



Liverpool City Region Growth Platform

Liverpool City Region Destination Management Plan Tender
Specification

Date of Issue: January 17, 2024



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1. Introduction

Liverpool City Region visitor economy is a dynamic, diverse, vibrant sector which has world renown brands creating global reach unlike many other UK regions. The region is synonymous with ambition, belief, social justice, and fun, founded on creativity and a unique sense of place.

Heritage buildings, museums, and galleries, sporting and music prowess which are synonymous here and showcased internationally, a thriving nightlife and diverse culinary offerings, award winning cultural events with the energy of grassroots cultural organisations all adding to its vibrancy and distinctiveness.

This is set against a backdrop of inspirational natural landscapes: miles of coastline and abundance of open green spaces, proud industrial heritage, woven together by the River Mersey and great public parks, brings together a powerful combination as a destination and as a place to do business, invest, live and study. All of this is powered by the Liverpool City Region's greatest asset: its people. It is their passion, character, warmth, and ideas that forge LCR's success.

In the last twenty years Liverpool has experienced a remarkable cultural and economic renaissance. Liverpool, an integral element in the UK's tourism brand – is an exceptional place with a distinctive offer that will enhance the appeal of the UK domestic and international visitor markets, unlocking its true power and potential. We need to build on these hard assets and on the abiding strength and allure of Liverpool's unique global brand as a city with an unmistakable identity and human personality for regionwide economic benefit.

As a special place of untapped potential, where the urge to invent, innovate and experiment is an integral part of what we are. With an international quality product to match any globally recognised brand, the Destination Management Plan will underpin our invitation to the world. We will make Liverpool City Region a place where things happen – including a place that stages outstanding and exceptional events of international quality and significance.

As a one of the first Visit England accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships, we now have the opportunity to develop a new vision for our region where our cultural, built and natural environment is celebrated and where we play our part in addressing the climate



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change emergency. It's time to reflect and refresh; and we are looking to work alongside a team of visionaries that 'get' the region and 'get' us.

2. Overview

The region's current visitor recovery strategy ran from 2021 – 2023 and operated to strengthen the sector's resolve and aid the speed of recovery from the impact of Covid-19. The latest post covid outputs from the VE projects funded by the CA's strategic investment fund, alongside the visitor data shows a promising recovery for the city region. The Visitor Economy Sector has experienced steady growth and latest figures for the city region show the visitor economy is now worth over £5bn surpassing the pre-pandemic high of £4.98bn in 2019. However, there are still fragilities within the sector which has minimal reserves, a difficult operational environment and challenges to recruitment and retention of employees. There is a need for continual adaptation and innovation.

The recovery strategy identified and resourced several key initiatives including growing the number of business events in the region and a three-year Destination Marketing Project, via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) Strategic Investment Fund. The projects have helped to kick start the sector and continue to provide part of the basis for our future ambitions for the region.

With a new framework of governance and delivery being implemented through the LVEP accreditation, the city region is in the position to consolidate its reputation as a global destination, appeal to new audiences, continue to contribute to the wider LCR economy and become the bedrock for future investment. The sector has already been innovative in the way it has developed funding mechanisms to secure future investment through private sector initiatives. As well as destination marketing activity and conference subvention, the introduction of the Accommodation BID¹ - a tourism levy paid by accommodation businesses who meet the rateable value threshold operating in a BID geographical area, has been developed as sustainable funding model to fund VE activity.

3. Background

¹ Applicable to the City Centre only.



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Pre Covid, the LCR visitor economy sector 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 Prescot, St Helens and Halton.

Latest figures show that although the pandemic continues to impact tourism there is a strong recovery happening across the city region. These findings are contained in the latest independent research for 2022 commissioned by the Visitor Economy team at Growth Platform – Liverpool City Region Growth Company. Headline figures show:

- Visitor Economy spend has risen to £5.18bn overtaking the pre-pandemic figure of £4.97bn in 2019. These figures dropped to £2.10bn in 2020 and £3.58bn in 2021.
- Although visitor numbers are still below the pre-pandemic figures of 66.27m in 2019 they have picked up to 55.94m. Visitor numbers dropped to 26.14m in 2020 and 42.15m in 2021.
- The number of staying visitors has risen to 5.83m overtaking the 2019 figure of 5.40m and is higher than the 2018 figure of 5.48m.
- The number of day visitors continues to rise to 50.11m and catch up with 2019 figures of 60.86m. 2021 saw 38.12m.
- Jobs in the sector have picked up to 51,605. The figure from 2019 was 55,703. They had dropped to just over 24,000 in 2020 to 38,000 in 2021.
- Other figures show hotel occupancy is also steadily rising to 74.3% from the 55.2% in 2021. The figure in 2019 was 78.4%.

