

# LAND SOUTH OF NORTHAMPTON ROAD BROMHAM

VISION DOCUMENT



OCTOBER 2017



*Rainier Developments is a privately owned land and development company operating across the UK. With extensive experience within our executive team, chaired by Eric Grove, we work collaboratively with landowners and key stakeholders to bring forward development proposals to benefit all involved.*

*Our experience and track record is across the whole cycle of the development process from early engagement with the local community through to delivery.*

*This approach as a land promoter, aided by our carefully selected external consultants, allows us to ensure that each development is brought forward in a sustainable manner with the overriding aim of delivering much needed new housing to help local authorities meet their housing requirements.*

*The land on the edge of Bromham is being promoted by Rainier Developments as a sustainable extension to the village, working in conjunction with lead planning consultants Barton Willmore.*

# Vision Statement

*This Vision for the site is to create a high quality extension to Bromham that reinforces the identity of the village and is well integrated both physically and socially. Up to 345 new homes are envisaged, with a wide range of housing types and tenures, helping to meet the needs of Bromham and the wider area.*

*The proposals will be responsive to the immediate and wider context, to create a development that sits comfortably within the landscape. Existing landscape features will be retained and enhanced as part of new multi-functional green infrastructure network that improves biodiversity and opportunities for amenity and recreation for local residents. The site is uniquely placed to link into and/or provide an extension to the Bromham Heritage Trail and deliver new open space for the benefit of the community.*

*The proposals will support the social and community infrastructure assets of the village by providing direct, safe and convenient connections into existing networks, encouraging movement by walking and cycling and providing easy access to existing public transport routes connecting Bromham with Bedford.*

*The aesthetic of the development will draw upon the best of local distinctiveness, to create a development of exceptional quality that is an asset to the Village in this important gateway location. A range of densities will facilitate a variety of different dwelling types and characters, which allow the development to integrate sensitively with the surrounding landscape.*

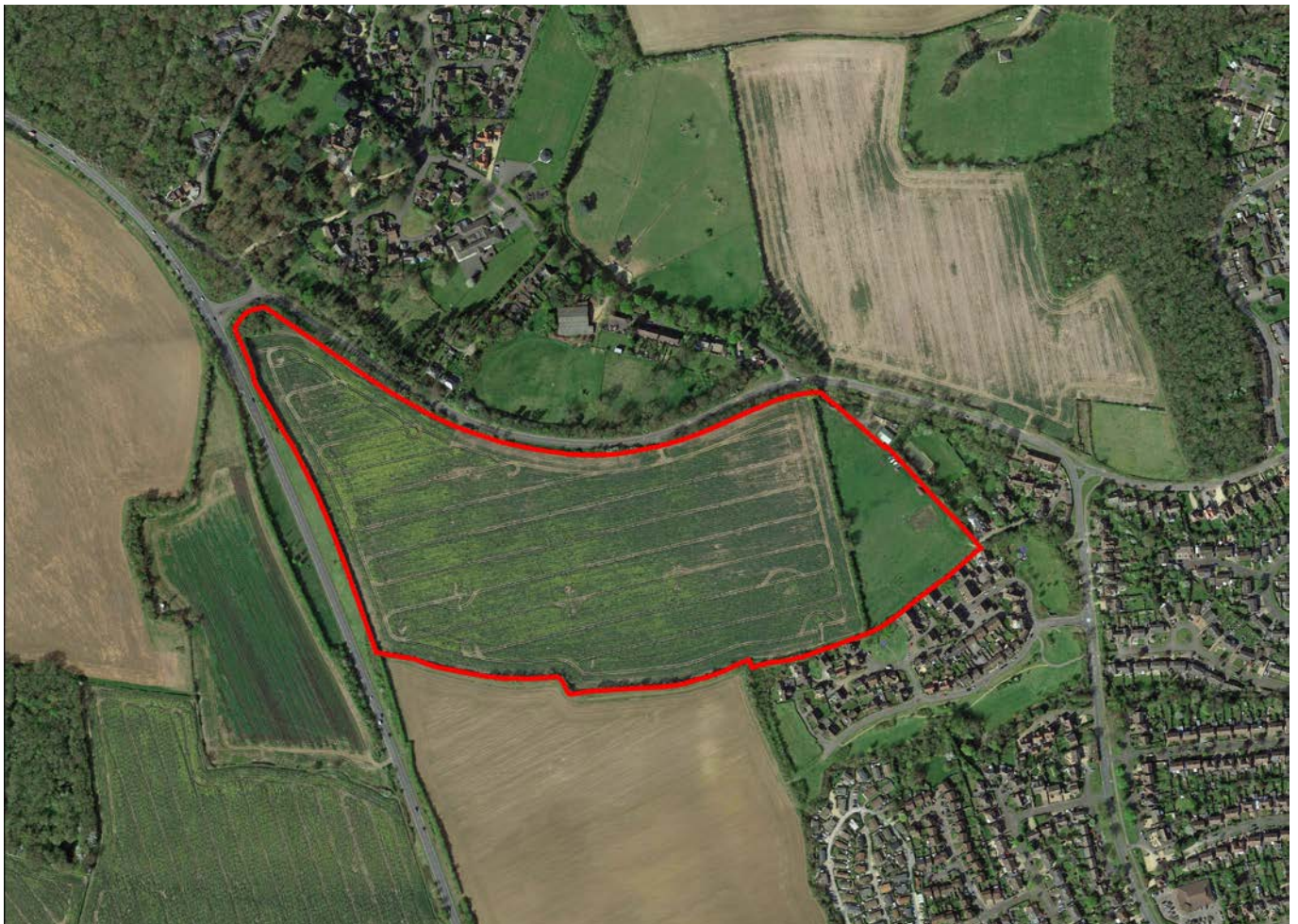


Figure 1. Aerial View of Site

# 1. Introduction

## Background

This Vision Document has been prepared to promote land south of Northampton Road, Bromham for residential development. The promotion is in the context of the growing need for homes in the area and Bedford Borough's new Local Plan, which will set out growth in the borough up to 2035. The site is located on the western edge of Bromham, a medium-sized village around 3 miles (4.5 kms) from the centre of Bedford (Figure 2). This document has been prepared to allow the local community to provide feedback regarding the development proposals.

## Site Description

The site extends to 17.21ha (42.53ac) and follows the line of Northampton Road (Figure 2). There is one large field in agricultural use and a much smaller wedge-shaped field used for grazing, with a hedge separating the field parcels.

A bridleway runs along the southern edge of the site before crossing into the adjoining field and extending westwards over the A428. There are other paths in the vicinity although these are not classified as public rights of way.

The majority of the land slopes down from west to east, with a slight rise closer to Northampton Road. The site is very well enclosed by mature trees and existing hedgerows along its edges.

There are existing houses situated along Wisdom Close, Barker Drive and Browning Close to the southeast, comprising mostly detached homes accessed off Peacock Road. The eastern edge comprises detached homes with extensive gardens running along most of the site's boundary, together with a commercial premises.

