



Hallam Land
Management

LAND EAST OF **CLAPHAM**

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

14 August 2020



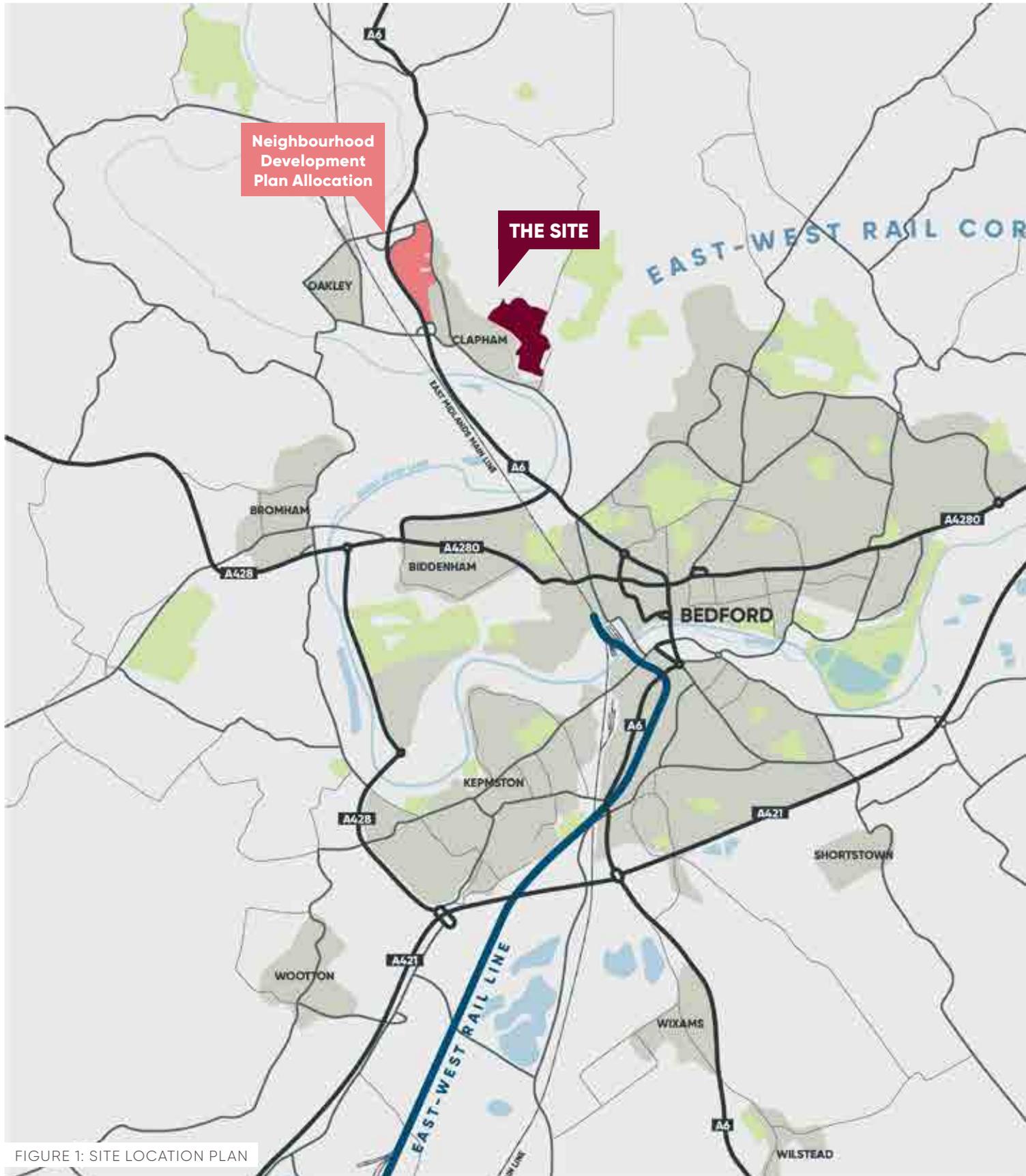


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION



The purpose of this document is to provide a brief description of the site at Land East 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 adjacent to Clapham, close to the heart of Clapham village to its east, approximately 3.5km 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 yet to be fixed but with a new modified Bedford station.



The site itself lies to the immediate east edge of the village heart and adjacent to existing residential development. The north west, and north edges of the site are defined by agricultural fields. The east edge is defined by The Baulk and properties on the west side of Green Lane. At the south east part of the site the edge is mainly defined by the north boundary of the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury and the north boundary of the existing primary school. The site comprises a series of fields and includes a number of agricultural buildings. These include agricultural barns to the south east corner of the site.

