

Bath & North East Somerset Council
People & Communities Department

Invitation to Submit an Expression of Interest
A new 210 place primary free school to serve
housing development at Mulberry Park, Bath

Introduction

Under Section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 'free school presumption') where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish a new free school. Bath and North East Somerset Council has identified the need to establish a new primary school in the Foxhill area of Bath to open in September 2018.

In 2013 the former Ministry of Defence (MoD) Foxhill site, in south east Bath, was acquired by Curo for housing development and re-named Mulberry Park. Curo is a not-for-profit housing and support organisation based in Bath. More information about Curo can be found at www.curo-group.co.uk.

The city of Bath has seen population growth over a number of years and existing schools have been expanded to meet the additional demand for places. The Mulberry Park development is located in the south east Bath area where it is projected that further school places will be required to meet the increased capacity for additional pupils generated from new housing development.

The B&NES Core Strategy is the key overarching document in the Local Development Framework and is the first of a new generation of policy documents that will set out the long-term planning framework for the district. The Plan outlines the need for new primary school places based on housing development within each area.

The Core Strategy identifies redevelopment of surplus Ministry of Defence (MoD) land at Foxhill and a number of other locations to optimise the contribution that these can make to the city's development needs.

The adopted Core Strategy can be accessed on the following link

http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Planning-and-Building-Control/Planning-Policy/Core-Strategy/core_strategy_-_adopted_interactive_version.pdf

In terms of school provision, there is limited future scope to add extra capacity at primary schools in the local area and their locations are not easily accessible from the Mulberry Park development.

A new 210 place on-site primary school will be provided in order to accommodate the pupils from housing development on the former MoD Foxhill site. Developer contributions from Curo in the form of capital and land have been secured and the new school buildings will be delivered by them in consultation with the Council.

The Bath and North East Somerset School Organisation Plan 2015-2019 provides further information on school place planning in the B&NES area and can be accessed on the following link:

http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sop_2015-2019_and_beyond_final_revised_0.pdf

The authority is therefore seeking proposals from appropriate sponsors to open this new school. This school would be deemed a free school. Proposers should complete the Free School Presumption application form and return it electronically to MulberryPark_NewSchool@bathnes.gov.uk

The table below outlines timescales for the process and submission of documentation. It includes the anticipated dates for decision making together with proposed delivery timescales and opening dates.

Activity	Timescale
Invitation to Submit an Expression of Interest published	Monday 26 th September 2016
Submission period for Expression of Interest by potential academy sponsors	Monday 26 th September 2016 to Friday 18 th November 2016
Closing date/time for Submissions	4.30pm on Friday 18 th November 2016
Interviews held (if appropriate)	Week commencing 5 th December 2016
All EOI's submitted to DfE	By Monday 12 th December 2016
Academy sponsor approved by DfE	Anticipated decision around March 2017
Design & delivery of new school buildings	January 2016 – June 2018
Opening of new school	September 2018

Following receipt of the applications, the Local Authority may decide to undertake an interview process to identify its preferred bidder. This may be affected by a number of factors such as the amount of applications received and whether the Council has existing relationships with the bidders. If it is decided to interview, a shortlist of potential sponsors will be invited to discuss their bids. Following interviews if the Local Authority identifies a preferred bidder this information will be forwarded to the DfE together with all submitted bids. The Secretary of State will make the final decision on the appointment of the new free school sponsor.

The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the South West, on behalf of the Secretary of State, will consider the local authority assessments and recommendations before deciding which proposer is in the best position to take forward the new school. The RSC will inform the local authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the local authority will inform unsuccessful proposers.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss your application, please contact:

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Please return your completed application form to
MulberryPark_NewSchool@bathnes.gov.uk

NB: the local authority led free school presumption is a different route to the DfE's free school programme. Further information about how to establish a new school via the DfE's free school programme route can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-schools-in-2014-how-to-apply-mainstream-and-16-to-19-free-schools>.

Section A – APPLICANT GROUPS

In this section applicants provide information about their group. Proposers must be DfE approved sponsors. If you are not already an approved sponsor you will need to separately apply via the formal sponsor approval process. You should contact the DfE about becoming a sponsor before submitting a proposal and you can find out more information at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sponsor-an-academy>

Section B – THE SCHOOL

- **Site details including location and plans**

The new primary school will be located at Mulberry Park, on the former MoD Foxhill site. The school comprises a site of at least 0.97ha and will include either a grass pitch or an All Weather pitch (budget dependent). The housing development and school site do not currently have an address and postcode. The postcode for Fox Hill which is a road adjacent to the development site is BA2 5QN

- **Site details**

The following aerial view shows the extent of the site which was formerly owned by the MoD. It was acquired by Curo in 2013 and has outline permission for up to 700 dwellings, up to 500m² retail, up to 1,000m²

employment and up to 3,500m² community/education (to include nursery), single from entry primary school, open space and all associated infrastructure. In September 2015 Curo received reserved matters approval for Phase 1 Mulberry Park. This will deliver 275 new homes by spring 2017.

