Benchmarking 2011-12: Results Summary

Introduction: some facts about Benchmarking

- Benchmarking, also known by its full name of 'Benchmarking Museums in the East of England', is now in its 11th consecutive year, with data going back as far as 2001/02. The annual survey is aimed at accredited museums or those working towards accreditation.
- This year for the first time, participating museums have been asked for permission to publish their data (with the exception of any personal data) with a view to uploading the full dataset on the SHARE website. In addition, all participating museums will be sent the full dataset. This is with the intention of making it much easier for museums to benchmark themselves against other participants on their own terms.
- The response rate this year has been very encouraging; just over three quarters of museums invited to take part did provide a response (76%), this is the highest level of participation since the survey began. In most cases, this participation represented a complete response (i.e. to all questions).

Audiences

- ***Total museum visits*** came to 2.8 million, or a mean of 24,867 visits per museum. In 2011, the total population for the region was 5.8 million[1], which means that there was a museum visit for every other person in the region. This measure has remained the same for the past three years now, suggesting that museum visits are fairly stable in the region.
- There were 99 museums that were able to provide ***total visit figures*** for 2010-11 and 2011-12 and were fully open during both years. These show an overall reduction from 2,749,141 in 2010/11 to 2,711,482 in 2011/12, or a 1.4% decrease, although this is a very small reduction. Some of the reasons given for a drop in overall visitor numbers include the recession, reduced opening hours and budget cuts, fewer special events and poor weather, particularly a problem on event days at which larger numbers of visitors are expected.
- The number of ***visits by school age children in organised groups*** (e.g. schools, after-school clubs) stands at 188,352, or a mean of 1,903 visits per museum. Visits were down 5.1% between 2010-11 and 2011-12 based on a constant sample of 78 museums. Reasons given by specific museums which experienced a drop include funding being withdrawn and the negative effects of increasing fuel costs on the ability of schools to make trips to museums.
- The ***total number of visits by children*** in 2011/12 came to 617,816, with the mean measuring 7,620 visits per museum. Based on a constant sample, total visits by children have seen little change between 2010-11 and 2011-12, going from 596,728 to 589,426 visits (1.2% drop).
- There were 68,931 ***instances of outreach with children*** in 2011-12, which equates to 1,149 per museum. Using a constant sample, the total went from 59,674 instances of outreach

[1] Results released by the Office for National Statistics (www.ons.gov.uk) based on the 2011 census give the East of England population as being 5.8 million. It is recognised that not all of the reported visits to museums will have been made by people living within the region, and indeed some people may have made repeat visits. Nevertheless this comment is offered as an assessment of visits per head of population.

with children in 2010-11 to 65,846 instances in 2011-12, this is a significant increase of 10.3%.

- ***Instances of outreach with adults*** totalled 54,644 in 2011-12 and the mean figure was 994 per museum. Based on a constant sample, this measure actually saw a significant drop of 9.1% over the two years between 2010-11 and 2011-12 from 35,681 instances to 32,421 instances.