CONTEXT LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

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 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.

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.

CLAPHAM POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE



OF THE PLAN & D PLAN

The site has been promoted previously in response to the Call for Sites for the Bedford Local Plan 2030 as "Tinsley Park". The adopted development strategy apportions growth of 500 dwellings to the key service villages with a key thrust to support the offer of services and facilities in these settlements and support the delivery of a new primary school.

In Clapham, the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly sought to allocate a site for delivering the 500 dwellings allocated to Clapham in the Local Plan 2030. During the process Land East of Clapham was considered as one of two options. With the site being in close proximity and therefore visible to more residents adjacent to the edge of the site, Land East of Clapham was discounted despite having positive attributes, which were identified in the Site Assessment prepared for Clapham Parish Council by AECOM. There is therefore a robust evidence base demonstrating that the site, if developed, would comprise sustainable development.

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FIGURE 2: SITE FEATURES

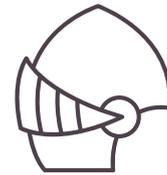


A number of preliminary site assessments have been undertaken to identify site constraints and opportunities to inform an appropriate potential development response. This has been supported by previous masterplanning work that has been undertaken alongside engagement with Bedford Borough Council, the 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.

FORM & HISTORIC CONTEXT

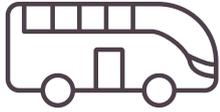


The approach to the village from the south east has a positive character with development comprising an informal mix of dwellings developed in different periods within a setting dominated by trees and soft landscaping. This character continues on Green Lane as it leads off the High Street towards the northern edge of the village before reaching a diverge point where local roads provide access to a number of properties. This includes a residential static caravan park to the immediate north east of the village which also lies adjacent to the east edge of the site on The Baulk – a local access road that serves the residential static caravan park and local farms.

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 Grade I Listed Church of St Thomas of Canterbury lies at the southern edge of the site approximately 125m north of the High Street and 90m from Green Lane. The church is a prominent and visible feature of Clapham that is visible particularly from the field to the north and overlooks the southernmost edges of the site and as such has been considered carefully in guiding the development concept. The church is a valuable opportunity to reinforce the heart and character of the village with a positive and enhanced setting.

The overall form and character of Clapham generates a strong case for creating a positive development layout, with the concept of an enhanced green or village heart. Framed by clusters of development, this layout would create an attractive space that would enhance the setting of the church. The green would also be integrated with a wider greenspace network but most importantly would provide a focal point at the heart of the settlement, embracing both the existing and proposed development.

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 buses with hourly services during the day from 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. A public footpath leading from the High Street through allotments enters the site from Highbury Grove and dissects the southern area of the site towards Green Lane.

Opportunities for vehicular access to the site include from The Slade (via Highbury Grove) and Green Lane and have been assessed and proven to be capable of supporting a development for up to 500 homes. Opportunities for additional cycle and pedestrian connections are possible from Green Lane and The Baulk. Within the site there is an opportunity to integrate cycle and pedestrian routes to provide convenient and direct access to facilities at the High Street, provide recreational opportunities and encourage more active and healthy lifestyles. Environmental enhancements in The Slade, Highbury Grove and Green Lane could also be provided.

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 pedestrian and cycling facilities.

There is potential for the development to complement these proposals with local improvements on 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 enhancements 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



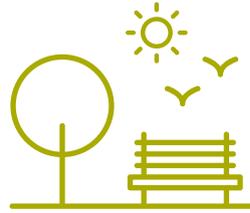
On the north shore of the River Great Ouse, Clapham village lies at the edge of a large plain with a landform that rises to the north east of the village from 35m AOD up to 80m AOD at Crow Hills. Much of the change in landform is pronounced beyond the village, with the steepest rise from 55m AOD. Otherwise 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.

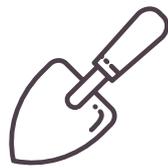
A key opportunity exists to structure development to provide a strong vista of the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury from the northern edge of the site, and as viewed from the public right of way that arcs around the north edge of Clapham.

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 a soft northern edge 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 attracted responses confirming existing surface water drainage is an issue along the southern boundary of the site adjacent to the rear gardens of existing residential development.

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. The focus of the village services are 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. The Church of St Thomas of Canterbury lies towards the east of the village. Located further west along Clapham High Street, the second cluster is more modest with a convenience store, public house, and a car showroom.

