

Rodbourne Cheney Play Area Refurbishment – Tender Evaluation Report

Report to: Leisure & Recreation Committee

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1. Purpose of Report

To present the outcome of the formal tender evaluation process for the proposed refurbishment of the Rodbourne Cheney Play Area and to seek Members' decision on the appointment of a preferred contractor for delivery of the works.

The council issued a Request for Quotation (RFQ) to redevelop the play area on Pembroke Gardens, inviting suppliers to submit a design and installation proposal. Six bids were received by the deadline.

Evaluation was conducted in accordance with the published scoring matrix, which weighted price (60%) and quality (40%) based on four key non-price criteria. Contractor C scored highest on the quality metrics and presented a preferred design as supported by the stakeholder working group, although their bid was not the lowest priced. The Council is asked to consider the evaluation outcomes and either:

- Approve award to Contractor A, the highest scoring bidder based on total weighted score, or
- Approve award to Contractor C, based on quality, stakeholder preference, and rationale outlined below.

2. Background

An open and competitive procurement process was conducted inviting design-and-build proposals for a new accessible play area. Submissions were received from six contractors and assessed using a 100-point weighted evaluation system and evaluated across six weighted areas:

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Price	60%
Technical Specification and Design Compliance	15%
Experience & Track Record	10%
Ability to Complete Ahead of October 2025	5%
Sustainability & Environmental Considerations	5%
Warranty & Aftercare	5%

Each non-price element was scored 0–5, multiplied by a factor (depending on the weight), and converted to percentage points. Price was calculated on a pro-rata basis using the lowest bid as the benchmark.

Each contractor was scored accordingly based on submitted designs, cost, and supporting documentation.

3. Evaluation Scores

Bidder	Price	Price Score	Design (15%)	Experience (10%)	Timeline (5%)	Sustainability (5%)	Aftercare (5%)	Total Score
A	£79,979.35	60.00%	9.00% (3/5)	10.00% (5/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	91.00%
B	£84,998.20	56.46%	12.00% (4/5)	6.00% (3/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	86.46%
C	£86,927.00	55.22%	12.00% (4/5)	10.00% (5/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	89.22%
D	£88,916.54	53.94%	6.00% (2/5)	10.00% (5/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	81.94%
E	£89,996.00	53.35%	9.00% (3/5)	10.00% (5/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	84.35%
F	£90,000.00	53.33%	12.00% (4/5)	8.00% (4/5)	4.00% (4/5)	3.00% (3/5)	4.00% (4/5)	84.33%

4. Stakeholder Feedback – Play Area Working Group (2 May)

The Play Area Working Group meeting, held on Friday 2nd May, included key community stakeholders, notably representatives from MOAM (Mums on a Mission) and Becky from Pipa Play, who assessed the designs from an inclusive play and usability perspective. Key findings were:

- **Contractor A**
 - Challenging climbing frame with stimulating risk.
 - Non-inclusive seesaw (no transfer provision for wheelchair users).
 - Poor quality and engagement of play panels.
 - Overcrowded layout with poor flow; seesaw sited directly in front of entrance.
 - Seating lacked backrests and armrests.
- **Contractor B**
 - Very welcoming front panel design.
 - Balanced risk and challenge.
 - Easy-access rocker but slight limitations on manoeuvring space.
 - Excellent wheelchair-accessible roundabout and good sensory provision.

- **Contractor C**
 - Excellent trampoline and wheelchair roundabout.
 - Seating poorly placed.
 - Multi-play unit had a steep, non-wheelchair accessible ramp.
 - Rocker lacked sufficient back support.
- **Contractor D**
 - Strong use of communication panels and orbit play item.
 - Overall lower play value and fewer features than others.
 - Gravity bowl item was disliked.
 - Positive risk and challenge features.
- **Contractor E**
 - Excellent flooring visuals.
 - Missing handrails on multi-play unit; slide not accessible from ramp (stepped).
 - Limited range of play equipment overall.
- **Contractor F**
 - Praised for ramp and seesaw design.
 - Lacked sufficient variety of play kit and sensory features.
 - Lower perceived risk and challenge.

5. Design Considerations and Compliance

Although Contractor A scores highest overall in the evaluation matrix (91.00), the Working Group raised concerns over the layout and specification compliance, notably:

- A core play item was originally sited outside the fenced area, which contravened the integrated design intent. This was rectified but created poor flow and design.
- Surfacing and fencing had therefore been reduced to cut costs, resulting in a non-like-for-like comparison with other submissions.
- Accessibility, flow, and play value were all considered inferior relative to alternatives.

Conversely, Contractor C's design, despite scoring lower overall, received strong qualitative support from stakeholders for its inclusive equipment choices and accessible features.

Legal and Procurement Considerations

The council may legally award to Contractor C despite not being the lowest priced bidder provided the award is based on the pre-set evaluation criteria. In this case, Contractor C scored higher than B, D, E, and F, and came second only to A. The combination of a strong quality score, design preference, and valid stakeholder reasoning supports a robust rationale for choosing C.

The council cannot return to bidders to request design changes - once the procurement period has closed, as this would risk breaching transparency and equal treatment rules. However, clarifications can be sought if minor, non-material.

6. Options for Committee

Option 1 – Appoint Contractor A

- *Pros:* Lowest cost and highest total evaluation score.
- *Cons:* Stakeholder concerns over specification compliance, accessibility, and long-term user experience. Design not supported by the Working Group.

Option 2 – Appoint Contractor C

- *Pros:* Preferred by the Working Group and stakeholders (MOAM, Pipa Play). Strong design rationale, accessible play equipment, and good technical quality.
- *Cons:* Slightly higher cost (£6,947.65 more than Contractor A). Requires recorded justification for deviating from highest score.

It is legally and procedurally acceptable for the Council to appoint a contractor other than the highest scoring, provided the rationale is transparent and based on quality, specification alignment, and user benefit. Please refer to appendices A.

7. Recommendation

That the Committee formally note the stakeholder and Working Group preference for Contractor C and resolves to:

- Either **appoint Contractor A** on the basis of best value score, or
- **Appoint Contractor C** as the preferred contractor based on superior design quality, inclusivity, and specification compliance – with the reasons for deviation clearly recorded in the meeting minutes.
- That the Committees recommendation is presented to the May 2025 Full Council Committee for final decision.