Specification

Background to London and Partners

London & Partners is a private company limited by guarantee. We are a not-for-profit, public private partnership, funded by grants and through our own commercial income streams. We work in partnership with organisations in London and across the world to deliver our vision and mission of telling London's story brilliantly.

Our remit is to drive leisure and business visitors to London as well as bidding to secure major events in the capital, attract new foreign businesses (Foreign Direct Investment) and help existing foreign owned companies expand.

When it comes to leisure, London and Partners is committed to developing London as a visitor destination and as such, has recently:

- led the visitor recovery by putting our resources and expertise to work on the Let's Do London campaign to support London's recovery as a visitor destination
- taken on a new, more strategic role working with the sector to develop London as a visitor destination
- convened partners to shape the city's destination vision and to promote London as a destination for tourists and events, achieving the scale needed to make an impact

You can read more about London & Partners 2021/22 Plan (londonandpartners.com)

Current commercial model

Visit London, London's official visitor guide, is an important source of inspiration and information for tourists and leisure visitors and fulfils a vital role in promoting London as a visitor destination. Inspired Visit London users benefit from the convenience of being able to book tickets for the major attractions, theatre tickets, trips and tours, through our tickets.london ticketing solution.

Users who click on 'Book Now' within a product page on Visit London are transferred seamlessly to the ticketing checkout process within tickets.london. Upon arriving at tickets.london - powered by one incumbent provider – users enter the checkout funnel and have a series of steps to follow in order to secure their tickets. There is no cart or basket in place. Users can purchase tickets through our mobile website, desktop and via the Visit London app.

The current model relies on the current supplier managing the transaction process. Users can purchase theatre and event tickets served by one incumbent and tickets for attractions and tours provided via another incumbent provider. One supplier plugs in the API of the other supplier. The first incumbent consolidates the commission fees for themselves and the other supplier and advise us, on the first day of the month, how much commission we are due.

The commercial income, generated through our existing affiliates, directly supports London and Partners and its ability to continue delivering our vision, mission and ongoing ambition of creating jobs and economic value for the city.

The combined impact of the global pandemic and leaving the European Union has reduced the overall number of visitors to London and led to a shift in the profile of visitors; from international to domestic. This has led to fewer overall users using Visit London and resulted in a significant reduction in ticket sales and income.

London and Partners have strong grounds for optimism in London's ongoing recovery and forecast a corresponding growth in Visit London's users and income in 2022 and beyond – we expect to retain domestic visitors and welcome back international visitors.

London and Partners is committed to developing Visit London and tickets.london, combining high-quality products and a best-in-class service, and be well positioned to serve higher numbers of users and visitors to the city.

We're currently developing the Visit London growth strategy, the ecommerce strand of which will prioritise user acquisition, serving users with products and experiences they align to their interests and passions, optimising conversion and delivering the service users have come to expect. This project is pivotal to the success of the growth strategy and in growing profitability from the low point of 2020.

Our future commercial model

We are looking for a supplier(s) to provide us with an industry leading ticketing solution, offered on an affiliate basis. This should include, but is not limited to, all major attractions, tours, day trips, West End theatre shows, experiences and events. Our expectation is that all interested parties will have and be able to evidence considerable experience of working with brands in similar commercial relationships and have more than sufficient technical capabilities and resources in which to implement by 1st April 2022.

In terms of our scope, our primary mission is to sell tickets for all attractions and experiences within London and the M25 and tours which start or end in London. We are interested in increasing the breadth and depth of our product offering and aligning this with the interests and passions of both our domestic and international audiences.

The supplier(s) should provide a ticketing solution which would be hosted, or integrated with other suppliers, on tickets.london, as it is currently. The supplier(s) would need to be willing to work together on the technical integration, if more than one is chosen. We would need to assign a primary supplier who would manage the transactional aspects of the tickets.london website.

We are, however, open to alternative options such as, but not restricted to, a co-branded affiliate site, if the supplier(s) can make the case for this. It is our ambition to create a shopping basket on visitlondon.com so that we can control more of the user journey. Please indicate how you might be able to support this approach in your proposal.

We have two lots, referenced below, and suppliers are able to select a single lot or both.

