Prior Information Notification and Service Specification – Web Development and Hosting Services

Weston College Group are inviting tenders for the following services:

Contract Name: **Weston College Group Web Development and Hosting Services**

Service Description	Term of contract
It has been identified that Weston College requires the support of an external web agency to maintain and develop its main website, as well as to host and both existing and new websites across the Weston College Group. The aim of which must be to meet the objectives defined below: 1. To deliver a seamless customer experience from initial discovery to application/enrolment/payment (as applicable) 2. To provide a seamless user experience with a focus on mobile and accessibility 3. Act as the single source of truth for course information, managing an API to load and edit course pages on the website 4. Ability to showcase latest news and events 5. Provide insight into audience behavior	**3 year +1 year**

Timeframe for tender process:

Process stage:	Proposed dates:
Specification Published	12/06/2025
Expression of Interest and Clarification period	12/06/2025 – 31/07/2025
Tender submission deadline	29/08/2025
Evaluation period	01/09/2025 – 19/09/2025
Provisional scores & Invitations to Presentations issued.	22/09/2025
Presentations	30/09/2025
Formal feedback issued and successful supplier notified.	06/10/2025
10-Day stand still period	06/10/2025-17/10/2025
Contract Award Notification	17/10/2025
Contract Mobilisation	20/10/2025 – 05/01/2026
Contract commencement date	05/01/2026

Note: These dates are subject to change.

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Specification

1. Organisation Overview

Weston College is a leading further and higher education institution based in Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset, UK. With a strong reputation for excellence in education, training, and student support, the College serves a diverse community of over 30,000 learners annually across multiple campuses.

Renowned for its innovation, inclusivity, and high standards, Weston College delivers a broad curriculum ranging from GCSEs and A-Levels to vocational training, apprenticeships, and degree-level programs in partnership with top universities.

The contract will commence on **05/01/2026** for a term of **3 years + 1 year.**

The contract is fixed price with the Contractor invoicing Weston College Group for one-twelfth of the annual cost on a monthly basis.

2. Operational Requirement:

Key Business Objectives

The aim of which must be to meet the objectives defined below:

1. To deliver a seamless customer experience from initial discovery to application/enrolment/payment (as applicable)
2. To provide a seamless user experience with a focus on mobile and accessibility
3. Act as the single source of truth for course information, managing an API to load and edit course pages on the website
4. Ability to showcase latest news and events
5. Provide insight into audience behavior

Please ensure that, within your proposal, you have costed and allowed for adequate contract supervision and management.

Assumptions

Several assumptions have been made in respect of the project brief and requirements:

- It is assumed that the Suppliers will meet all the requirements outlined in this document
- It is assumed that the Supplier selected will conduct their own discovery and requirements gathering exercise with College to ensure that all needs are met, not just those as defined within this document
- It is assumed that College will have the right to use the technology built as part of this project for other business units as required

Criteria

Website	Development Support	Server Hosting
weston.ac.uk	Y – ongoing	Y
ucw.ac.uk	N – request only	Y
weiot.ac.uk	N – request only	Y
construction-training-centre.co.uk	N – request only	Y
westonwintergardens.co.uk	N – request only	Y
forwardfutures.co.uk	N – request only	Y
thegreenhousewsm.co.uk	N – request only	Y

Current website infrastructure and management

- The website is managed by the Digital Marketing Manager with most front end development being carried out by two internal web developers.
- Additional members of the marketing team act as "content editors"' adding news stories and updating copy.
- The website is hosted via an AWS server, managed and maintained by a separate supplier.
- The website is based on a Drupal CMS
- The website is integrated with online applications via an API (provided via an external software developer, Tribal).
- Any developed code, tools or IP is owned by Weston College Group.

Handover

It is expected that any new supplier will propose a comprehensive mobilisation plan that will allow for a smooth transition of services working closely with the incumbent.

A list of Non-functional Requirements has been defined as below. The Group have used the MoSCoW method of applying expected priority to these requirements. Key: M (Must have), S (Should have), C (Could have) and (Would have). If you cannot meet the Must Have requirements please advise why, and how you will overcome this element of the project.

Non-Functional Requirements - Please note this section accounts for 15% of the overall scoring matrix.

