

VISION DOCUMENT

LAND AT SHELFANGER ROAD // DISS

MARCH 2018



SCOTT PROPERTY GROUP

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"Creating a publicly accessible green space at the heart of Diss."

1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Vision Document accompanies the representations made as part of the Greater Norwich Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation and the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan Draft Vision and Themes Public Consultation. It aims to provide further details on the sustainability and overall suitability of the Site to provide a modest but multi-faceted development to address current and future needs in Diss, and the potential benefits that the development of the Site could deliver.

It is expected that this document can form a basis for further discussions with the Greater Norwich Local Plan Team, South Norfolk District Council, Diss Town Council, the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and other local stakeholders as appropriate.

THE SITE

The Site is under the sole control of the M Scott Property Group, working in close partnership with a local landowner.

Extending to 3.2 hectares (7.9 acres), the Site is located between Mount Street and Shelfanger Road, and is known locally as the 'Parish Fields' site. It comprises a single field currently used for grazing cattle and is bordered by predominantly residential development the north, east and west, and the medical practice and Mount Street car park to the south. Due to the Site's size and location, it is no longer suitable or viable for future agricultural use, and this proposal presents an opportunity to unlock the land for public use.

GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN REG 18 CONSULTATION

The Site is being promoted through the Greater Norwich Local Plan (site ref. GNLP0341), and has been assessed as part of this process, with the assessment concluding:

"Near the centre of the town, GNLP0341 has several advantages of location but it could be to the detriment of Mount Street Gardens, considered an Important Local Open Space in South Norfolk Planning Policies."

The development proposals presented in this document have given extensive consideration to the need for a sensitive and sympathetic scheme, and one which is of benefit to the Conservation Area and to Diss as a whole.

DISS & DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Diss Town Council is currently in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with seven local parishes as part of an ambitious multi-parish initiative. The Neighbourhood Area was adopted in August 2017, defining the extent of the area over which the Plan will apply.

The Draft Vision and Themes Public Consultation identifies specific local issues for each of the communities covered by the Neighbourhood Plan Area, with the one of the three issues for Diss being:

"Agree acceptable development proposals to 'unlock' the Parish Fields site for public access."

The proposed development is also of particular relevance to a number of the stated action points:

- Create safe walking and cycling routes across Diss and linking with the villages;
- Assess the need for all types of housing and the most appropriate place to build it, to provide the right type of housing for differing needs in the individual communities;
- Enable new businesses to establish;
- Work with NHS and other providers to deliver better equipped and accessible medical facilities;
- Ensure appropriate provision for delivering care in the community in line with local policies;
- Ensure communities have access to local meeting places, public open spaces, play and activity areas and facilities to support any local sports.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposed scheme, which is explained in more detail later in the document, consists of c. 35 no. retirement apartments, 5 no. bungalows, significant areas of public open space (over 50% of the total site area) and additional land dedicated for the future expansion of The Lawns Medical Practice (with whom initial discussions have taken place). The proposed scheme provides a number of key benefits that not only meet the needs of the local area, but also those of the wider District.

A summary of these benefits is provided below:

- PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
- FACILITATING THE EXPANSION OF THE LOCAL MEDICAL CENTRE
- DELIVERING SPECIALIST ACCOMMODATION TO ADDRESS LOCAL NEEDS
- INCREASING CONNECTIVITY VIA PEDESTRIAN & CYCLE LINKS
- ENCOURAGING THE USE OF SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRANSPORT



2. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

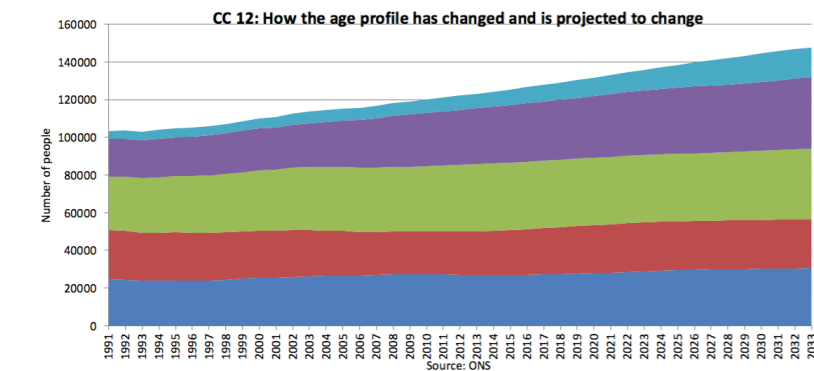
DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

There is forecast to be a significant increase in the number of residents in South Norfolk aged 65 and over between 2017 and 2035, as shown in the table below.

