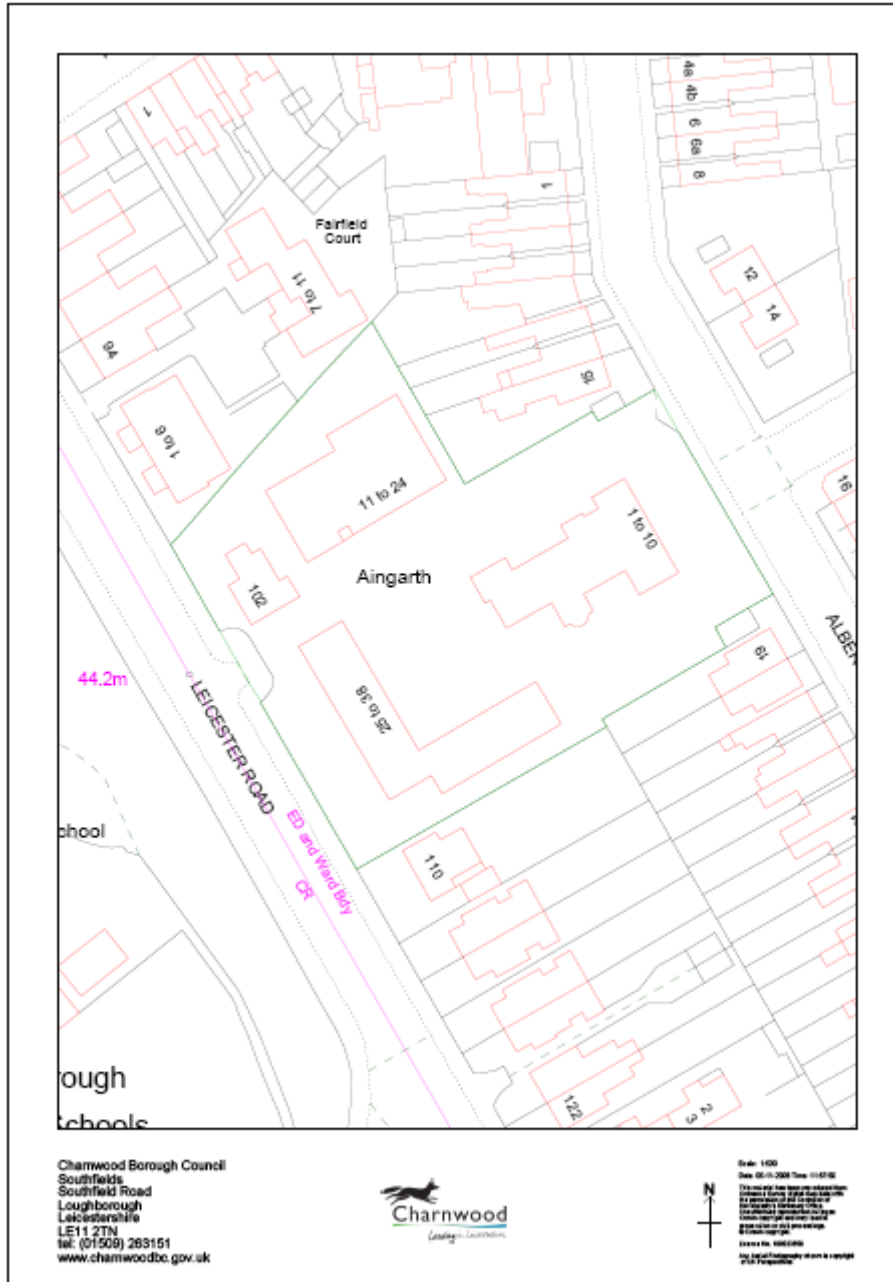
Babington Court

Babington Court is located on the corner of Woodgate and Howe Lane in Rothley. The scheme is situated in the south west of the village a short distance from the village centre and its associated amenities.



