

Growth Platform Invitation to Tender

Destination Marketing Website Development

Growth Platform

Growth Platform is the Liverpool City Region's (LCR) Growth Company which has been established by the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Combined Authority (CA) to deliver the City Region's business growth and sector development, working in partnership with business, the constituent Local Authorities, Universities, Colleges and third sector partners.

The Visitor Economy is a priority sector to for Growth Platform, with the potential to deliver major growth bringing both economic benefits and reputational advantage to LCR. This project is directly linked to the City Region's Visitor Economy Recovery Strategy 2021 - 2023 and the specific priorities for increasing the city region's share of international and national visitor markets. Working in conjunction with the City Region's Destination Marketing Board, Growth Platform has been commissioned to be the accountable body for this project and responsible for the delivery of the project outcomes.

Introduction

In July 2021, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) agreed to support a new Destination Marketing Project aimed at bringing tourists back to the city region and rebuilding market confidences. The 3-year programme, supported by public and private investment, will integrate, and coordinate the delivery of destination marketing activities across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) by harnessing the collective appeal of its individual assets and recognised destinations to support the immediate recovery of the sector following the impact of the pandemic and longer-term economic growth.

In support of the destination-led approach to marketing, the project will enhance the region's digital marketing infrastructure through the enhancement and development of the three destination websites (VisitLiverpool, VisitSouthport, VisitWirral), investing in a new integrated operating platform and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The aim will be to enhance the functionality of the content management system (CMS) and the accessibility to LCR content across all domains. It will also improve the user experience through enhanced navigation, search criteria, fulfilment, and the ability to access dynamic content. The platforms will also support the delivery of the campaign activity and enable the management of content to increase search rankings, maximise the experience on mobile platforms and content sharing through social media channels.

The new websites will be the platforms to showcase Liverpool City Region's tourism offer to articulate the unique compelling assets and characteristics of the City Region. It is essential, however, that the individual requirements of the three destination websites, and their specific needs, are supported enable them to reach their specific audiences and developing theme specific content, in addition to overarching regional themes. Each Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) are at different stages of maturity and the unique requirements of each partner is attached to this overview and forms part of this brief.

Current Position

Until the pandemic hit, the City Region number of staying and day visitors had grown significantly over the past decade, driven largely by leisure rather than business related trips. The value of the sector in 2019 to the region was c: £4.7 billion providing employment for 57K people. The pandemic had a devastating impact with the value of the visitor economy falling by around 38%. The loss of this contribution brought into focus the need for an effective and targeted marketing response to bring back visitors and develop a resilient and sustainable model.

Prior to the pandemic, marketing activity in LCR had been, at times, subject to unstructured and uncoordinated approach to the promotion of the region, diluting the impact of resources and messaging. The destination websites currently operate through an outdated MERVIN system (Merseyside Information Network) which has been in existence since the 1990s with limited functionality and accessibility across all platforms.

Goals & Deliverables

Liverpool City Region's destination marketing strategy will be taking a digital first approach, ensuring that all digital channels are working in order to achieve the below goals:

- Websites that can be benchmarked positively against competing regions in the UK and Europe
- Websites that reflect the individual Destination Marketing Organisations brand identity
- Content supporting overarching and partner specific themes, brand framework and narrative relevant to audiences
- Create a flexible website that has an easy-to-use CMS for our in-house team to manage
- Best in class user experience, including structure, navigation and functionality
- SEO optimised to increase organic website traffic
- An integrated contact form plugged into the CRM to capture data
- Facilitate any user testing required to gain feedback in the development process
- Integration of 3rd party plug-ins
- Options for hosting of the website and maintenance of the website
- Recommendations for managing and sharing data between partners
- Unforeseen development work that will be required to achieve our goals

Requirement

As outlined above, the appointed agency will develop and build City Region's family of DMO websites. The specific for each website is contained in the attached annex 1.

Timeline & Milestones

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, please note these dates are subject to change.

