



Hallam Land
Management

LAND NORTH OF **CLAPHAM**

Prepared on behalf of
Hallam Land Management
By **David Lock Associates**

14 August 2020



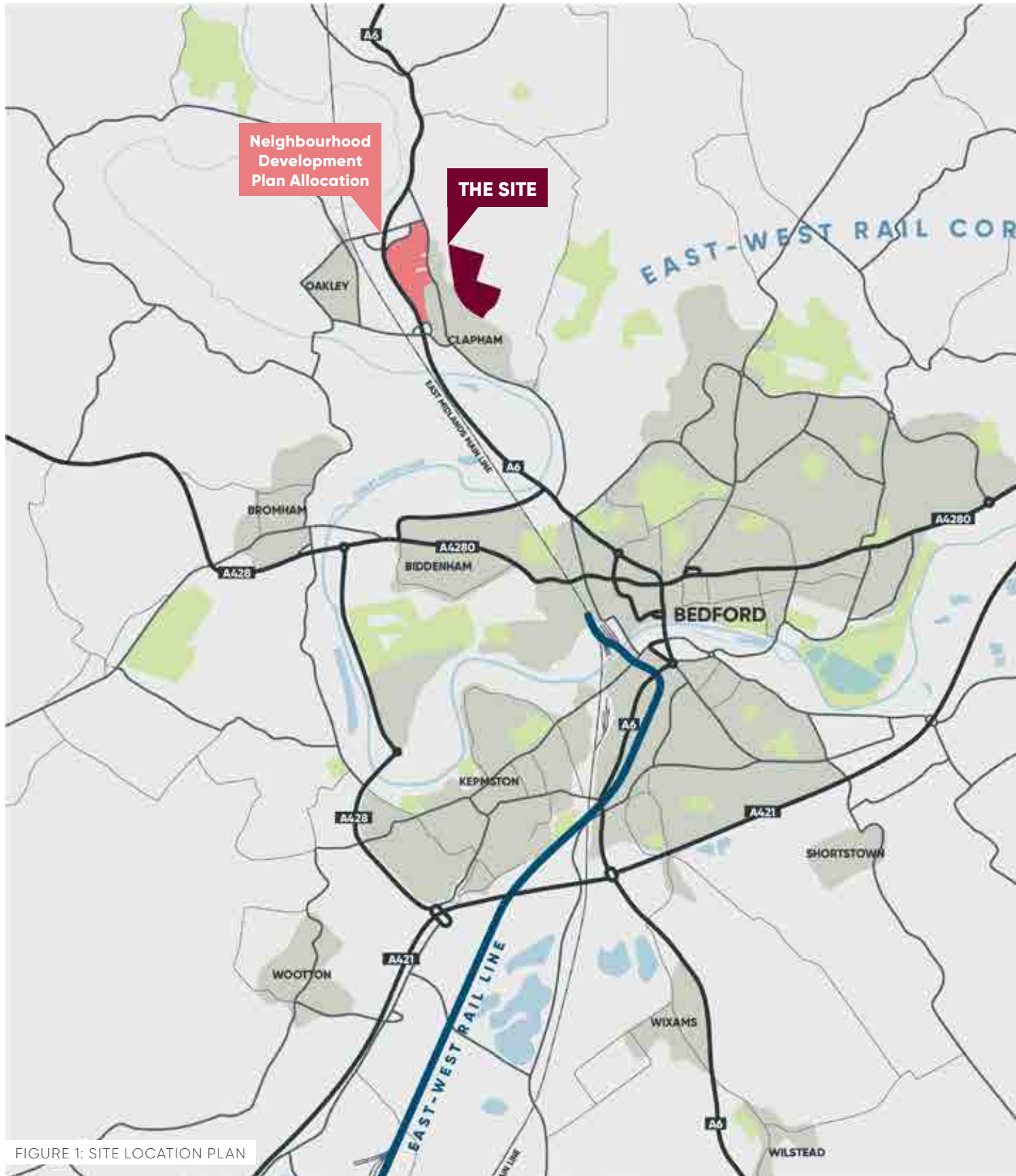


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION



The purpose of this document is to provide a brief description of the site at Land North of Clapham, setting out its context, a summary of key site assessment findings and provide an initial concept to illustrate the development potential and how development can be integrated with the built environment of the wider surrounding landscape.