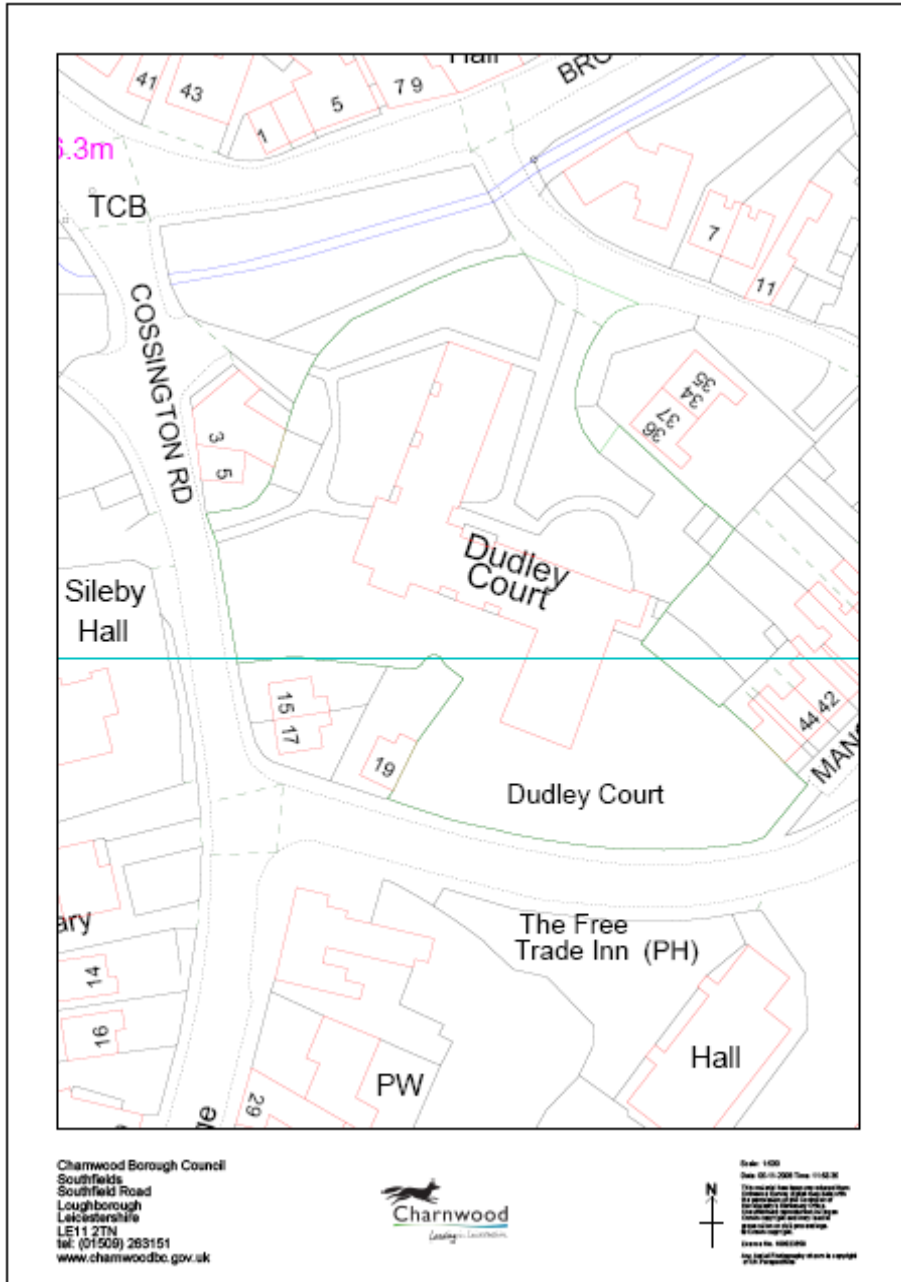
Aingarth

Aingarth is situated between Albert Promenade and the A6 Leicester Road in Loughborough.



