

Liverpool City Region Growth Platform

Liverpool City Region Visitor Economy Strategy Tender Specification

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1. Introduction

This tender specification sets out the key deliverables and requirements for the development of a new Visitor Economy Strategy for the Liverpool City Region. While the region's current tourism strategies run until 2025, Covid-19 has fundamentally changed the policy and operating landscape meaning a new approach is needed to strengthen the sector's resolve and aid the speed of its recovery. This will include building the resilience of the region's tourism businesses that have been so heavily impacted by national restrictions and establishing priority visitor markets over the short, medium and long term. It will also mean repurposing our existing projects and initiatives to build back business and consumer confidence as well as sharpening our approach for engaging DCMS and other government departments.

The City Region's Visitor Economy is founded on a strong and collaborative approach to working, backed by good governance, effective leadership and the desire to make things happen. We are no strangers to challenging and difficult times, and as has been the case on so many other occasions, we will come out stronger for it. As a result, we are seeking a dynamic consultancy team that shares our dedication and passion for the visitor economy and is prepared to work tirelessly with us to shape a new vision for its future.....as well as helping us establish how to achieve it.

2. Background

The visitor economy of the LCR forms an important part of the areas economic and social fabric. Pre Covid, it employed 57,000 people, generating in the region of £4.7 billion per annum. The main tourism centres of the region are Liverpool, Southport and Wirral who attract a mix of domestic and international leisure and business visitors. There are other places in the City Region that attract significant numbers of visitors including its coastal and open spaces and the emergence of destinations such as Prescott, St Helens and Halton.

Over the last 10 years the City Region has experienced exponential growth in visitors from overseas and domestic markets which has been matched by investment in infrastructure, amenities and connectivity. In terms of its business base, the sector has over 10,000 SME's providing consumer facing services (leisure, hospitality, retail, travel trade etc) or operate within its wider supply chains. They are supplemented by major brands such as Knowsley Safari, Aintree Race Course, the Arena & Convention Centre Liverpool (ACCL), National Museums Liverpool (NML), Liverpool FC, Liverpool ONE, international hotel chains and Liverpool John Lennon Airport who help differentiate the region from other destinations and offer visitors a unique mix of things to do.

The City Region's VE strategy runs until 2025 and is supported by an investment strategy that runs to the same timeline. Their primary objectives being to increase the region's share of domestic and overseas leisure and business stays, and to increase competitiveness by sustaining sources of long-term investment.

The overall target to generate £4.7bn in economic impact per annum was achieved in 2019. A range of initiatives have also been progressed to sustain funding into the sector (product development, skills and training, destination marketing and conference subvention etc) including the use Combined Authority (CA) Strategic Investment funding and the potential for introducing a visitor levy.

3. Governance & Structures

The City Region's Visitor Economy sector is governed through the Visitor Economy Board (VEB), which forms part of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The VEB is accountable to the CA and has responsibility for the region's VE strategy and comprises the private sector chairs of the region's local authority visitor economy networks and sector specialists. As the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for the city region, Growth Platform (the delivery body for the Local Enterprise Partnership) is accountable to the VEB for strategy, delivery and funding. Through this arrangement, Growth Platform

commissions Marketing Liverpool to manage tourism membership, destination marketing and convention bureau services.

Taking all of these elements into consideration, the City Region was in active discussion with Visit Britain and DCMS with regard to the Tourism Sector deal pre Covid. Discussions have taken place at a ministerial level and included indicative proposals relating to a pilot Tourism Zone.

4. Covid-19 – VE Recovery Plan

The City Region's Visitor Economy has been hit harder than many other cities and regions as a result of COVID-19, with the overall economic loss being in the region of £2.4 billion to date. To ensure the sector developed a structured and pragmatic approach to the recovery, the VEB agreed 4 broad priorities to help inform the City Region's wider recovery planning and guide subsequent discussion with Government regarding the Tourism Sector Deal. They are as follows:-