Northampton Road forms the northern edge. This is a tree lined street that sweeps between the main village street and the A428. Beyond this lies Elisabeth Curtis Centre (a riding school for the disabled), clusters of houses and a small estate accessed via Chestnut Avenue.

There is a main road to the west (A428), located within a cutting, beyond which lies open countryside.

To the south lies a belt of trees and vegetation beyond which is further agricultural land.

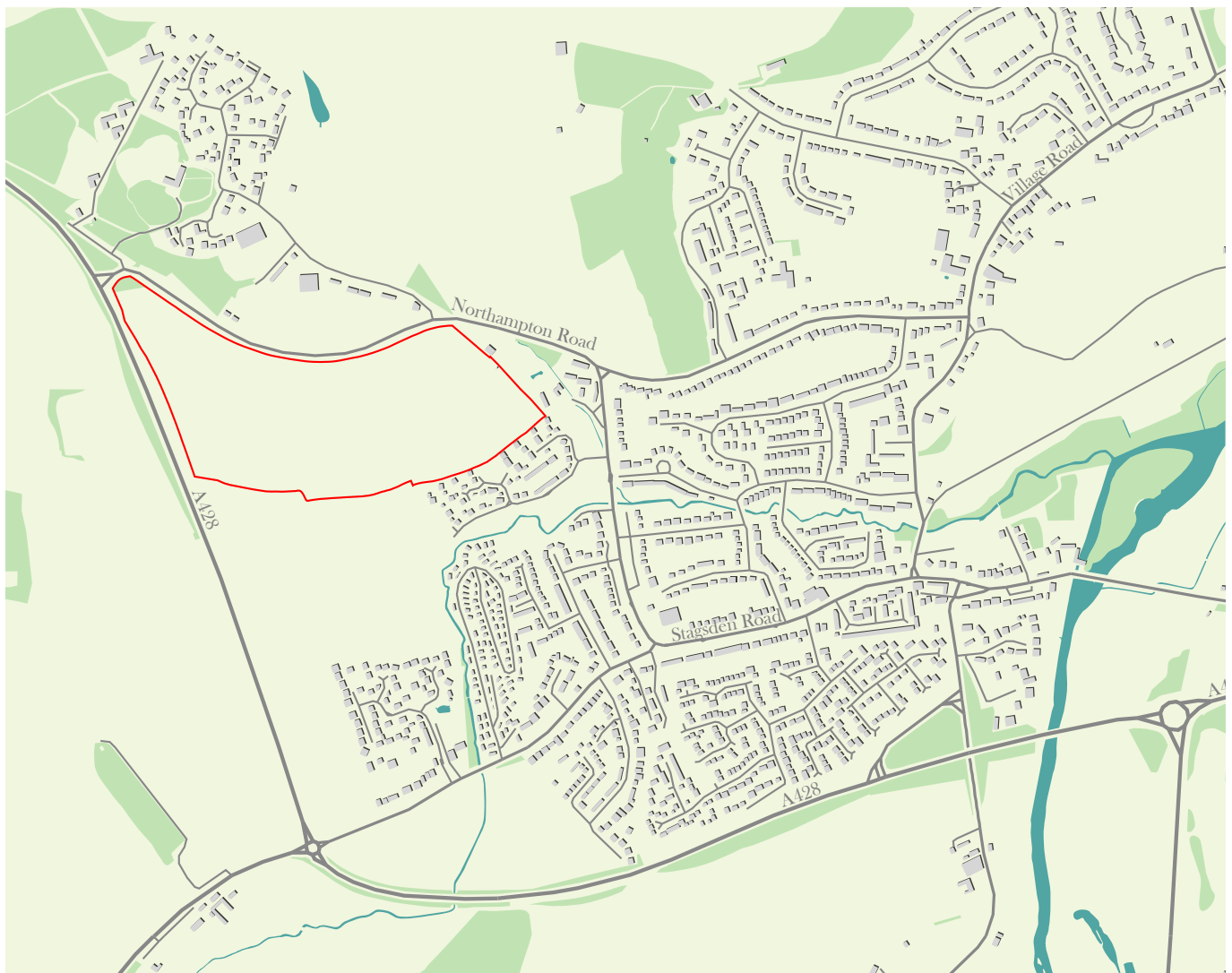


Figure 2. Map of Bromham Village (site edged red)



**‘The Site is well enclosed by mature trees and existing hedgerows that would benefit from new planting and habitat enhancement’**



Figure 3. View of the southern site boundary looking east



# 2. Evolution of Bromham

## Introduction

Understanding a place is key to delivering integrated and responsive developments. This is not about copying the past, rather it means understanding and interpreting the context of a particular site. In order to inform the master plan and design proposal for the site, the historic development and character of Bromham has been analysed.

## Historical Evolution

The historical maps set out in Figures 4-7 show how the village has changed over the past century. This highlights that the village expansion has moved westwards away from existing constrained land to the east.

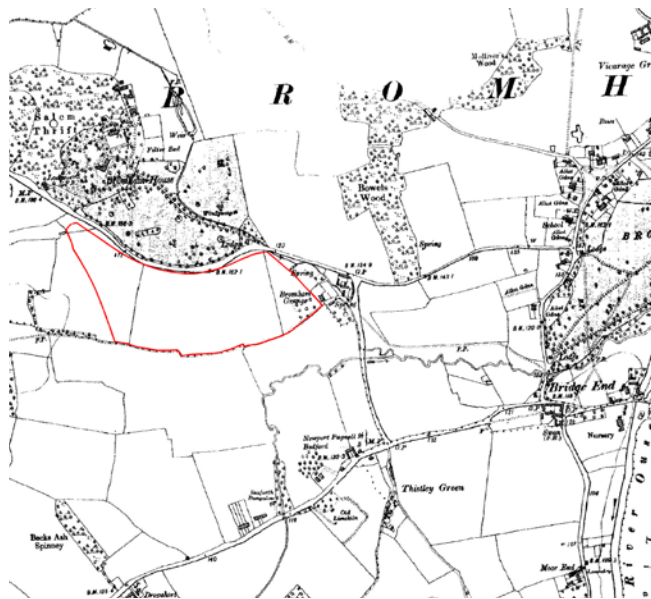


Figure 4. Historic Map dated 1902

At this point in time, Bromham comprised four main clusters of buildings centred around St Owens Church. In common with many similar settlements of this period, there are a whole series of footpaths criss-crossing the landscape with connections to other farms and villages, such as Biddenham to the southeast. Other notable features in the area include Bromham Grange (now next to the southeast corner of the site) and two railway lines to the north.