	2017	2035
Number of residents aged 65+	32,400	46,100
% of District population aged 65+	24.2%	29.1%

Source: POPPI Database, Institute of Public Care / Oxford Brookes University, 2017

ONS data predicts that the growth of the population aged over 60 will account for 67% of the new household growth in the District over the majority of the Greater Norwich Local Plan period (to 2033).

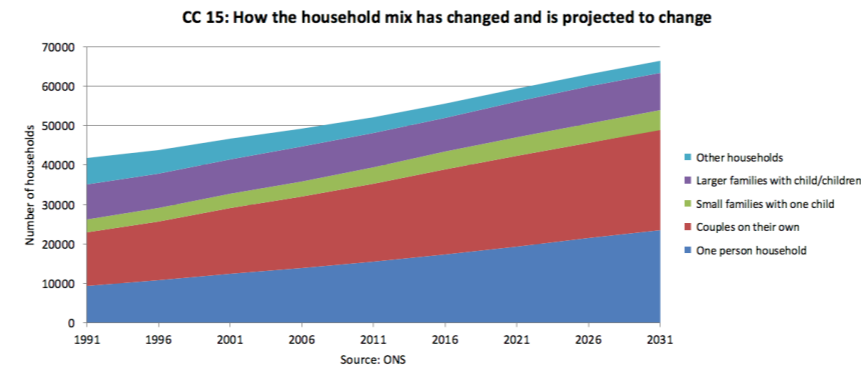


Source: ONS, "What Homes Where" database, March 2013

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the wider Central Norfolk Housing Market Area (June 2017) predicts that the population of older people in some form of sheltered or specialist accommodation falling under planning class C2 will increase by 3,909 over the period 2015-36. The figure for South Norfolk stands at 634, suggesting a strong need for additional specialist accommodation for older people over the Greater Norwich Local Plan period. Due to the predominantly flatted nature of such developments, and the requirement for this accommodation to be within close proximity to local services and amenities, it is presumed that the majority of this specialist housing will need to be delivered within the Norwich fringe and principal towns of Diss, Harleston and Wymondham.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

The demographic changes will lead to a shift in household compositions. The chart below shows the historic household mix in South Norfolk, and how this is forecast to change over the next 15 years. The result is a significant increase in the numbers of single person households and couples living on their own.



Source: ONS, "What Homes Where" database, March 2013

This shift in household composition creates a need for more smaller properties, with 64% of the total demand for new homes coming being attributed to one, two and three bedroom properties.

HEALTHCARE IMPLICATIONS

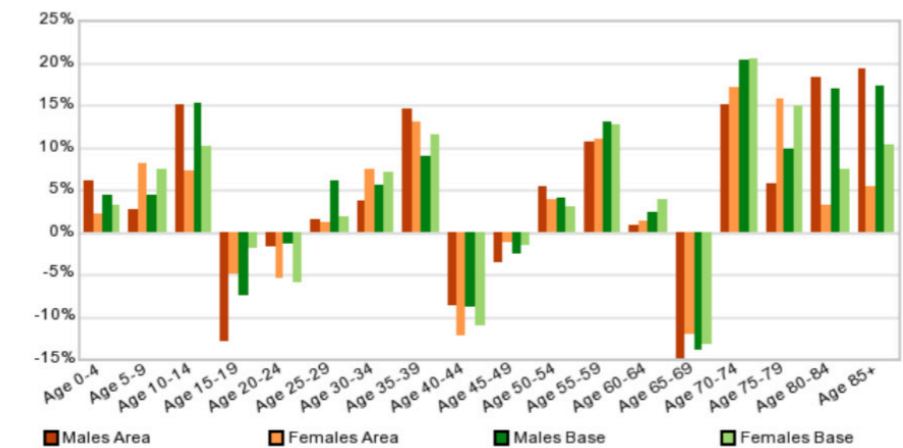
The ageing population has wide-ranging health implications which have the potential to place additional pressures on local NHS and adult social care services. The following table shows the current and projected future figures for a range of common health concerns for people aged 65+ in South Norfolk.

	2017	2035	% change
Number of people suffering from dementia	2,222	4,005	+80%
Number of people admitted to hospital following falls	665	1,065	+60%
Number of people unable to manage at least one daily activity	5,853	9,494	+62%
Number of people suffering from depression	2,767	3,936	+42%

Source: POPPI Database, Institute of Public Care / Oxford Brookes University, 2017

LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Experian data can be used to analyse the situation at a more local level. The graph below shows the forecast changes across different age ranges to 2020 for the area within a 10 minute drive time of Diss, compared against baseline data for South Norfolk as a whole.