General

Req ID	Continued requirements of weston.ac.uk	Classification
1.1.0	The site must be GDPR compliant.	M
1.2.0	The site must be compatible with all common desktop browsers with reasonable backwards compatibility (to be agreed) and should degrade gracefully with non-supported browsers.	M
1.2.1	The site must be compatible with all common mobile browsers with reasonable backwards compatibility (to be agreed) and should degrade gracefully with non-supported browsers.	M
1.3.0	Target page speed should be sub 2 seconds (measured by Google PageSpeed Insights).	S
1.4.0	All CSS and Javascript should be minified.	S
1.5.0	All web applications must be deployed over HTTPS connections.	M
1.6.0	The site must meet WCAG AA 2.1 compliance as a minimum	M
1.7.0	The site must be designed and developed to mobile-first principles	M

Supplier Response: Please state whether all of the above elements can be met and provide any additional detail in 300 words or less.

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Functional Requirements - Please note this section accounts for 25% of the overall scoring matrix.

<u>General</u>

Req ID	Detail	Classification
2.1.0	All web pages must be optimised for desktops, tablets and mobile devices.	M
2.2.0	All Course applications must be pushed to our course management system Tribal EBS	M
2.3.0	Users must be able to register for events	M
2.4.0	Users must be able to search for general job vacancies and be taken to the external application website	M
2.5.0	Users must be able to search for apprenticeship job vacancies	M
2.8.0	The site must be integrated with Google Analytics and Google Tag Manager	M
2.9.0	The site must be integrated with Google Tag Manager.	M

Supplier Response: Please state whether all of the above elements can be met and provide any additional detail in 300 words or less.

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Functional Requirements

Courses

Req ID	Detail	Classification
3.1.0	Course information must be pulled directly from the Tribal EBS course management system	M
3.2.0	The site must be able to list Curriculum Areas i.e. Business	M
3.3.0	The site must be able to list Subjects associated with Curriculum Areas. I.e. Marketing within Business.	M
3.4.0	The site must be able to list Courses associated with Subjects i.e. Level 2 Retail within Marketing	M
3.5.0	The site must be able to list Subjects i.e. Marketing	M
3.6.0	The site must be able to list Courses associated with Subject Interests	M
3.7.0	The site must allow users to apply for courses.	M
3.8.0	The site must allow students to apply for infinite courses at a time.	M
3.9.0	Course applications must be pushed automatically into Tribal EBS	M
3.10.0	The site should show contextual content associated with courses.	S

Supplier Response: Please state whether all of the above elements can be met and provide any additional detail in 300 words or less.

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Functional Requirements

Search

Req ID	Detail	Classification
4.1.1	Users must be able to search for Courses by Curriculum Area	M
4.1.2	Users must be able to search for Courses by Subject Area	M
4.1.3	Users must be able to search for Courses by Mode of Study i.e. Distance Learning, Part Time, Full Time.	M
4.1.4	Users must be able to search for Courses by Industry Area.	M
4.1.5	Users must be able to search for courses by Venue, using both a list and map function.	C
4.2.0	Users must be able to search for Events by Event name	M
4.2.1	Users must be able to search for Events by Description	M
4.2.3	Users must be able to search for Events by Tags	M
4.2.4	Users must be able to search for Events by Date	M
4.2.5	Users must be able to search for Events by Type	M
4.2.6	Users could order Events by Type	C

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4.3.0	Users must be able to search for News/Content	M

Supplier Response: Please state whether all of the above elements can be met and provide any additional detail in 300 words or less.

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Functional Requirements

Security

Req ID	Detail	Classification
5.1.0	The site must use HTTPS throughout	M
5.2.0	A report must be provided detailing how the site has been tested against known vulnerabilities based on the OWASP Top Ten platform. The report must include details of vulnerabilities identified and what mitigation/ remediation has been conducted to reduce any risk of potential exploitation.	M

Supplier Response: Please state whether all of the above elements can be met and provide any additional detail in 300 words or less.

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3. Summary of Responsibilities

General

This Section describes the general responsibilities of the Contractor under the Terms of the Contract, in order to give the Contractor an indication of the scope of its obligations in agreeing to provide the Services.