Museum Resources

- ***Expenditure*** in the region for the year 2011-12 totalled £24.9 million as reported by 103 museums. The mean expenditure figure therefore equates to £241,107. In 2010-11, the mean figure was £213,319 and in 2009-10 was £258,846.
- ***Total staff costs*** in the East of England amounted to just over £16.5 million (97 museums), which on average equates to £171,005 per museum. In 2010/11 and 2009/10 the comparable means were respectively £281,075 per museum and approximately £230,000 per museum.
- ***Total annual income*** (not including time-specific project grants) for the region's museums came to £13.6 million, or £133,464 per museum (based on a sample of 102 museums). In 2010/11 and 2009/10 this same measure recorded respectively £19.1 million in total or a mean of £177,408 and £16.8 million in total or a mean of £176,848. Even taking into account missing figures for the Fitzwilliam Museum which did not take part in the recent survey (usually around £4 million), it does still suggest that income has fallen this year.
- ***Income*** provided ***by time-specific grants*** ('additional project income') totalled £6.4 million (or £74,925 per museum on average, based on a sample of 86 museums). This figure shows a noticeable reduction of at least 50% compared with previous years where the totals amounted to £14.4 million or £161,380 per museum (2010-11) and almost £11 million or £151,739 per museum (2009/10). Nearly 40 different organisations are reported to have provided funding to the region's museums in 2011-12.
- ***Income from retail spend*** reached £1.6 million (in 2011/12 the exact figure was £1,627,140 and in 2010/11 it was £1,954,141). The mean figure for this year is £16,775 per museum and for last year was £19,348 per museum suggesting that income from retail sales has dropped in the last year.
- Income from other sources, namely schools and events / hospitality were not collected prior to this year, therefore no comparison can be drawn with earlier figures. ***Income from schools*** totalled £789,106, which equates to a mean of £9,989 per museum (based on there being 79 museums in the sample). ***Income from events / hospitality*** came to a total of nearly £2.5 million, the mean being £32,236 per museum (for a sample of 77 museums).
- ***Donations*** brought in £1.4 million in total, this worked out to a mean figure of £14,263 for museums in the region (based on 99 museums). In 2008-09, the last time this measure was collected, total income from donations came to £880,257 (or a mean of £9,169 per museum). In 2007-08 comparable figures were £733,674 (total) and £8,839 (mean).
- In 2011-12 there were a total of 567 ***full time equivalent (FTE) staff*** (counting both project and non-project funded staff) for 67 museums. This works out as a mean of 8.5 FTE staff per museum. In 2010-11 the comparable mean was 8.8 FTE staff per museum (where there were 654 FTE staff overall), which is not a significant difference.
- There were a total of 4,879 ***volunteers*** working in 104 museums in 2011-12. This makes a mean of 47 volunteers per museum. In 2010-11, 2009-10 and 2008-09 the comparable mean figures per museum were respectively 43.1 volunteers, 42.5 volunteers and 51 volunteers. This therefore shows a very stable picture with regard to volunteer numbers in the region over the last four years at least. Furthermore, 102 museums indicated that their volunteers had devoted a total of 412,949 hours, or 4,049 hours per museum. This equates to a substantial **£3.8 million invested in museums** in the East of England in 2011/12[2].

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[2] The exact figure is £3,861,068. Based on advice from Volunteer England, when working out an hourly rate it is best to take a value between the national minimum wage (£6.08 for workers over 21 from October 2011) and the median hourly wage (£12.62 in April 2011, Office for National Statistics). In

Museum Collections

- The majority of museums surveyed fall into one of the first three categories with regard to the ***size of their collections***; 'Under 1,000', '1,001-5,000' or '5,001-50,000' objects in collection.
- Museums in the region were most likely to have had a visit from a professional conservator and/or Museum Development Officer in the last 12 months, respectively 50% and 49% of museums. Around one in four museums (42%) have had a visit from a Curatorial Adviser in the last 12 months and one in three (27%) have had a visit from a National Security Advisor in the last 5 years. Just over one third (38%) have had other professional advice in the last 12 months. Almost three quarters of museums (73%) report having in place an intruder detection system.
- The ***total number of disposals*** made by surveyed museums came to 630 objects, with the ***total number of acquisitions*** adding up to 14,034 objects
- One in five organisations (20%) indicated that their ***storage areas*** are currently overfull with a further 41% indicating that they are now full. This means that a lack of storage is cause for concern in almost two thirds of museums. Just over one quarter (28%) reported that their storage facilities will be full in the next 5 years with a further 10% stating that they had another 5-10 years before their storage areas would be full. There were 50 museums that reported 'yes' they plan to address any storage issues (some museums briefly said what these plans are). There were 20 museums that indicated 'no' they did not have in place plans to deal with any current or potential shortfall in storage capacity, although one of these museums stated that they are 'in development'.

Digital Strategy

- Almost 80% of museums that responded to the question stated that they had updated their website more than one week ago but in the last month (40%) or had updated it in the last week (39%). Just over one in five museums (22%) reported that they had updated their website more than one month ago.
- There were 103 organisations (museums and museum services/trusts) that provided information about their use of social networking sites, with these museums being split slightly more in favour towards those that do make use of them (54%) rather than those that do not (46%). By far the most common networking site used was Facebook.
- Almost three quarters of organisations surveyed do not have a written digital strategy (72%), with only just over a quarter (28%) having one of these in place (**Table 12**). This is therefore potentially an area for development in the future.
- Three quarters of organisations surveyed (76%) indicated that 5% or less of their collections are available online. A further 12% stated that more than 5% but less than 25% of their collections are online; 5% indicated that between 25% and 75% of their collections are online. Lastly, just 7% said that more than 75% of their collections are available online.

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this instance, the hourly rate was therefore taken to be £9.35.