Source: Experian, 2017

The graph highlights the significant increases within both the local area and the District as a whole in the age brackets of 70 and over.

There is a concern that the housing stock in the area may be lacking in terms of overall numbers and also suitability for older people. Flats of all types account for less than 6% of the housing stock within the local area, and a Rightmove search (March 2018) found just three retirement properties on the market, only one of which was still available.

Whilst bungalows account for c. 19% of all dwellings in the area, a similar Rightmove search revealed just 18 bungalows available for sale in Diss.





3. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Diss is defined in the Joint Core Strategy as a 'Main Town', with an estimated population of 8,000 (Norfolk Insight, 2015). It is a prosperous and highly sustainable settlement with a good range of amenities, operating as a central hub to a number of satellite settlements. This contextual analysis was undertaken early in the project to influence the design and assess the most appropriate forms of development.

ACCESSIBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Diss benefits from a highly accessible location with good access to the A140 and A143, offering easy access to Norwich, Stowmarket, Ipswich, Thetford and Bury St Edmunds.

A public footpath runs to the south of the Site between the car park and medical centre. The proposed development provides an opportunity to improve connectivity between Shelfanger Road and Mount Street through new pedestrian and cycle links.

There are bus stops within close proximity of the Site along Mount Street, Shelfanger Road and Sunnyside, providing regular links to Long Stratton, Norwich and Pulham Market, as well as numerous locations in Diss, Roydon, Bressingham and the surrounding villages.

Diss railway station is approximately 2.6 km south-east of the Site, and is situated on the Greater Anglia line. There are frequent services to Norwich (20 mins journey time) and services to London Liverpool Street (1h 30mins).

HEALTH

The Lawns Medical Practice is located immediately adjacent to the Site. As part of the proposal, land would be gifted to facilitate the future expansion of the surgery, which is currently constrained with limited scope for growth.

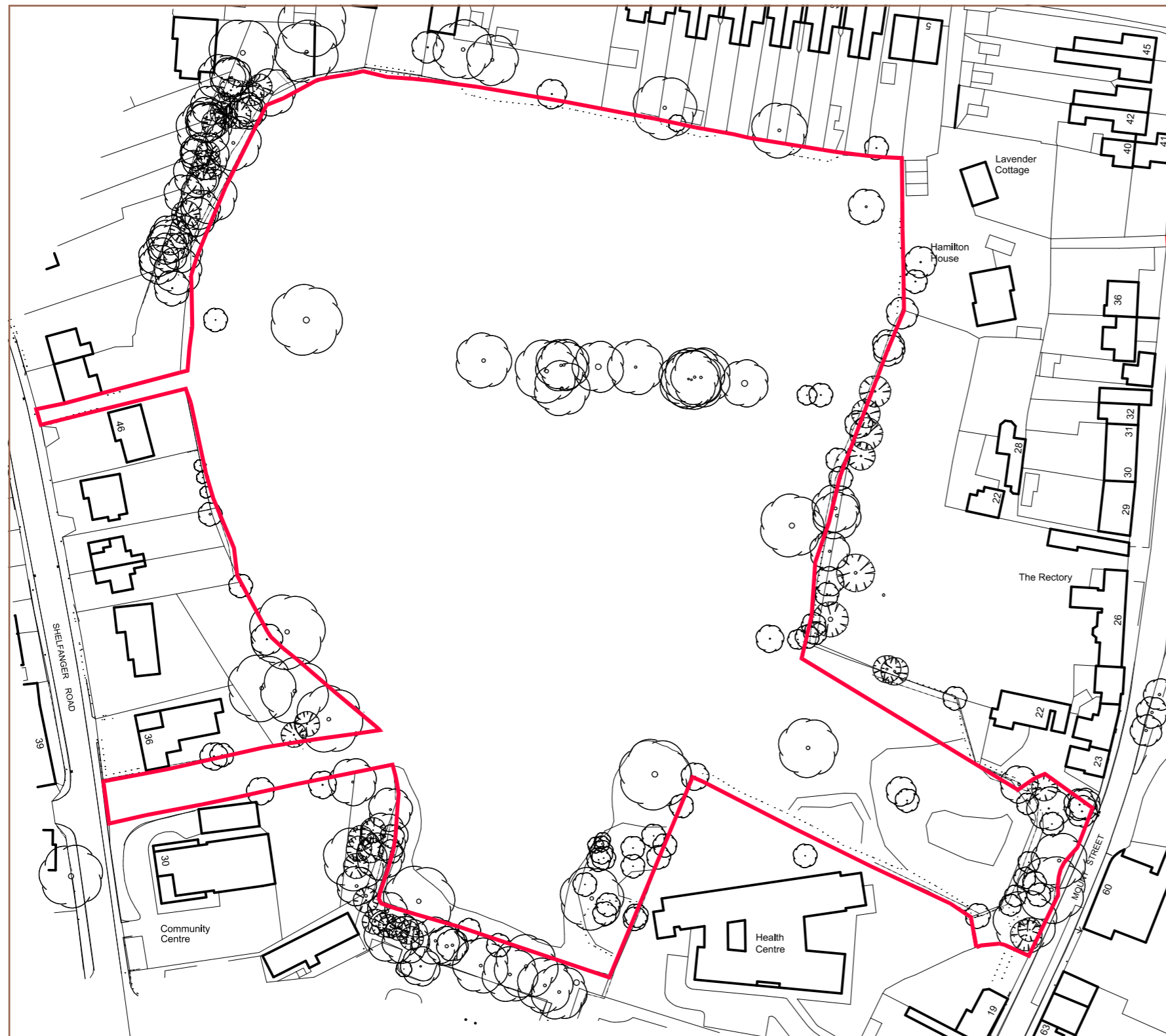
SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Diss offers an excellent range of services and amenities for existing and potential new residents. Mere Street, Market Hill and Market Place offer numerous shops, restaurants, pubs and cafés and larger supermarkets are also within easy reach of the Site. New residents would also be able to easily access the post office, library and numerous sports and social clubs.

