

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	21 January 2014
Title:	Visit Hampshire Website Procurement
Reference:	5502
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval to procure and spend for a contract to provide an enhanced online tourism website for Hampshire in order to showcase the county's cultural assets, promote visits, and help grow the county's £2.5 billion visitor economy.
- 1.2. This paper seeks to
 - set out the background to the website;
 - consider the finance for the website;
 - highlight the current performance of the Visit Hampshire website; and
 - briefly consider the future direction of the website.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Tourism is worth £2.5bn to the Hampshire economy and provides 10% of jobs in the county
- 2.2. The Visit Hampshire website plays an important role in joining up the county's fragmented tourism offer and in presenting comprehensive visitor information, encouraging visitors to move around the county.
- 2.3. Visit Hampshire acts as a portal site to tourism businesses and to the main destination sites (e.g. Visit Portsmouth), and is also the main promotional channel for smaller destinations (e.g. Test Valley).
- 2.4. The internet is a crucial shop window for destinations to showcase their product to potential visitors who increasingly research days out and short breaks online via desktops, smartphones and tablets.
- 2.5. In order to remain competitive and meet the changing needs of customers who expect to access up-to-date information 24/7, often on the move, the official tourism website for Hampshire needs to be enhanced.

- 2.6. The existing £100,000 single tender threshold for the Visit Hampshire website will be reached by 31 March 2015. It is now necessary to go out to tender and test the market.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The County Council will allocate £90,000 over three years for the design, build, and ongoing maintenance of the new Visit Hampshire website. However, it is proposed there be an option to extend the contract by a further two years. It is hoped that by this stage the success of the venture in attracting other sources of funding will reduce the overall cost to the County Council, and therefore though the cost for the extension could amount to a maximum of £30,000 per year, it could well be lower.
- 3.2. Income will be generated from banner advertising on the new site, in addition to potential partner contributions for the build of campaign sites, for example from local authorities looking to move their destination 'in-house' or via external funding from the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Visit England etc.
- 3.3. An upper limit of spend needs to be indicated as part of the OJEU process. A ceiling of £250,000 is recommended to allow for optional extensions, potential future partner contributions or external funding. The £90,000 County Council contribution is included in the £250,000 potential spend.

4. Performance

- 4.1. In 2012, the Visit Hampshire website received over 627,000 visits, an increase of 45% compared to 2011.
- 4.2. In 2012, 73% of visits to the site were via desktops, 16% were from smartphones, and 11% were from tablets, emphasising the increasing need to present visitor information in a more accessible way for a range of differently sized devices. This is especially important in tourism so visitors can access information when travelling.
- 4.3. In a recent Visit Hampshire online survey, which received 756 responses, the majority of respondents ranked the design, content and functionality of the current site as 'good', and 38% wanted the existing content to be retained (and enhanced).

5. Other key issues

- 5.1. In April, 2011, Visit England withdrew funding for EnglandNet, a national tourism product database which enabled destinations to distribute their data nationally. By supporting this central database, destinations were able to share data and work collaboratively. The result of this withdrawal of funding has been increasing destination fragmentation and a widening of the market for online solutions. There were previously only two major IT companies that could successfully integrate with this database.
- 5.2. Hampshire County Council IT Services were given the opportunity to identify whether they could provide an internal solution for the provision of a Visit Hampshire website. It was agreed that this would not be feasible within the required time-frame due to the Hantsweb team's current workload and priorities.

- 5.3. Hampshire County Council is currently paying Tourism South East £12,300 per annum to manage tourism data on behalf of local authorities in order to present comprehensive data on Visit Hampshire. By moving to a more efficient IT solution, rationalising this data, and moving data management in-house, this will present a considerable cost saving.
- 5.4. Managing data in-house will also enable the County Council to create visitor apps for smartphones and tablets, and syndicate data for external distribution, for example via a widget that could be given, or sold, to third parties. This may include attraction and event information.

6. Future direction

- 6.1. The procurement of a new tourism website will enable the County Council to enhance the promotion of Hampshire as an outstanding visitor destination, offer a cost-effective web solution to other destinations by offering campaign sites, and enhance relationships with key businesses by improving their online presence.
- 6.2. The need to generate income will become a strong focus, and the ability to build campaign sites that can be managed on behalf of partners will become a central part of the site's strategy moving forward. This will enable Visit Hampshire to become less reliant on funding from the County Council's Economic Development budget.
- 6.3. The technical specification for the website will be future-proofed as much as possible to enable the County Council to adapt to industry change and ensure maximum flexibility.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That approval be given to procure and spend in respect of a contract for a new Visit Hampshire Tourism website at a cost of £30,000 per year for three year's duration at a total cost of £90,000, with an option to extend the contract by a further two years at a maximum further cost of £30,000 per annum, totalling a maximum expenditure of £150,000 over five years.
- 7.2 That the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment be given delegated authority to agree any variations to the items approved referred to at paragraph 7.1 above, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	No
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	No
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1 The proposals in this report have been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Council's equality objectives. An assessment of the impacts in this service area can be found at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-impact-assessments/cx-pu-eqimpact-envi.htm>
- 1.2 It is considered that the issues covered by this report will not have impacts requiring further specific actions by the Council above those already established in its existing policies and working procedures.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. None.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

The Visit Hampshire website promotes transport information both for travelling to and within the county, including sustainable transport means such as train, bus and bike hire.

- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

N/A