

# Foxhill Regeneration and Development Charter (text only)

## Final ATLAS Draft - Version 5

### FOR CONSULTATION

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Making things happen

## Forward

The development of the Foxhill Housing Zone provides an exciting opportunity to create a sustainable and vibrant community in the south of Bath. It is crucial that we build a distinctive, well-connected neighbourhood where people choose to visit and live.

Bath & North East Somerset Council and Curo are working together with local people to use the opportunity of new development at Mulberry Park as a catalyst for positive regeneration that will lead to improvements in both the physical and social environment at Foxhill.

This Regeneration and Development Charter sets out our shared ambitions for Mulberry Park and Foxhill. These ambitions will guide Curo, the Council and local people in the development and delivery of homes, open spaces and community facilities built with quality, choice and community pride at their heart.

The successful development of the Foxhill Housing Zone cannot be achieved by one organisation alone and this Charter provides a set of shared ambitions that all partners can work towards. It will equip key stakeholders with a common understanding of the kind of community we wish to nurture and a clear and shared language that will enable closer working in the creation of an integrated and sustainable development.

We have been fortunate to draw on the expertise of the Homes & Communities Agency in shaping this Charter. Their understanding of the site coupled with their knowledge of developments across the UK has ensured that we can learn from experiences elsewhere to bring the best to the Foxhill Housing Zone.

We recommend this Charter as a document that sets out shared ambitions for the successful development of the Foxhill Housing Zone. Now Curo, the Council and the local community can use it to ensure that together we build a distinctive, vibrant and sustainable community that can thrive and endure.

**TO BE SIGNED BY B&NES AND CURO**

## **The Opportunity**

Foxhill comprises a former Ministry of Defence site (renamed Mulberry Park) and its neighbouring post war former council estate. Both areas are located within the Combe Down Ward of Bath, on the southern outskirts overlooking the World Heritage City.

MOD Foxhill (Mulberry Park) is a strategic allocated site in the Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) Core Strategy. It has also been the subject of a detailed Masterplan Concept Statement, produced by B&NES with ATLAS assistance in 2012. The government declared Foxhill as a Housing Zone in 2015. Housing Zones are locally led partnerships aimed at speeding up housing delivery on large sites. Proposals for development at MOD Foxhill have now been incorporated into the B&NES emerging Placemaking Plan. Outline planning permission was granted for proposals at Mulberry Park in March 2015 and the first phase of development was granted reserved matters approval in September 2015.

There has been significant research relating to the socio-economics of the Foxhill neighbourhood in recent years. It possesses a number of positive community assets such as extensive green space, a strong sense of local identity and dedicated community groups. Alongside these positive assets are also high levels of deprivation, lack of work, social vulnerability and poor educational outcomes that are 'hidden' by the general affluence of the Combe Down Ward and its surrounds. As a former council housing estate it also has one of the highest proportions of affordable housing in the District. Its 'hidden' nature means that the Estate has missed out on previous regeneration opportunities that have benefitted other areas of Bath.

The redevelopment of the Mulberry Park site is seen as the ideal catalyst for major estate and community regeneration of Foxhill and was the key driver in Curo's acquisition of the site in 2013. Curo owns approximately 60% of the 863 homes on the Foxhill Estate. Curo's landholding interests in this area provide a unique opportunity to realise significant regeneration proposals for the existing estate alongside development proposals for the delivery of 700 new homes and associated facilities at Mulberry Park.

The Charter seeks to describe this opportunity for new investment in the neighbourhood, stimulated and secured through the redevelopment of Mulberry Park. It describes a series of ambitions and the collaborative approach to their delivery in order to realise the benefits in terms of the broader economic, housing, social, education and cultural offer within Combe Down.

## **About the Charter**

### **Aims**

This Charter has been drawn up by ATLAS on behalf of B&NES Council and Curo and amounts to a shared understanding of the issues and opportunities at Foxhill.

This Charter has three overriding aims:

- To establish a set of shared ambitions for Foxhill which can inspire the existing and new communities to become involved and shape their neighbourhood in the future;

- To provide a framework for a genuinely collaborative approach by equipping B&NES councillors and officers and Curo with a common language, helping them to communicate more effectively with existing communities and those people who may want to move into the area.
- To secure better outcomes for Foxhill and the wider area from future investment and to support strategic decision making.