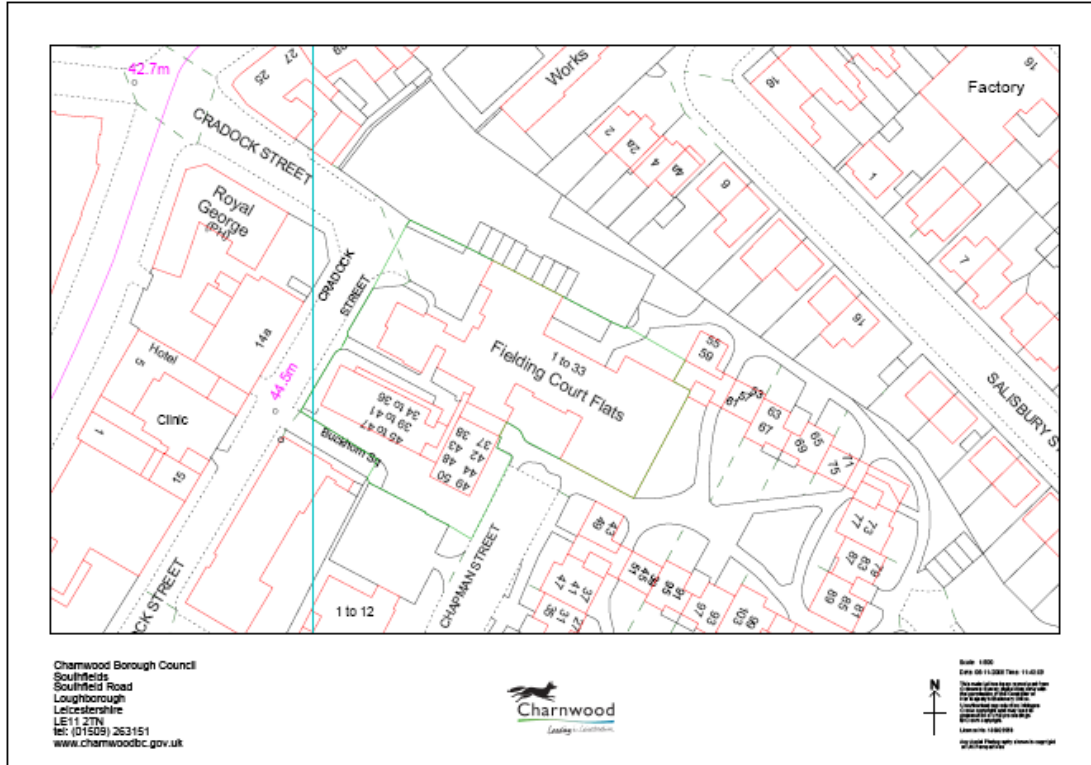
Dudley Court

Dudley Court is located on Cossington Road in Sileby, a short distance from town centre amenities.