Published	1 st June 2022
Deadline for supplier questions	13 th June 2022
Deadline for Growth Platform response to supplier questions	14 th June 2022
Deadline for tenders to lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org	7th July 2022
Interviews/Presentations	14 th July 2022
Suppliers notified of Award of Contract (10 day standstill begins)	15 th July 2022
Contract Issued	26 th July 2022
Contract Start Date	27 th July 2022
CRM & Destination Management Systems Operational and Functional	28 th February 2023
Contract End Date	31 st March 2025

Budget

£130,000 (inclusive of VAT)

Supplier questions

Any questions should be directed to lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org on or before the 'Questions Deadline' date stated in the above timeline. Please title the email '**Destination Marketing Question**'

All questions and answers will be made anonymous and disseminated to all potential suppliers on Growth Platforms [tender page](#). It will be the responsibility of the potential supplier to monitor the site for latest activity.

Proposal Format

Suppliers must demonstrate the ability and capacity to deliver the brief. Suppliers expressing an interest in this opportunity should provide their submission in MS Word or PDF formats and not exceed 10 sides of A4.

Submissions should provide responses to the following:

- Understanding of the brief – context and awareness of strategic and technical requirements
- Methodology – scoping, development, integration of partner websites, testing and deployment, including risk mitigation measures
- Cost schedule – detailing phases of work and resources required, including any financial contingencies for software, licenses etc.

- Project management arrangements – designated resources, systems and key personnel as well as timeline for transition period for website going live, scheduled project meetings and updates should also be factored in
- Project plan and delivery schedule including phased payment milestones
- This is a comprehensive piece of work and we would encourage suppliers to clearly demonstrate their ability to deliver this work in their response.
- We are seeking a consultancy with a strong understanding of the tourism sector, with a particular knowledge of agencies such as ourselves.
- We ask that you provide examples of the types and range of consultancy support you would be able to offer and how you believe this will help achieve our objectives.

Evaluation

When awarding this contract Growth Platform reserves the right not to accept the lowest price tender, but the most economically advantageous tender taking into consideration the award criteria below.

Submissions will need to score at least 65 to be eligible. In the event that all submissions score under 65, Growth Platform reserves the right to re-advertise the opportunities.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals / Quotations will be assessed and scored on the following criteria:

Quality 65% made up of;		Weightings
1.	Please include an implementation plan that outlines roles and responsibilities (with associated resource requirements), covering all aspects of the proposed outline of approach in response to this brief – 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 and what methodology you will adopt to deliver the brief.	35%
2.	Provide information on monitoring of the contract and how you will ensure our required outcomes are met. How will you keep the Growth Platform team up to date with progress? How will you address any failure to generate results? How will you deliver final evaluation of the project to provide an overview of outputs achieved?	10%
3.	Detail the resources and your technical ability to carry out the service. Provide information on the workforce to be employed for performance of the service and level of resources to be used. This should include providing any details of ability you will bring to the project in terms of building a new website that is searchable, engaging and has the best-in-class user experience? This should include how you would approach the delivery of this projects, the integration of partner requirements and how you would work with partners to support their own requirements and identities.	20%
4.	Price (Lowest bid price /your bid price) x 35%	35%

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 and understanding of requirements.

Interviews and Presentations

Once all submissions have been scored Growth Platform will invite the suppliers with the 3 top scores over 65 to present their product to a panel made up of representatives from Growth Platform, Sefton BC, Wirral BC and Marketing Liverpool.

The presentations will take place at Growth Platform offices and are intended to help the project team gain greater insight about your outline proposal. A maximum of one hour will be allowed for the presentation and it should be focussed on the following areas of your initial submission –

- The methodology and implementation plan. (50%)
- The approach for delivering outputs and managing the project within the fixed delivery timescales. (25%)
- The approach for building a new website that is searchable, engaging and has the best-in-class user experience (25%).

The supplier representatives who attend the interviews should be the people who will be working on this contract. Suppliers will be sent an invitation with an allocated slot before the interview date in the timetable above.

Deadline and Submission

Proposals are required by **7th July 2022** electronically to lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org
Please title your email ‘**Destination Marketing Submission**’

Date Published

Wednesday 1st June 2022

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.

Annex 1

Destination Marketing Website Development overarching brief

1. Introduction

Where we are now

VisitLiverpool.com, VisitSouthport.com and VisitWirral.com are the official tourism website for Liverpool City Region. They attract millions of users each year and have high levels of engagement. Growth Platform, working in partnership with Liverpool City Council, Sefton Council and Wirral Council are seeking to work with a digital agency to transform the website to meet the increasingly sophisticated needs and expectations of modern travellers. The Liverpool City Region comprises neighbouring local authorities of Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, Southport and Wirral.