Figure 1 shows the location and extent of the site in relation to Clapham Village.



SITE CONTEXT



The site lies to the northern edge of Clapham village, approximately 4km to the north of Bedford town centre. The settlement is also located adjacent to the A6 connecting south to Bedford and north towards Rushden and Kettering. The corridor of East West Rail is proposed to run between Clapham and the northern edge of Bedford with the final route alignment to be fixed but with a new modified Bedford station.



The site itself lies to the immediate north edge of the village as defined by the edge of existing residential development served by Knights Avenue, Duke Drive and Paddock Close. The north and east edges of the site are defined by agricultural fields. The west edge is defined by Twinwood Road. The site comprises a series of fields and agricultural buildings. Development nearby is proposed to the north west of Clapham (500 dwellings) in the emerging Clapham Neighbourhood Plan.

The Borough Council's Local Plan review seeks to identify an appropriate development strategy for growth, the level of which is to be informed by both housing needs for the Borough, which is likely to be uplifted by the anticipated spatial strategy for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. We anticipate that a key element of the Borough Council's emerging strategy in this context will continue to focus growth around the Bedford and Kempston urban area, and include surrounding settlements that are well connected to Bedford and have the potential and capacity for accommodating development. Clapham, therefore, provides a valuable opportunity for accommodating growth and contributing towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough, particularly in the shorter to medium term timescales. Allocating additional growth in turn will set the context for an onward review of the Clapham Neighbourhood Plan which is likely to be adopted during the review of the Local Plan.



CLAPHAM AS A POTENTIAL LOCAL FOR FUTURE GROWTH





ATION DWITH

Being approximately 3.5km from Bedford Town Centre and the railway station, Clapham has the potential to benefit from improvements in infrastructure to encourage active travel with attractive fit-for-purpose walking and cycling links and also to public transport, adding to the connectivity benefits being delivered through "Transporting Bedford 2020" at the A6 Northern Gateway.

New opportunities at Clapham will also underpin the community and commercial facilities in the village and will help to secure qualitative improvements in the environment (e.g. of the High Street) and recreation and community facilities.





A number of preliminary site assessments have been undertaken to identify site constraints and opportunities to inform an appropriate potential development response. This has been supported by previous masterplanning work that has been undertaken alongside engagement with Bedford Borough Council, the local community, and Clapham Parish Council. Key features and issues arising from this previous work are summarised below and shown in Figure 2.

SITE ASSESSMENT

Clapham village is linear in form, and has expanded from its traditional core, first along the High Street with individual plots and terraced housing before broadening out to the north and east with a mix of later municipal and private housing development. Expansion to the south west of the high street has been and remains constrained by the River Great Ouse, Paula Radcliffe Way, the railway, and high voltage overhead power lines. To the north of Oakley Road more recent residential development has been completed to the west of Milton Road within the last decade or so and further development is proposed in an emerging allocation on Milton Road to the north of the village. The proposed allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan will extend the linear form of Clapham further north from the village core and towards visually prominent higher ground.

There are number of historic buildings in Clapham, with some that have Listed status. These include Clapham Park Farmhouse at Green Lane, the Horse and Groom Public House and Woodlands Lodge on the High Street. The development form in this part of Clapham is to be consolidated by the allocation, for 500 dwellings, of land to the west of the former A6 – through the Clapham Neighbourhood Plan.

FORM & HISTORIC CONTEXT



TRANSPORT



Movement patterns in Clapham are quite linear and focussed towards the High Street and Milton Road which formed the former A6. The existing A6 now by-passes the village via Paula Radcliffe Way.

Clapham is served by public transport services with hourly services during the day with existing bus stops along the High Street and Milton Road. Services also serve Highbury Grove. The main railway station is located in Bedford with train services providing regular connection to London Blackfriars, London St Pancras, Kettering, Bletchley and the West Coast Main Line and Leicester. Proposals for East West Rail as part of the Oxford Cambridge Arc will provide additional connections in future to Cambridge and potentially with the East Coast Main Line.