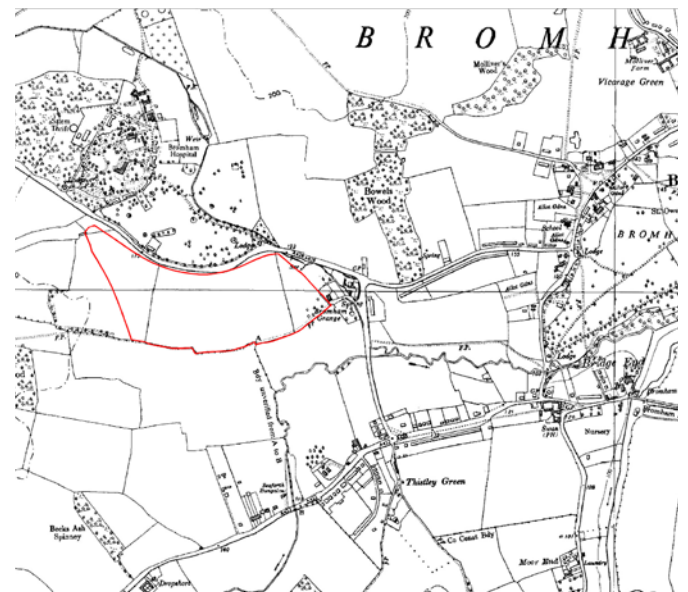


Figure 5. Historic Map dated 1960

By now, the village began to expand outwards along the main streets, including Grange Lane to the west, Stagsden Road to the south and to the east of Bromham Bridge (some of these buildings are not shaded in). There has also been infilling along the main street. Further out, Bromham House has been turned into a hospital and additional buildings have been built within its grounds.



Figure 6. Historic Map dated 1989

There was considerable growth in Bromham between the 1960's and 1980's. This growth has filled in the spaces within the historic street pattern and expanded the village. The village expanded to the north (Woodland Drive) and south (New Road) plus later development comprising new housing on the southern side (Queenby Way, Brett Drive). The other significant change was to the wider landscape following construction of a bypass along the southern edge of the village.

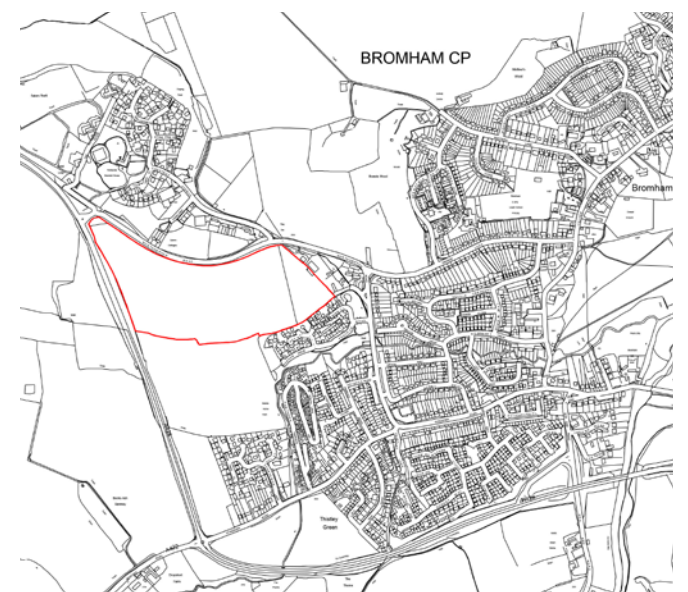


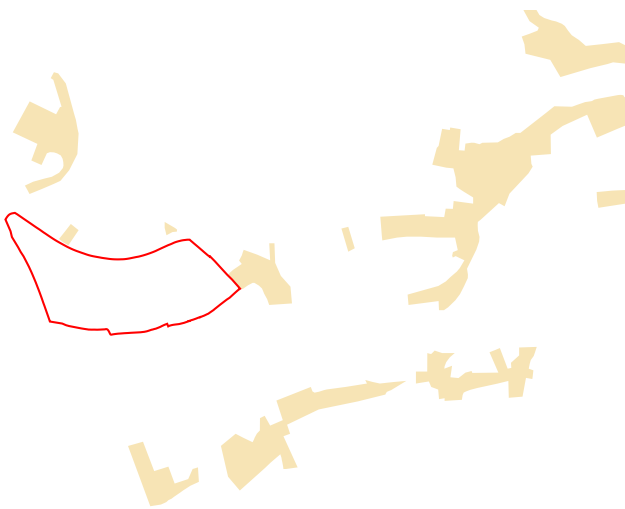
Figure 7. Bromham Today

There has been backland development to the southeast (Patridge Lane) and a small group of houses near the River Great Ouse (The Paddocks). New homes have also been built to the east (Peacock Drive) whilst the hospital has been redeveloped into housing (Chestnut Drive). Elsewhere, the school has expanded and Budgens supermarket has been built.

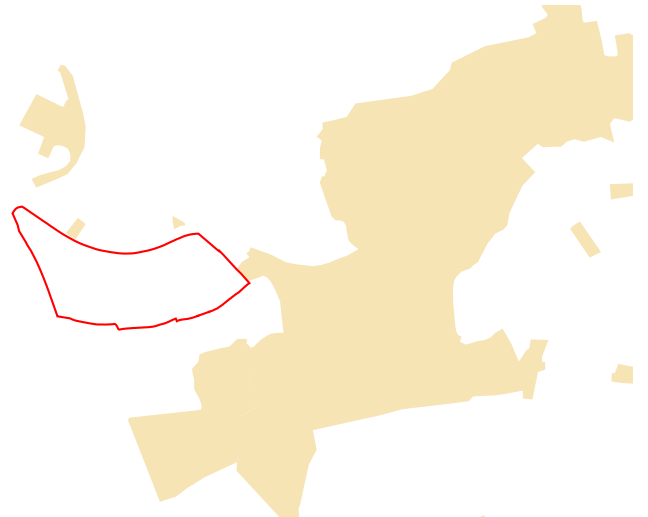
## Evolution Summary

The four images above show how Bromham has expanded since the 1960s. Similar to many other settlements, the village first grew along main radial routes, before infilling between the main streets took place. There were then major areas of expansion in the 1960s/70s, followed by other waves of growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Key influences would no doubt have been Bromham Park, the River Great Ouse (and any flooding issues), electricity pylons to the north, woodland, and more recently, the new bypass.

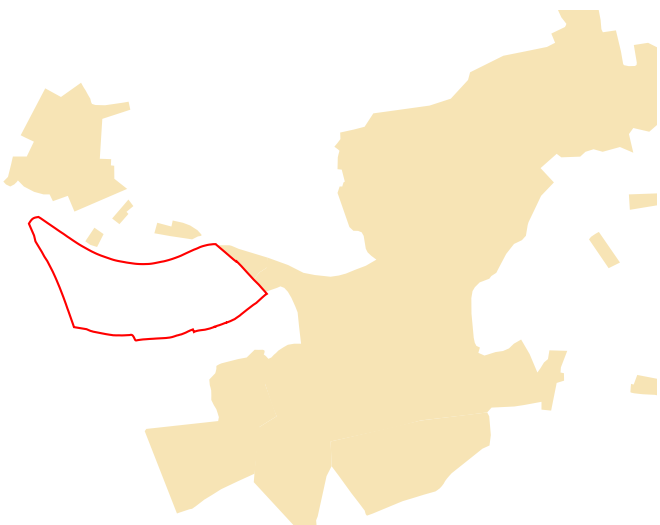
**‘The analysis of the historical evolution of Bromham illustrates that the Site is a logical next step in the evolution of the settlement pattern, consistent with the approach of infilling unconstrained areas along radial routes and up to defensible boundaries including the A428 to the west.’**



