

CLARIFICATION RESPONSES

Experience Audit, Gap Analysis and Opportunity Assessment

Reference: ENEE-96FD71

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Q1. Governance and approval

As well as the client manager identified in the brief, are there other steering or oversight groups that will need to sign off final reports and which need to be accounted for in the timelines?

Response

The Senior Manager for Visitor Economy Development will remain the primary client contact and will coordinate review and approval.

Experience North East England expects draft findings and final outputs to be shared with and reviewed by a small core working group – including relevant Experience North East England leads (i.e. digital & travel trade) and regional partners such as the product development leads at our partner LVEPs.

Experience North East England will provide one consolidated set of comments, and final sign off will sit with Experience North East England. Bidders should allow for a proportionate review period between draft and final outputs and state any timetable assumptions in their proposal.

Q2. Indicative number of experiences

Do you have an estimate of the number of experiences that the audit and database will identify?

Response

Experience North East England does not have a fixed target or reliable estimate for the number of records. The RFQ seeks a comprehensive regional strategic baseline, but explicitly does not require an exhaustive census of every attraction, event or visitor experience. Bidders should propose a proportionate approach that can be delivered within the available budget and timetable, and may state their assumptions about the likely volume and depth of coverage.

Success will be judged by the quality, reliability and usefulness of the evidence and analysis, and by appropriate coverage across themes and geographies, rather than by record count alone.

Q3. Visitor Economy Spatial Strategy

When will the Visitor Economy Spatial Strategy for North East England be available?

Response

The interactive spatial dashboard is available now and will be provided to the appointed supplier at inception. The written Visitor Economy Spatial Strategy is expected to be available from early September 2026 and will be shared once complete.

Q4. Perceptions research

When will the perceptions research referred to in the brief be available?

Response

The perceptions research is available now and will be shared with the appointed supplier as part of the inception materials.

Q5. Bookability and business support evidence

What information do you anticipate is or will be available from the specialist support on online bookability and distribution and the business support research referenced in the brief?

Response

The available material includes insights generated through previous specialist support and business engagement. This includes business-reported barriers and challenges relating to online bookability and distribution, product development, commercial and digital readiness, and access to business support. It may also include learning from relevant programmes and engagement with participating businesses. The material should be treated as supporting evidence rather than as a complete or standardised dataset. The appointed supplier will be expected to review, validate and supplement it through the audit and proportionate stakeholder engagement.

Q6. Information from LVEPs and local authorities

What information do you anticipate will be provided by the LVEPs and local authorities?

Response

Subject to availability and any relevant data-sharing restrictions, LVEPs and other relevant partners are expected to provide existing experience or business inventories and database extracts, relevant strategies and evidence, intelligence on current product development activity and the emerging pipeline, and introductions to appropriate networks and stakeholders.

Coverage, format and completeness are likely to vary, so bidders should not assume that a single complete or standardised dataset will be available. Experience North East England will help to coordinate access, while the supplier will remain responsible for collating, validating and supplementing the evidence as necessary.

Q7. Google Docs and Google Sheets

The RFQ suggests Excel and Word formats for the database and outputs. Would Google Docs and Google Sheets be acceptable alternatives?

Response

Google Docs may be used for narrative outputs.

Excel is preferable to Google Sheets. However, Google Sheets are acceptable, provided the outputs are fully accessible to Experience North East England. They must be editable, searchable, sortable, filterable and capable of further analysis by Experience North East England.

Ownership and access must be transferred to Experience North East England at handover, with no ongoing reliance on a supplier account or licence. The final presentation should be supplied in editable Microsoft PowerPoint format as stated in the RFQ, unless an alternative is agreed at inception.

Q8. Existing experience data

Does Experience North East England already hold existing databases, inventories, destination management systems or experience datasets that will be made available to the successful bidder, or should proposals assume that the database will be developed entirely through primary research and publicly available information?

Response

Experience North East England and its partners hold a range of relevant datasets and research that will be shared where possible and appropriate. These may include the investment monitor, FAM trips database, Experience North East England Evidence Base, the spatial dashboard, and relevant data held by LVEPs and local authorities.

Experience North East England does not currently hold a single comprehensive regional experience database, and bidders should not assume direct access to destination management systems. Existing materials will provide a starting point but are likely to vary in scope, structure, and completeness. The supplier will therefore be expected to consolidate, validate and de-duplicate the available information, and supplement it through publicly available sources and proportionate primary and stakeholder research.

Q9. Scope of the experience audit

Should the audit focus solely on existing commercially available visitor experiences, or should it also include emerging experiences, community-led initiatives, self-guided experiences and tourism products that demonstrate future development potential?

Response

The audit should cover both existing visitor experiences and relevant emerging or near-market opportunities. Community-led, free, self-guided and itinerary-based experiences may be included where they meet the definition in the RFQ and present a clear visitor-facing proposition or credible development potential. Paid and bookable experiences should receive particular attention because of their relevance to visitor spend, marketing, travel trade and the future regional website.

The supplier should distinguish between experiences that are live and bookable, live but not currently bookable, in development, and identified opportunity concepts. The requirement is not an exhaustive census of all community activity, attractions or events, or an open-ended exercise in speculative concept generation. The focus should remain on a useful regional evidence base and a prioritised three-year opportunity pipeline.

Q10. Stakeholder engagement

Will Experience North East England facilitate introductions to key stakeholders and partner organisations, or should the successful bidder assume responsibility for arranging all stakeholder engagement directly?

Response

Experience North East England will support and facilitate introductions through its existing networks, including LVEPs, local authorities, where appropriate previous programme participants, stakeholder forums, tourism businesses, and travel trade and business events contacts. The appointed supplier will remain responsible for proposing the engagement plan, arranging and conducting the agreed activity, following up with participants, and recording and validating the findings. Experience North East England will assist with access and coordination, but stakeholder participation and availability cannot be guaranteed.

Q11. Future use of the Experience Database

Is there an expectation that the Experience Database will become a live resource that Experience North East England will continue to maintain and develop beyond the commission? If so, are there preferred formats, platforms or technical requirements?

Response

Yes. The dataset is intended to be a reusable internal resource that Experience North East England can maintain and develop following handover. There is no prescribed database platform and no requirement within this commission to build a live digital platform, destination management system, website integration or booking engine. Excel, Google Sheets or a compatible GIS format may be proposed, provided the solution is searchable, editable, maintainable using commonly available software, and exportable without material loss. It should not create an ongoing dependency on the supplier or any unapproved licence or subscription cost. The final format and fields will be agreed at inception, and the supplier should provide an appropriate handover. Ongoing maintenance after handover remains outside the scope of the commission.

Q12. Geographic level of analysis

Should findings be presented at regional level only, or should the final outputs also provide analysis and recommendations at individual LVEP or destination level?

Response

The final outputs should provide a clear regional view, with sufficient disaggregation to identify material patterns, strengths, gaps and opportunities across the relevant LVEP geographies and the seven local authority areas where the evidence allows. Place-specific clusters, visitor routes and priorities should be identified where they are strategically significant. The database should include geographic location and local authority area as set out in the RFQ. The commission does not require seven standalone local reports. Recommendations should remain focused on regional experience development, while identifying place-specific priorities where supported by the evidence, and should complement rather than duplicate the Visitor Economy Spatial Strategy.