As we continue to stimulate growth, our visitor economy sector still requires the support, and intervention to build resilience within our local community, businesses, and tourism partners, and this will be integral to achieving the ambitious economic benefits we plan to set out in our plan. The changes in the current national tourism landscape allows LCR to re-imagine the contribution the sector makes to the wider place making economy, shaping a new collective future direction for the sector. Embedded in the wider city region policies and strategy, it will provide the VE a platform to strengthen the case to secure additional funding and identify key projects to support.



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4. Governance & Structures

In April 2023, VisitEngland approved the Liverpool City Region application to be one of the first Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) in the country. The LVEP provides an important opportunity to work across the city region to promote the visitor economy sector and tourism offer.

The new programme and national structure have been designed to enable and deliver closer collaboration between VisitEngland and destinations who are well integrated and delivering strong local leadership through public-private sector governance.

The role of the LVEP is to provide the strategic leadership and oversight to destination management and marketing activities. The overarching purpose of the Liverpool City Region LVEP is therefore to:

- Strengthen public-private sector partnership arrangements to provide leadership and management of the LCR as a destination.
- Promote the city region at national and international levels, raising visibility, attraction and driving tourism growth.
- Maximise the contribution of the Visitor Economy to wider placemaking, levelling up and economic growth.
- Help shape and deliver national strategy and activities through enhanced strategic relationships with VisitEngland, DCMS and wider government.

Following approval of the City Region's LVEP application, governance structures and board membership are being refreshed and implemented and this will provide the leadership for this critical piece of work.

The LCR LVEP Board is comprised of sector specialists and the overarching remit of the board is to be the City Region's expert and leadership group on the role of the visitor economy, and to deliver the region's Destination Management Plan. The board will oversee the performance of VE within the LCR economy; influence policy, stimulate economic growth, productivity and competitiveness whilst supporting the LCR in its ambitions for inclusive growth and sustainability, and to promote the City Region to national and international audiences supporting inward investment activity where possible.



5. The Brief

Consultancy support is required to help establish a new Destination Management Plan for the City Region covering the period 2024 – 2029. Tenders are welcomed from independent companies and consortia. The approach required is collaborative and should build on progress made against the Destination Management Plan 2015 – 20 and the Short Term LCR Visitor Economy Recovery Strategy to March 2023. It will require engagement with public, private and third sector stakeholders in setting out a clearly articulated, refreshed vision for driving innovative, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient sector growth. It will bring together key stakeholders and articulate their roles and responsibilities alongside identifying clear destination management actions, identifying the priorities for growth, as well as supporting the City Region’s ongoing ambitions to play a full and active role to be a proactive and ambitious LVEP.

It is anticipated that part of this work will review existing, and potential, programmes and projects across the City Region are rationalised and brought together into a coherent plan of action and strengthening our linkages into other sectors including culture, creative, sport, transport, planning, environmental services and digital.

6. Scope & Parameters

The aim and output of this tender is to develop a new Destination Management Plan for Liverpool City Region. The strategy should cover a 5-year (24-29) vision and framework for delivery and the submissions are requested to clearly address the following core areas:

Who we are and how are we performing?

It is anticipated that this section will cover these areas as a minimum:

- Current product strengths and weakness including facilities, culture, landscape and countryside, the built environment, access and transport and visitor services.
- Analysis of tourism performance and impact – volume and value of tourism and performance of tourism businesses
- The relative position of LCR and how it is viewed across demographics and geographically;

- Visitor levels, types, activities, motivations, spend levels and reaction to the destination;
- Who are not visiting and why?
- Levels of enterprise and community engagement
- What is distinctive about LCR and how does this set us apart on both domestic and international markets
- The business base, performance, vulnerability, engagement, investment intentions.
- Comparison with competitor destinations internationally and nationally.
- The relationship to other sectors and functional areas of CA/ LAs.

