

Playground Committee -Report

The Committee met for the first time on the 7th January and will meet again on 5th February. The Committee's main task has been to progress the renewal of the Bourdillon Field playground. This has involved applying for planning permission and inviting tenders from potential suppliers of playground equipment. Once tenders have been received there will be an evaluation process leading to a recommendation to Council for placing a contract with a supplier.

Planning Application:

An application has been submitted (ref: P24/S3823/FUL). This is for the proposed extension to the existing playground area. Once the Committee has selected a single supplier and design, the Council will need to apply for Permitted Development approval on the existing area which will require an equipment lay-out diagram and surfacing information and plans. Provided that the surface is mainly grass with artificial surfacing only where it is needed (ie there are no 'engineering' works, then this should get approved within 2 weeks. If the recommended design includes more extensive artificial surfacing then SODC will require another full planning application along with the associated evidence such as biodiversity and arboricultural reports and it will probably take 12 more weeks. The Council won't be able to place a contract until it has planning permission which will then delay implementation until the autumn.

Invitation to Tender:

An Invitation to Tender (ITT) was sent out to a number of potential suppliers and the period for notifications of intention to bid has now closed. Twelve suppliers indicated that they intended to tender. A site visit for potential suppliers followed by a question and answer session was organised on the 7th January. Six suppliers attended. In the Q&A session Committee members explained that they were looking for imaginative designs but in accordance with the specifications set out in the ITT; there was no set budget although the ITT gave an indicative range of £150,000 to £200,000; the Committee emphasised the need for designs to sit well in the context of a village setting and the open nature of Bourdillon Field, suppliers were asked to use their expertise and experience to come up with solutions and the Committee did not wish to be unduly prescriptive in terms of design and items of equipment. Suppliers were concerned that the potential budget range could mean that providing competitive bids could be difficult. The Committee advised that tenders could provide a range of options around a design allowing them to suggest 'add-ons' or cheaper and more expensive alternative items of equipment.

The date for the submission of tenders is 7th February.

Evaluation:

An Evaluation Work Group has been formed, membership to be approved at this Council meeting. A scheme setting out the principal criteria and, within those criteria, their elements and the weighting to be attached to them has been prepared. This is set out in a spreadsheet to enable each member of the Evaluation Group to individually and separately assess and score tenders with results then being aggregated as a basis for ranking bids. That process will begin as soon as tenders have been received.