1. **Providing Business Support, Advice and Guidance** - Measures to ensure the survival and resilience of tourism businesses pre recovery and in preparation for recovery. Specific focus on self-employed, micro businesses and SME's due to the importance and density of these businesses in the LCR tourism economy.
2. **Protecting our Destination Management Organisations** – Aimed at developing the resilience of the City Region's DMO's to lead the recovery of region's visitor economy during and post Covid-19. The region's DMOs play a key role in co ordinating and leading the sector locally therefore new funding solutions and working arrangements are needed to offset significant losses in commercial revenue streams.
3. **Building Back Business Tourism & Events** – Establishing a clear road map for the re opening of the region's major conference and events venues, as well as repurposing existing investment to regain lost market share. This includes using the skills and capability within the City Region to open venues like the ACCL safely and in compliance with Covid-19 guidelines and supporting Visit Britain to progress the national business events strategy.
4. **Driving Demand across our Leisure Markets** - A destination led approach that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of visitors and uses the strength of Liverpool and the diversity of the City Region's coastal and resort offer/amenities to meet the emerging market needs/preferences

Each of the priorities are being delivered through an action plan which has resulted in several initiatives being developed or implemented. They range from a new £3m project for business events and the development of dedicated VE business support programme to the creation of a new sector skills plan and a proposed c.£3m investment in destination marketing. At a wider level, several of the City Region's destinations can secure investment in infrastructure over the next 2 – 3 years through the Government's Town Deal programme.

While these interventions demonstrate the positive approach the City Region is taking to rebuild tourism, the restrictions on the movement of visitors will almost certainly last until summer, if not autumn 2021 as the Covid-19 vaccine takes full effect. Within this timeframe, it is unclear how short-term initiatives that have delivered high impact since the start of the pandemic will be maintained. Similarly, projects that were being considered pre pandemic need to be repurposed and restructured to have the optimum effect in rebuilding consumer and business confidence.

On a wider macro-economic level, there are a range of factors that will also impact recovery, not least Brexit and key government policy areas regarding central funding for tourism and the continuation of fiscal measures including the retention of lower of VAT thresholds and Air Passenger Duty.

5. The Brief

The changes inflicted on the City Region's visitor economy by Covid-19 has accelerated the requirement to refresh the current strategy. As highlighted, the priority to support business through the next 12 – 18 months is a fundamental requirement both in terms of conserving the various sectors that make up the visitor economy, and their role in maintaining the region's visitor offer and long-term competitiveness.

Working from the region's existing strategic and investment plans in conjunction with our priorities for Covid-19 recovery, consultancy support is required to help establish a new strategy for the City Region's visitor economy running to March 2023. The strategy will provide the basis for dialogue with the CA and Government departments as well as supporting the City Region's ongoing ambitions to play a full and active role supporting the Tourism Sector deal.

This will be delivered by rationalising the range of existing and potential programmes being developed across the City Region into a coherent plan of action and strengthening our linkages into other sectors including culture, creative, transport and digital. Whilst the scope of the strategy is by no means exhaustive, the main areas of focus will be:-

Development Area	Rationale	Intended Outcomes
Business Support & Resilience	Establishing future visitor economy business support initiatives based on insight/mapping from Covid-19 programmes (regional and national).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building case for sustaining dedicated VE business support services/resources. - Prioritisation and establishing the evidence base for the next round of Growth Hub/BEIS funding (consumer facing & supply chain businesses) - Improved alignment with CA local support programmes and other forms of business support funding.
Demand Generation	Establishing short term strategy (2 years) to build back business confidence and markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alignment with business growth programmes - Strengthened proposals for LCR destination marketing SIF (domestic/international markets) and implementation of business events SIF projects - Integration with wider place-based regeneration initiatives (e.g. Town Deals etc).
Sector Skills	Integration of emerging VE Skills for Growth Agreement into wider VE strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alignment with skills broker and apprenticeship programmes. - Strengthening case for dedicated sector governance/CA funding programmes, employer engagement/VEB skills priorities clarified. - Establishing the rationale for employer led programmes in conjunction with trade associations such as the Liverpool Hospitality Association.
Tourism Sector Deal	Developing the City Region's approach and positioning to support the tourism sector deal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established road map for potential tourism zone pilot (post Covid) - Mechanism for engaging DCMS/VB and leveraging local investment secured (that

		has the potential to be secured) to develop our business case. - Clarifying longer term funding ask/requirements to support the implementation of the strategy.
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The consultant team will also need to consider the City Region’s DMO structures and future options for delivery in light of reduced commercial incomes. This includes the options for securing core funding from local or national sources (or both) and the opportunity for further dialogue with DCMS/Visit Britain regarding the review of DMO’s we understand are taking place at national level.

The strategy will also need to be aligned with the local plans being developed through the City Region’s Visitor Economy Networks, the CA recovery plan and the short, medium and long-term proposals for a UK Tourism Recovery Plan currently being formulated by DCMS.