Where we want to be

The three websites are the primary platform of our national and international marketing campaigns. Their success is essential to achieving economic targets to attract more visitors and make Liverpool City Region a recognised year-round destination. The websites must complement our other digital channels and increase our ability to generate enquiries, convert users and provide a world-class user experience.

Our ambition is to create a website that inspires visitors to Liverpool City Region by communicating the region's world-class attractions, culture, sport, shopping and visitor experiences.

In achieving this, the scope of this brief includes providing a common & scalable solution for each of the Visit sites. The CMS should be considered as a common platform that is accessed and managed on a similar in-house basis by each area, and although working to a common CMS architecture, be able to allow each area to incorporate its own place brand and content to showcase the distinctiveness, character and proposition of each.

A new, common platform will provide greater consistency, continuity and knowledge sharing in digital estate management across the LCR, and provide a common base for analytics, data gathering, potential and marketing integration, asset transfer and rich media integration. This platform will also need to be accessible to the stakeholders of each district, including staff members and other partners. We want to be able to improve our members' experience by offering them a tailored CMS experience, focused on providing key analytics and ability to upload and edit their product pages.

Visitor Economy Impact

In the past decade Liverpool City Region has witnessed a dramatic rise in popularity as a visitor destination for overseas visitors (5th), domestic trips (6th) and business trips (8th). To build resilience in the visitor economy, we are aiming to transform Liverpool City Region's popularity as a 'year-round' visitor destination. The Visit websites are the first touch point for most visitors and the new website will be 'smarter' in understanding the customer journey with an intuitive and conversion driven user experience.

2. The Brief

- To build a user driven, intuitive, optimised website experience built upon a robust, configurable and flexible CMS
- The ability for the CMS to connect to a dynamic database, CRM and 3rd party applications for improving the customer data experience and monetisation of the website
- An end to end, market facing and dynamic site focused on discovery of inspirational experiences and seamless conversions
- To provide a CMS that can create channel sites for a business to customer audience and a business to business audience (Liverpool Convention Bureau and Southport Convention Bureau)

3. Objectives

The objectives of the project are to:

- inspire more visitors to come to the city, and wider City Region
- create a world-class and intuitive user experience, through personalisation, inspiring content and carefully designed interactions
- increase website engagement (comments, shares, page views, downloads, video views)
- create an easy to use and comprehensive database of products that is connected to the CMS - hotels, attractions, restaurants etc.
- Increase the number of product page bookings – hotels, attractions, events, restaurants etc.
- create best practice and leading e-commerce functionality to improve conversions
- integrate databases that are capable of talking to third party systems and software to improve our market insights
- create a dynamic database tagging system to support personalisation and content delivery
- develop revenue streams with affiliates, native advertising, sponsored ads
- integrate ticket platforms with easy navigation back to Visit brands and the opportunity to upsell accommodation/ restaurant bookings for example
- increase integration and shareability of content across social media channels
- Tonally reflect the core elements of the associated brands - further consolidating the role of the website as a key standard bearer for the city's visitor proposition

- Develop an integrated accommodation booking service which offers bespoke availability (the ability to integrate with key events, conferences) and a flexible booking system reflective of the major competitors i.e. Booking.com/ Trip Advisor – offering the same experience whilst also including a commission model
- Allow all brand sites to sit under the respective estates enriching user experience to book/ plan etc without causing SEO problems such as duplicate content
- Flexible templates to create new landing pages for marketing campaigns that pull in a wide range of products and allow greater flexibility in the CMS when designing for rich media content experiences for all brand sites
- Improve partner and member user experience by being able to upload, edit their products and page content while also offering access to their analytics
- Training should be provided for website administrators, particularly where there is new or altered functionality
- Follow legal requirements for the website to include GDPR & DPA implications on capturing and processing data and also be fully compliant with WCAG 2.2 AA Design Standards

4. Scope of Requirements

CMS Features & Functionality

The CMS must provide partners, content editors and publishers a permission-based workflow management process in order to ensure that content is consistent, on brand and developed to a consistent and high-quality standard.

It should present users and user groups with a clear and easily navigable toolbar and menu options to have flexibility and greater control in page design and editing, whilst providing a clearly partitioned directory for the storage and publishing of web assets such as images, media and documents across a range of formats (png, gif, mov, mp4, wmv, pdf etc.).