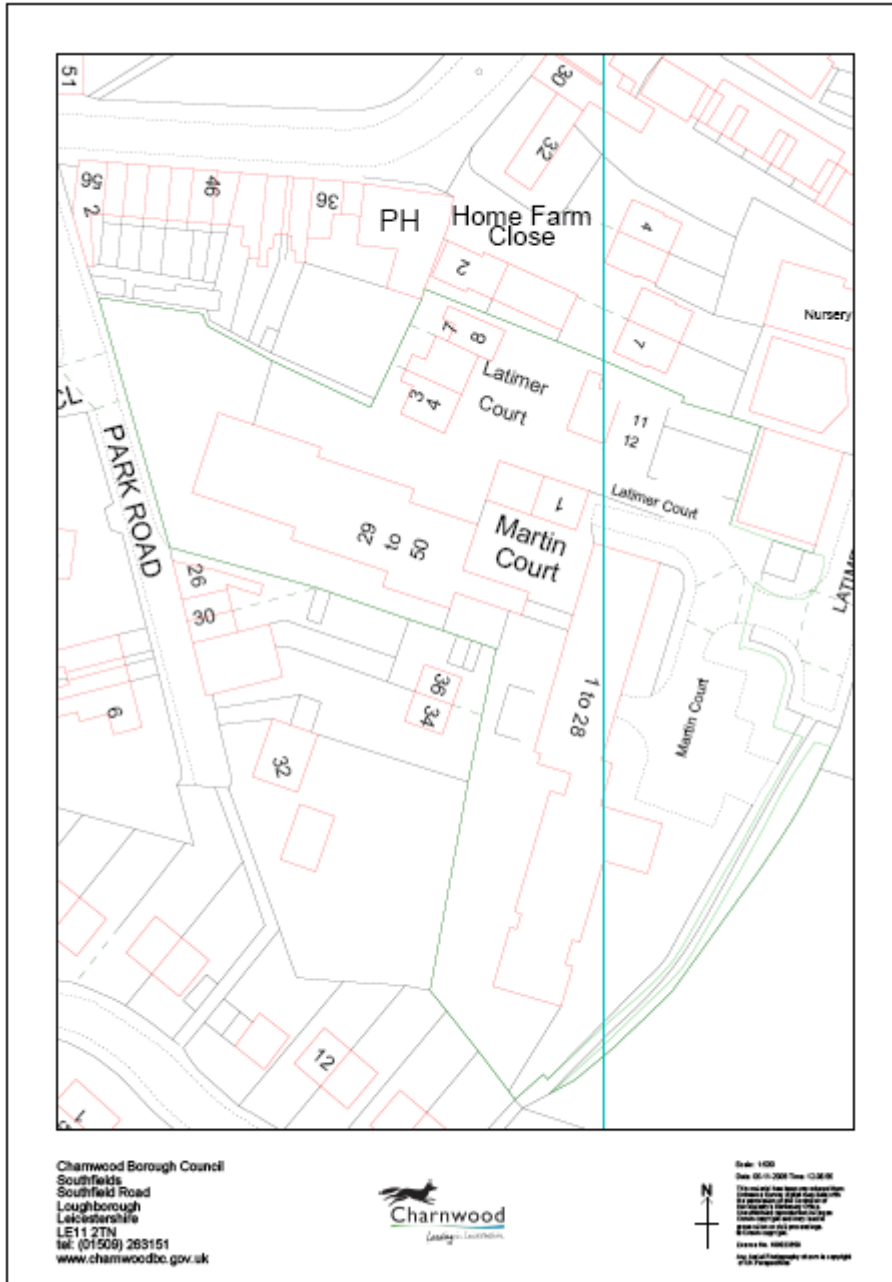
Fielding Court

Fielding Court is located on the corner of Craddock Street in the centre of Loughborough



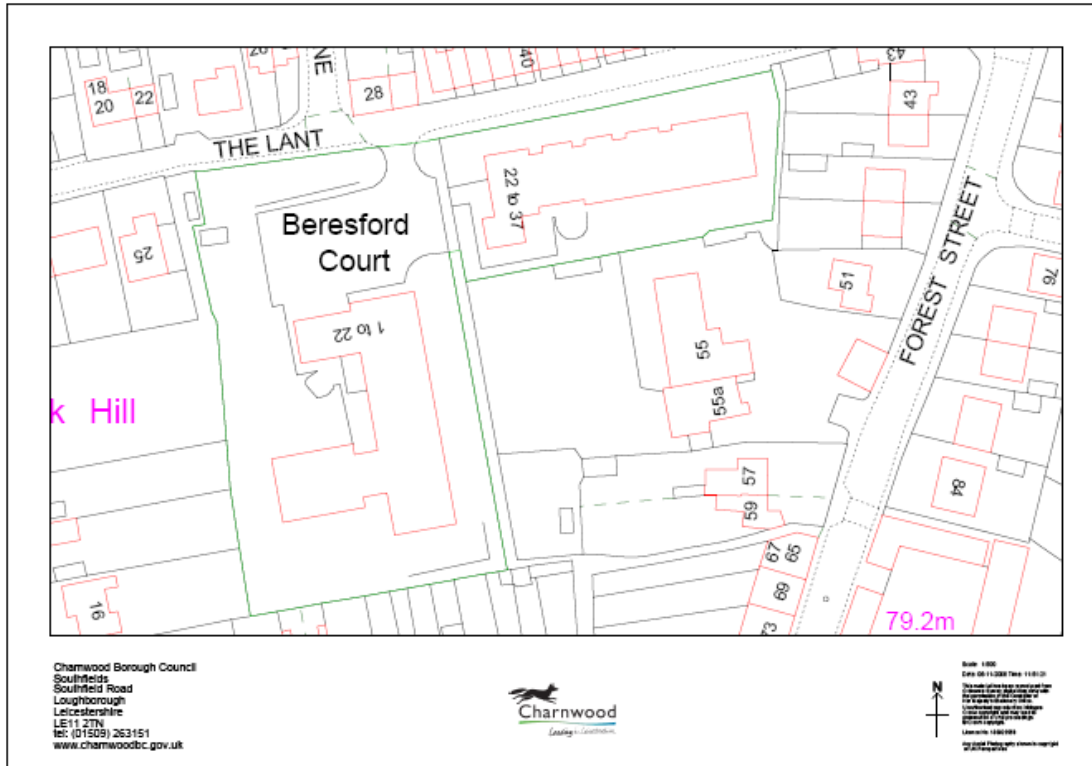
Martin Court

Martin Court is situated on Latimer Street in Anstey close to all town centre shops and amenities.



