

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Demand Analysis for “A Town Unearthed: Folkestone before 1500”

- The research analysed demand among Folkestone’s residents, stakeholders and schools for activities developed as part of the “A Town Unearthed: Folkestone before 1500” (ATU) Project. The field research comprised a survey of local residents and interviews with stakeholders and local schools.
- The overall characteristic of those residents who participated in the survey, mirrors that of the local population as a relatively mature, working class group whose areas of residence extended to those living as far away from Folkestone as Densole, indicating that the ATU Project potentially has a greater reach than may have been initially envisaged.
- There is significant amount of latent demand for the Project which was generally viewed by residents, stakeholders and schools alike, to be a great asset to the town. In spite of this, and the fact that the majority of residents (69%) were very or quite generally interested in history and archaeology, only 9% of residents had immediate awareness of the Project and slightly less than 20% had engaged in any ATU activities, raising early concerns about the Project’s visibility.
- Five out of the eight stakeholders interviewed had been approached to become involved in the Project and the remaining three would have liked to have been contacted. Only two of the nine schools interviewed thought they had received an initial approach, although a few suggested that other school representatives might have been approached, without passing on the relevant information to colleagues.
- Perceived benefits of the Project included community cohesion, civic pride and economic regeneration (stakeholders) and family engagement, capacity building support for local teachers and supporting skill development and student engagement (schools). Furthermore, 83% of residents felt that the Project was ‘a good thing’.
- Residents expressed greatest interest in exhibitions and guided walks, and both schools and stakeholders felt these should be continued in the future. They additionally offered ideas for new activities, the former citing online resources and the latter, a Young Time Team and Young Historians Clubs.
- Residents identified key future markets for the Project as: ‘residents with an interest in local history and archaeology’ (65%); followed by ‘families with children over five’ (52%) and ‘the elderly/retired’ (48%). Stakeholders felt that the focus should remain on the younger generation and the visitor markets and schools were keen to see the Project develop in such a way as it would allow interschool relationships either between primary and secondary schools or schools of the same level.

- Awareness raising and publicity were seen as the key weaknesses of the Project to date and as such, the key barriers to future engagement. There are three recommendations for the future success of the Project. Firstly the development and implementation of a communications and branding strategy that will allow ATU to reach its full potential. Secondly, a process of tangibilisation of the audience experience through the introduction of tangible cues. Thirdly, a reconsideration of those individuals and groups who are willing and able to be deployed in activity development and management, and raising overall awareness of the Project. As a result of a much broader perspective on the Project's appeal, a correspondingly broader range of activities might become genuine 'competitors' for audiences as ATU seeks to compete with sporting, shopping and other leisure activities.