Non-motorised links to Bedford currently comprises a pavement connection along Clapham Road between Clapham and the Northern Gateway. Both the Bedford Town Centre and the Railway Station fall within an identified 5km cycling isochrone from the site. Recreational routes include a bridleway from Twinwood Road that arcs around the northern edge of the site towards Park Farm and The Baulk and provides views towards the village and the site.

Milton Road via Twinwood Road offers an opportunity for vehicular access into the site. Opportunities for potential cycle and pedestrian connections also include Twinwood Road but also via Duke Drive from Knights Avenue. Within the site there is an opportunity to integrate cycle and pedestrian routes to provide convenient access to facilities at the High Street, provide recreational opportunities and encourage more active and healthy lifestyles.

In addition, access could potentially be provided through adjacent land to the east – an additional site put forward in the call for sites and termed Land East of Clapham. The land is in the same landownership and similarly promoted by Hallam Land Management. One possible option would be the allocation of both sites.

The potential impact of the proposals on the local transport network has been initially assessed to inform the potential access locations, local improvements to the existing network and identify potential improvements to the wider networks. The potential for improvements at the A6 Northern Gateway to Bedford, were identified in the initial assessment which are now being delivered after £15.5m of funding was won by the Council from SEMLEP to support the delivery of a £18m “Transporting Bedford 2020” project across Bedford. Improvements at the A6 Northern Gateway are focussed at signalling the Paula Radcliffe, Great Ouse Way roundabout and Clapham Road / Manton Lane roundabout and improving to pedestrian and cycling facilities.

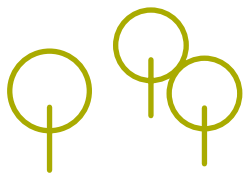
There is potential for the development to complement these proposals with local improvements in Clapham High Street to enhance the public realm, increase the frequency of public transport and the quality of walking and cycle links including on Clapham Road between Clapham and Bedford. Potential benefits including widening travel choice between Clapham, Bedford Town Centre and the Railway Station and minimising the growth in vehicular traffic. The ambition would be to significantly reduce the urbanising influence that is the legacy of the High Street having previously formed part of the A6.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken to identify ecological constraints across the site. A full ecological assessment would be required and undertaken in due course. There are no overriding constraints to the development of the site and the preliminary appraisal considers that there are significant opportunities to deliver ecological enhancement as part of the development at this site – key being the retention and enhancement of existing assets. These opportunities relate to integrating strategic green and blue infrastructure networks within the site, which have been included as concept features. Such enhancements will seek to achieve biodiversity net gain.

ECOLOGY



LANDSCAPE

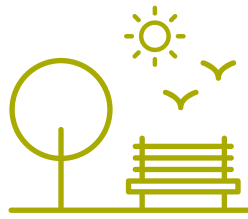


On the north shore of the River Great Ouse, Clapham village lies at the edge of a large plain with a landform that rises to the north east of the village from 35m AOD up to 80m AOD at Crow Hills. Much of the change in landform is pronounced beyond the village, with the steepest rise from 55m AOD. Otherwise the landform immediately around the village is more gently sloping towards the River Great Ouse. This rising landform and change in gradients provide a strong defensible boundary for the site and Clapham.

The topography and visibility of the rising landform suggests that development should generally be limited to locations that are below some 55m AOD, or where it can be readily accommodated within the landscape structure. The site boundary has been designed with reference to the landform and to ensure that development would be readily and attractively accommodated within it.

Open space facilities include extensive allotments and playing fields within the centre of the village. The existing public rights of way network provides access into the wider countryside. There is an opportunity for development to integrate an extensive green infrastructure network which will have an important function in defining soft edges to integrate development into the landscape. Development of the site would be required to provide open space to meet the needs of the development. A well-integrated open space and greenspace network would increase recreational opportunities for the wider village and encourage more active and healthy lifestyles. Therefore, additional pedestrian connections between existing open spaces and a new network of green infrastructure and open spaces would benefit the village as a whole with new recreational opportunities. As well as supporting landscape integration, the network has the potential underpin the character and feel of development and as such should form a key structuring principle.