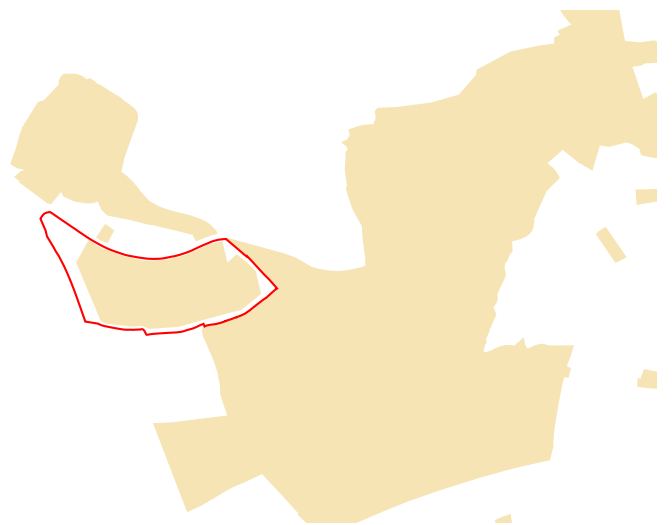
1960



1972 - 83



1989-93



Future (incorporating proposed land south of Northampton Road)

# 3. The Character of Bromham

## Introduction

This section describes Bromham’s character. The aesthetic of the new development will draw upon the best of local distinctiveness, to create a development of exceptional quality that is an asset to the Village in this important gateway location.

Figure 8 is a figure ground plan of Bromham, showing the built form along with key routes for reference. The plan highlights some of the key historical areas and includes some of the buildings referenced in the earlier historic maps. The focus is on older areas and more recent developments that more accurately reflect the village’s character.

## Historic Bromham

These areas tend to have winding roads, often with areas of open space at crossroads and key landscape features, such as Bromham Mill/Bridge. These spaces tend to be overlooked and fronted by the adjoining buildings.

The urban form tends to comprise narrower buildings with a more informal layout. Typical of most buildings from the 18th Century, they were constructed using traditional building techniques and materials. Nearly all are two-storey in height. Materials tend to be stone or dark red brick, with pitched tiled roofs.



Figure 8. Figure Ground Plan of Bromham





**Area in front of the Swan Pub**



**Old Post Office**



**Bromham Mill**



**West Lodge**



**Bromham C of E Lower School**

## Recent Developments in Bromham

The three examples of recent developments are shown on the plan in Figure 8 and the accompanying images below. They interpret the historic characteristics of Bromham whilst meeting planning and highways standards and reflecting the requirements of today's home buyer. They include a preference for off-street parking, double glazing throughout, pavements on at least one side of the road, street lighting and the provision of children's play areas.



**Chestnut Avenue**

Detached house, set back from street with driveway / parking area to the front.



**Quenby Way**

Some of the materials reflect the village's history but parking and pavements dominate the street scene and detract from the environmental quality of the area.



**Peacock Road**

A recent development just south of the site. Mostly detached homes, set back from the streets and with grass verges and materials that respond to the village's history.

# 4. Planning Context

With a growing and ageing population, the need for housing remains high. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. Paragraph 17 confirms the role of the planning system is to “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs”.

To boost housing supply, paragraph 44 states local planning authorities should “use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework.”

Bedford Borough Council are currently reliant upon planning policies from the 2002 adopted Local Plan, as well as the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Allocations and Designations Local Plan. In order to locate appropriate sites for residential developments, the Council have undertaken Call for Sites exercises in 2014, 2015 and 2017.

The Council are preparing the Local Plan 2035, which will update planning policy and extend the current plan period beyond 2021. A completed draft of the Local Plan is expected to be published for consultation in early 2018. This document will assess the housing requirement up to 2035, and show where such housing can be located.

The site forms part of a larger area put forward to Bedford Borough Council within the Call for Sites exercise (Figure 9). This is Site 43 described as “Land South of Northampton Road, Bromham”. It combines with Sites 49 and 51, which include the land further south.

Bromham Parish Council have defined the area of their Neighbourhood Plan. The Bromham Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared. The latest programme anticipates consultation with residents in early 2018.

The Bromham Parish Council response of 24th May 2017 to the Local Plan 2035 - Planning for the Future Consultation - stated the following regarding their assessment of sites 43, 49, 51 combined:

*“The findings from our Issues and Options 2016 Paper supported the combination of these sites as one development area. We would support, and actively promote this site, to be the preferred development site in the Village for a reasonable level of growth. This site would also provide an opportunity of providing significant additional areas of green space and community facilities – sports etc”.*

The promoter of sites 49, 51 and 53 have submitted a combined request for a Screening Opinion to the Council to assess the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment. Whilst the parcels of land, including site 43, will be brought forward by separate promoters, they can still provide a comprehensive development to benefit the village as a whole.

