

Committee:	Development Control Committee	Agenda Item
Date:	28 June 2006	6
Title:	Request for amendments to the approved masterplan – Rochford Nurseries, Stansted Mountfitchet / Birchanger	
Author:	Jeremy Pine (01799 510460)	Item for decision

Summary

1. This report concerns a request by Croudace Ltd for amendments to the approved masterplan to accommodate changes to the road layout following the approval of a T-junction onto Foresthall Road, and also the relocation of part of the area of open space and the Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP).
2. The report follows the one presented to the DC Committee on 17 May 2006, when Members deferred making a decision as there were a number of issues that were concerning them. Officers have subsequently discussed these issues with Croudace, and this report takes those initial discussions into account. Any further information received after the writing of this report (including a further revised masterplan) will be reported.

Recommendation

3. That Members agree the revisions to the approved masterplan.

Background Papers

4. See application files UTT/1123/01/OP and UTT/0557/06/DFO

Impact

Communication/Consultation	See report on application UTT/0557/06/DFO
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Finance	None
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	None
Ward-specific impacts	Stansted Mountfitchet South and Birchanger

Workforce/Workplace	None
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Situation

5. The approved masterplan envisages the main area of open space within the Croudace site being provided along the boundary with Foresthall Road, including a LEAP. Croudace would like to relocate the bulk of the open space and the LEAP to the northern boundary, but retaining a landscaped buffer along the southern boundary to the east of the junction of the feeder road and Foresthall Road. The full reasoning for the changes are given in the attached Design Statement dated March 2006. Some changes are consequential as a result of the Taylor Woodrow layout. Following the concerns expressed by Members, Croudace are considering increasing the depth of the remaining landscaped buffer along the southern boundary, but still wish to relocate the bulk of the open space to the northern boundary.
6. Members will recall that Taylor Woodrow had to amend their section of the masterplan to accommodate a Great Crested Newt habitat along Foresthall Road, which balances the effect of the changes now being requested by Croudace. Officers have taken into account the concerns that Members have over the relocation of the open space. Overall, the effect of the masterplan changes along the southern boundary should be neutral. Taking the Croudace and Taylor Woodrow sites as a whole, there should be no increase in the number of houses directly abutting Foresthall Road as opposed to being set back behind landscaping and open space.
7. The effect along the northern boundary would be beneficial, as the relocated open space would enhance views through to the windmill from what is an elevated part of the site. Also, the setting back of buildings behind the open space would reduce their prominence due to the site's elevation when viewed from the north.
8. At the meeting on 17 May, Members raised a number of other concerns during their discussion of the proposed amendments to the approved masterplan:

Proximity of Phase 2 minor access road to Foresthall Road. Segregation of the bridleway from the minor access road. "Pinching in" of the bridleway to Foresthall Road.

The masterplan is conceptual only and is not concerned with detailed layouts of individual phases. Croudace have been made aware of the Members' concerns about the access road and its relationship to the bridleway and to Foresthall Road, so these can be dealt with as part of the Phase 2 reserved matters submission. The bridleway has to "pinch in" to Foresthall Road so that it meets up with the approved Taylor Woodrow section of bridleway to the east.

Northernmost phase of housing to be constructed early

Phasing is not a specific masterplan issue, but there is a condition on the outline planning permission requiring phasing to be agreed. In this case the site would be worked from south to north, i.e. away from the Foresthall Road junction. This phasing would be consistent with that agreed on the Taylor Woodrow site. Inevitably there will be some disruption to new residents during construction phases, but this will exist irrespective of the direction that the site is worked.

Public open space to be introduced at an earlier time

The S106 Agreement requires that the timetabling of the open space and LEAP be agreed with the local planning authority before development commences. Croudace have concerns that providing the open space in advance of the Phase 3 housing could result in lack of natural supervision. Officers share this concern, but a suggested compromise could be to redefine Phase 2 so that it includes all the housing down the west side of the site which would provide some natural surveillance of the open space, which could then also be provided as part of Phase 2. Croudace have initially indicated that this revised phasing strategy would be acceptable, in which case it will be reflected in the revised masterplan drawings.

Safe routes to school

Croudace's network of paths would link through to the school site and to Taylor Woodrow's, network, which in turn link to Church Road, Foresthall Road and Stoney Common / Manor Road. There should be no undue conflict with vehicular traffic.

Bridlepath to be provided early

The bridleway along Foresthall Road would be part of the advanced infrastructure works for which planning permission was granted under reference UTT/0554/06/DFO on 25 May, however Members excluded it by condition as they were concerned about its relationship to the remaining open space.

9. The revised masterplan includes the Phase 1 layout for information purposes only. Members are not being asked to approve the Phase 1 layout as part of the masterplan amendments, which are only conceptual. The Phase 1 layout is the subject of a separate report (UTT/0557/06/OP) in the schedule.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
None	None	None	None