

ITEM 8: PREFERRED CONTRACTOR REVIEW

‘Preferred Contractor’, for this review, refers to the contractor who is requested to quote / complete works without competition and up to the value of £1000 (as approved by Full Council 21 March 2022)

During 2022, the preferred contractors in effect became ONE preferred contractor

3 possible expectations of ‘preferred contractor’ process:

1. Councillors: value for money, approved process, transparency
2. Residents: prompt action, value for money, fair process
3. Clerk(s): efficient process, time-saving, reliability

How widely has the process been used and in what tasks?

	Winter 21-22	Feb-Dec 22
Allotments	50%	10%
Play Equipment repairs	30%	60%
Site maintenance (eg soil erosion, fences)	n/a	20%
Miscellaneous (eg bus shelter, phone box)	20%	10%

Has it saved money, including administration time?

- Administration time: Yes: only 1 source of quotes. Because more time efficient, more works being completed,
- ‘Preferred contractor’ quotes have been very reasonable & itemised for materials & labour

Has it improved efficiency?

- Yes, for SCO PC: turnaround of repairs and maintenance is much more prompt
- Yes, for DPC: 1 source of quotes and good mutual understanding of what’s needed by/for contractor

Has the workmanship been up to standard?

Yes,

- Signing off process has holes in it, but improved by weekly Play Area Inspections. Cllr Cooke inspects, signs off & reports back as soon as possible.

- Potential issue of some more structural repairs to play equipment needing more qualified contractor?

Has the process been fair and transparent?

- From a 'Due Process' point of view? **Yes:**
 - Full Council approved,
 - spending capped,
 - including in Financial Regulations & Standing Orders
 - AMC Committee approve ALL works regardless (unless emergency works, when retro-approval is sought)
- From a resident's point of view? **Yes:**
 - Paper trail from enquiry to quote to approval is evident
 - residents / tenants sometimes recognise & talk to Preferred Contractors.
 - Residents see quicker action.
- From a resident's point of view? **NO:**
 - Not evidence of sharing work amongst other capable local contractors or knowingly getting best value for money, possibly
- From Councillors point of view?
 - **YES?** Faster resolutions during AMC meetings leading to prompt turnaround of general works
 - **NO?** process is resulting in 1 contractor undertaking the majority of work outside the annual maintenance contracts.

Strengths

- ❖ Good rapport & understanding
- ❖ Reassurance & reliability
- ❖ Supporting smaller local businesses

Weaknesses

- Work requires quick signing off, but contractors don't always know when they'll do the works.
- Delivery address of eg parts to DPC home. These then need delivering to preferred contractor
- Work concentrated in 1 contractor

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACTORS - general comments

2022-23 AMC tenders provided awkwardly small number of contractors interested. 11 businesses invited, 4 returns (1 of these 4 quoted to do all sections or none)

Asset Management have suggested reducing 2023-24 contract to 9 months (July 2023-end of Feb 2024) , to allow for 2024-25 contract to run March to March.

Future availability of interested contractors a concern.

Who checks the experts (eg tree works?) This became problematic after 2021 Tree Survey. Size & cost of tree works meant a minimum of 3 quotes for works were required. This led to 3 different interpretations of what work was needed and therefore were not like-for-like quotes.