

**RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER
DELEGATED AUTHORITY FROM
EXECUTIVE/COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ☒
DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN
THE CONSTITUTION ☒**



DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION TAKEN BY:	Strategic Director of Environment & Operations
IN CONSULTATION WITH:	Executive Member
PORTFOLIO AREAS:	Environment and Operations Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Witton Park Play Area Procurement

1. DECISION

To approve the award of the contract for the redevelopment of the children’s play area and adventure play area at Witton Country Park and the award for preferred bidder status for play area developments, until 31st March 2025, to the successful bidder Kompan, following a tendering exercise.

2. REASON FOR DECISION

A tendering exercise has been completed via the Chest procurement system and two compliant bids were received by the deadline. Both bids were evaluated and a preferred bidder was chosen by the evaluation panel.

3. BACKGROUND

Witton Country Park is the Council’s premier and only country park. It is a destination park and attracts more visitors than any other park in the Borough. People attend the country park to play sport, take part in recreational activities, to attend an event or to enjoy the many outdoor features of the Country Park.

‘The Wits’ adventure play and play area is one of the main attractions for families visiting the Country Park. The play area provides opportunities for children 2-13 years of age to have fun, play independently and safely in a stimulating, exciting and attractive play area

The play area at Witton Country Park was made from wood in the main and the wood has deteriorated. As a result the play area need to be replaced, as the play equipment is in part unsafe and many items have had to be decommissioned to ensure safety is paramount for users.

The Executive Board approved on 8th December 2022, the procurement for the redevelopment of the Wits play area and children's play area at Witton country park, plus also awarding the successful bidder, preferred bidder status for future play area developments by the Council until 31st March 2025.

The Council was due to receive £350,000 section 106 funding, as a contribution towards Green Infrastructure / Public Open Space and associated community facilities, within the West Blackburn area. This was from the redevelopment of a site at Brokenstone Road, where up to 450 residential units were planned. Witton Country Park is located in the West Blackburn area, therefore the £350,000 s106 funding could be invested in new play facilities at Witton Country Park to replace The Wits.

Tendering for the redevelopment of play spaces was a lengthy process and whilst there were a small number of frameworks available for the procurement of approved contractors, this still required a tendering process to be followed for each site, so a preferred supplier route was identified as the most beneficial option for the Council, to enable the process of procurement to be shortened, enabling early access to any redeveloped play area.

The £350,000 proposals include a large activity play area on the current site of The Wits and a full re-vamp of the younger children's playground.

Following a tendering exercise for the play area redevelopment at The Wits, two compliant bids have been received. The two bids have been evaluated by a panel and the preferred bidder is Kompan.

The award conditions also allocates Kompan as the preferred bidder for any future play area facilities by the Council within the next 2 years until 31st March 2025.

4. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

A number of complaints have been received about the current condition of the play area and unless the play area is redeveloped, it will inevitably have to close.

If the play area closed it would undoubtedly lead to less visitors attending the park and many children in the Borough would have less opportunities to engage in high quality fun, safe, inclusive and positive play alongside other children.

Additionally, with the recent opening of Go Ape, which is family centric, the 'family offer' at the park has been greatly enhanced and there is a greater opportunity to attract more visitors to the park from the borough and from surrounding areas.

There would also be reputational damage to the Council if our destination park had no play area and adventure play facility for children and families to enjoy.

The Council has procured contracts for play area redevelopment with Kompan in the last 2 years, with their ability to deliver projects clearly evidenced and satisfactory. The tender also required bidders to provide metal equipment, which would be more resistant to deterioration than wood.

The build programme is likely to be up to 20 weeks once approvals have been given for the award.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding for the play area redevelopment has been identified from the section 106 funding from residential development in the locality.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The procurement of the play area and preferred supplier status for Kompan has followed the Government's procurement rules, with the Council's Central Procurement Team overseeing the tendering, the evaluation and award of the contract.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The tendering, evaluation and award are managed within existing resources, as will the management of the redevelopment of the play area.

8. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

An alternative bid was received but the evaluation panel decided that the bid did not match the play value of equipment that Kompan provided.

9. CONSULTATIONS

Potential bidders for the redevelopment of the play area were identified from a procurement framework and were consulted on the project. The Council has also covered a number of questions posed via the Member of Parliament (MP) for Blackburn and via its complaints procedure and also via social media on the redevelopment of the play area, as well as consulting with the developers who have made available the section 106 funding.

All the above support the redevelopment of the play area at the Council's destination park, Witton Country Park.

The Executive Members for Environment and Operations, plus the Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention & Well-being have been consulted on the proposals and scheme of work in line with the December 2022 Executive Board Report.

10. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Tony Watson
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DATE:	26/06/2023
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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	Tender documents.
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