

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL  
REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY  
DATE OF MEETING: 21 JANUARY 2016  
REPORT OF: AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT LEAD OFFICER, RAMM  
TITLE: RAMM's MARKET RESEARCH and DATA CAPTURE PROGRAMME UPDATE**

**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 note the content of this report and comment and to suggest areas to explore / questions to ask in future visitor surveys (for both on site and online visitors).

**3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

3.1 A better understanding of who uses the museums service in person and online (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 and digital 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 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 in this report.

**6. What are the legal aspects?**

6.1 None identified.

## 7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

## 8. Report details:

8.1 RAMM has a strong track record of collecting information about visitors, both on site and online, 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.

8.2 Five tranches of on site 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 four each in August and October 2012, 13, 14 & 15 (funded by Arts Council England).

8.3 Data from online visitors is collected through Google analytics.

### 8.4 Background

8.4.1 After RAMM's reopening in December 2011 the visitor research was 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 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. Although for benchmarking purposes and for identifying trends a proportion of the data questions have been consistent since 2011, in subsequent surveys the questionnaires were changed to include attitudes and behaviour related to donating, spending and digital interaction.

8.4.2 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 local population.

8.4.3 In 2015 RAMM registered with the Audience Agency's Audience Finder, a requirement of all Arts Council Funded cultural organisations, and is now collecting visitor-profiling data throughout the year. Similar to Acorn Segmentation (3.4) Audience Finder can be used to compare visitors to local population characteristics and, in addition, to those of other cultural organisations and will enable RAMM to identify potential growth areas.

8.4.4 In 2015 RAMM introduced a new customer relationship management system which collects data to enable personalised and targeted customer relations and to inform fundraising and income generation planning. The collection, storage and use of personal data complies with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

### 8.5 KEY FINDINGS FROM 2015 RESEARCH

#### 8.5.1 Views, attitudes and motivations

- Satisfaction levels remain high in with 97% 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.
- 95% would recommend a visit to friends and family.
- Over two thirds of visitors came to see specific exhibits.
- Nearly three quarters of visitors came for new things to see and do.
- Nearly one in six people said they had spent money during their visit to the museum. 41% of these spending up to £10.
- Of those who spent money during their visit over two thirds had spent it in the cafe.
- Half of RAMM's visitors say the most effective way to promote to them is via the website. Outdoor posters (35%), Facebook (32%), Email (27%) and press advertising (21%) scored highly too.

#### 8.5.2 Classification

- Six in ten visitors to RAMM live in Devon.
- RAMM has more female visitors (63%) than male (37%).
- Over three quarters of RAMM's visitors are employed (full or part time) or retired.
- Around a third of respondents had not visited before demonstrating RAMM's appeal as a visitor attraction.
- Two thirds of those who had visited before had visited at least twice, 27% had visited over five times, indicating a high level of engagement.
- In socio-economic terms RAMM's profile is close to that of the Devon population. This finding is unusual for museums and is a result of the planned audience development undertaken by the museum.

### 8.6 PROGRAMME 2016-18

8.6.1 RAMM will carry out surveys of visitors both on site and online building on the data collected 2012-15 to benchmark performance from year to year and identify trends.

8.6.2 Using its new customer relationship management system RAMM will collect and analyse data relating to ticket sales and buying behaviour, friends membership, patrons, giving and legacies. This work will inform development activity to enhance RAMM's sustainability.

8.6.3 RAMM will gather visitor numbers, attitudes and views relating to charged-for exhibitions to inform future planning.

### 8.7 CONCLUSION

8.7.1 The programme to date has provided valuable data about visitors and non-visitors to RAMM. It has also provided information about their reactions and attitudes to aspects

of the museum. While still building on this knowledge, future work will use new data to introduce a personalised approach to communications, managing relationships with targeted individuals and identified audience groups.

**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 This report is for information and provides Members with the opportunity to suggest further research questions. It does not have implications on the listed issues.

**12. Are there any other options**

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. It would also reduce RAMM's capacity to continue to develop its customer-focussed communications and services and income generation.

**Camilla Hampshire, Museums Manager & Cultural Lead**

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

**Background papers used in compiling this report:-**

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