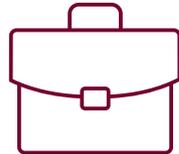
Development offers the potential to reinforce and enhance the viability of these existing local services and facilities. Within walking and cycling distance of facilities, adjacent to Highbury Grove, the site is placed in one of the best locations at the edge of the village close to these facilities. With the COVID-19 pandemic underpinning a greater shift in working from home, we can expect these local facilities to be valued and used increasingly by a growing local catchment.

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. The Ursula Taylor School also lies immediately to the south of the site, which provides opportunities for expansion to meet any additional needs for school places.

EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT



Employment opportunities in the village include local facilities and services with extensive employment opportunities. Other employment locations exist at Bedford which are readily accessible by bus services and Twinwoods Business Park. As stated above, 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. The relationship of new development and these properties will need to be carefully considered through the configuration of land uses, orientation of buildings, landscape buffers with generous planting 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 and respecting the setting of the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury. A key objective is to create a well-structured development that relates to and indeed enhances the overall character of Clapham and integrates an 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 a community facility to serve the development and complement Clapham's overall facilities offer.



A comprehensive green infrastructure network that is aligned with key viewpoints, integrates natural features, structures development, and integrates a network of public open spaces. A key feature of this network will include an avenue that accommodates views towards the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury, the setting of which will be enhanced with the creation of a village green in the centre of the development.



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 Green Lane and the Slade via Highbury Grove.

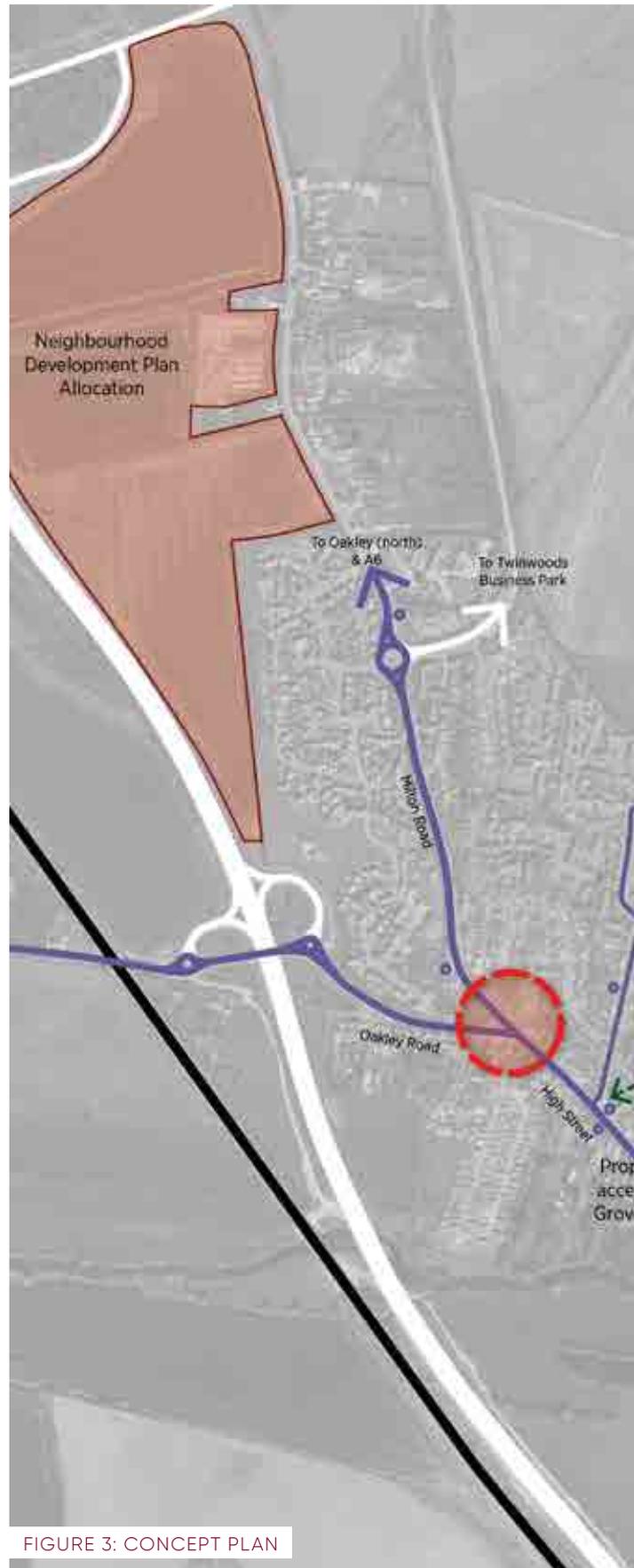


FIGURE 3: CONCEPT PLAN

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 at East 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.