Supplier core responsibilities:

- Support the development requests of the Digital Marketing Manager and the internal web team.
- Updating and testing core Drupal files.
- Demonstrate expertise, good coding practice, and coding standards as part of the response to this tender.
- Updating PHP versions for all Drupal and WordPress sites on the server.
- Modifying website templates as needed or upon request.
- Installing and configuring Drupal modules when required.
- Developing bespoke functionality for Drupal and WordPress sites.
- Managing errors and resolving critical malfunctions.
- Providing technical support
- Offering API support, maintain current connections and creating new system connections if needed.
- Setting up new WordPress instances on the server if required.
- Help to maintain first rate levels of core accessibility, complying with WCAG AA 2.1 standards.
- Emergency support in the event of website outage or downtime.
- Work with additional suppliers who manage existing technologies and integrations that integrate into the site such as:
  - Dudobi – Server maintenance, storage, troubleshooting and upgrades.
  - Tribal – "EBS" software development and support

Weston College Group Responsibilities

- Provide clear development briefs, project scopes, and priorities via the Digital Marketing Manager and internal web team.
- Ensure timely internal approval processes and sign-off on website changes, developments, and design iterations.
- Supply access to all necessary systems, platforms, and content required for development, testing, and integration (e.g., CMS logins, API documentation, brand assets).
- Maintain internal ownership of website content strategy and supply up-to-date content, images, and documentation as required.
- Notify the contractor of any scheduled changes to existing systems that may impact website performance or integration.
- Work collaboratively with the contractor to define timelines, provide feedback, and manage testing and deployment cycles.
- Monitor and report on any performance issues, accessibility concerns, or site errors observed by college users or stakeholders.

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- Ensure coordination between internal departments and teams when delivering web-based services or content updates that require technical input.
- Facilitate introductions and collaboration between the contractor and additional suppliers managing integrated technologies (e.g., Dudobi for server support, Tribal for "EBS" systems).
- Comply with data protection regulations and provide appropriate guidance on data handling, retention, and security policies where applicable to web content and integrations.
- Communicate emergencies (e.g., downtime, critical errors) promptly to the contractor for timely resolution.
- Designate a single point of contact (e.g., Digital Marketing Manager) to manage and streamline communication with the contractor.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

To ensure consistent delivery, performance, security, and accessibility standards for the Group's digital platforms, the following Monitoring and Quality Assurance requirements will apply. Bidders must describe their approach to meeting and reporting against these requirements.

Performance Monitoring
- The supplier must implement ongoing monitoring of website performance, including uptime, response times, and load speeds, across desktop and mobile platforms.
- Page speed must be routinely measured using Google PageSpeed Insights, with an aim to maintain sub-2-second load times (Requirement 1.3.0).
- A monthly performance report must be submitted to the College including metrics on:
  - Page load times
  - Device/browser compatibility issues
  - User behaviour analytics (via Google Analytics)
  - Uptime/downtime
  - Key events (e.g. traffic spikes, errors)

Security Monitoring
- The supplier must conduct regular security scans and submit a quarterly OWASP Top Ten compliance report, outlining:
  - Vulnerabilities found
  - Remediation steps taken
  - Security patches or system hardening measures applied
- HTTPS must be enforced across all pages (Requirement 5.1.0).

Accessibility Assurance
- The supplier must maintain WCAG 2.1 AA compliance (Requirement 1.6.0), including:
  - Accessibility testing prior to each major deployment
  - Quarterly accessibility audits using automated and manual tools
  - Reporting on accessibility issues and remedies
- Accessibility compliance must be confirmed in each major release report.

Functionality Testing
- The supplier must conduct functional regression testing prior to every major deployment to confirm:
  - Integrity of integrations with Tribal EBS
  - Search, application, registration, and event functions are working as intended
  - Compatibility across common browsers and devices (Requirements 1.2.0, 1.2.1)

- A test results summary must be provided to the College before release approval.

Content Management QA
- The supplier must verify:
  - Version control and rollback functions work as required (Requirement 6.16.0)
  - User role permissions are consistently applied and managed (Requirements 6.2.0–6.3.0)
- Any CMS updates or form integrations must undergo user acceptance testing (UAT) with the internal team before deployment.

Issue Tracking and SLA Compliance
- An issue and request ticketing system must be used, with categories for bugs, feature requests, and incidents.
- The supplier must meet agreed SLAs, including:
  - Emergency response within X hours for site outages
  - Critical issue resolution within Y business hours
  - Routine request handling within Z working days
- Monthly review meetings must include an SLA compliance summary.