In addition to this, the proposed solution will also provide the ability to test / preview revised content in a sandbox facility, prior to publishing.

A suite of templates with varying flexibility and purposes will be highly useful across all brand websites and we would welcome thoughtful consideration when approaching this aspect. Current templates incur high costs and restrict content creation and promotion which impacts our ability to create the best user experience as possible.

Current CMS ability is currently restrictive in what can be pulled through and in what format. We require the products to be able to be pulled into the front end of the CMS with greater flexibility and optionality, while also improving the dynamism of the templates which currently do not allow for customisable features that are complementary to rich media content formats.

All websites will need to have the same ability and functionality which allows the creation and updating of new product pages, create/upload events as well as storing data (e.g. newsletter sign-ups or competition entrants for marketing purposes). This access should be allowed through a secure login access that is available to each user and allow a variety of master and

admin functions. It is anticipated that the CMS will offer the capability to be adapted and published (under the separate area “Visit...” domains)

The CMS should allow diverse content to be published or inserted without recourse to significant (and costly) third-party re-coding or development. In summary, the CMS should not be restrictive, all sections must be readily adaptable “in-house” to serve new content across a broad range of formats (to this end, it would be expected that the CMS will offer a range of page styling, layout and configuration options). This is a must going forward as current templates are not adequate or complimentary to the creative marketing campaigns and content that is currently hosted on the websites.

We would also require the CMS to recognise that when a product from the database of the CMS is created to feature on all channel sites that a canonical form is placed in order to avoid being penalised for duplicate content by the search engines. A useful feature would also be for the CMS to have in-built tools to resize and optimise images, currently this is quite a manual process and those who are less comfortable with operating a non-intuitive CMS struggle and therefore create inefficiencies.

Given an objective is to capture market insight and data (via sign ups, campaign tracking/ ROI and conversion measurement through booking and sales information) proposals should consider, as a minimum:

- Ability for CMS API to connect to 3rd Party API connectors i.e. Zapier
- Solutions offering integration with well-established platforms with minimal development time needed
- Specific examples of compatible systems should be provided alongside recommendations

Website Features to Improve Customer Experience

Blog

For the blog, the websites should have ‘writer profiles’ and for each writer to have their own page which will pull through their blogs using a tag management system. This is to feed into the larger tag management system and to be used as a recommended blog feature on other blogs. This grouped content feature will be designed to increase time spent on the website based on user behavior.

Web Stories

We welcome proposals on how we can integrate Web Stories into the website that will be complementary to our marketing campaigns and creative content. With the increase of stories on social media channels, we want to replicate this functionality on the websites. Ideally this would be a template that would be created that we could use over and over again for specific campaigns.

Templates

We would like to have templates that are able to be flexible with what products are allowed to be pulled in from the back end of the CMS, while also being able to showcase content in engaging ways. We would also like templates to have an FAQ feature as currently we do not have this and we see this as something that would be helpful for our users.

Personalisation

Using a dynamic tagging database system, the new website should be able to have recommendations pulled through on blogs and product pages that relate to the current page users are viewing. For example, if users are on a blog about ‘Top places to eat in Ropewalks’,

we would also like to pull through hotels/events/things to do in Ropewalks, alongside recommendations of food related blogs.

We would also like the ability to upsell and add on products based on user actions, for example, if a user is buying an event ticket, to suggest accommodation available on the dates of the event.

This is a consideration for the backend database and frontend of the CMS to be able to talk to each other better, as currently it's restrictive. We want to be able to connect the products with content in a seamless and intuitive way so that users spend more time on the website, download more relevant content and have a better experience.

This feature is also quite essential for improving the internal links throughout the website and play an important role in maximising page value in terms of SEO, therefore, we would like proposals to address this consideration thoroughly.

Example of features linked to the dynamic tagging system in database:

- search features by keywords/unique queries
- calendar that links to product pages
- geolocate recommendations based from purchase behavior
- geolocate recommendations based from user engagement and behaviors
- Ability to link and pull through data from an external database
-

Itinerary Builder

The proposal should include an itinerary builder that works closely with an interactive map to recommend neighbourhoods to stay and visit based on previous user actions on the websites. This will require a tagging system that pulls through the correct pages from the database. We will also want to recommend pre-built itineraries which can be sent to their email or shared to user connections via social media.