## Status and Uses

B&NES and Curo have agreed this Charter as a clear statement of their shared ambitions towards creating a unified development linking Mulberry Park and the Foxhill Estate, which has wider benefits for the Combe Down area.

All of the principles of the charter are underpinned by national, regional and local planning policies and it seeks to interpret these rather than to repeat them. The Charter does not constitute a formal planning policy document, although it will be treated as a material consideration by the Council in determining planning applications.

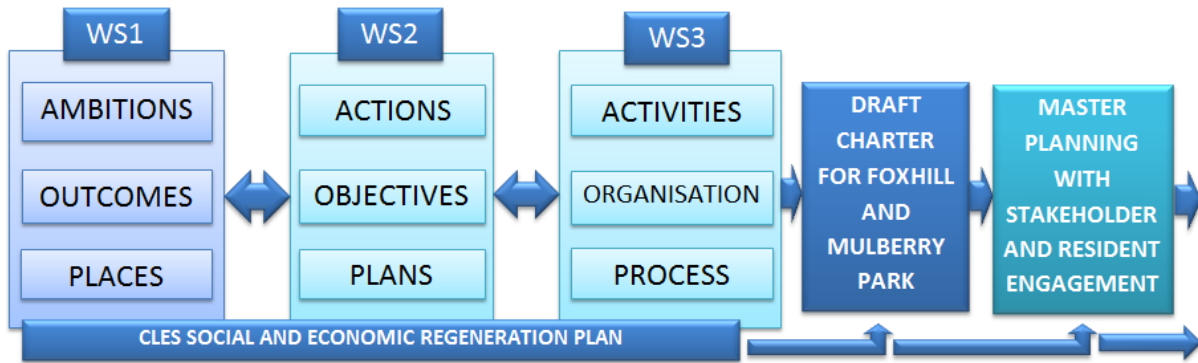
The Charter will be principally used to assist the parties in:

- ***Masterplanning***  
Provide a framework for the masterplanning exercise for the regeneration of the Foxhill estate. The Charter will inform and be informed by future engagement with local residents and other key stakeholders.
- ***Making investment and other strategic decisions***  
The Charter will be used by B&NES and Curo in decision-making regarding investment, policy development and the identification by Curo of priorities relating to its existing housing stock within Foxhill.
- ***Aligning funding streams***  
B&NES and Curo will use the Charter to support approaches to securing investment from government agencies and other funding sources and to enable them to align their spending plans with future investment priorities for Foxhill.

## Origins

The idea for this Charter grew out of three workshops organised by ATLAS and involving B&NES officers and members and Curo staff which took place over three months between November 2015 and January 2016.

This Charter also acknowledges that regeneration of the wider area has already started with the redevelopment proposed at Mulberry Park. It has also been informed by the outcomes and proposed actions of the emerging Social and Economic Regeneration Plan for Foxhill and Mulberry Park. The relationship between the workshops, Charter, emerging Social and Economic Regeneration Plan and future masterplanning is illustrated by the diagram below.



Workshop 1 (WS1) enabled B&NES and Curo to talk about their aspirations and issues for the future of Foxhill and the wider Combe Down area, including Mulberry Park, resulting in a set of ambitions. Workshop 2 (WS2) tested and refined these ambitions and explored how they could potentially be delivered. Workshop 3 (WS3) established some key principles for how B&NES and Curo will continue to work together in seeking to deliver the ambitions of the Charter, particularly with regard to the process for the creation of a masterplan for the Foxhill estate regeneration. The workshops brought together key decision makers from the B&NES and Curo to talk about their aspirations and issues for the future regeneration of Foxhill, building on previous work undertaken by Curo, B&NES, the community and voluntary organisations with local residents.

## Charter Ambitions

The Charter includes a series of key principles for achieving regeneration and development under four broad ambitions built up by B&NES and Curo through the workshops. These are:

1. Communities: communities which continue to be proud of themselves and their local neighbourhood
2. Connections: a neighbourhood which is well connected and fully integrated with its surroundings
3. Housing Choice: a destination where people choose to live and then want to stay
4. Quality of Place: a vibrant neighbourhood with a mix of uses and a strong local economy

A central, cross-cutting theme for the Charter running through each ambition is that of building a sense of community and integration through providing a greater choice of housing along with the active participation of people in the way their neighbourhood is run.