Lot 1: All major West End theatre shows

Lot 2: All major London attractions

Our requirements and expectations

We have defined a comprehensive set of requirements below. These are listed in any order of priority. We expect our suppliers to do the following:

1. **Expand our range of bookable products to appeal to our different audiences**
- Offer a broad range of bookable products that appeal to Visit London's domestic audiences (Londoners, day trippers and overnight stayers) along with international

audiences from our key markets (France, Germany and the US in the short to medium term)
- Provide access to major Central London attractions, popular West End theatre shows, immersive experiences, sightseeing tours and trips. The bookable products could potentially include cinemas, popular events and more.
- Secure and retain bookable high traffic, seasonal events such as Winter Wonderland and Christmas at Kew Gardens. We'd welcome other high traffic events that aren't currently offered on Visit London.
- Consolidate a range of different sources of insight to identify new bookable product opportunities and trends.
- Liaise with attractions to on-board products that aren't yet bookable.
- Explore the opportunity to widen the scope of bookable products to extend across London.
- Recommend and build bundled product packages.
- Have the flexibility to remove any products that we no longer want to list.
- Make new products bookable as soon as they become available.

2. **Consistently meet our users' expectations**
- Maximise product availability at peak periods.
- Serve users with competitively priced tickets that offer genuine value for money.
- Deliver high-quality customer service, accessible for our broad range of users. This includes providing customers with a range of ways to get in touch should they have queries.
- Document a complaint handling process and SLA. Regularly assess process effectiveness.
- Maintain quick loading times across all devices and operating systems. The supplier should report on site speed and explore ways to improve loading speeds.
- Develop tickets.london with an eye on future user benefits and applications, including but not limited to: mobile ticketing, 'on the day' ticket purchases, the ability to add and store tickets to mobile wallets within the VL app and mobile site, the capability to translate the checkout journey into languages commonly used by our users and have scope to extend this as we grow into additional markets.
- Provide users with the opportunity to opt into our newsletter and encourage downloading of the VL app at the end of the checkout.
- Offer users the flexibility and ease to amend or cancel their bookings.
- Provide users with cancellation insurance.
- Create a simple and frictionless checkout funnel - with a basket or cart - that drives conversion and customer service excellence, in line with industry best practice.
- Enable users to 'save for later' products or events they are interested in.
- Implement a checkout funnel that indicates where users are in the process (breadcrumbs), their current status and remaining steps. Visually display the product name, ticket quantity and total ticket price on each page of the checkout funnel.
- Serve users with a broad range of payment options including PayPal, with the Mastercard payment gateway being a particular nice to have. Mastercard are a strategic commercial partner and we're focused on routing transactions through their payment gateway.
- Allow users to checkout as 'Guest' (not being compelled to register)
- Encourage cross-sell and upsell throughout and the end of the customer transaction and in advance of attending the event / visiting the attraction. Visit London should benefit commercially from this.

- Recommend other products at the end of their transaction so to increase the likelihood of further purchases.

- Direct users to what we agree to be the best page at the end of the journey. This could be things to do or tickets and offers landing pages or a next best product page.
- Show live product prices and offers, with a dynamic pricing information across Visit London channels (this would replace the manual entry information currently relied on)
- Serve users with different value-based pricing and promotional and special offers

3. Maximise Visit London's income potential

- Receive competitive levels of commission for ticket sales generated through tickets.london.
- Pursue upsell and cross-sell opportunities.
- Scope opportunities to add 'bolt-ons' from which Visit London would benefit financially, for example, driving sales of cancellation insurance.
- Promote London and Visit London to their customer base(s).
- Continuously and pro-actively seek to optimise conversion. Support Visit London with its own testing and optimisation activities.
- Drive conversion through abandoned basket emails.
- Enable Visit London to decline the opportunity to promote certain products, should they fail to meet our commission expectations or service standards.
- Incentivise Visit London to drive sales of new and under-performing products, for example, by offering additional commission.