To increase the website engagement on certain features such as the itinerary builder, we want to be able to have social proof widgets that act as call to actions and encourage people to download/provide email addresses for us to automatically email users the itinerary they prefer. This example automation is another reason why we require a solution that allows the CMS API to connect with external and third-party software.

For us to improve on this itinerary builder feature we would like to measure it and therefore require specific event tracking so that we can analyse user segments by itineraries downloaded.

Price Indicators

On product pages (Events/Things to Do/Accommodation), we will require a price indicator feature to show users an estimated cost. This feature can also be used across the website as a filter for when choosing pre-built itineraries. This is another type of call to action widget we would like to use and would like to see solutions available to achieve the goal of increasing user engagement.

Interactive Map

We would like the new websites to include an interactive map to show users how to get to Liverpool, Southport and Wirral by plane, rail, car, bus and ferry. The map should be multi-purpose, from being a helpful guide to knowing how to get here and also used for showcasing the neighbourhoods. We do not want this map to pull through from Google Maps, as their recent changes in pricing have restricted our ability to display. We will require the map to pull

through the information from the database. There is an option to consider exploring co-development of this tool with other key partners in Liverpool, such as the key transport operators (Merseytravel, Merseyrail, Arriva etc.) who currently provide multi-layered mapping as part of their current online travel planning solutions – and thereby reducing the development time needed for a bespoke mapping solution.

Display & Optimisation

The CMS (separate for each partner) should offer a solution that is fully optimised for display on a variety of desktop, tablet and mobile devices. Although certain systems offer automatic re-configuration options, we anticipate that site design and architecture will be deployed to optimal effect across all display formats without loss of layout, design or navigational integrity. A shared database, connected to the CMS also required to cross promote products for the wider region.

We want the site to be compatible with a number for different browsers, devices and even older browser versions as our demographics and users come from a variety of backgrounds. This consideration is important for making our websites accessible.

We would also like to know how the website will be optimised for featured snippets and People Also Ask in Google. Recommendations on how this schema optimisation can be implemented from the CMS will be crucial in our ability to retain our high Google rankings against the likes of Tripadvisor.

In relation to SEO we would also like suggestion on the following:

- How redirects can be minimised
- How canonical tags can be assigned to pages when different channel websites end up competing with one another
- How alt tags can be automatically populated to images if possible
- How images can be automatically optimised
- How certain low traffic pages can be de-indexed
- How can we choose to not index certain pages

API Connectors

Our ambition is to include third party integration with software's such as Crowdriff/Stackla for marketing, Data Thistle for aggregating events and Campaign Monitor for automating email campaigns. This will allow the creation of interactive questionnaires and visual content that inspires and gathers information based on responses to allow recommendations and increase personalisation.

The third-party software will have to be connected to our CRM and use a connector API service such as Zapier if no direct integration is available, thus, avoiding creating bespoke API connections for a multiple of third parties, saving us time and money.

We will require a feed pulling through from Instagram which will show images of the product pages based on the 'location' feature. This will require an API connection to Instagram to be used on product and blog pages, however, we understand that the API integration for Instagram can be restrictive, so we are open to alternatives on this.

E-commerce Functionality

For e-commerce-based pages, the website will require an 'add to basket' feature that will allow users to pick and choose products (events/things to do etc.) and create a basket of items and pay for them once complete.

We will also require a feature that allows the basket to be shared via email and social channels as PDF. If a user chooses not to share this feature, then they can choose to save it for later and send it to themselves via email.

Also, an option is to create a profile, however, we are open to a discussion as to whether a profile feature is necessary or not.

E-commerce metrics we will be looking to track:

- Average Order Value
- Cost per Conversion
- Value per Visit
- Returner Visitor Conversion
- New Visitor Conversion
- Traffic Source Conversion
- Shopping Cart Abandonment Rate (Add to Basket)

A nice to have feature in the CMS would be the ability to A/B test variations of content and pages. This feature would ideally be best suited for the e-commerce side of the website but also equally helpful for testing marketing copy/titles and any content that requires a download as a call to action. We would like to hear about A/B testing functionality in the CMS and suggestions on how this can be implemented and achieved.

A final consideration to improve user experience for the ecommerce-based pages would be to have faceted navigation to be implemented and complement this with a best practice breadcrumb structure. If this can be included in the template suite that would be ideal.

