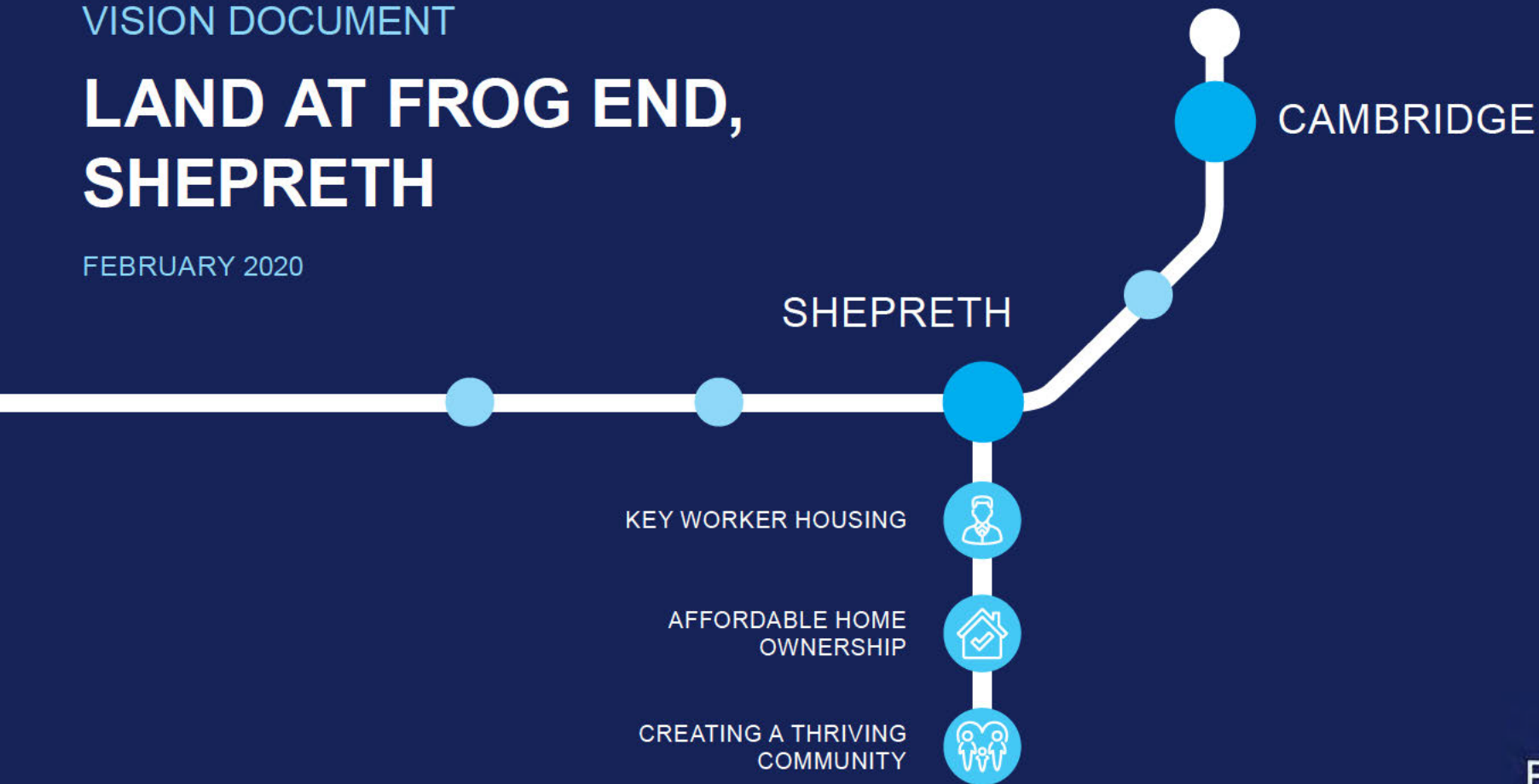


VISION DOCUMENT

# LAND AT FROG END, SHEPRETH

FEBRUARY 2020



Quality Assurance

**Site name:** Land at Frog End, Shepreth

**Client name:** M Scott Properties Ltd

**Type of report:** Vision Document

**Prepared by:** - Jonathan Stewart

**Signed:**

**Date:** - 13.02.2020

**Reviewed by:** - Helen Davies

**Signed:**

**Date:** - 13.02.2020

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

M Scott Properties Ltd has a proven track record of delivering development that meets the particular needs of communities, securing environmental improvements and community infrastructure that delivers tangible benefits. They are at an early stage in considering potential development options for Land at Frog End, Shepreth and are keen to engage with the Council, stakeholders and the local community to refine and discuss the proposals further as part of the ongoing consultation.