OPEN SPACE & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



ARCHAEOLOGY



Preliminary assessment work has found that there is the potential for the site to contain limited Iron Age/ Early Medieval remains and low potential for remains for all other archaeological periods. It is considered unlikely that remains that do exist would be of more than local significance. Any requirement for further archaeological evaluation could be undertaken as a condition of planning permission.

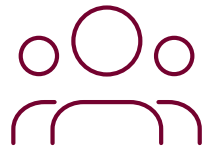
A Draft Drainage Strategy has been prepared and identifies the site and adjacent land as being in Flood Zone 1, with a low probability of flooding from the River Great Ouse which lies to the south of the village. In terms of surface water drainage, areas of surface water have been identified. Previous community engagement (in relation to the neighbouring "Tinsley Park" site) attracted responses confirming existing surface water drainage is an issue along land adjacent to the rear gardens of existing residential development on Highbury Grove.

The Draft Drainage Strategy recommends implementing a drainage system that integrates sustainable drainage measures (SuDS) to manage surface water run-off. SuDS are therefore included as concept features in locations that reflect the initial assessment works. In addition to managing run off levels from new development, there is a valuable opportunity to consider how SuDS may provide additional betterment in terms of addressing the current surface water flooding issues that are experienced by residents at the southern edge of the site.

FLOODING & SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE



COMMUNITY FACILITIES



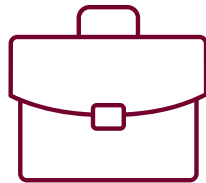
There are a number of local facilities which are focussed on the High Street in two distinct clusters. The main cluster lies towards the south east side of the village between Green Lane and Highbury Grove. This includes a parade of shops, convenience supermarket, a number of takeaways, a post office, pub, school, Methodist Church, and vets. Located further west along Clapham High Street, the second cluster is more modest with a convenience store, public house, and car showroom.

The level of potential demand for school places arising from the development will need to be considered carefully to consider whether any further capacity will be required. Development being allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan includes provision of a new school in addition to the existing Ursula Taylor School.

EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT



Employment opportunities in the village include local facilities and services with extensive employment opportunities. Other employment locations exist at Bedford which is readily accessible by bus services and Twinwoods Business Park. The shift to home working generated by COVID-19 is likely to remain in the post pandemic era which creates a timely opportunity for the housing mix to include space for home working and ensure that they can be well served by infrastructure such as superfast broadband.

The site is located in close proximity of existing utilities which currently serve residential areas near the site. Investigations have found that the site can be readily served from existing networks with enhancements where necessary.

INFRASTRUCTURE



RELATIONSHIP WITH EXISTING DEVELOPMENT



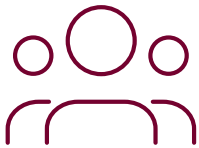
The southern boundary of the site is mainly defined by residential development and their rear garden boundaries, with those on Knights Avenue and Duke Drive being separated from the site with a substantial 10m area of formal planting. The relationship of new development and these properties will need to be carefully considered through the configuration of land uses, orientation of buildings, new and reinforced landscape buffers and enlarged gardens to mitigate against the potential for overlooking.

THE CONCEPT

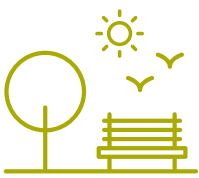
An initial concept has been prepared, informed by the preliminary assessments above, and consider issues such as vehicular access. A key objective is to create a well-structured development that relates to the overall character of Clapham and integrates and extensive and accessible green infrastructure network with generous open space provision. The concept illustrates the potential of development to provide:



500 homes.



A small community hub with a retail unit and community facility to serve the development and complement Clapham's overall facilities offer.



A comprehensive green infrastructure network that integrates natural features, structures development, and integrates a network of public open spaces.



At the southern edge of the development a key objective is to ensure that there is a positive relationship between new and existing development. Where appropriate this would include adequate landscape buffers and enlarged gardens to mitigate against potential overlooking.



A network of recreational pedestrian routes integrated with the green infrastructure network that are linked to the wider public rights of way network.



Vehicular access would be provided from Twinwood Road, or to the East via the adjacent site under the same ownership.