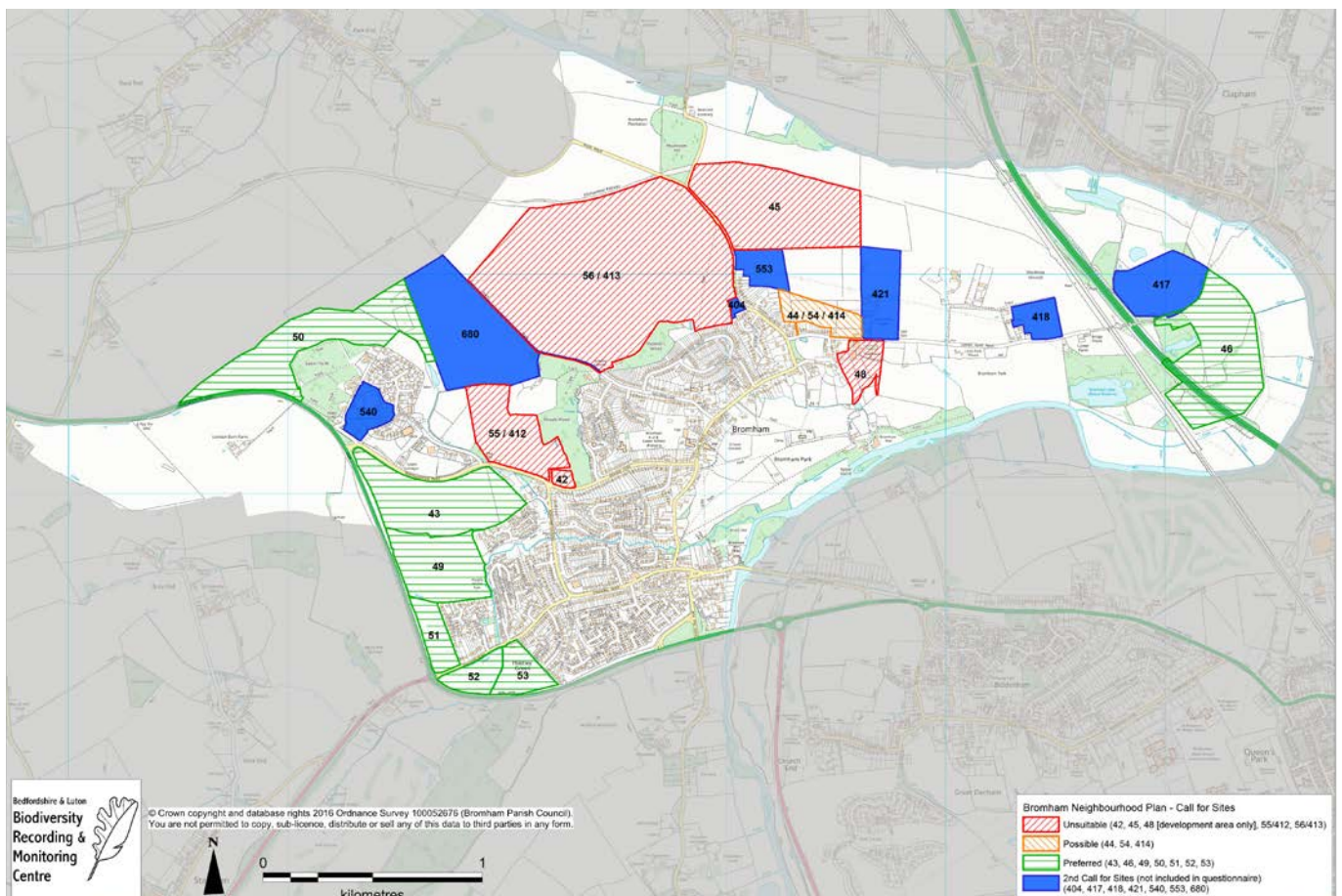


Figure 9. Preferred Sites Plan from the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan Issues and Options Consultation



# 5. Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

A landscape character and visual amenity assessment has been undertaken to understand the key characteristics of the area, the ability for the site to accommodate development and key visual receptors to inform the design response. A summary of the main findings are set out below.

## Character Area

The site lies within the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands National Character Area (NCA 88). Key characteristics include:

- Gently undulating, lowland plateau divided by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east;
- Variable, scattered woodland cover and clusters of ancient woodland, particularly on higher ground representing remnant ancient deer parks and Royal Hunting Forests;
- Predominantly open, arable landscape of planned and regular fields bounded by open ditches and trimmed, often species-poor hedgerows;
- Smaller towns, villages and linear settlements widely dispersed throughout the landscape with a diversity of building materials including brick, render, thatch and stone.

## Key Considerations

The site has the potential to accommodate change in the form of well planned development that responds to the site's relationship with Northampton Road, existing public rights of way, and neighbouring properties. The adoption of appropriate design and mitigation approaches will minimise impacts on landscape character. The site's landscape would benefit from improvements to the existing perimeter hedgerows and planting structure through new habitat creation.

The interaction of undulating topography, existing built form and overlapping vegetation results in a relatively restricted visual envelope. Receptors of high susceptibility to change are limited.

It is considered that good quality residential development could be successfully accommodated within the existing landscape and that any adverse landscape and visual effects could be mitigated in the longer term with the implementation of suitably robust green infrastructure proposals. Where feasible, the proposed green infrastructure will comprise the conservation and enhancement of existing landscape features such as public rights of way, hedgerows and trees. These existing features will be supplemented with significant new woodland, tree and structural planting together with a mosaic of new mixed habitats to improve biodiversity.

Overall it is considered that the landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development would be localised and contained. Subsequent attention to detailed design, implementation and management of the landscape proposals would however remain important to ensure that the effects are minimised and identified opportunities for enhancement are maximised.



View northeast from Public Bridleway (Ref BW5)



View south from Northampton Road / Chestnut Avenue Junction



# 6. Facilities

## Retail and Community Facilities

The nearest supermarket is Budgens, located approximately 500m from the south-eastern corner of the site (Figure 10 and 11). There is also a small parade of shops to the northeast, off Molivers Lane. These include small convenience store (One Stop), pharmacy, a beautician and fish and chip shop.

There are various facilities focussed near the historic core of the village along Village Road. They include a village hall, churches, library and GP surgery. There are also two pubs located to the southeast of the site (The Swan and The Prince of Wales).

## Recreation and Open Space

The nearest facilities are shown on Figure 10. They range from the open space along Barker Drive/Peacock Road to the recreation grounds along Chestnut Avenue up to Bromham Park further east. There are two equipped play areas immediately to the south. Bromham Mill is located further east at Bridge End. This is a late 18th early 19th Century building with a café where a range of cultural activities take place. It is understood that the café will be transferred to the Parish Council in October 2017.

## Employment

There are some limited employment opportunities in Bromham, however Bedford does offer a variety of employment opportunities within its town centre and its edges which are easily accessible from the village.

## Education

The nearest school is Bromham Primary School, a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school, located on Grange Lane within walking distance of the site. This school has committed to seven new classrooms to cater for planned development. Biddenham International School is situated in the adjacent parish of Biddenham, whilst Lincroft Academy School is located in Oakley to the north of the site.

Overall, Bromham has a good range of services and facilities, most of which are within walking distance (5-10 minutes) or a short cycle ride away.

There is potential for additional homes to support and sustain existing commercial services. Any impact upon local services will need to be considered, such as the impact upon the number of school places or local GPs. This could be achieved through Section 106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

