

## Housing Services Local Letting Plan

### Mulberry Park and Foxhill

A local letting plan is an agreement between Housing Services and a housing provider. It decides how properties will be allocated in certain defined geographical areas. Local lettings plans will only be used in exceptional circumstances, to meet specific local issues within an area.

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## Neighbourhood profile, supporting information and views of the local community

Mulberry Park is the new name for the former Ministry of Defence (MOD) site at Foxhill. Curo purchased the site in March 2013 as a result of a competitive bidding process run by the MOD. Foxhill was one of three sites in Bath which was brought to the market at the same time. Curo paid a commercial price for the site. It is a 19 hectare brownfield site with outline planning permission for up to 700 dwellings, up to 500m<sup>2</sup> retail, up to 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> employment use, up to 3,500m<sup>2</sup> community/education, single form entry primary school, open space and associated infrastructure.

The Foxhill Estate is a post war housing estate of over 800 homes. It is pre-dominantly a social housing estate but there has been significant right to buy on the estate. Some areas of the estate have been more popular than others and there are some areas where private ownership forms 75% of the stock. Levels of home ownership are much lower in other areas, notably the flats and pre-cast reinforced concrete homes. In these areas Curo has retained 75% of the stock. The redevelopment proposals focus on areas where Curo's ownership is highest and where the stock is poorer quality and less popular. The site is mostly residential with only a limited offer in terms of retail and community provision. The area proposed for redevelopment is 11 hectares and currently is the location of 537 dwellings.

From the start of this process, Curo has recognised the importance of identifying key groups and stakeholders, contacting them at an early stage in the process and trying to resolve any issues well ahead of submission of a planning application and the development of this Plan.

The principles adopted throughout the process of public consultation have been to:

- engage and involve as many local residents and groups as possible
- present the proposals clearly and honestly
- listen and provide feedback
- be clear about what the applicant is able to change as part of the consultation and why
- be clear about what the applicant cannot change and why
- closely follow national consultation protocol for planning applications

A combination of communication methods have been and continue to be used to ensure key messages and general information about forthcoming proposals are far-reaching and inclusive within the community. These include:-

- Extensive meetings with key stakeholders/ interest groups
- One-to-one meetings with residents of Foxhill Estate and neighbours of the proposed development
- Appointment of a dedicated member of Curo staff to act as a first point of contact for residents
- Consultation on the emerging masterplan through design workshops and exhibitions
- Media relations (regular updates supplied through the local press)
- Creation of a press office/ point of contact for any individual or organisation requiring further information about future plans for the site
- Creation of a regular newsletter distributed to 3,000 surrounding residents

- Creation of Foxhill Stakeholder Forum, Foxhill Residents' Regeneration Panel and Foxhill Forum (Community Regeneration Board)
- Creation of a dedicated consultation website
- Social media including Facebook and Twitter.
- Opening up of a local office on Fox Hill, the Mulberry Park Visitors Centre

## Purpose of the plan

The purpose of the plan is:

- 1) To ensure that housing allocations to the Mulberry Park & Foxhill development help to facilitate the phased redevelopment of Foxhill and Mulberry Park.
- 2) Prioritise existing residents who need to move to facilitate the Foxhill redevelopment on Homesearch.
- 3) To create a mixed and sustainable community and contribute to making Bath & North East Somerset an even better place to live, work and visit

## Objectives

The Local Lettings Plan aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Prioritise existing residents who need to move to facilitate the Foxhill redevelopment on a phase by phase basis in accordance with the rehousing programme
- Balance the needs of existing residents and other people on the Homesearch Allocation Scheme
- Provide a home for people with different housing needs
- Create a community which is diverse and representative of the area, ensuring a broad range of adults and children living on the development
- Take into account the location of individual dwellings to ensure that the needs of an applicant can be managed appropriately within the development.

## Approach

New build social housing on Mulberry Park/Foxhill will be advertised for letting via Homesearch. The properties will be clearly advertised so as to prioritise residents who need to move to facilitate phases of the redevelopment on Foxhill. This priority will be based on a rehousing programme agreed between the Council and Curo.

Homesearch will advertise the new Mulberry Park/Foxhill properties phase by phase (A – G) and give priority to current Curo Foxhill tenants\* living in an area ready for redevelopment. Priority will be awarded on a phase by phase basis once the redevelopment programme of a particular phase has been agreed with the Council. The Homesearch system will automatically create a shortlist which puts Curo Foxhill tenants\* above all other applicants for the corresponding new Mulberry Park/Foxhill properties to reflect this. In addition to this shortlisting priority, Curo Foxhill tenants\* will be awarded Group B priority.