**Shepreth lies within a key public transport corridor**, with a railway station providing direct links to Cambridge (a journey time of just 12 minutes), excellent cycle connections by dedicated cycle paths to Melbourn and Cambridge and the A10 running to the east of the village where numerous transport improvements are planned to deliver high quality public transport infrastructure. **Shepreth also lies outside of the Cambridge Green Belt.**

Shepreth therefore represents a sustainable location to accommodate some of the growth needed over the new plan period to 2040.

These representations are accompanied by a suite of technical appraisals that have assessed the site in terms of its capacity to accommodate the proposed development and its relationship with the surrounding area; all of which demonstrate that there are **no insurmountable constraints to development of the Site**. As such, the Site is capable of being sensitively designed so as to develop as a distinct place within its own character, responding appropriately to its landscape and heritage setting. There is also scope to provide improvements to existing community infrastructure provision for Shepreth residents.

The **significant public benefits** that development of the Site could deliver are:

- **An enhanced level of affordable housing (45%)**, addressing specific local needs and providing new homes across a variety of types and tenures, potentially to include for key worker accommodation. There is also scope to explore a new innovative affordable housing concept where properties are built to a certain specification, with the capability for simple expansion to a specified size to prevent people having to move home as their family expands;

- Provision of **approximately 200 new homes to meet local needs**, including:
  - **single-storey bungalows (LifeLong Homes™) and almshouse-style properties to address the needs of people aged over 60 as well as those with or supporting someone with a disability**. The properties can be designed to respond to people's changing lifestyles and needs as they age, encouraging people to 'rightsize' earlier in later life;
  - provision of **self or custom build housing**;
  - opportunities for a **Community Land Trust**;
- Provision of approximately **36,000 sq ft of modern, high quality, flexible commercial floorspace** at the entrance to the Site to accommodate enterprises at a range of scales and **provide new job opportunities for existing and new residents** and those living nearby;
- Provision of approximately **6,000 sq ft of land for community use**, providing a serviced plot with the full flexibility for the local community to decide which type of facility is required
- Transformation of over 14ha of privately owned agricultural land into **publicly accessible areas of open space and woodland, together with new and enhanced opportunities for informal and formal recreation to promote health and wellbeing**;

- **Provision in excess of 10% Net Environmental Gain** as a result of the extensive network of retained and proposed green spaces providing opportunities for an increase in natural habitat and ecological features, including the potential to double the L-Moor Shepreth SSSI that lies to the south-west of the site through consultation with the Wildlife Trust;
- Provision of new homes and commercial accommodation set within an extensive network of open spaces and within walking and cycling distances of key facilities and public transport infrastructure to **promote active, healthy living** and facilitate sustainable commuting patterns to Shepreth railway station;
- **A development capable of aiming for ‘zero carbon’**, through a combination of efficiency, solar generation, heat pumps and electric vehicles;
- **Enhancing and maintaining the vitality of Shepreth and the local rural economy** by supporting local services and facilities, especially at a time when villages are seeing a reduction in services levels; and
- **A sustainable development delivered by a responsible developer** who takes a long term view and prioritises delivering community and environmental benefits that meet the needs of local communities. For example, M Scott Properties Ltd is a member of the Natural Cambridgeshire Developers’ Forum seeking to understand best practice and to understand where opportunities exist to increase biodiversity on sites. Their sites are assessed against the Developing with Nature Toolkit, with a view to exceeding the proposed ‘Charter Mark’ threshold. M Scott Properties Ltd are also committed to the ‘doubling with nature’ initiative promoted by Natural Cambridgeshire.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been prepared on behalf of M Scott Properties Ltd and accompanies a response to consultation on the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation. The purpose of this document is to highlight the spatial growth opportunity that lies along the Cambridge to London Kings Cross rail line, referred to as the South-Western Corridor. This Vision Document provides a high-level site assessment and masterplanning strategy for potential residential-led development in this area

## WHY THE SOUTH-WESTERN CORRIDOR?

### TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**“A few rural parts of the district are well served by rail, for example the A10 corridor both north and south of Cambridge, while others rely on the market towns and Cambridge for access to the railway network.”**  
10.5, South Cambridgeshire Adopted Local Plan.