Examples of Community Facilities in Bromham



Playing fields at Primary School



Bromham Medical Centre



Bromham Baptist Church



Children's' Play Area to South



Parade of Shops off Molivers Lane



Bromham Library



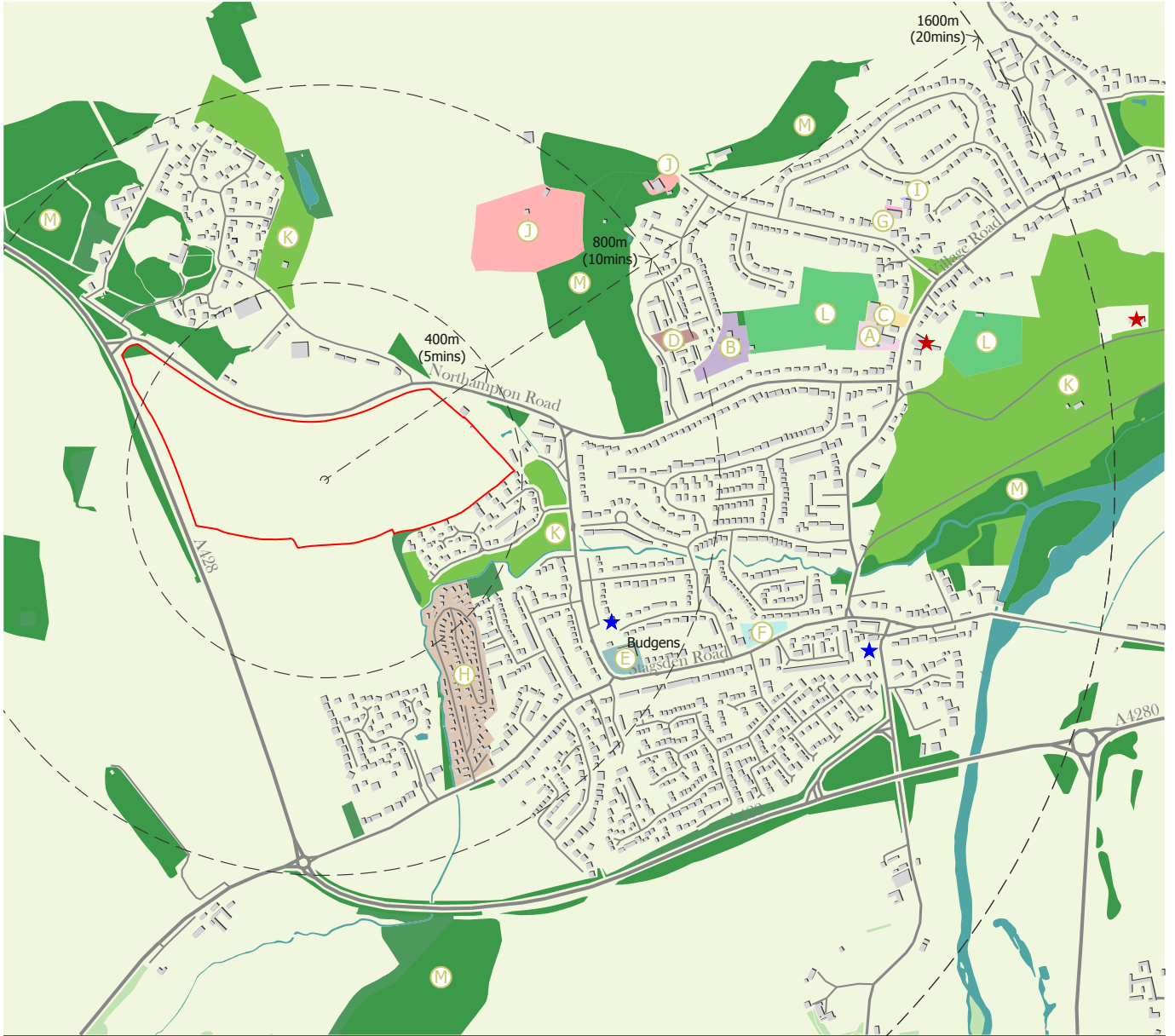
Children's' Play Area to Southeast




















Budgens Supermarket



Bromham School



- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Site Boundary               |  Retail   |  The Leslie Sell Activity Centre with Associated Camp Site |
|  Public House                |  Car Dealership (Toyota) and Petrol Station                         |  Public Open Space/Park                                    |
|  Place of Worship            |  Parade of Shops Including: One Stop Pharmacy Beauticians Fish Shop |  Outdoor Sports Facilities                                 |
|  Bromham VC Lower School     |  Caravan Park   |  Woodland  |
|  Bromham C of E Lower School |  Little Fishes Nursery  |  Walking Distances From Site                               |
|  Village Hall                |  |   |
|  Village Library             |  |   |

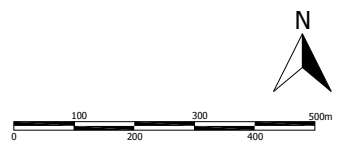


Figure 10. Community Facilities Plan

# 7. Connectivity to Social Infrastructure

**'The Site is exceptionally well placed to provide direct, convenient and safe access to key community and educational assets within Bromham by foot and cycle.'**



Bromham Lower School



Budgens



Library







Figure 11. Connectivity to Key Social Infrastructure Plan

## 8. Access and Movement

### Strategic Highway Network

The site will be accessed via Northampton Road as illustrated by Figure 14. This joins onto the A428 further west, which then connects onto the bypass around Bedford before joining the A421 further south beyond which lies the M1 motorway. To the west, Northampton Road connects with the A422 towards Milton Keynes and the A428 continues northwest towards Northampton itself.

Looking eastwards, the A428 provides a direct connection into Bedford Town Centre and either north along the A6 or further east using the A421 towards Cambridge.

### Local Highway Network and Access

In terms of the local network, Northampton Road runs further east and down past Budgens before running east along Stagsden Road and then north towards the historic village centre.

### Public Transport

The nearest bus stops are located along Northampton Road immediately north of the site (Route No. 24). The next nearest stops are further east, also along Northampton Road (Route No. 41). Both these stops are located within an easy walking distance of the site. There is an opportunity to provide a safe and convenient route to these stops using the existing bridleway or creating a new link alongside it. Route 41 provides a regular service (every half an hour during the day) connecting to Bedford Town Centre/Rail Station (approximately 20 minutes) and Northampton North Gate Bus Station (approximately 50 minutes). Bedford station has regular services into London Blackfriars station (44mins to 1 hour and 10mins).

### Walking and Cycling

Residents will be able to walk to the nearby Budgens supermarket using the existing bridleway and pavements either side of Northampton Road. There is also scope to walk to the local schools, village hall, churches and pubs. The small parade of shops is further away although still within walking distance or an easy cycle ride. Overall, the site is already well connected with the existing street network of pavements in the village.

In terms of the wider area, the site lies alongside a bridleway, providing links west towards Bury End, whilst at the end of Northampton Road, lies a link onto the John Bunyan Trail.

### Summary

Overall, the site is considered to be well connected in terms of vehicular access, including the wider strategic routes, which will reduce the amount of traffic travelling through the village. There are also existing bus connections providing alternatives to driving with scope to support or extend these routes.



