

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL
REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
DATE OF MEETING: 5 MARCH 2015
REPORT OF: AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT LEAD OFFICER, RAMM
TITLE: RAMM’s MARKET RESEARCH and DATA CAPTURE PROGRAMME UPATE**

Is this a Key Decision?

No

* One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

No function is being exercised. This report is for information only.

1. What is the report about?

1.1 To inform Members of the visitor research and data capture programme and for the forthcoming plans to be noted.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 Members are invited to comment on the report.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 A better understanding of who uses the museums service (and consequently who does not); their views of the visitor experience and their preferences, is information that helps the RAMM team monitor satisfaction rates; identify trends; shape forward planning and informs its audience development activities and income generation initiatives.

3.2 Research of this kind provides the user context for RAMM and its services and is therefore important background data for Members information.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

4.1 The independently commissioned visitor research will be funded by The Arts Council, England through its Major Partner Museum programme 2015-18. The recently installed Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) was similarly funded by the Arts Council , England’s external funding.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 There are no additional financial implications contained within this report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 This report raises no legal issues provided that the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 are complied with concerning the collection, storage and use of personal data. The purpose of the report is for information only.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

8. Report details:

RAMM has a strong track record in collecting information about visitors, their behaviour, attitudes and opinions. This activity is key to being a responsive organisation and also provides important evidence for funders, partners, applications and award submissions.

Four tranches of research have been undertaken since RAMM reopened in 2011, the first December 2011 to January 2012 (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) and the last three each in August and October 2012, 13 & 14, (funded by Arts Council England).

BACKGROUND

After reopening in December 2011 the visitor research was been designed to capture visitor views regarding their experience of and reactions to the newly-refurbished museum.

Most visitor information was collected through an exit survey, a questionnaire that can be self completed or facilitated by a researcher interview. It is designed to take no more than five minutes to complete. It consists of two question types – Classification (eg age, gender, employment status, residents or visitors, etc) and Views on RAMM – capturing views, rating a number of key service and operational aspects, and measuring satisfaction. The sample size is large enough (800) to have confidence in the robustness of the data. This research has been undertaken by Power Marketing.

Although for benchmarking purposes and for identifying trends a proportion of the data questions have been consistent since 2011, in 2013 & 14 the questionnaires were changed to include attitudes and behaviour related to donating and spending.

RAMM also uses Acorn Segmentation, a tool widely used in the commercial world. This compares visitor information to local population data. It allows RAMM to identify areas of potential growth and to compare the socio-economic profile of museum visitors to that of the base population.

The collection, analysis and reporting on data 2012-14 has been funded by Arts Council England through its Major Partner Museums programme which runs until March 2015.

During 2012 Fiona Hutchison working in the Centre for Sport, Leisure and Tourism Research at the University of Exeter undertook an investigation of the socio-cultural impacts of RAMM on the people of Exeter as part of her PhD (CASE Award Studentship supported by the Economic and Social Research Council and Arts Council England through its Major Partnership Museums programme). Key findings are reported in 4.3.

KEY FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH 2014

Views on RAMM

- Satisfaction levels remain high in with 98% rating their overall satisfaction as good, very good or excellent.
- Nine out of ten people said they would be likely to visit again which reflects the fact that a large number of visitors are local.
- Over nine in ten would recommend a visit to friends and family.
- Between 2013 and 2014 the number of people visiting who said they had spent money during their visit to the museum increased from 55% to 66%. The majority of these (45%) spending up to £10.
- Of those who spent money during their visit over three quarters spent it in the café.
- Half of the visitors said they would be quite or very likely to buy something if RAMM had a bigger shop.
- Half of RAMM's visitors say the most effective way to promote to them is via the website. Outdoor posters (33%), Facebook (30%), Email (25%) and press advertising (25%) scored highly too.

Classification

- Around six in ten visitors to RAMM live in Devon with over three in ten from the rest of the UK and abroad.
- RAMM has more female visitors (60%) than male (40%).
- Nearly three quarters of RAMM's visitors are employed (full or part time) or retired.
- Around a third of respondents had not visited before showing that RAMM is successful in attracting new visitors.
- Nearly three quarters of those who had visited before had visited at least twice, 30% had visited over five times, indicating a high level of engagement.
- In socio-economic terms RAMM's profile almost exactly matches that of the Devon population. This finding is unusual for museums and is a result of the planned audience development undertaken by the museum.

Socio-cultural impact

In spring 2012 over eight in ten Exeter residents, both visitors and non-visitors agreed with the statements as follows:

- Children and young people can benefit from (96% agree)
- Can represent us to visitors (92% agree)
- People of all ages can mix (90% agree)
- Celebrates local customs and traditions (90% agree)
- People of all ethnicities can mix (87% agree)

- Makes us feel proud of where we live (81% agree)
- People new to Exeter can come and feel included (82% agree)

Demographic characteristics revealed few statistical differences from socio-cultural population measures. This is a strong positive finding for RAMM as it demonstrates that RAMM delivers a broad range of socio-cultural impacts to Exeter residents no matter what their age, educational level, household income, gender, household make up, or what they tend to do during the week.

PROGRAMME 2015-16

RAMM will carry out two visitor surveys in 2015 building on the data collected 2012-14 to benchmark performance from year to year and identify trends.

RAMM will undertake new work collecting and analysing data in its new customer relations management system (CRM) relating to ticket sales and buying behaviour, friends membership, patrons, giving and legacies. This work will inform audience development activity to enhance RAMM's sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The programme to date has provided valuable data about visitors and non-visitors to RAMM and their reactions and attitudes to aspects of the museum. Developing RAMM's relationship with its customers including using its new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system will allow personalised and targeted customer relations as well as collecting data to inform audience development and income generation planning.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

- 9.1 The museum contributes to corporate objective 'Provide great things for me to see and do', as part of the cultural and retail destination offer that attracts visitors to the city centre and the 'quality of life' mix that helps deliver inward investment. A better understanding of RAMM's visitor preferences and behaviours adds to an understanding of the wider picture and the market intelligence critical to sustaining and developing a flourishing city centre.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

- 10.1 This information gathering and analysis exercise holds no specific risk. It is externally funded and part of plans for 2015-18

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

- 11.1 Information gathering is conducted within RAMM so the work created no new impacts on these social issues.

12. Are there any other options?

12.1. Ceasing data collection would deprive the Museum, Members and external funders of important benchmarking and planning information. As the work is externally funded, financing may be lost. It would diminish the evidence base required to support future funding applications.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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