Audit and Continuous Improvement
- The College reserves the right to conduct or commission independent audits on security, performance, or accessibility at any point.
- Suppliers must maintain a continuous improvement plan, detailing:
  - How lessons from support logs and feedback are used to prevent repeat issues
  - Suggested platform or performance optimisations

Financial Monitoring

Weston College Group Contract Manager shall meet with the Contractor from time to time for discussions on standards of all aspects of the contract.

The Area Manager shall also be required to attend a monthly meeting to present and discuss the trading account.

Open Book Policy

Weston College Contract Manager shall have access to all records and documents relevant to the service, both at the Contractor's office and records kept onsite, and the Contractor will be expected to give full co-operation during an audits that may take place.

Statutory Requirements

Insurance

The Supplier shall hold all relevant insurances including Public Liability Insurance **not less than £5 million** and Employee Liability Insurance **not less than £10 million.**

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Statutory Legislation

All existing United Kingdom legislation is to be complied with at all times.

- **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) & Data Protection Act 2018**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018**
- **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**
- **Computer Misuse Act 1990**
- **Cyber Essentials Scheme (Recommended Standard)**
- **Electronic Communications Act 2000**
- **The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) 2003 (as amended)**

The bidder is required to give details of their policy on complaints / non-compliance in their tender submission. This should include their follow up corrective action procedure.

Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment Requirements

In accordance with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and Weston College Group's Safeguarding and DBS policies, the successful contractor will be required to demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding, including the safe recruitment and deployment of staff working on any part of the contract.

1. Safeguarding Policy and Training

- The Contractor must maintain a robust safeguarding policy and confirm that this policy is embedded across the organisation.
- All staff involved in the delivery of services under this contract, particularly those who may be required to work on-site or interact (physically or digitally) with staff or students, must have completed safeguarding and Prevent training to the same standard as Weston College Group employees.
- The Contractor is responsible for arranging annual refresher safeguarding and Prevent training in consultation with Weston College Group.

2. On-Site Work and Identification

- If any contractor staff are required to work on Weston College Group premises (e.g. for infrastructure setup, training, or support):
    - o The Contractor must provide in advance the full names and addresses of those personnel.
    - o Each employee must wear a contractor-issued photo ID badge at all times while on-site.
    - o These ID passes are the responsibility of the Contractor and will not be issued by Weston College Group.

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3. DBS Requirements

- All contractor personnel who are required to work on Weston College premises must undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at the Contractor's expense prior to beginning work.
- Any disclosures resulting from DBS checks must be discussed with the Weston College Group Contract Manager before any offer of work is confirmed, to ensure alignment with Weston College Group's safeguarding expectations.

4. Vetting and Record Keeping

- In line with statutory guidance, the Contractor will be required to complete and maintain a Contractor Vetting Form, listing all staff working on the project. This form must be regularly updated and available for inspection upon request.
- The Contractor must ensure full compliance with Weston College Group's safeguarding, DBS, and safer recruitment policies throughout the life of the contract.

Basis of the Contract

The contract will be based on fixed price basis.

The initial period of the contract will be **3 years + 1 year to be reviewed annually.**

Weston College Group may from time to time, by giving notice in writing to the Contractor, amend the operational requirement. Any such variation shall be subject to a fair and reasonable price adjustment to be agreed between Weston College Group and the Contractor.

The bidder is required to confirm acceptance of the proposed contract with their return bid.

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Contract Monitoring

To ensure effective delivery and continuous improvement of the services, the successful Contractor will be required to participate in **monthly contract review meetings** with the Weston College Group Contract Manager and relevant stakeholders. These meetings will provide a formal forum to:

- Review service performance against agreed KPIs and SLAs
- Monitor progress on development work, support tickets, and issue resolution
- Discuss upcoming requirements or enhancements
- Review innovation proposals or efficiency initiatives
- Address any risks, challenges, or change control items

The Contractor will be expected to provide a **monthly performance report** in advance of each meeting, detailing service metrics, updates on current workstreams, incident logs, and compliance with accessibility, security, and quality assurance standards.

These meetings will form part of a broader contract management framework that includes **quarterly strategic reviews** and **annual performance evaluations** to assess overall service value and alignment with Weston College Group's digital objectives.