Bus No.41 stopping along Northampton Road



Northampton Road looking east

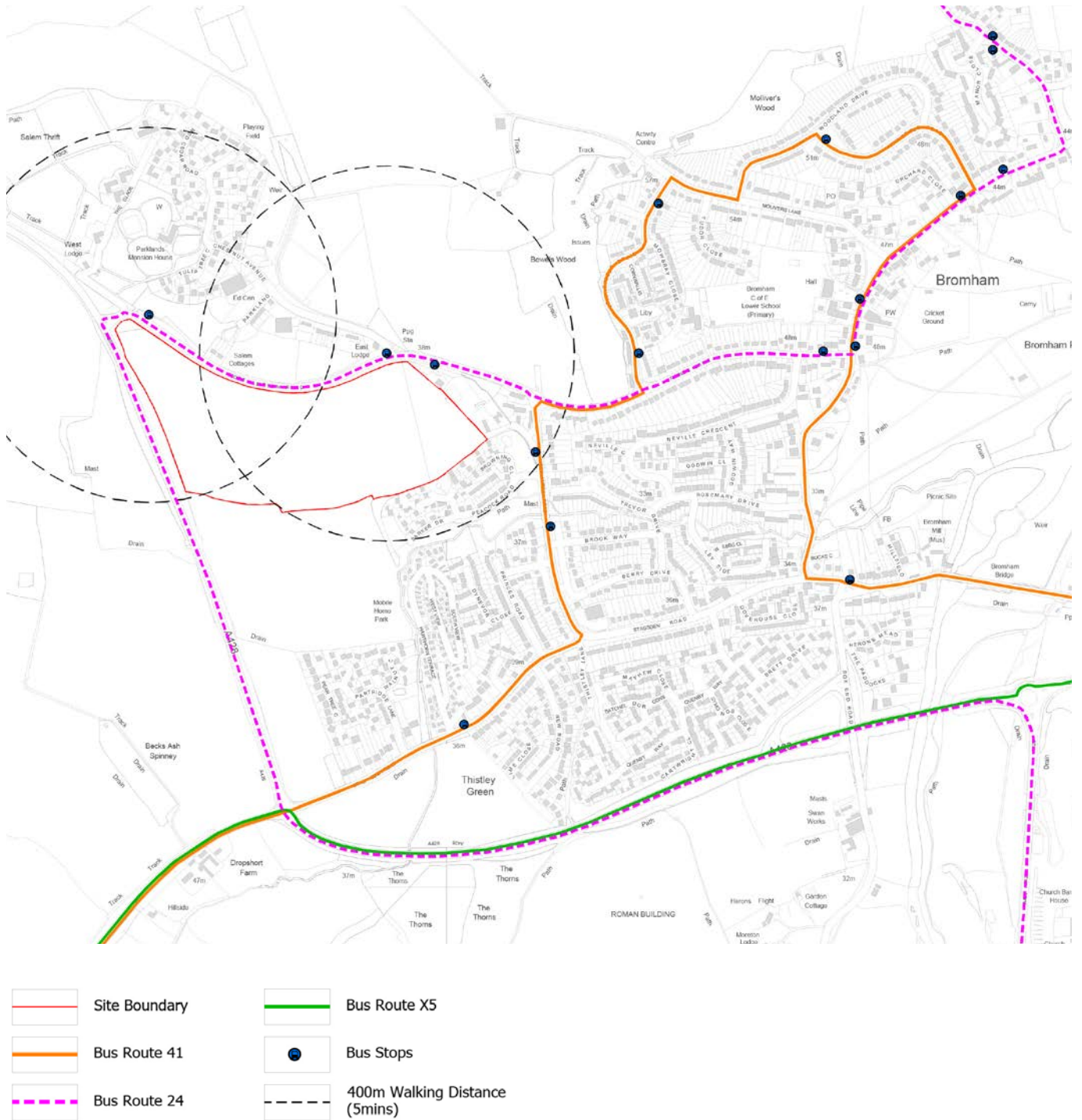


Figure 12. Access and Movement Plan



# 9. Site Analysis

The key site constraints and opportunities (Figure 14) informing the Master Plan are set out below.

## Topography

The site slopes down gradually from a high point of approximately 55m AOD in the west to 40m AOD in the east. The land rises up towards Northampton Road with a slight camber towards the south-eastern boundary.

## Trees and Vegetation

There are mature trees and vegetation running along the perimeter of the site, with an additional hedge near the eastern boundary. These should, wherever possible, be protected. There is an opportunity to add significant amounts of new trees and vegetation within the envisaged development.

## Public Rights of Way

There is a bridleway running along the southern edge of the site (see Figure 14), before extending out into the adjoining field and heading west. This will need to be protected to allow for suitable connectivity to existing facilities within Bromham.

## Ecology

An extended Phase 1 Habitat survey has been undertaken on the Site. This has identified that there are a number of designated sites to the South (Hanger Wood SSSI), north west (Salem Thrift CWS) and north east (Bowels Wood CWS) within 780m, 200m and 200m respectively.

Within the site the intensively managed arable habitats are common and widespread in the region and are considered to be of low ecological importance. Boundary trees and hedgerows characterise the edges of the site, with some hedgerows being identified as important under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. A small area of semi-natural broad leaved woodland is present in the north-west corner of the Site.

In terms of protected and notable species, there is no suitable habitat for riparian species on site. Seasonal surveys will be required to determine the presence or otherwise of bats, Great Crested Newts and Birds.

Overall, there is more than sufficient scope within the site to accommodate any ecological mitigation or compensation that may be required and improve upon ecological features in line with the requirements of local conservation objectives and planning policy.

## Surface Water Drainage

According to the Environment Agency website, the site does not lie within the flood plain (i.e. Flood Zones 2 or 3). Any development will need to provide suitable surface water flood attenuation to deal with the changes in surface water run off and from the new homes themselves. This could include swales, attenuation ponds and drainage runs. These would be integrated into the landscape and enhanced for ecological gain.

## Immediate Boundaries

Development will need to respect the residential amenity of the adjoining housing, particularly those that lie close to the southwestern boundary.

## Noise

The adjoining A428 is located within a cutting but still creates noise along the western edge of the site. This will need to be taken into account when planning land uses or proposing any mitigation.

## Utilities

There are two sets of overhead cables crossing the lower half of the site. These appear to be low-voltage electricity cables and it should be straight forward to place these underground or re-direct them. Other utilities, such as foul drainage, water and telecommunications are currently being assessed and any necessary improvements or changes will be made as appropriate.



Figure 13. Panoramic view taken from southwest corner of site



Figure 14. Site Analysis Plan

# 10. Design Rationale

This section explains the design rationale that underpins the proposal.

## Linked Landscape

The proposals will create a generous new linked landscape network within the site that integrates and connects with the wider surrounding context. A multifunctional green infrastructure network will accommodate formal and informal areas of open space, sports opportunities, natural greenspace and areas for surface water attenuation. This will provide substantial habitat enhancement, bio-diversity and amenity benefits for Bromham. The existing hedgerow separating the site and the hedgerows

around the perimeter will be retained and enhanced as part of the green infrastructure network.

The surface water attenuation concept will work with the existing topography of the site to deliver a sustainable drainage strategy comprising a series of linked flow routes, swales and attenuation features. The swales and attenuation areas will be integrated into the primary streets and open spaces to maximise the benefits of the sustainable drainage approach and contribute to the quality of the development.



Figure 15. Linked Landscape Principles Plan

## Connections

Two access points are proposed which will comply with local authority transport requirements. These are joined to create a spine road running through the development to improve connectivity and adds further character to the development.

The concept seeks to maximise opportunities for walking/cycling into the village and nearby bus stops by creating a connection onto the main road via the southeast corner of the site.

There is also the potential to create another point of connection into the area of open space along Barker Drive.