### Communities

***'communities which continue to be proud of themselves and their local neighbourhood'***

Successful communities are made up of people from many different backgrounds but who benefit from the trust, co-operation and general sense of wellbeing created when people interact. The Charter seeks to:

- Ensure that existing and future residents engage and then remain actively involved and engaged in creating a new neighbourhood and regeneration going forward.
- Maintain trust and empower local people to lead in developing and managing their community, utilising local knowledge and expertise.

- Foster a sense of continued community pride and ownership of the area, improving the life chances of people who live there now.
- Ensure good, affordable access to services (including smart use of technology) and provide new and flexible education, health and community/arts facilities, as part of a 'Community Hub'.
- Provide more leisure opportunities and open spaces which people can enjoy.

## **Connections**

### ***'a neighbourhood which is well connected and fully integrated with its surroundings'***

Places and communities that are well connected and linked to each other as well as linked by effective public transport and other sustainable travel modes provide benefits in terms of natural communication. This supports social and economic integration alongside reduced congestion, and pollution. The Charter seeks to provide:

- A place which is integrated with Bath and a neighbourhood that 'knits' into the wider area and is no longer out of the way.
- A unified, permeable development linking Mulberry Park and the Foxhill Estate, and the wider Combe Down area, where both existing and new housing fit seamlessly together and the community is linked by useable high quality green spaces.
- Sustainable transport links to Combe Down, the rest of the City and the wider area together with safe routes to walk and cycle, linked to the Skyline walk.
- Improved high speed broadband connectivity, required to support social and business development including small and medium sized businesses in Combe Down generally.
- Improved access to community services.

## **Housing Choice**

### ***'a destination where people choose to come to live and then want to stay'***

Regeneration can provide the opportunities for the Foxhill area to become a central part of one of Bath's key desirable neighbourhoods in which to live. The Charter aims to:

- Improve housing standards and living conditions and enhance the reputation of the area.
- Provide greater choice of homes to generate a balanced community, including affordable housing, such as rental, shared ownership and sub-market sale to meet local housing needs.
- Enable the delivery of homes which people feel an attachment to and continue to take pride in.
- Ensure that housing in all tenures allows for changes in needs and lifestyles as people's circumstances and ages change, so they can still remain fully included in their neighbourhood.
- Actively promote opportunities to work from home or work close to home.
- Design new housing so that differences in tenure are not obvious.
- Ensuring that any new housing in the estate is of the same high quality as Mulberry Park.

## **Quality of Place**

### ***'A vibrant neighbourhood with a mix of uses and a strong local economy'***

The right mix of uses in the best quality design of buildings alongside high quality public realm help to create vibrant neighbourhoods with a clear identity and strong economy that people prize. The Charter will seek proposals that:

- Create a safe environment and a walkable neighbourhood.
- Deliver high quality buildings, green infrastructure, streets and spaces, and iconic and distinctive built infrastructure (e.g. Cable Car).
- Provide a high quality, sustainable management and maintenance service.
- Establish and respond to a clear set of place making 'rules' including appropriate building heights, densities and ensuring houses look the same regardless of tenure.
- Develop skills and encourage local employment opportunities including through links with other local large employers such as the hospitals, colleges and Bath University
- Develop skills and opportunities for learning alongside a flexible community space/facilities/hub which could also be used by small market enterprises and business uses.
- Provide high speed broadband connectivity to support access to training and services.

## **Making things Happen**

A key purpose of the Charter is to provide a framework for genuinely collaborative working between B&NES, Curo and other key stakeholders including, importantly, local residents and community groups. It will provide an important framework for the masterplanning exercise that will take place alongside continued resident and stakeholder engagement. In doing so, it is recognised that the Charter will remain a 'living' document that will benefit from periodic updating and refinement to reflect the long term nature of the proposed regeneration ambitions.

This final section of the Charter sets out the key themes and principles for on-going collaborative working alongside the key next steps for further collaborative action by B&NES and Curo identified at this point in the delivery of the project. It then sets out the broad intentions with regard to the ensuing masterplanning process.