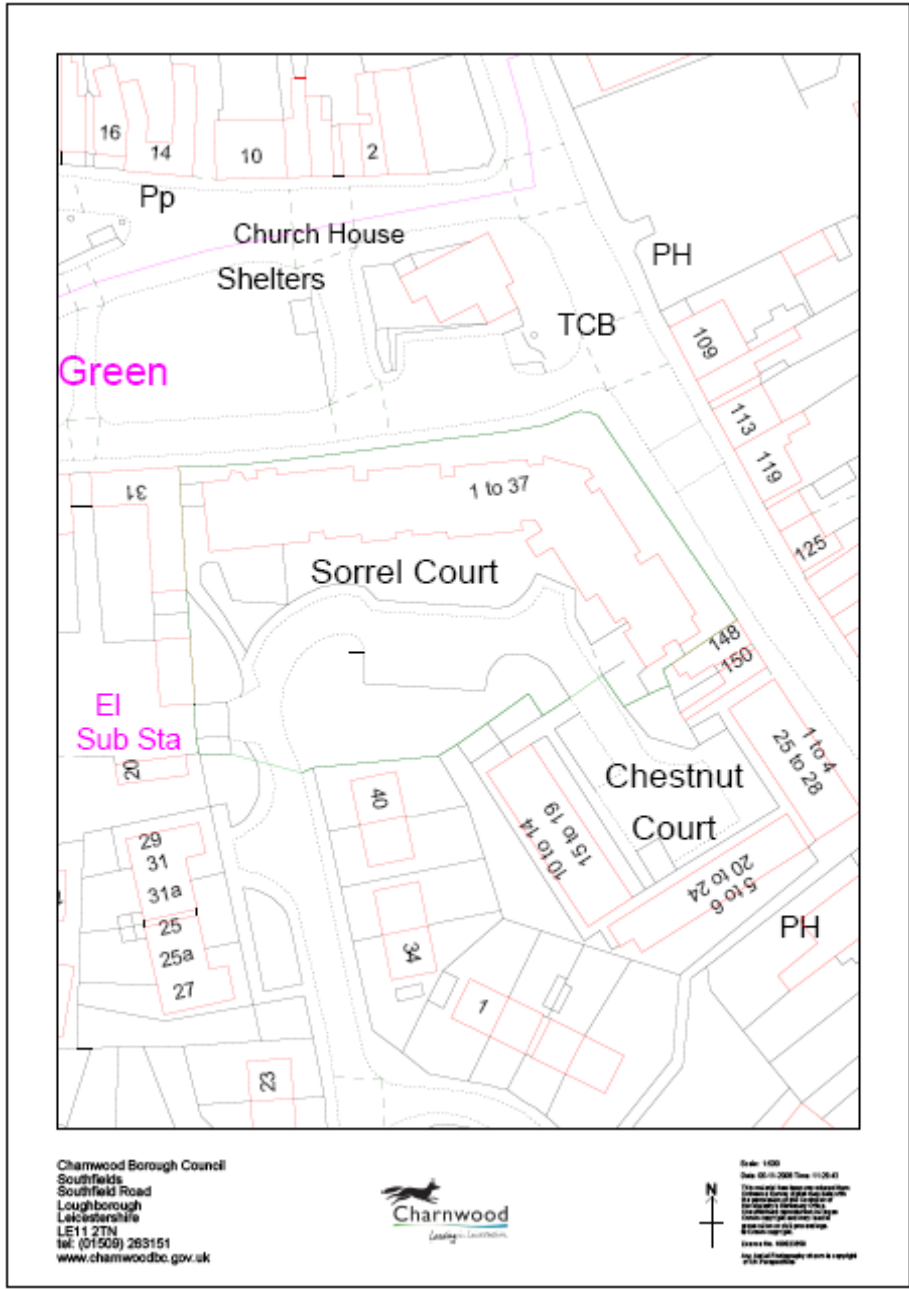
Beresford Court

Beresford Court is situated on The Lant in Shepshed a short distance from town centre amenities.