The effective date for the priority will be agreed between Housing Services and Curo (between 9 and 18 months prior to the completion of first new build properties of the corresponding phase).

This will give tenants the option to consider housing away from the Foxhill/Mulberry Park development.

As an incentive to move, Curo Foxhill tenants\* (excluding tenants with an Assured Shorthold tenancy) who currently under-occupy their accommodation may be allowed to under-occupy by a maximum of 1 bedroom in their new home. This will depend upon the merits of the case, including a tenant's ability to afford their rent, and will be agreed between Curo and Housing Services.

Where shortlists have a number of applicants with the same group and effective date, Curo will be able to consider applicants in the following priority order:

- Whether there is part of the phase which requires emptying earlier than others to facilitate the redevelopment
- Tenants on Assured (non Shorthold), protected or fixed term tenancies (Affordable Rent Tenancy)
- Properties which meet their assessed bedroom entitlement according to the Homeseach criteria. For example a tenant who needs a three bed property will be prioritised above a tenant who, as an incentive to move, has been given the option to bid for a three bedroom property as an under-occupier.
- Other reasons such as medical, welfare or hardship need
- Length of time in their existing property

Once all Curo Foxhill tenants\* in a phase have been considered, Curo will be able to consider remaining Curo and non Curo applicants on the shortlist.

Exceptions may be made where wheelchair accessible units and larger properties of more than four bedrooms become available. Wheelchair accessible units properties will be offered to any applicant on the Homeseach register who best meets the adapted need for any particular wheelchair accessible unit. Due to the lack of 4/5/6 bedroom properties, larger properties may also be exempt from the shortlist priority awarded to Curo Foxhill tenants\*.

Where allocations are made to applicants from outside the prioritised re-housing phase, Curo will aim to provide 50% of homes to people in employment.

Where it is reasonable, applicants may be refused accommodation on the development to ensure that a mixed and sustainable community is created. For example applicants with a history of anti-social behaviour or previous tenancy management issues may be refused accommodation on the development.

In exceptional circumstances, such as difficulty in securing a particular type of property, Curo and Housing Services can agree a 'direct let' to ensure that the building programme isn't put at financial risk.

\*

- Tenants with an Assured (non Shorthold) or a Protected tenancy
- Tenants with a fixed term tenancy-Affordable Rent Tenancy (if the fixed term is 5 years or more)
- Tenants with an Assured Shorthold tenancy living in a property with two or more bedrooms

Tenants occupying one bedroom Assured Shorthold tenancies and tenants on a Curo Enterprise Assured Shorthold tenancy will not be given priority through this local lettings plan.

## Timescale

The plan will commence with immediate effect, priority will be given to phase A residents nine months before the first completions on phase 1 Mulberry Park, currently planned to be end of 2016, up to completion of the project in 2028.

## Review date

The Local Lettings Plan will be reviewed quarterly by Housing Services and Curo. Curo will produce a report to summarise the performance of the plan quarterly including how closely actual lets match the aims of the plan.

## Equalities

All applicants will be considered individually. Housing Services and the Council will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and provide evidence for the reason for refusing accommodation to an applicant.

## Important information

With the exception of the requirements of this Local Lettings Plan and the Rehousing Strategy, Housing Service and Curo will comply with the Homeseach Allocation Scheme and Nomination Agreement.

Housing Services must ensure that this scheme does not dominate the Homeseach Allocation Scheme and that overall, the scheme gives reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories.



Annexes:

### Annex 1 Draft Programme

The below programme is draft only and may be subject to change. Curo will inform the Council of any changes at the quarterly meetings.

	Possession required	First new build lets	9 months before date of first lets
Phase A	June 2018	Sept 2016	Dec 2015
Phase B	Aug 2020	Dec 2018	March 2018
Phase C	July 2022	March 2021	June 2020
Phase D	March 2024	Feb 2023	May 2022
Phase E	Sept 2026	Sept 2023	Dec 2022
Phase F	June 2018	Sept 2016	Dec 2015
Phase G	June 2018	Sept 2016	Dec 2015

### Annex 2 Foxhill and Mulberry Park





# Annex 3 Indicative Phases on Foxhill





