	Agenda Item No:
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority **LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY** **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** **22 OCTOBER 2020 AT 11:00**	**7** Report No: **E/693/20**

LEE VALLEY WEBSITE

Presented by the Head of Communications and Head of IT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper gives Members an update and overview of the current situation with the website and the plans for its future development.

It has been nine years since Lee Valley's current corporate and visit websites were launched. Although content has been kept up to date, expectations, technology and design have become outdated. Extensive changes are required to comply with new accessibility legislation requirements. The websites have been built on legacy software which is being retired by the current website developers in January 2021, meaning that the current system will not be supported, resulting in a new website being required.

Due to the procurement process, timeline and to build compliance an interim solution is required to maintain our web presence while a new contractor is procured and new website developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members Note:

(1) implementation of an interim website presence for both the visit and corporate websites;

(2) the ITT and project timeline; and

Members Approve:

(3) establishment of a Comms and Access Working Group and the recommended Member involvement as outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

1   The Authority's current website was created in 2011 for a very different organisation and the internet was at a very different stage regarding use and what the Authority's web visitors and stakeholders required. Technology, expectations and web users' behaviour have advanced enormously meaning that our current websites are no longer fit for purpose. Functionality, navigation and styling are out of date and, perhaps most obviously, it is not optimised for

mobile devices meaning that the increasing numbers of our visitors who use the site on a mobile phone or tablet get a poor experience.

WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT SYSTEM/PROCESS

2   There are technical and legislative reasons why there is now a requirement to replace the sites:

a.   Access legislation
The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 come into force in September. This requires a new level of accessibility for web visitors with disabilities. Our current websites do not meet this requirement.

b.   Retirement of Content Management System (CMS)
We have a bespoke CMS (the software that manages the back end and content on the website). Our current operator (S8080) have stated their intention to retire this system on 14 January 2021.

c.   Age of website
The design, functionality and layout of the website has become outdated and need updating in order to be able to reflect the current position of the Authority and to be able to take advantage of newer technologies, such as the integration of the Authority's GIS system. The current CMS is limited (by virtue of its age) in its ability to leverage new technology.

IMPACT OF CHANGE

3   With the timescales involved in the procurement, development and delivery of a new website, it will go beyond the January deadline of the retirement of the current CMS. This means that there will be a need for an interim Minimum Viable Product (MVP) website that will have limited functionality, design and pages, in order to maintain an on-line presence. The MVP will essentially be a slimmed down temporary site which will have core information which we need to keep promoting and selling activities at the Park, telling the story of the Park and housing mandatory and business critical information.

4   We will use this as a staging post in the slimming down of the website and collation of the information that will be needed for the new site.

BENEFITS OF CHANGE

5   The new website will be a customer focused, business centric site which promotes and "sells" the valley and the Authority's offering. It will have a single-minded focus on this to bring visitors and potential visitors, and funders, stakeholders and other key audiences, to what they want (including sales of goods) as quickly as possible when they arrive at the site.

6   The amount of information, which has grown organically over time as new products, venues and projects have come on line will be reviewed and refreshed, to create a new customer and visitor focused navigation to take people to what we are promoting and what they are looking for.

7   As mentioned above, the retirement of the CMS means that we have little choice but to create an interim site to fill the gap between the January retirement and

the new site.

8   We have produced an Invitation to Tender (ITT) which is currently out to market. The procurement timeline takes us to December, with the contract award early January 2021.

9   By using tools such as Google Analytics we will clear away areas of the site which are not used or visited in order to better promote the core elements of what we need, dovetailing with our social media feeds.

10   A large amount of the site is the complex product pages of our most complicated venues – such as Lee Valley VeloPark. As we pass these to GLL all of that information goes onto their site and we simply signpost these elements to them. This rebalances the site in a new way.

IMPLEMENTATION

11   It is envisaged (subject to appointment of the contractor) that the development of the website will take around four months, with a planned launch to ideally coincide with the transfer of venues to GLL, or be shortly thereafter.

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

12   We will ensure that Members are involved during the process and suggest that the Comms and Access Steering Group be re-established. We see the key focal points as being:
   • December / January – appointment of contractor and sharing of their schedule;
   • approx. February – sharing of early stage designs, content strategy and information architecture for input and discussion; and
   • approx. March – sharing of advanced designs, content strategy and information architecture for input and discussion.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

13   There are no environmental implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14   We estimate the one-off capital cost will be £40k - £60k. Money has already been allocated in the IT capital budget and this period of market engagement will determine the actual budget needed.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15   Staff returning from Furlough will be redeployed to assist with both the interim and new websites.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

16   There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

17   Accessibility Regulations 2018 – development of new websites mitigates risk on this.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

18   There are no equality implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

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BACKGROUND REPORTS

None

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMS   Content Management System
MVP   Minimum Viable Product
ITT   Invitation to Tender