Conversions

As we look to monetise the website and understand our user behaviour, we would like to know how the websites would be best served for tracking the following:

- Content Conversions
- Ecommerce Conversions
- Affiliate Conversions

5. Technical Considerations

We welcome technical insight into how the following would be optimised and open to discussion about how best to optimise the website.

We want to be able to achieve the highest possible score according to Google Core Web Vitals. Consideration should be given to:

- **Connection**

After experiencing a period of downtime in 2019 for over 24 hours, and a period of downtime in May 2022, we want the hosting solution to be cloud based but potentially with a physical back-up to minimise the risk of future downtime and avoid any national/global problems. We also want hosting to deliver content as fast as possible to improve page speed.

A consideration here is that currently all Visit websites have different hosting providers, we welcome a proposal to offer a combined hosting solution that will increase efficiency and security in line with GDPR for all 3 websites.

We also intend to have big campaigns throughout the year that will spike traffic so please consider this in your proposals.

- **Images**

The website will have many large images and high-quality images. We want to know the best way to automatically optimise for this and make the sizes as small as possible without compromising quality. We would like to know if there is an automated option available here or whether it has to be manual. We would also welcome an option that removes older, unused images from the server automatically after a period of time.

- **Site Architecture**

The current site architecture for visitliverpool.com works very well and we will want to keep this very similar as it has many deep linked pages and internal links that work well for the search engine performance. However, please note any individual considerations for VisitWirral and Visitsouthport towards the end of this brief. Benchmarking of the other partners site architecture will be required to identify best practice. Please make this a priority when creating a sitemap and analysing the structure.

6. Partner Access

Currently VisitWirral.com and VisitSouthport.com use the CMS of VisitLiverpool.com to populate their website. They will have to keep this access with the new website and have access to the CMS and core backend database functions in order to enable them to access what they can now. Currently we have a CMS database they use to access a library of product pages and a front-end system that is unique to each website. We require the partners to have access to a backend system through the VisitLiverpool.com CMS that updates their unique front-end website.

The Liverpool Convention Bureau will function slightly differently in the way that the product categories are displayed and pulled through into the frontend of the CMS due to the nature of the business. Distinct differences will have to be customised in order for the CMS to be able to be functional for all channel sites.

The Liverpool Convention Bureau site will talk to a different audience, we want to be able to store data in the same database, possibly via the same 'product.' There's likely to be a duplication of products displayed on the VisitLiverpool website and the Liverpool Convention Bureau. Instead of duplicating 'products' or data with minor amendments we'd want each site to pull through different data fields relevant to their respective audiences.

Suggestions for how this partitioning is possible will be required, recognising the need to ensure the distinctiveness of each area's brands (area specific CSS and designs are likely requirements), whilst providing a common management and architectural framework.

7. System Requirements

We expect proposals and recommendations to explicitly identify native system requirements, in order to ensure that the current IT infrastructures are suitably geared and resourced to accommodate proposed solutions. (For example, this may include consideration of local install or cloud-based licensed solutions).

8. Current System & Provider Analysis

The website has many challenges which we would like the new website to either not have or have ready made solutions. The challenges of the current website causes many bottlenecks internally and also restricts the creativity of the team while also increasing inefficiencies.

A few of the challenges which you should consider for the CMS are:

- CMS interface is not intuitive to navigate making it difficult to teach and also source talent that has experience in the systems
- Page templates are limited in functionality and restrictive to amend
- Housekeeping and admin of images and pages on the server is time consuming and a manual process to remove to make space
- Text and header formatting is not consistent
- Image library could be more efficient and options for sizing images

A few of the challenges which you should consider for the backend database are:

- Product stats provided are not in sync with Google Analytics results
- Housekeeping and admin with channel websites is non-existent
- There are old channel websites no longer in use that we are unable to delete

We are looking for a provider who can also confirm and address the following issues:

- Currently we are charged for small changes to templates, with greater flexibility with templates will we no longer incur these costs?
- A clear idea on what incurs extra costs once flexible templates are created
- A clear idea on what SEO costs are involved once a solution for broken links, pages and 301 redirects are solved, is it possible to have bulk redirect functionality
- The challenges, if any, with being able to connect the API to third party softwares
- How can event tracking for on-site user behaviour be implemented without incurring costs

9. Project Management

It is expected the appointed supplier works in close harmony with the Marketing Liverpool, Marketing Southport, Visit Wirral & Growth Platform project team to identify and resolve potential technical or content integration issues and they are familiar with inter-agency cooperation in delivering solutions with 3rd party elements.