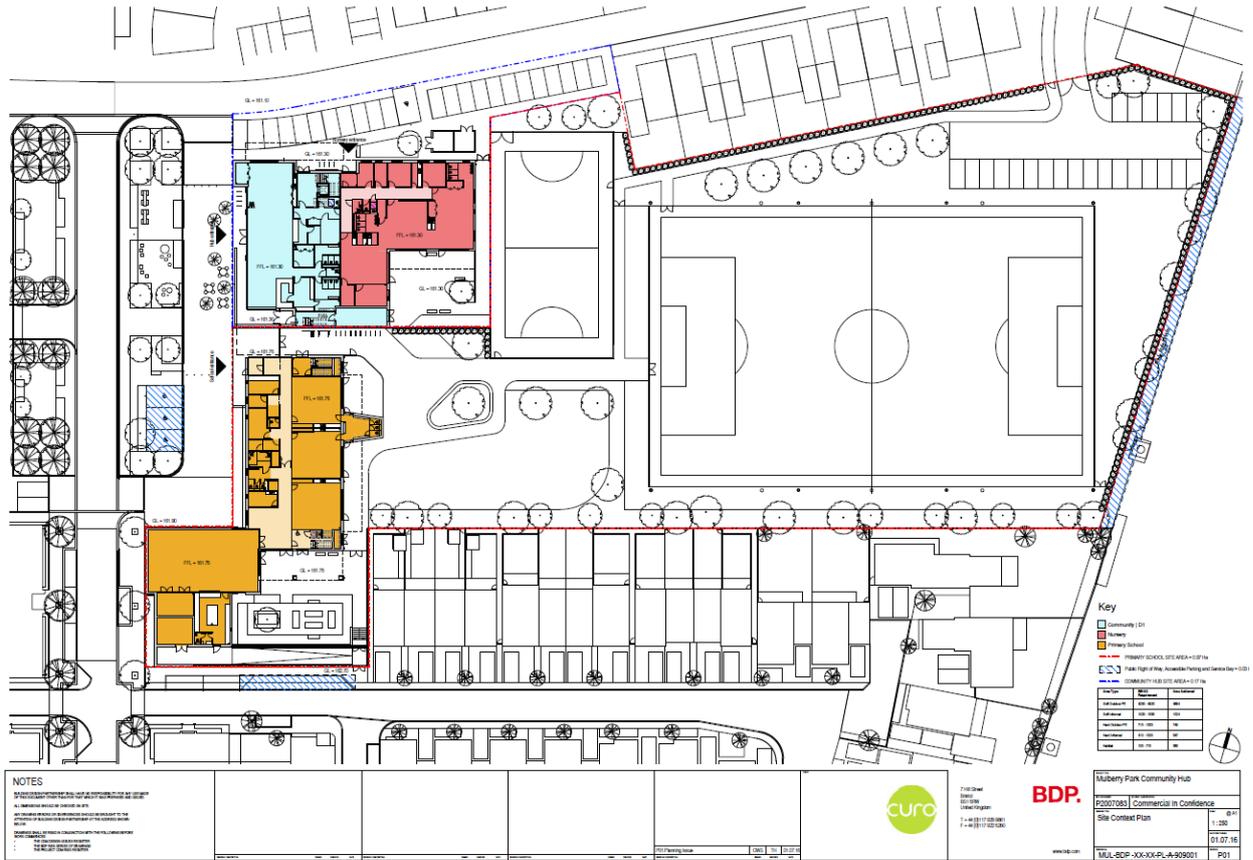


A reserved matters planning application for the new primary school, pre-school, office and enterprise facilities was submitted on 1st July 2016. Further details of the planning application can be found via the Planning section of the B&NES public website at the following address:

<http://isharemaps.bathnes.gov.uk/data.aspx?requesttype=parsetemplate&template=DevelopmentControlApplication.tmplt&basepage=data.aspx&Filter=^refval^='16/03320/RES'&history=2a8520d7e02a40949270c94d6c803f4d&SearchLayer=DCApplications>

- **Site Plan**

The following plans, provided by Curo, detail the school buildings (in orange) and the school site boundary (identified by the red line boundary)



Curo's website, which provides further information on the housing development, can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.mulberryparkbath.co.uk/>

The new school buildings will be built in accordance with BB103 guidance for a one form entry primary school. The detailed specifications and designs are currently being agreed between B&NES and Curo.