Three of the seven train stations lie along the South-Western Corridor between Cambridge and Royston – a significant proportion of the overall number within the District. In addition to this the A10 runs adjacent to these settlements, and the route is also very well served in terms of cycle links into Cambridge. Delivering new housing along this route could meet a significant level of housing need whilst providing new residents with highly sustainable transport options into Cambridge, and the numerous current and proposed employment opportunities that lie within.

Whilst there have been elements of growth along this route, the growth has been largely unplanned and speculative. This has led to a disjointed approach to addressing the key issues facing the Greater Cambridge area, and has not maximised the potential of this infrastructure gateway into the City of Cambridge. A well-planned and managed growth strategy could deliver significant benefits over other spatial options, as highlighted below.

## AFFORDABILITY

**“Whilst strong economic growth brings with it great opportunities for international recognition, investment into the area and local employment, it also creates challenges in terms of high housing costs and the ability to find suitable affordable accommodation within close commuting distance to places of work.”**  
Homes for our Future: Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023.

Affordability in the South-Western Corridor is an issue, with house prices on average 22.7% more expensive than the District (Experian, 2018). Boosting housing supply in this area of high housing need will help to address this imbalance through the provision of additional choice, whilst also delivering much-needed affordable housing.

## GREEN BELT

The area immediately around Shepreth has the key benefit of not being designated as Green Belt land. The Cambridge Green Belt begins less than 2km to the east of Shepreth at Foxton, and encompasses a number of otherwise sustainable and potentially suitable locations for growth which offer similar transport infrastructure benefits and suffer from similar affordability issues.



Figure 1; Wider connectivity

## 2 HOW IS SHEPRETH THE SOLUTION

*“78% of working households who live in Greater Cambridge also work in the area and make up 62% of the overall workforce for Greater Cambridge.” Homes for our Future: Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023.*

A core focus moving forward within the Greater Cambridge area is to support local workers by providing affordable housing in a location that is served by sustainable transport options.

Shepreth has had limited growth in comparison to the other settlements in the South-Western Corridor and as such it has not benefited from the additional planned investment. Given that Shepreth benefits from one of just seven train stations in the South Cambridgeshire District, its usage rates are underwhelming when compared to Meldreth which is one stop further away from Cambridge City. This can be attributed to the station’s limited parking and localised catchment; both of which can be addressed through planned development and community involvement.

In order to maximise this valued asset and support the South Cambridgeshire District, we strongly encourage and support the focus of key worker and affordable housing provision within Shepreth at a quantum that stimulates the local economy and allows it to thrive beyond the local plan period.

### 12 MINUTES INTO CAMBRIDGE BY TRAIN

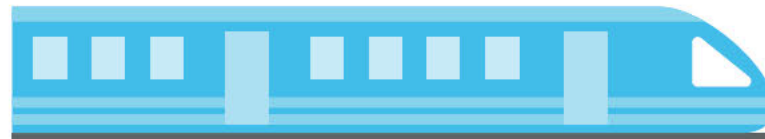
Shepreth Station offers a direct service into Cambridge with the journey taking just 12 minutes. [There are currently two trains per hour, and it proposed that this level of service could be increased to provide a larger number of commuters with a viable and sustainable alternative to the use of private motor vehicles.]. The proposed site is less than 750m from Shepreth Station. Increased housing in the vicinity of the station would increase the number of commuters who are provided with a viable and sustainable alternative to the use of private motor vehicles.

*“Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated.” Paragraph 102, NPPF*



Between 2017 and 2018 Shepreth Train Station was used 63% less than Meldreth

Shepreth Train Station - The station was used 114,294 times



Meldreth Train Station - The station was used 307,868 times

Figure 2; South Cambridgeshire Station Usage



## 45% AFFORDABLE HOUSING

*“Cambridge is a wonderful place to live. But not everyone here currently can have access to affordable, sustainable and good-quality housing.” Homes for our Future: Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023.*

The proposed development would deliver an enhanced level of affordable housing in an area of high housing need. This would be delivered as part of a housing mix that responds to both local and District-wide needs, providing new homes across a variety of types and tenures, potentially including self and custom build and specialist accommodation (subject to demand).

This rare opportunity to provide 45% affordable housing on the site has only been made available through the balanced views of the Landowner and Promoter associated with the project.