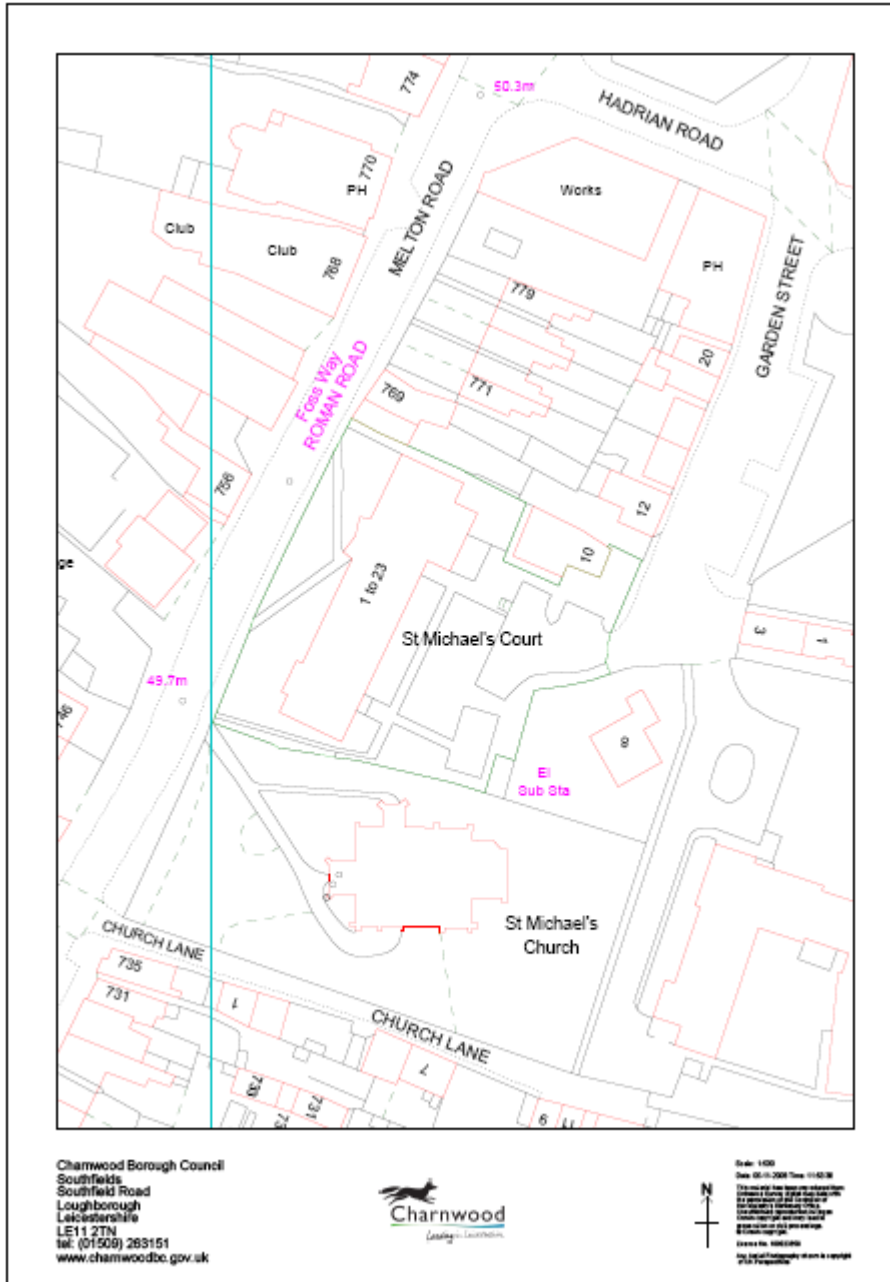
Sorrel Court

Sorrel Court is located on the corner of The Green and Leicester Road in Mountsorrel. The scheme is situated just to the north of the town centre a short walk from shops and local amenities.