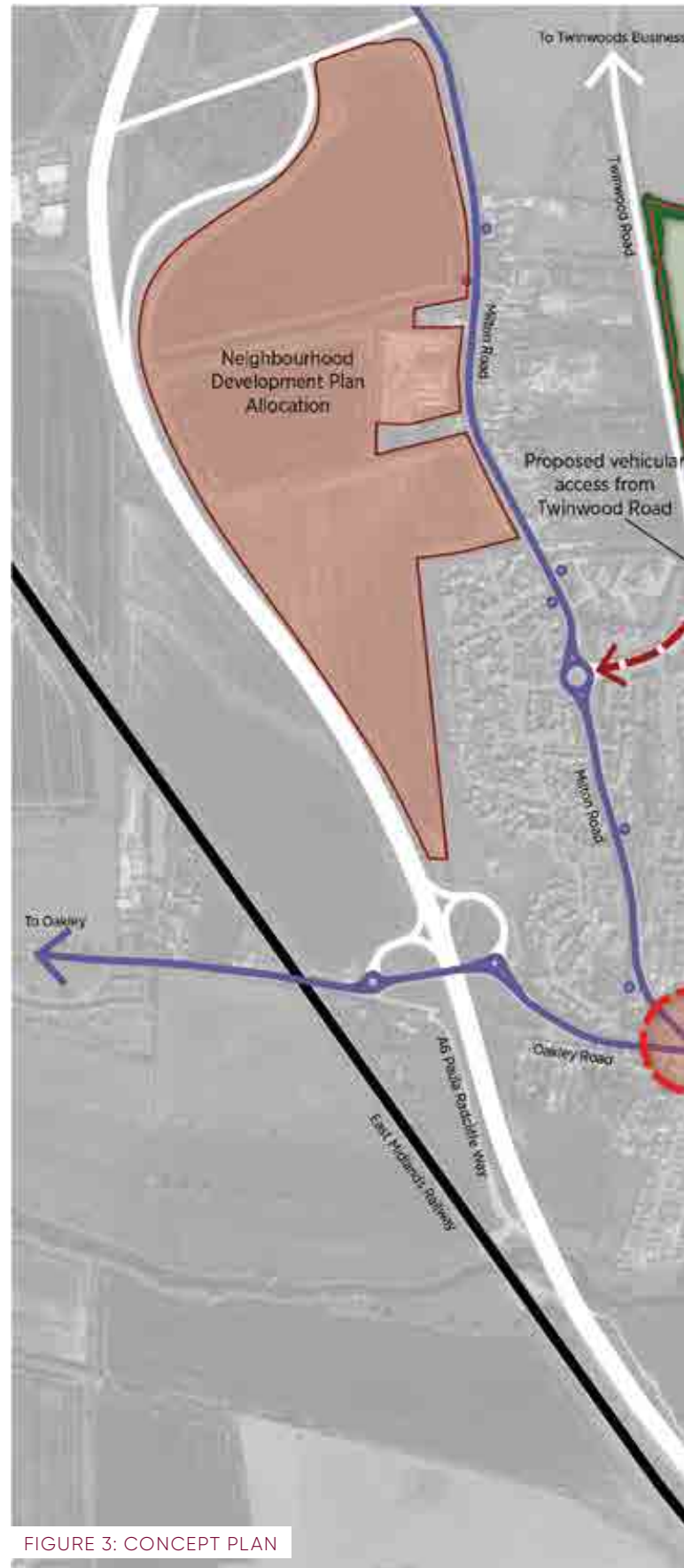
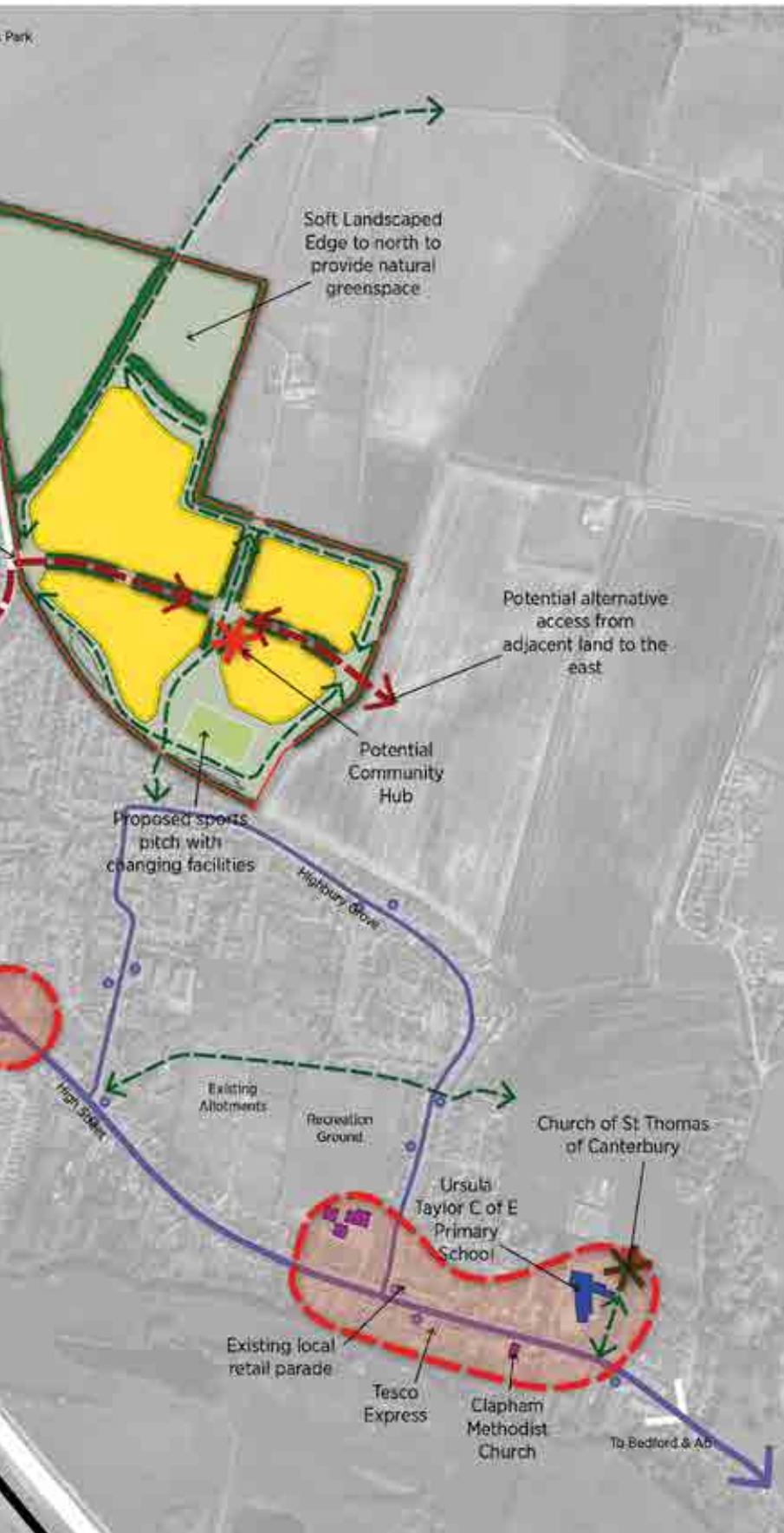


FIGURE 3: CONCEPT PLAN



DELIVERY

An appraisal of the site and its deliverability has been prepared which considers that the site is immediately available for development and can be delivered without any significant constraints. In summary the site:

- Is well located, being close to Bedford with scope to improve connections, particularly for walking and cycling and improved public transport services
- Is accessible from the existing road and footpath network with access to public transport services.
- Is close proximity to existing services and facilities with scope to improve and complement overall offer with a community hub.
- Has the potential to integrate SuDS measures to manage surface water run-off and potentially address existing surface water drainage issues.
- Is in close proximity to an established network of utilities and services.
- Is promoted by Hallam an experienced land promoter with a track record of delivery, including schemes in Bedford.

Overall Land North of Clapham is a site that can be brought forward in the short term with significant potential to meet the future growth needs of Clapham and the wider Borough.