In addition to the above, the Promoter of the site has been working on an innovative approach to affordable housing and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the Local Authority at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

## KEY WORKER ACCOMMODATION

*“For South Cambridgeshire, ensuring its villages remain vibrant and sustainable, and working with local businesses to ensure homes are affordable and available to local workers are high priorities for the District.” Homes for our Future: Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023.*

Shepreth station will only be one stop (Foxton) from the proposed new South Cambridge station which is due to open in 2025 and will serve the Addenbrookes and Biomedical campus site. The employment numbers are projected to be c.30,000. Given the Green Belt constraints and limited opportunities to provide affordable key worker accommodation, proposals that seek to address this should be encouraged and engaged with at an early stage to ensure that deliverability is secured.

## CREATING A THRIVING COMMUNITY

*“Strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way. In doing so, they should consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure.” – Paragraph 72, NPPF*

*“Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.” Paragraph 103, NPPF*

As well as offering excellent opportunities for commuters, the masterplan includes a proposed business centre which will stimulate the local rural economy and provide the opportunity for people to live close to their place of work. Given the high occupancy rates of the commercial units that already lie within Shepreth, and the market research that has been undertaken, we are confident that Shepreth will offer an attractive location for SMEs that are unable to afford the rates within Cambridge City.

The Scott Properties Land presents an excellent opportunity for new development that will knit in to the fabric of the existing settlement.

#### EARLY DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Given the unconstrained nature of the site, it is proposed that a significant proportion of the affordable housing could be delivered early in the development programme, in order to meet the immediate need.

#### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Consultation has been undertaken with the Parish Council to establish the pressures that currently face the village of Shepreth and what additional investment could address. Unsurprisingly given the lack of investment that Shepreth has seen, there are numerous requirements for additional community facilities. These include areas of play for older children and teenagers such as the provision of a NEAP, SIP and youth facilities providing a range of play equipment and space beyond that provided by typical play equipment. Also, improving the changing facilities in the village hall or a new pavilion on the Recreation Ground are options to consider as well as onsite provision of flexible space for potential retail provision.

The quantum of development will therefore be critical to ensuring delivery and sustainability of these beyond the plan period, an example of which being a new primary school and/or medical facility.

Discussions have taken place with Cambridgeshire County Council Education (CCCE), who have informed us that there is currently capacity in the neighbouring schools; however, the current education facilities do not have the ability to expand further and therefore there could be the demand for a new 2FE school within the Shepreth area in the near future.

We would encourage further discussions with CCCE at an early stage to ensure that this deliverable project can be established within their development programme.



Figure 3; Shepreth Growth



### LEGEND

- Red line boundary
- Existing roads
- Existing vegetation
- Boundary with rear garden
- Grade II\* Listed All Saints Church
- Grade II Listed building
- Existing Views
- Agricultural / arable field within boundary
- Potential pedestrian / cycle access
- Potential vehicular access
- Public Right of Way
- Shepreth L-Moor SSSI
- Railway line
- Water course / drainage channel
- Scheduled Monument
- Collins Close Playground
- Conservation Area
- Traditional Orchard - Priority Habitat

Figure 4; Opportunities and Constraints



The emerging concept proposal responds to the contextual analysis and opportunities and constraints mapping and proposes a sensitively designed, residential-led scheme based on a central area of public open space. This central space serves as a key focal point and provides a green heart to the site with views towards the Conservation Area and its various Listed Buildings.

A landscape buffer is proposed between the development edge and Shepreth SSSI, ensuring the setting of this designated landscape is protected whilst introducing species-sensitive boundary planting to enhance biodiversity. Boundary planting is proposed alongside existing dwellings and the Conservation Area creating a softer edge to the development and a strong sense of place.

The concept indicates that the site could accommodate approximately 200 dwellings, including a proportion of age-restricted bungalows helping to integrate the development into its surroundings and address the need for older persons accommodation. The mixed use employment area to the south could provide circa 36,000 sq. ft. of floor space as well as a flexible space for potential community uses at the centre of the site.

**LEGEND**

 Views towards Conservation Area and Church



Figure 5; Illustrative Master Plan



Vehicular access is proposed from Frog End which also provides a pedestrian and cycle route towards the A10.

The proposed primary road from Frog End, provides access to the commercial facility before aligning north-west towards the residential aspect of the masterplan. Secondary roads spur from the primary road, providing access to the various development parcels.

A new pedestrian and cycle route is proposed between Meldreth Road and the development site, creating a new connection for occupants and users of the site providing a more direct route by foot or cycle towards the village centre and the train station.

Existing links will be enhanced with new routes proposed to encourage connectivity across the site linking the village with the wider open countryside to the west.

### LEGEND

-  Existing Road
-  Proposed Primary Access Road
-  Secondary Shared Surface Road
-  Pedestrian and Cycle Routes



Figure 6; Access and Circulation



The master plan proposes a range of character areas within the site, they consist of the following:

1) Mixed use employment area to support SMEs - to be located adjacent to Frog End.

