Following Full Council's decision on the Trowbridge Close play-area refurbishment, the unsuccessful supplier has raised concerns regarding the procurement process.

A proposal from Bidder A was presented to the Leisure and Recreation Committee on 3 September and recommended for approval. However, as the expenditure required Full Council approval, officers undertook further due diligence and obtained a broadly comparable quotation before the matter was presented to Full Council. The alternative proposal was several thousand pounds lower, and Members approved that scheme on the basis of best value.

Both suppliers were anonymised within the decision-making reports. Bidder A's quotation, detailed design, layout and pricing breakdown were not provided to the alternative supplier. The alternative quotation was obtained against a general functional specification setting out the types of equipment and works required.

There is no evidence that anything underhanded took place, and the Council's normal process was followed. However, officers recognise why the timing of the two reports may have caused concern or created that perception for the unsuccessful supplier.

The supplier's comments will be formally recorded and taken into account when preparing future play-area procurements, particularly regarding the timing of reports, the information placed in the public domain and ensuring that comparison quotations are obtained before a preferred scheme is presented to Committee.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Note the concerns raised by the unsuccessful supplier and the clarification provided regarding the procurement process;
2. Confirm that the comments will be considered when planning future play-area procurements; and
3. Authorise Officers (on behalf of the chair) to issue a formal response to the supplier on behalf of the Committee.