## **Working Together**

The creation of the Charter has involved extensive collaborative working and engagement. Successful delivery of the Charter ambitions through the masterplanning process and subsequent delivery stages will depend to a large extent on this collaboration continuing over a substantial period of time. Key elements identified as important for achieving this are:

- ***Governance, Communication and Engagement***  
The Foxhill Forum is already established and seeks to incorporate the views of bodies like the Community Association, Foxhill Residents Association, Residents Regeneration Panel, the Stakeholder Forum and Public Services Board into the wider decision making and delivery of the project by Curo and B&NES. The production of this Charter and engagement in the masterplanning process presents an opportunity to revisit and re-fresh these arrangements to ensure that what is in place is fit for purpose going forward.
- ***Project Management***  
Delivery of the Charter ambitions and successful regeneration will be complex. Strong project management and positive collaborative working across a wide range of stakeholders will be important, with consideration being given to the following key elements:
  - Organizing an appropriate project management structure, including an overall Partnership Board sitting above a Working/Practitioners Group or similar two tier structure.
  - A collaborative, multi-disciplinary 'Development Team' approach should be adopted, by both Curo and B&NES throughout the masterplanning and planning application processes.

- Establishing an overall project plan and timetable against which key decisions would need to be made and the project advanced in a timely manner. The issues, risks and resulting tasks for achieving this timely progress should be readily identified and understood.
- **Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs)**

PPAs are a recognized and well used tool within B&NES for formalizing and recording the above elements of project management and can also be used to respond to resource and capacity issues that could also affect the timely delivery of the project. A PPA was previously used successfully by Curo and B&NES for the Mulberry Park planning application.
- **Monitoring and Measuring Progress**

There are likely to be benefits in terms of transparency of decision making, continued collaboration, project management and identifying progress for there to be a periodic (potentially annually) review of this Charter. This would include the reconfirmation (or refinement where appropriate and agreed) of the ambitions, working arrangements and key actions.

There are also a number of key immediate areas for working together by B&NES and Curo under each of the four identified Charter ambition areas. These have been identified through the process of agreeing this initial version of the Charter alongside the concurrent production of the emerging Social and Economic Regeneration Plan. They will be updated through the proposed project management approach and periodic monitoring.

- **Delivering Communities**

Establishing and agreeing the approach to the intended integrated provision of access to services, infrastructure and opportunities for employment and skills. Continuing the high levels of engagement and consultation with the existing communities.
- **Delivering Connections**

Agreeing an appropriate strategy and design response to secure the desired physical integration of Foxhill and the surrounding area and the opportunities presented by the community hub on the Mulberry Park site. Developing a shared understanding of how people want to move towards, around and through the regeneration areas and agreeing the potential approach to the extent of demolition and/or retention of homes on the Foxhill estate.
- **Delivering Housing Choice**

Clearly establishing and agreeing a definition of and approach to the delivery of affordable housing, affordable living and housing choice generally.
- **Delivering Quality of Place**

Initiating discussions as an early part of the masterplanning process over the approach towards and content of the place making rules and how best to ensure a high quality design and place.

In addition, the Charter recognises that the successful delivery of the ambitions is interlinked with being able to demonstrate and agree the extent to which alternative options are likely to be viable. A further key action for B&NES and Curo to undertake jointly at this time is to define and agree the scope of a brief for **independent analysis of scheme viability**.



## **The Masterplanning Process**

The ambitions outlined in this Charter will be delivered through a combination of social, economic and physical regeneration. These will in a large part be delivered through a masterplanning process which will culminate in a proposal setting out the physical changes envisaged alongside the actions proposed in the emerging Social and Economic Regeneration Plan. The masterplan will acknowledge the constraints that affect the estate, particularly land ownership, as well as the opportunities provided by the development of the adjacent Mulberry Park site. Following individual discussions with private owners of properties within the estate in early 2016 and broader consultation and engagement with local residents on this Charter, the masterplanning process will start.

The project architects will then seek to establish the optimum design solution for the masterplan that best delivers the Charter ambitions whilst minimising the impact on those that do not wish to sell. Options will be developed and tested against the ambitions set out in this Charter through a series of workshops with residents, B&NES and other stakeholders. Further engagement will take place with the wider public through exhibitions to test the proposals more broadly. At each key stage options will also be tested for deliverability and financial viability. Formal approval from B&NES for the masterplan will then be sought through an outline planning application.

## **Next Steps for the Charter**

This draft Charter has been worked up jointly by Curo and officers and members of B&NES. Both partners now want to give local residents, community groups and other stakeholders an opportunity to have their say about the shared ambitions for Foxhill. Curo and B&NES would like the stakeholders to act as critical friends, providing a sounding board to the ambitions outlined in the draft Charter and potentially suggesting refinements and improvements which can be taken forward into the masterplanning exercise.