Regular reporting, communication and coordination of development actions are led by the supplier and project managed and reported in a risk averse way that provides contingency arrangements and pathways as appropriate to a recognised project management standard (e.g. Prince 2, Agile etc.).

It is anticipated that proposals will include a high-end programme plan and risk register providing a clear pathway for redevelopment.

10. Hosting & Maintenance

It is expected that proposals will also provide hosting solutions to ensure the stability and resilience of the site / CMS in terms of load bearing and subsequent site performance, based upon anticipated levels of site usage on an annual basis and notably in peak seasonal and event periods (the number of servers, back up, bandwidth and concurrent site traffic levels are to be factored into the proposed solution). As a guide to traffic, in 2019 the VisitLiverpool.com website received 5.7M pageviews and for peak traffic it received 47k pageviews in 1 day. The hosting solution needs to be acceptable to all parties to meet their individual requirements.

Additional costs for ongoing maintenance should be indicated as a contingency, including any post-deployment support options added to the cost proposal submitted in the response to this specification. This may also include options for higher quality hosting, use of content delivery networks and any other technical speed and security improvements.

We would also like to know if the hosting can be based in the UK and possible to use green/renewable energy with backups secured away from the main servers.

11. Validation & Testing

Proposals should also anticipate user engagement during development. Testing will be commissioned at the beginning to validate the brief and development options, during the course of development (navigation, accessibility, content etc.) and end (UAT) - an iterative process working with a range of identified (priority) user groups based on target segments, (see appendix) including indicative (potentially campaign based) scenarios and mapping the user flows and responsiveness of the site as part of the overall visitor experience. It is anticipated that each stage of testing will include cross browser / OS testing as mandatory.

12. Additional Requirements

- **Visit Southport**

Where we are now

VisitSouthport.com is the main tourism website for Southport, Sefton and the coast. The Sefton coast spans 22 miles, starting at Crosby through to Southport which is a small coastal town by the sea.

Visit Southport have invested for many years in quality, monthly SEO management which has resulted in a strong performance, in particular, throughout the pandemic. In the first quarter of 2022 alone, the site has outperformed the past 5 years which includes 3 major Google core updates.

Based on the success of our post pandemic marketing campaigns, we are working with our creative, advertising and SEO agency and have established a strong campaign for 2022 which focusses on peak times throughout the year. We have identified that digital platforms are a fundamental part of this campaign and the website continues to be the vital window to our destination.

Where we want to be

VisitSouthport.com is the primary platform of our marketing campaigns which focus on Southport being a year-round destination. The website is a window to the destination and the wider region, and whilst it must complement our other digital channels and support our marketing campaigns, it also must increase our ability to convert users to visitors through experiences.

Our ambition is to create a website that inspires visitors to come to Southport and the wider Liverpool City Region by communicating the attractions, culture, sport, shopping, and visitor experiences. Our marketing campaigns are emotive and experiential, and it is vital our website also compliments this and works alongside the wider Liverpool City Region, giving the user a 360-degree view of Southport to enrich the visitor experience.

Visit Southport Requirements

- To build a user driven, intuitive, optimised website experience built upon a robust, configurable and flexible CMS
- The ability for the CMS to connect to a dynamic database, CRM and 3rd party applications for improving the customer data experience and monetisation of the website
- An end to end, market facing, and dynamic site focused on discovery of inspirational and emotive experiences and seamless conversions from our marketing campaigns
- To create a website which reflects the Visit Southport brand whilst being functionally developed for optimised SEO, social media and UX
- To provide a CMS that can create channel sites for a business-to-customer audience (Visit Southport/ Southport Air Show) and a business-to-business audience (Meet Southport - Conference) without compromising SEO
- To create a website which editors can easily navigate with in page design and editing control which can host images, media and documents across a range of formats (png, gif, mov, mp4, wmv, pdf etc.)
- Create a CMS to recognise that when a product from the database of the CMS is created to feature on all channel sites, that a canonical form is placed in order to avoid being penalised for duplicate content by the search engines
- A CMS with in-built tools to resize and optimise images
- Ability for CMS API to connect to 3rd Party API connectors i.e. Zapier
- A website optimised for featured snippets and People Also Ask in Google and recommendations on how this schema optimisation can be implemented from the CMS
- The website will also need to take into consideration how alt tags can be automatically populated to images, how to minimize redirects and how certain low traffic pages can be de-indexed
- Integrate ticket platforms with easy navigation back to Visit brands and the opportunity to upsell accommodation/ restaurant bookings for example