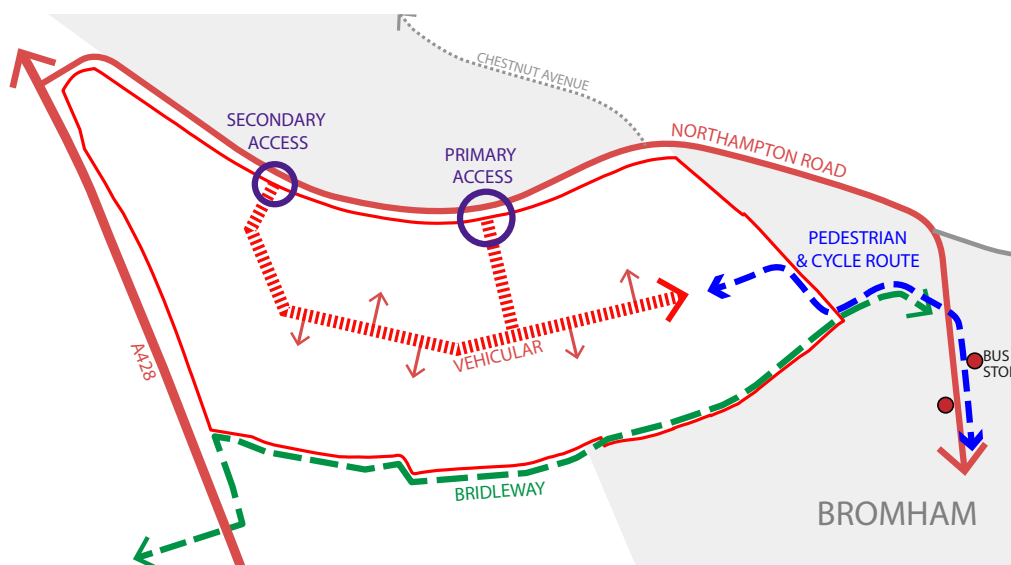


Figure 16. Connections Principles Plan



### Emerging Master Plan Concept

The emerging master plan concept illustrates how the landscape and movement principles underpinning the design approach can come together to create a development that is well contained and assimilated within the wider landscape and built form context. The approach proposes a lower density southern and western edge, with an informal character as a response to the surrounding landscape.

The linked landscape concept is illustrated by a connected network of open spaces with 'green fingers' reaching into the heart of the development. A central Green Avenue will provide a linking thread through the development, with a strong soft landscape emphasis, combining tree planting, swales and informal open space.



Figure 17. Development Concept Plan



# 11. Proposal

The Concept Master Plan below illustrates the design for the development. This has been informed by the site and contextual assessment presented in this document to deliver the vision for this site.

The proposal can provide up to 345 dwellings, together with formal and informal open space open space, to include surface water drainage attenuation and a play area.

There would be two new access points off Northampton Road, with the primary connection on the eastern side and a secondary connection further west. These would be connected within the development to create a main spine road.

We envisage the new homes will be two storeys with place making and way-finding objectives achieved through the materials palette and design of the public realm. There will be a mix of housing types and tenures, including detached, semi-detached and terrace homes.



- 1 Linear Park
- 2 Multi-functional green infrastructure, including opportunities for sport
- 3 Surface water attenuation and ecological enhancement opportunities
- 4 Primary vehicular connection
- 5 Potential residential parcels and building frontages
- 6 Main spine street
- 7 Existing trees/ hedgerows retained and enhanced.
- 8 Foot/cycleway connection



## 12. Summary



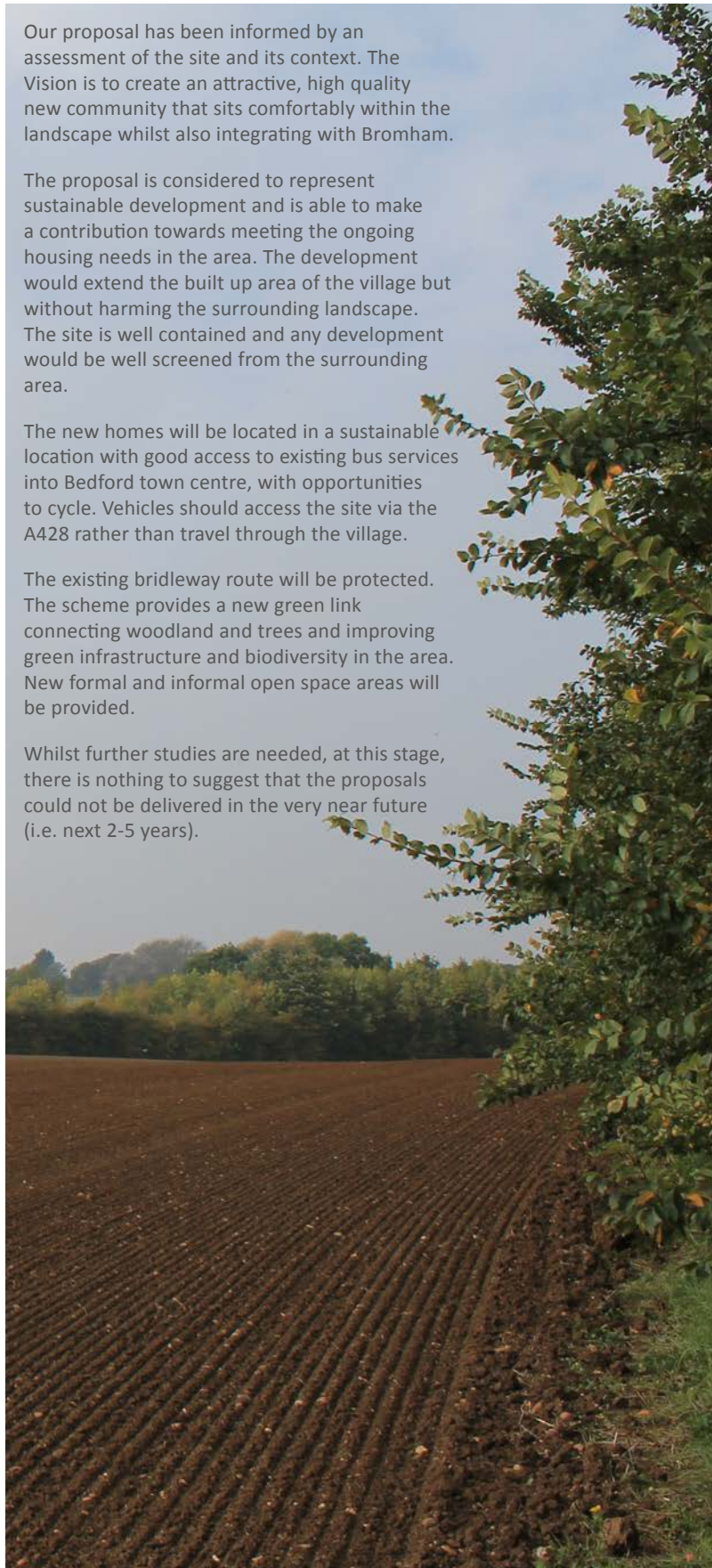
Our proposal has been informed by an assessment of the site and its context. The Vision is to create an attractive, high quality new community that sits comfortably within the landscape whilst also integrating with Bromham.

The proposal is considered to represent sustainable development and is able to make a contribution towards meeting the ongoing housing needs in the area. The development would extend the built up area of the village but without harming the surrounding landscape. The site is well contained and any development would be well screened from the surrounding area.

The new homes will be located in a sustainable location with good access to existing bus services into Bedford town centre, with opportunities to cycle. Vehicles should access the site via the A428 rather than travel through the village.

The existing bridleway route will be protected. The scheme provides a new green link connecting woodland and trees and improving green infrastructure and biodiversity in the area. New formal and informal open space areas will be provided.

Whilst further studies are needed, at this stage, there is nothing to suggest that the proposals could not be delivered in the very near future (i.e. next 2-5 years).





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