4. Maximise operational efficiency
- Document service level standards and agreements, including those for incident resolution
- Agree and document SLA agreements, should multiple supplier(s) be involved.
- Work collaboratively with other suppliers, where appropriate, and assign clear responsibilities and resolution processes, without the need for intervention.
- Take every effort to ensure that Visit London is always on, with fail over measures in place, particularly should payment issues manifest themselves.
- Provide early notification of necessary website maintenance and limit to outside of core transactional hours
- Minimise risks and external threats to users, user data and the service experience. Notify Visit London immediately of problems with the site or any arises that arise.
- Populate, update and manage all product listings changes in a timely fashion.
- Embed functionality to quickly and easily place a banner across all tickets.london pages in the event of a major incident that may cause widespread cancellations.
- Provide Visit London with a dedicated and named account manager and schedule regular review meetings. Notify Visit London well in advance of account management changes.
- Transfer email addresses of those who have opted into our newsletter to the email marketing team.
- Provide Visit London with the ability to easily edit product information within a CMS.
- Grant access to all live data and reporting. Must have an Analytics Integration (or plugins) with some major software such as Optimizely, Google Optimize, Google analytics, Magento etc.
- Pro-actively notify us of changes in behaviour and key insights that support sales growth.

- Confirm commission earned from the previous month on the first working day of the new calendar month.
- Produce a separate monthly white label report for the app.
- Support our ambition to work collaboratively with commercial partners and facilitate payment integrations (Secure Remote checkout) and implementation of new payment tools. PayPal and Mastercard are the front of our thinking.
- Clearly state where the service will be hosted from.
- Provide the necessary data protection certification.

Technical requirements

The system will have two touchpoints with existing London & Partners systems

1. A method (e.g. API, webhook, or feed) to share product data with our web platform for incorporation onto the visitlondon.com website.
2. A method to share the details of purchasers who opt-in to Visit London emails with our email service provider (currently dotdigital). This needs to be done as close to real time as practical (max delay 24 hours) so that welcome emails can be sent in a timely fashion.

The system will also need to allow London & Partners to have the following scripts on all pages, including checkout.

1. Google Tag Manager, to load Google Analytics and Google Optimize
2. Sitecore Federated Experience Manager (FXM)

These should be treated in accordance with relevant cookie consent laws

SLA for site performance

- Uptime 99.9%
- Page speed and accessibility to measured using Google Lighthouse
  - Lighthouse Accessibility: 90%
  - Lighthouse Performance: 50% for mobile / 80% for desktop

In readiness for implementation, the successful affiliate(s) will need to develop and manage the implementation plan, in collaboration with our in-house development team. We expect to provide input and have full visibility to this plan, a separate and comprehensive testing plan and deployment schedule. We ask that our supplier(s) maintain a risk register and notify London and Partners of any significant issues with meeting the deployment target date, as soon as possible, along with plan to mitigate the delays.

Project governance

Shortlisted suppliers will be asked to present to a panel of senior London and Partners managers. This is likely to include:

Rose Wangen-Jones   Managing Director, Marketing and Destination

Simon McCaugherty   Consumer Marketing Director

Joanna Darwin   Marketing Services Director

Steve Pugh   Head of Channels and Innovation

Paul Tatman-Madsen   Head of Growth

Paul is the Visit London product and channel owner and responsible for its commercial income and the growth strategy. He will lead the project on behalf of London and Partners, with support from the panel, the Marketing and Destination Managing Director and our in-house procurement team.

Before awarding a supplier London & Partners will undertake a financial, data protection and other necessary working practices assesments.

Measuring success

1. Deploying the ticketing solution on-time and fulfilling our requirements and expectations

Our aim is to deploy the new ticketing solution on 1st April 2022. Meeting this target date would be considered a success, as long as the solution has been rigorously tested and there is a high degree of confidence, from all parties, that the solution will be fully operational from this date. We expect to see clear results and evidence of high and sustained website performance.

2. Drive income

The primary objective of the programme is to grow income profitably, in line with London and Partners financial expectations. This will be achieved by our affiliate(s) offering the products Visit London user's want, competitive rates of commission, by optimising conversion and securing additional income through cross-sell, upsell and revenue generating bolt-ons.

3. Offering a best-in-class customer experience

As the official visitor guide for London, Visit London users should expect a swift, smooth and seamless transaction, one that gives them confidence in us as a brand and in our affiliates, to the extent that they use us again in the future and recommend us to others. As users, we have high standards in the checkout process and in the post-conversion and pre-event communication. Success will be gauged through user testing, customer satisfaction exercises and observed feedback against set objectives.