Where do we want to be by 2029?

In light of the evidence collated, we want to develop a vision and understanding of the direction the sector is taking. It is anticipated that in developing this, work will cover as a minimum:

- Evaluation and alignment of existing national strategy and policy.
- Evaluation and alignment with LCR CA and Local Authorities strategy, policies and local plans.
- Consultation with a range of stakeholders and their evaluation and the methodologies used. Stakeholders will include public and private sector, industry bodies and not for profit organisations.
- Emerging trends, opportunities, and challenges of relevance.
- The role of the VE in place shaping including economic prosperity, job and business creation, influence on corporate base development, wellbeing, and health.
- Maximising opportunities and access for all.
- Identify what the challenges and opportunities are for accelerating growth.
- Priority of themes for the sector such as addressing seasonality, spend and spend of visitors, capacity and quality of services/products, development needed to attract new markets, joint working, sustainability, inclusion and accessibility, opportunity for change.
- The development of the LCR LVEP mission, vision and values strategic priorities and objectives.
- The adoption and maximisation of a distinct place brand



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How will we get there?

A clearly defined plan of coordinated activity will identify ideas and concepts for specific actions, the priorities, timings, indicative costs and resource required, responsible body and potential funding source. The action plan will evaluate areas such as:

- Destination brand development - image, branding and promotion.
- Alignment of arts, culture & heritage into wider destination brand development.
- Attracting and managing business events and the role of the VE in support the growth of corporate base.
- Product development and innovation
- Recommend mechanisms for delivery structures to coordinate tourism growth with partners both public and private
- Maximise alignment of sub sectors and their strategies where relevant (film, TV, sport, culture, food and drink, nighttime economy, music) and how we can strengthen the working relationships.
- Evaluation of VE sustainability and accessibility and how it can be maximised for good growth and aligned with LCR climate action plan and the UN SDGs
- Understand the sector requirements for business support and skills development to promote growth and productivity.
- Tactical marketing and relationships with other LAs/ private partners.

How do we measure progress and continue to drive success?

The implementation of the DMP must be continually, evaluated and the proposal needs to make recommendations on the best way to oversee activity and its impact and how this is connected into governance arrangements. Recommendations on reporting processes, evaluation and public communication of the work both on a national and local level is also to be considered. The tenders should also suggest KPIs and monitoring systems for the DMP.

7. Timeline & Milestones

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

	w/c 04/03/24	w/c 11/03/24	w/c 18/03/24	w/c 25/03/24	April 2024	May 2024	w/c June 2024	w/c July 2024	August 2024	September 2024
Selection Process & Award										
Interview										
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	15/01/24	23/02/24	04/03/24	11/03/24	18/03/24
Project Specification Issued					
Submissions/ Tenders received					
Written submission evaluation					



Interviews					
Award					
Inception meeting					

The intention is that the contracted services will be for an 8 month period but this may be subject to change and extended for the purposes of funding, performance, strategic alignment and external requirements.

8. 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 Friday 23 February 2024

The deadline for any queries prior to submission is Wednesday 31 January 2024 and these should also be sent by email to **natasha.mealor@growthplatform.org**

9. Budget



A maximum of £40,000 has been allocated to this project (exclusive of VAT).

10. Contract Award Criteria

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.

Contracts awarded to tenders will be solely based on the quality criteria set out 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.

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? Please provide an overview of the implementation and delivery plan you will adopt for the development of the Destination Management Plan, and provide detail how you will ensure timescales are met.(33.3%).
- Detail the resources and your company's technical ability to carry out the service. Provide information on the composition of the delivery team for performance of the service and level of resources to be used (33.3%)..
- 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. (33.3%)

Interviews and Presentations

Once all submissions have been scored Growth Platform will invite suppliers with the 3 top scores over 65 for an interview to a panel made up of keys stakeholders from the LCR’s visitor economy.

The interview 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 interview and it should be focussed on the quality criteria.

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.

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.

Score	Meaning
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.

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.