RECREATION, LEISURE AND WELL-BEING

Diss offers excellent sport and recreation facilities, including clubs for football, rugby, bowls club and cricket club, as well as a leisure centre and allotments. There is also a good provision of parks and open spaces, although there is not currently any accessible open space within close proximity of the Site.





4. SITE ANALYSIS

The Site Analysis Plan identifies the key opportunities and constraints which have informed the design of the scheme from the outset.

LANDSCAPE

The Site is broadly flat, with a slight fall towards the south and south-east. An initial landscape and visual impact assessment recommends that the built form should be massed towards the south and west of the Site, so as not to impact on the nearby heritage assets. It concludes that the Site has the capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

HERITAGE

The Site is within the Diss Conservation Area wherein proposals should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the architecturally and historically important area. There are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings and other heritage assets within close proximity of the Site, located principally to the east along Mount Street.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

The current agricultural use means that the Site has limited ecological value at present, and development would not impact upon any Wildlife Sites, Nature Reserves, or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. A Habitat Study concludes that any potential adverse impacts can be mitigated through appropriate measures, and that an opportunity exists to make a positive contribution to biodiversity.

An Arboricultural Survey has also been commissioned and has identified a number of tall mature trees which should be retained as part of any development. Additional planting is proposed to improve the existing hedgerows, creating an attractive parkland setting and providing new habitats.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk from flooding. On-site attenuation and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will be incorporated into the design of the development, to be guided by the findings of a detailed Flood Risk Assessment.

ACCESS AND SERVICES

A Transport Assessment has been undertaken to assess the suitability of the Site for the proposed development. The proposed vehicular access will be from Shelfanger Road in the form of a new priority junction which achieves the required visibility splays, and consists of a 5.5m carriageway with 1.5m footways on either side. Two further accesses for pedestrians and bicycles are proposed; to the north of 46 Shelfanger Road, and to the south of 23 Mount Street.



5. THE VISION



1. A GREEN HEART FOR DISS

At present, the Site is not accessible to the public and is not actively managed. The Diss Conservation Area Character Appraisal expresses a desire for public access to be granted over the Site, and this could be delivered as part of the proposed development.

Over 50% of the Site is proposed as open space, allowing it to be used and enjoyed by all members of the community. This will also ensure that the area is preserved and maintained for future generations. We are keen to work with the Town Council and local community to determine the detail of how this open space could be designed and maintained.

2. LAND GIFTED TO THE MEDICAL CENTRE

The future expansion of the medical centre is currently limited by its constrained site. The proposal will provide a unique opportunity for the medical centre to expand in the future by safeguarding a significant area of land adjacent to the current site.

3. ASSISTED LIVING APARTMENTS

Circa 35 assisted living apartments are proposed to help address the demand for specialist accommodation for older people, in an area in which over 27% of the population will be made up of people aged 65+ by 2020.