- **Pupil Capacity**

The pupil capacity for the school will be 210 places

- **PAN**

The schools Planned Admission Number will be 30.

- **Age range**

The school will serve the primary age range of 4-11 years. There may also be an opportunity to deliver pre-school nursery provision (0-4) at the adjacent facility. This would be via a separate discussion with Curo (see nursery provision below).

- **Gender**
To accommodate male and female pupils.

- **Nursery provision**

In addition to the School site, the Section 106 agreement secured an area of land of at least 500m² and a financial contribution of £363k to deliver the infrastructure for new nursery provision.

A 70 place nursery for children between the ages of 0-4 will be delivered by Curo on an adjacent site, linked to the Community Building. There may be an opportunity for the new free school to deliver this provision or alternatively Curo may engage a private provider. The new provision will be run on a commercial basis.

- **Sixth Form provision**

The school will serve the primary age range and therefore no sixth form provision is required.

- **SEN provision**

The site does not include any specialist SEN provision but will be designed in line with BB103 which includes a small amount of general SEN space provision. The free school will be expected to provide mainstream school provision for pupils with special educational needs within the local area, where appropriate.

- **Community use/shared facilities**

The new school will be located in close proximity to the new local community facilities and nursery provision. Curo are keen to promote the area as a community hub and there is the opportunity for the school to play an active role in both the community space and nursery provision if they so wish.

It is hoped the school will provide an additional community resource outside of school hours.

- **Catchment area**

No catchment areas are in use for the surrounding areas.

- **Proposed admission arrangements**

The School will have an Admission Number of 30 and will initially admit pupils from Reception Year only. In year two it will admit pupils in Reception and year 1 and so on until all year groups are provided for. The

school should be flexible and open to the possibility of admitting pupils in other year groups if the Local Authority identifies a shortfall of places in existing schools (to meet local demand).

The free school sponsor must admit pupils in accordance with the DfE Code of Practice for Admissions and Admission Appeals under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. Priority for admission to the school should be in accordance with guidance and legislation. The free school sponsor must also agree a set of admission criteria to be used in the event of the school being oversubscribed. The proposer will participate in the authority's co-ordinated admissions process and fair access protocol. These can be found on the following links;

Co-ordinated admissions - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/schools-colleges-and-learning/admissions-schools>

Fair access protocol - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/schools-colleges-and-learning/admissions-schools/area-placement-and-support-panels-fair-acc>

- **Transport arrangements**
There are no anticipated transport arrangements expected to impact upon the new school
- **Equalities impact analysis**
A separate equalities impact assessment has been carried out.

Section C - VISION

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum, please ensure you include the following:

- A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery based on educational excellence for all pupils irrespective of their starting points.
- Plans for appropriate engagement with the local communities and parents/carers during the pre-opening period and any on-going engagement.
- Excellent support facilities to meet the needs of all children, including looked after children, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, etc.
- A commitment to excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning.

Section D – EDUCATION PLAN

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- An ambitious, broad and balanced, deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake.
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets.
- A staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective performance management)
- The needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive.
- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs, homework clubs and music/art clubs
- The school's approach to : PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare; and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs)

Section E – CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- The resources you would draw on/and or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date.
- Clear evidence that you have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and run a school effectively, including: managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety.
- How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures.

Section F – FUNDING AND COSTS

A Section 106 agreement is in place to provide a one form entry primary school not to exceed a value of £4.2m. Curo will procure a contractor with school building experience to deliver the new school. Following completion the school will be transferred into Council ownership.

As prescribed by the DfE the site will then be transferred to the new free school sponsor on a 125 year lease. This will be completed prior to occupation of the new school buildings.

Following appointment, the new free school sponsor will be expected to enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State.

The DfE currently provides £25,000 for legal expenses to the successful sponsor.

B&NES will provide a one off lump sum pre-opening start up grant. The sum of £66,034 will be provided to help support initial staffing and non-staffing costs associated with setting up the new school.

In some circumstances where the new academy requires support owing to diseconomies of scale the Council may provide a sum ranging from £0 to £67,263 as additional support. Further details are available on request and the exact amount will be determined in discussion with the successful bidder.

Section G – IMPACT AND EQUALITIES ASSESSMENTS

As prescribed by Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The local authority must also consider whether the new school would impact on any groups with protected characteristics. No issues were identified as a result of the equality impact assessment analysis.