- Develop an integrated accommodation booking service which offers bespoke availability (the ability to integrate with key events, conferences) and a flexible booking system reflective of the major competitors i.e. Booking.com/ Trip Advisor – offering the same experience whilst including commission models
- A separate CMS system is required but a shared DMS system to allow cross promotion of products but each Visit brand to retain control of their own CMS
- Page load speed needs to be considered especially with high quality images
- **Visit Wirral**

Where we are now

Visitwirral.com is the tourism website for Wirral. The Wirral Peninsula has 50 miles of beautiful rural walks, including a 35-mile circular trail, plus cycle routes and beaches. Wirral also is the ideal place for a golfing break with 14 golf courses to choose from and will once again host The Open Championships in 2023. In 2024 Wirral will be 'Borough of Culture' for the second time and will showcase its cultural offer through events, art and more.

The Visit Wirral website was refreshed in 2019, mainly to incorporate the new branding (#aplacemadeforyou) but there is further work to do and this brief will address this and the needs of the City Region. Unfortunately, the pandemic did have a significant effect on the tourism resource within Wirral Council, including for visitwirral.com, however, through this and working with partners we aim to build this back to enable Wirral to be discovered and rediscovered by visitors once again.

We are currently working internally and with partners to establish new campaign activity for 2022 that will truly welcome visitors back and engage new ones to discover Wirral #aplacemadefordiscovery. The website will be a key call to action as part of this.

Where we want to be

Similarly, to the other visit sites, Visitwirral.com will be main call to action for our marketing campaigns, which highlight Wirral as a year-round destination. The website should move away from simply being a functional way to find out information about specific aspects of/ or businesses in Wirral but to inspire, engage and convert users to visitors through experiences. Through inspiring and creative content, a clean and easy to use site, and excellent SEO, we want visitwirral.com to be the first place visitors come to find out about what Wirral has to offer. We want them to be so impressed by the user experience that they return to use the site in future and are more likely to take trips here and recommend to others.

The majority of visitors to Wirral are day visitors but with our campaign activity and the new website, we want to encourage many more short breaks. We hope to do this through promoting the range of things to do and unique experiences on this peninsula, as well as complementing the offer of the city and beyond to show how a break in Wirral can be extended further.

Visit Wirral Requirements

- A full width website is needed as it currently has a background that is no longer required (responsive and optimised for all devices)
- Training provided for website administrators, particularly where there is new or altered functionality

- Retain Visit Wirral branding (logo, colour palette, font) but making sure branding colours are consistent through all the site/functionality as they are not currently. Wirral would, however, like to discuss options around reducing the amount and size of blocks and panels of colour currently used as well as the ability to have colours/palette/font changed should branding change in future
- E-commerce functionality to be enabled for visitwirral.com in the back end, but it may not be used immediately. Therefore, options for this requirement to be switched on easily at a later date and any cost implications needs to be included and an illustration given to how it will work
- Wirral would be open to other passive income functions to be recommended and discussed. Visitwirral.com currently has ads at the bottom of the page which can bring in a small amount that is taken off as a discount from their contract
- The structure and content of visitwirral.com needs a full review and so would expect the developer to undertake an assessment and make recommendations. Wirral will have some initial thoughts on this as well so this assessment would follow a meeting
- This should include a review of front-end functions and widgets (e.g. accommodation booking search box), taking into account new functionality and features (e.g. recommendations/related blogs pulling through), to ensure best user experience, maximise time spent on site and conversion rates
- There is also some functionality switched off which Wirral may like to take forward
- Ability to link through to Liverpool Convention Bureau ('Meet') potentially as a section to cover the Business Tourism offer for now until a Wirral offer may be more developed. The same may be required for Travel Trade

**VISIT
LIVERPOOL**

SOUTHPORT
DIFFERENT EVERYTIME


wirral
A place made for you