2) Lower density and low rise development proposed adjacent to existing dwellings in the north-eastern parcel of the site. Could also include potential community uses in the parcel located at the centre of the site.

3) Village edge - proposed to form the edge of the settlement and respond to the adjacent SSSI through a range of densities and frontages.

4) Boundaries - boundary treatment proposed to include enhanced native hedgerow and tree species to define the settlement edge and create a strong sense of space.

5) Landscape buffer - a proposed wedge of open space between the settlement edge and Shepreth SSSI to create a soft edge to the development and sensitive approach to the landscape designation.

6) Village green - central public open space as a focal point to the development including seasonal planting and areas for play and recreation.



Figure 7, Character Areas

## 7 PRECEDENT IMAGERY

The following images demonstrate the setting of the development drawn from best practice and the local context.

The materiality is proposed to reflect the local vernacular with the use of bricks and timber.



Figure 8; Soft Landscape defining property boundaries



Figure 9; Example of local built form



Figure 12; Natural Play

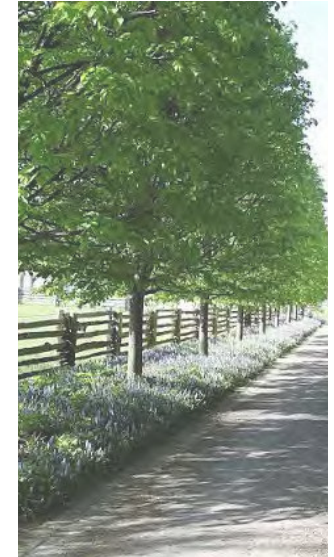


Figure 13; Tree lined roads



Figure 10; Example of contemporary bungalow



Figure 11; Example of village green

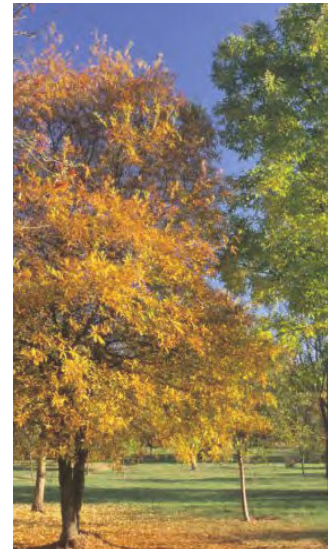


Figure 14; Seasonal Interest

Shepreth has been the subject of a spatial assessment in order to identify whether it is an appropriate area to accommodate future growth to contribute towards addressing the acute issues facing the Greater Cambridge area.

This document has concluded that development in Shepreth provides an excellent opportunity to support the existing community and also the current and future residents within the area.

The contextual analysis and opportunities and constraints mapping has confirmed that the site is suitable, available and achievable for development and that there are no constraints to delivery. This has informed an emerging concept proposal for the site.

Land at Frog End, Shepreth is well related to the existing village and Shepreth Railway Station is within 750 metres from the proposed pedestrian access. Shepreth station provides direct links to Cambridge and to London Kings Cross. The site is also well related to regular bus services operating along the A10 and to excellent local cycle connections to Melbourn and Cambridge.

Shepreth is also closely associated with the neighbouring villages of Foxton, Barrington, Meldreth and Melbourn. These settlements are within walking and cycling distance from Shepreth and linked by the public footpath network, thus providing a further range of services and facilities as well as extensive employment opportunities at Melbourn Science Park.

National Planning Policy Guidance advises that it is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and smaller settlements.

The spatial opportunity for Shepreth provides an opportunity to bring forward significant public benefits to the local community and Greater Cambridge area as a whole to meet an identified, housing and employment need, whilst maximising the use of existing infrastructure.

For more information please contact Alison Wright, Bidwells.





# APPENDIX B

# LIST OF APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: Landowner Support

**Alison Wright**

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**Subject:** Shepreth

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 19 March 2019 13:21  
To: Martin Scott <  
Subject: Letter

Ref :  
M Scott Properties planning submission

I can confirm that the site is within my ownership and under a Promotion Agreement with M Scott Properties.

M Scott Properties are proposing for residential and commercial development together with the provision of new community facilities at Frog End , Shepreth .

I have been consulted as part of this process and confirm my support for the proposal.

[REDACTED]



BIDWELLS

ON BEHALF OF M SCOTT PROPERTIES LTD



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