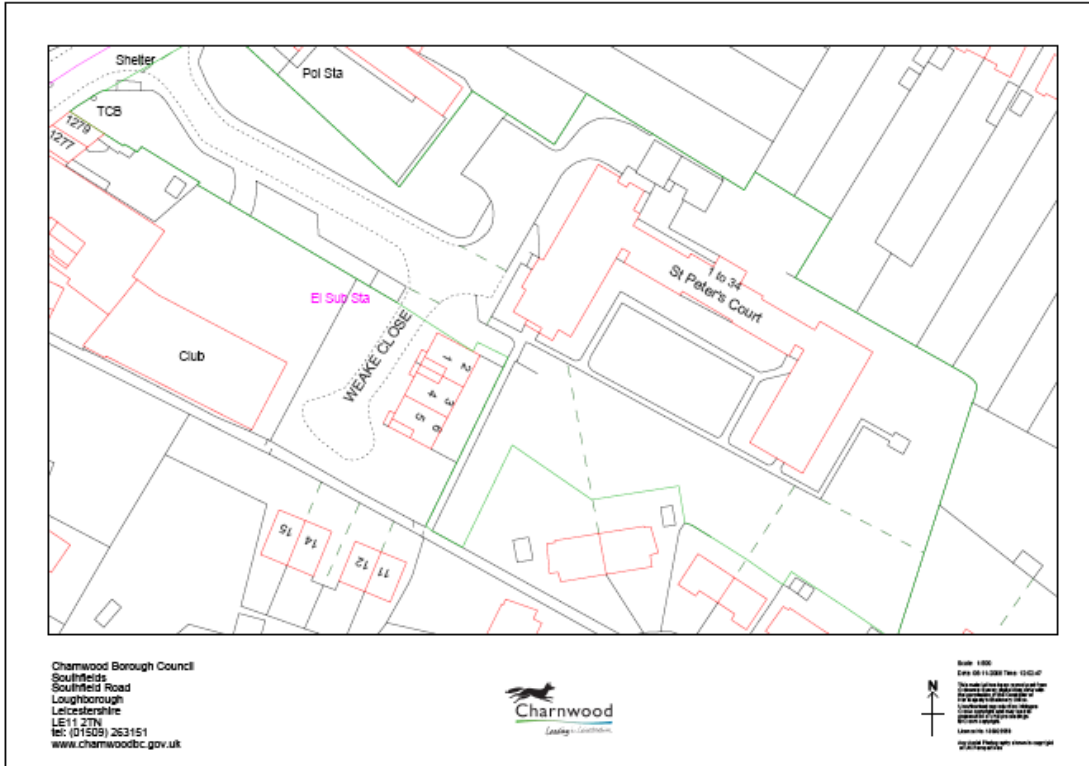
St Michael's Court

St Michaels Court is located on Melton Road in Thurmaston. Melton Road is the main road running through Thurmaston and provides a number of local shops and amenities.



St Peter's Court

St Peters Court is located off Melton Road in Syston.