4. BUNGALOWS

5 no. single-storey dwellings are proposed to the west of the Site. These have been positioned to minimise the impact on the existing neighbouring properties and to address the recommendations of the landscape and visual impact assessment.

5. NEW PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE LINKS

At present there is a lack of connectivity between Shelfanger Road and Mount Street, with pedestrians and cyclists using either Sunnyside to the north or St Nicholas Street to the south. The proposal will introduce a safer, more convenient and attractive route through the Site for pedestrians and cyclists.

6. EXISTING TREES AND HEDGEROWS RETAINED

The proposed development ensures the retention of the mature trees in the centre of the Site, and will offer the local community the opportunity to appreciate them up close. The existing hedgerows which border the majority of the Site will be retained and enhanced through additional planting, improving the biodiversity and ecological value of the Site.



6. MASTERPLAN



7. THE BENEFITS

The development could lead to a range of Economic, Social and Environmental benefits.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS



DIRECT EMPLOYMENT

The retirement apartments will create a variety of new full and part-time jobs, as well as employment during the construction phase.



ADULT SOCIAL CARE BUDGETS

Specialist housing developments such as this are proven to reduce the strain on and cost of local adult social care services.



MEDICAL CENTRE EXPANSION

An area of land is proposed to be safeguarded to facilitate the future expansion of The Lawns Medical Practice.



COUNCIL REVENUES

A Section 106 package will be agreed with SNDC and Diss Town Council can also benefit if the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted.



SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

The proximity of the Site to the Town Centre will facilitate significant spending by new residents to the benefit of local businesses.

SOCIAL BENEFITS



IMPROVED HEALTH OUTCOMES

Specialist accommodation that is adaptable to changing needs is proven to result in improved health outcomes for residents.



CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF AREA

There is an opportunity to enhance the setting and appearance of the Conservation Area through the proposed public open space.



ADDRESSING LOCAL NEED

The demographic analysis has shown that there is a significant current and future need for specialist accommodation for older people.



RELEASING UNDER-OCCUPIED HOUSING

The provision of specialist accommodation will free up often under-occupied family housing in an area of high housing need.



ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Over 50% of the Site is to be dedicated as accessible public open space for the enjoyment of new and existing residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



GREEN HEART FOR DISS

The development will create a new green heart for Diss, enhancing the ecological value of the Site and facilitating environmental gains.



PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Site's proximity to key local services and amenities will encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport.



SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE

A sustainable urban drainage system will provide a low carbon and environmentally friendly surface water drainage solution.



ENCOURAGE BIODIVERSITY

There is an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity of the Site through the addition of new green infrastructure and wildlife corridors.



NEW PLANTING AND LANDSCAPING

Significant new planting is proposed as part of the development, providing new habitats and an attractive landscape.



8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development is the result of an assessment of the Site, its landscape characteristics, and the surrounding natural and built environment. This has been coupled with the requirements and standards set out by the relevant planning policies, and the proposals seek to address the concerns raised in the Greater Norwich Local Plan site assessment, as well as the aspirations of the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan.

Development of the Site would have a minimal impact in landscape terms, and there is the potential for a well-designed scheme to make a positive contribution to the character of the local area, unlocking a what is currently an inaccessible site for the enjoyment of the local community.

The Site benefits from a highly sustainable location, and the proposed development would make a significant contribution towards an identified and well-documented housing need in both the immediate area and the wider District, whilst also facilitating the expansion of the local medical facility.

This Vision Document has demonstrated that there are no identified constraints which cannot be overcome or mitigated to enable the delivery of the proposals in the short to medium term, and as such the Site should be considered for an allocation as part of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan and Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan.

NEXT STEPS...

We are committed to working with Diss Town Council to agree acceptable development proposals to unlock the Parish Fields site for public access.

We are keen to develop a good working relationship with South Norfolk District Council, the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Diss Town Council and other local stakeholders, and from this we hope to further develop the scheme and deliver a vision that meets the aspirations of the local community.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please feel free to contact Scott Properties via the details below.

Paul Webster
Director - Scott Properties
01206 913540
pwebster@mscott.co.uk

“An excellent opportunity to unlock a highly sustainable site to meet an identified housing need and for the enjoyment of the local community.”





M Scott Property Group Ltd
Oyster House | Suite 5
Severalls Lane | Colchester | Essex CO4 9PD
T: 01206 845845 | mail@mscott.co.uk | www.mscott.co.uk