6. Timeline & Milestones

Below are the high-level indicative timelines in which this project will be delivered:

	w/c 18 th January	w/c 25 th January	w/c 1 st February	w/c 8 th February	w/c 15 th February	w/c 1 st March	w/c 8 th March	w/c 22 nd March
Selection Process & Award								
Project initiation meeting								
Partner & Stakeholder Consultation/Document Review								
Initial Findings & Priority Setting								
Strategy Development & Action Planning								
Strategy First Draft								
Strategy Second Draft								
Strategy Final Draft								

Project procurement, award and initiation will need to be progressed within an acute timeframe. In order to provide bidders with key milestones, the timeline below indicates the response time and proposed timescales for the award:

Milestone	21/12	18/1	20/1	22/1	25/1
Project Specification Issued					
Submissions/ Tenders received					
Written submission evaluation					
Award					
Inception meeting					

7. Format & Content of Submission

Guidance for the submission of tenders is as follows:-

- Submissions should be in MS Word or PDF formats and not exceed 6 sides of A4.
- It is expected that submissions will set out how the requirements will be met, in terms of providing the desired outputs on time and on budget.
- Submissions should also provide a clear indication of how resources will be deployed and apportioned, including the necessary supporting systems and tools needed to fulfil the brief, factored into the overarching cost schedule.
- Brief overview of key personnel and their relevant professional experience and qualifications should be included.
- Measures and approach to managing/mitigating project risks should also be outlined.

COMPLETED TENDERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY EMAIL TO Natasha.mealor@growthplatform.org BY 5pm on 18th January 2021.

The deadline for any queries prior to submission is Wednesday 13th January and these should also be sent by email to Natasha.mealor@growthplatform.org

8. Contract Award Criteria

Contracts awarded to tenders will be based on those offers that are the most economically advantageous to the Liverpool City Region Growth Platform based upon the following criteria:

Price 35%
Quality 65%

The Liverpool City Region Growth Platform will evaluate quality and price submissions separately for an invitation to quote where price is not the sole deciding factor. This helps to ensure that quality evaluations are as effective and fair as possible.

Quality Criteria

The quality criteria will be assessed against a written submission outlining the process you would adopt for delivering the project brief set out above.

The assessment criteria for the quality submission will be assessed against your responses to the following questions:-

- What methodology will you adopt for delivering the brief? (33.3%)
- What relevant experience and expertise will you bring to the project in terms of developing strategy for the visitor economy where multiple destinations and stakeholders are involved? (33.3%).
- What is your track record in delivering projects of this nature and working across the various sub sectors of the visitor economy? (33.3%)

The scoring mechanism for scored questions will be detailed as follows unless stated otherwise.

Score	Meaning
0	Unacceptable response. Requirement level is not met. Many important issues are completely un-addressed or response wholly inadequate or inappropriate. Concerns are serious and risk levels unacceptable for many areas.
2	Poor response. Requirement levels are adequate for only some important issues. Some important issues are largely incomplete. Concerns are serious and risk levels unacceptable for some areas.
4	Adequate response. Requirement level is partially met. Overall the proposals are satisfactory, but some issues are weak. Risk levels apply but Bidder has demonstrated understanding of how they will meet all minimum requirements.
6	Good response. Requirement level is partially met, competence is demonstrated in all areas but there is scope for more detail and more depth in some areas.
8	Very good response. Requirement level is met with only a few minor weaknesses or queries. Competent bid demonstrating overall understanding of requirements and experience in all areas.
10	Excellent response. Requirement level fully met. All key issues addressed. Range of examples of good practice, experience, understanding of requirements.

References

Please provide details of two comparable projects undertaken for clients within the visitor economy/tourism sector.

Terms & Conditions

The Liverpool City Region Growth Platform standard legal terms and conditions will be used to govern procurement and contract management. These arrangements will be confirmed on completion of the tender

process. Please note that Growth Platform does not negotiate these standard terms as they are considered to be fair and reasonable.

Conditions of Tender

- Please be aware that due to the relatively low indicative budget for this work (i.e. less than the current OJEU limits) there is no regulatory obligation for us to provide feedback if you are unsuccessful.
- We reserve the right to discontinue this tender process at any time and not award a contract.
- You will not be entitled to claim from us any costs or expenses which you may incur in preparing and/or submitting your Tender at any stage of this exercises. This applies whether or not your organisation is successful.

9. Budget

Based on external support for the development of the White Paper (exclusive of VAT) a maximum of £20,000 has been allocated to this project.