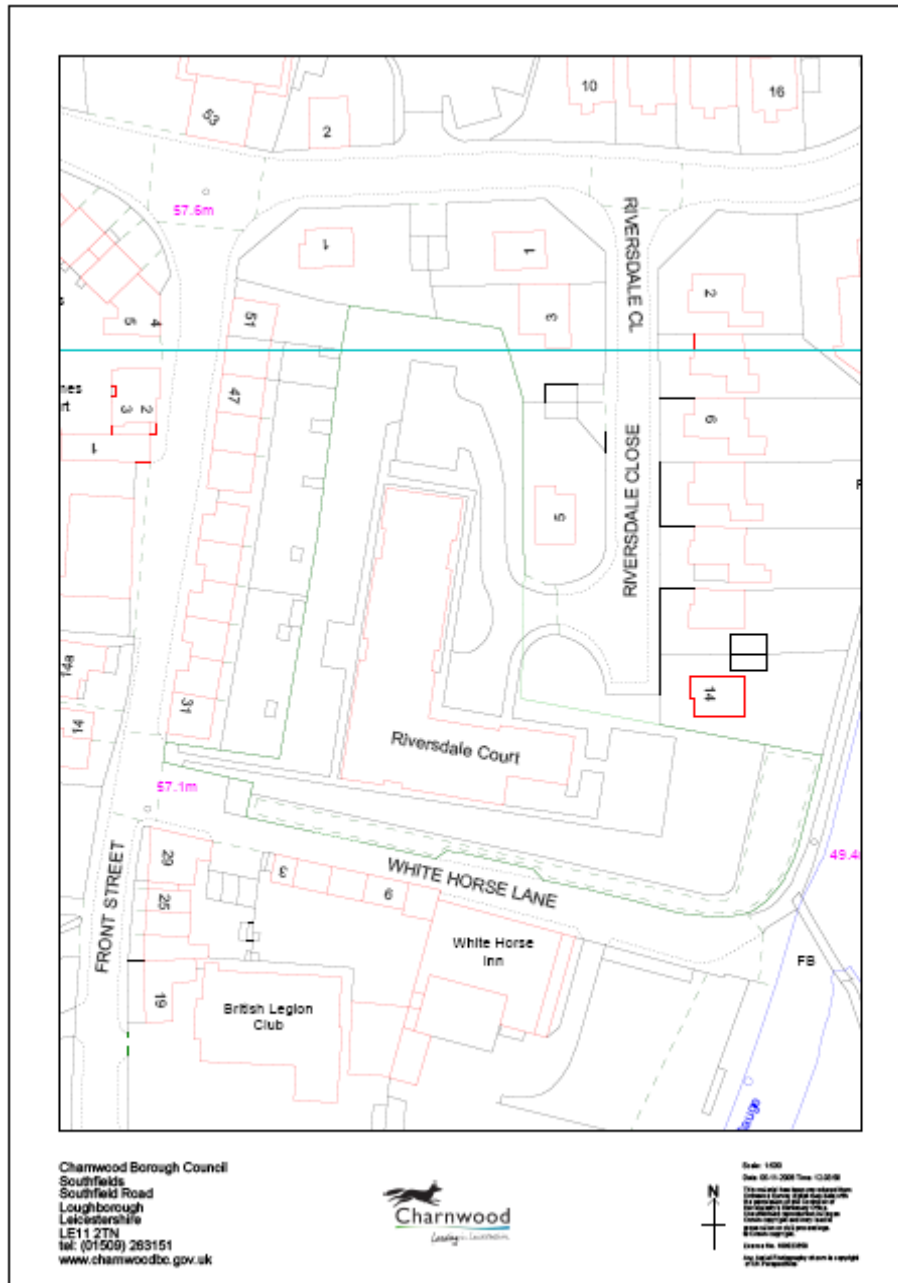
Arnold Smith House

Arnold Smith House is located on Bridge Street in Shepshed close to town centre shops and amenities.



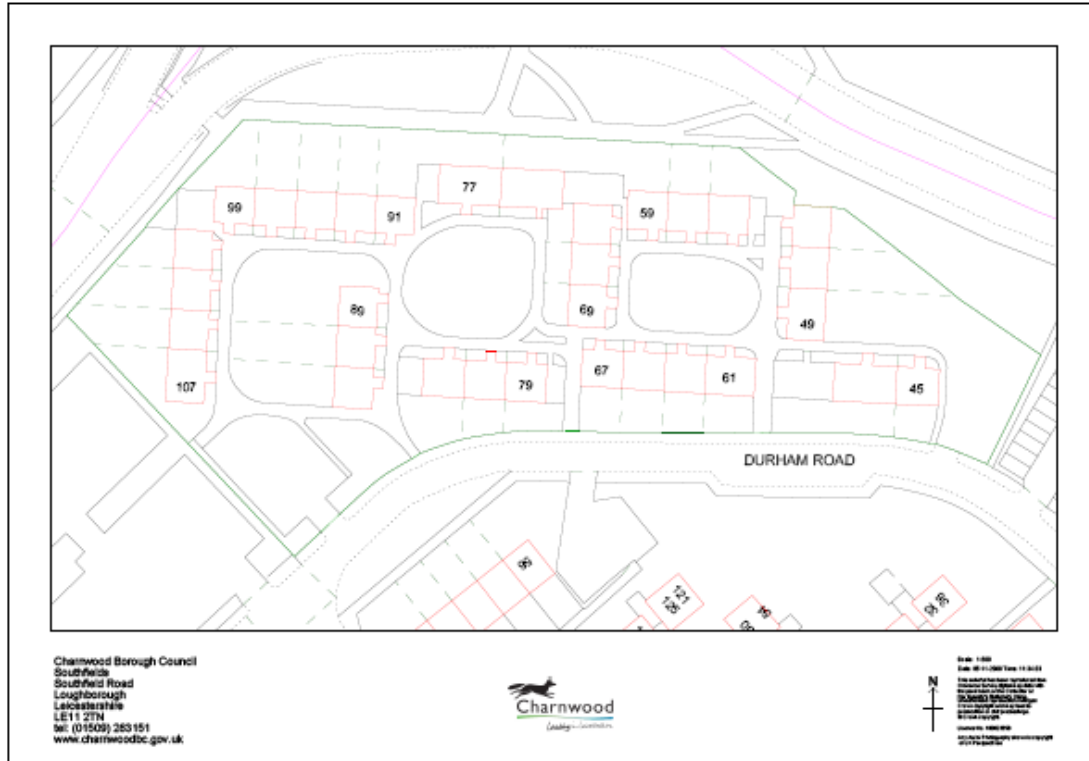
Riversdale Court

Riversdale Court is located on Riversdale Close adjacent to the River Soar in Birstall. The nearest local amenities are in Birstall town centre a short distance to the north west of the scheme.



Durham Rd

Durham Road is located off Derby Road on the north side of Loughborough. The scheme is situated approximately one mile from Loughborough town centre



Gray's Court

Grays Court is located on North Street in Barrow upon Soar. The accommodation is accessed both via North Street and Bryan Close. Town centre amenities are situated on the High Street in Barrow a short walk from Grays Court.

