

Agenda Item: 6

Report to: Museums Committee

Date: 9th June 2008

Report from: Museums Curator

Title of report: **VISITOR QUESTIONNAIRES**

Purpose of report: To provide an analysis of visitor questionnaires completed between July 2007 and May 2008

Recommendations: **The report is for noting**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At a previous meeting members requested to see the results of ongoing visitor surveys carried out at both Museums. Details of previous surveys were reported to the Museums Committee in June 2003 and December 2005

1.1 A total of 37 forms were completed for the main Museum and Art Gallery and 29 for the Old Town Hall Museum although not all questions were answered by the respondents. The results of the survey are attached.

2.0 Summary of findings

Question 1, Regularity of Visits: at the main Museum there were more regular than first time visitors although more of the latter than in 2005. At the Old Town Hall there were more first time visitors although these were not as high as in 2005.

Question 2, Visitor Origin: Hastings Museum attracted a slightly higher percentage of visitors from outside the town (53%), the Old Town Hall a considerably higher figure (68%)

Question 3, Means of Transport: the majority of respondents came by car to both Museums and the figure was higher than in 2005. However there was also an increase in the number of visitors using public transport, as opposed to walking, and this may represent the longer distances travelled – see question 2

Question 4, Reason for Visit: understandably the highest proportion of visitors to the Hastings Museum came to see the new displays (40%). At the Old Town Hall the largest group were tourists (48%) although this is lower than in 2005.

Question 5, Source of Information: most visitors came to the Hastings Museum through personal recommendation (23%) followed by publicity in the press (21%). Visits to the Old Town Hall were mainly through chance find (44%) and the Information Centre (24%)

Question 6, Age of visitors: the majority of visitors to the Hastings Museum and Old Town Hall were adults of working age (46% and 33%) followed by the over 60s (39% and 30%). There was a significantly higher proportion of children visiting the Old Town Hall but these figures do not reflect the educational visits recorded in details on Museum Attendances reported elsewhere.

Question 7, Views on Exhibitions: 80% of respondents considered the exhibitions at the Hastings Museum to be either very good or interesting.

Question 8, Preference of Exhibition Topic: the majority of respondents were most interested in local history, followed by art history.

Question 9, Visitor Satisfaction: there were high satisfaction levels, 97% of respondents at the Hastings Museum were satisfied or highly satisfied and 96% at the Old Town Hall.

Question 10, Feature Most Like : at the Hastings Museum the most popular items, in order, were the Durbar Hall, the new displays, the design of the extension and Grey Owl, at the Old Town Hall it was the interactivities and variety of exhibits.

Question 11, Feature Most Disliked: at both Museums the main complaint was not being able to read the labels

Question 12, Suggestions: at the Hastings Museum the highest number of comments were received about providing more text, improvements to the café and shop and better seating, at the Old Town Hall suggestions included more interactivities and audio visual facilities, lower labels and more seating

Equal Opportunities monitoring: there were slightly more female than male visitors at both sites, a small proportion of disabled visitors and respondents had a predominantly white European background.

3.0 Museum response to issues raised in survey

- 3.1 In order to counteract the difficulties of reading labels under the low light levels required to preserve fragile exhibits it is intended to issue additional large print text sheets for each gallery.
- 3.2 Exhibition topics will be looked at in more detail when the Jerwood proposals are confirmed and a further review takes place into the role of the exhibitions at the Museum. The preference for local history may reflect visitor profiles as shown in the equal opportunities section of the form. Future exhibition programming will need to reflect the Council's community cohesion priorities. More detailed questionnaires relating to specific exhibitions are in course of preparation.
- 3.3 Minority ethnic communities are currently being targeted through the Museum's outreach programme.

3.4 Additional seating has been kindly provided for the Museum and Art Gallery through the Hastings and St Leonards Museum Association.

3.5 Comments on improvements to the shop and café area have been taken on board.

4.0 Policy implications

Please tick if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities & Community Cohesiveness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic / Financial implications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights Act	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisational Consequences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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