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Performance and KPIs:

KPI	Target	Measure
KPI 1	100% customer satisfaction sustained across reporting periods	- Response Time SLA: 95% of support tickets responded to within 4 business hours - Resolution SLA: 90% of tickets resolved within agreed SLA (e.g., 48 hours) - Assessed at bi-monthly meetings, attended by both parties to review tickets, workload, actions and deadlines.
KP1 2	99.9% uptime for hosting and website core services; Avg. page speed <2s for key user journeys.	- Automated uptime monitoring (StatusCake) with real-time alerts - Monthly reports include uptime, outages (duration + cause), and page speed per page type (home, course search, contact, etc.) - Page speed tested via Google Lighthouse on both mobile and desktop. - A monthly trend analysis of performance data to pre-empt degradation and a quarterly review of hosting infrastructure health.
KPI 3	100% compliance with QA checklist; 0 critical errors and <2 high-severity issues per deployment	- QA checklist co-owned and signed off by both teams quarterly - Deployment reports must show checklist completion (checklist stored in version control or project tracking tool) - Errors graded (Critical, High, Medium, Low) using defined criteria; tracked in an issue log with time-to-resolution targets - Random spot checks on live pages and a quarterly audit score for overall QA health.
KPI 4	100% of security updates applied within SLA; all pen test issues resolved within 30 days	- Patch SLA: Critical = 48 hours, High = 7 days, Medium = 14 days - Monthly compliance dashboard showing update status across CMS core, modules/plugins, and server - Annual pen test results shared with risk levels; remediation plan and timeline provided and

		tracked
		- Zero known CVEs older than 30 days on public-facing systems
		- Results of annual vulnerability scan or pen test (aligned to OWASP Top 10) shared with the College and remediation actions tracked.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility will be assessed through the SQ stage.

SQ Scoring Matrix:

Met	3
Partially met	2
No met	1

Scores will be collated, only suppliers who score above **6** will receive an Invitation to presentation stage. Suppliers who score 1 on any of the SQ questions will not be progressed to presentation stage.

Evaluation process

1. **Selection Questionnaire** will allow potential suppliers to self-declare their status against the eligibility criteria and exclusion grounds to provide preliminary evidence of their suitability to pursue a professional activity, economic and financial standing, and technical and professional ability.

2. **Invitation to Tender** will include service specific tender questions to enable potential suppliers to submit a full and detailed offer to supply services against the specification provided in the PIN.

3. **Supplier Presentation** will allow potential suppliers to present service models, innovation and finances to the evaluation panel.

4. **Evaluation of tenders and presentation.**

ITT Scoring Matrix: [This may vary by service]

Innovation and added value	10%
Account management	10%
People and mobilisation	10%
Service specific detail	20%
Financial	20%
Added & Social Value	10%
Business continuity and Disaster planning	10%
Presentation Question	10%

5. **Formal notification** of scoring and contact award.

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Appendix A Conditions of Tender

1. Every tender received is deemed to have been made subject to these conditions.

2. The bidder must obtain for themselves at their own expense all information necessary for the preparation of their tenders.

> a. Information supplied to the bidder by Weston College Group is only for guidance in the preparation of the tender. The bidder must satisfy themselves by their own investigations of the accuracy of such information.

> b. The bidder is required to complete and provide all information required by Weston College Group in accordance with the contract appendices and schedules. Failure to comply with these conditions will lead Weston College Group to reject the tender unless omissions have been expressly agreed by Weston College Group.

3. Any bidder who directly or indirectly canvasses any member or official of Weston College Group concerning the award of the contract for the provision of the services, or who directly or indirectly obtains or attempts to obtain information from any such member or official concerning any offer tender or proposed tender for the services shall be disqualified.

4. All information supplied by Weston College Group in connection with this invitation to tender shall be regarded as confidential to Weston College Group. This invitation to tender and accompanying documents are and shall remain the property of Weston College Group and shall be returned and/or deleted on demand.

5. Any bidder who fixes and adjusts the amount of this tender by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person, or in any way acts in a collusive manner shall be disqualified.

6. Tenders must be for the supply of the whole of the services upon the terms and conditions as set out.

7. The bidder shall cost the contract for 3 years + 1 year from the commencement date.

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