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**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Economy Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2014

**Subject:** Christmas 2013 Summary

**Report of:** Chief Executive

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**Summary**

This report responds to the Committees request for an overview on the Christmas activity promoted by the Council this year including Christmas markets, the lighting scheme, events and an integrated communications campaign. The report assesses the extent to which it drives economic growth. In addition, the Committee requested information on district centres and a comparison with other major cities, where such information was available.

**Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to note the report.

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**Wards Affected: All**

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**Contact Officers:**

Name: Sara Tomkins

Position: Assist. Chief Exec. Comms & ICT

Telephone: 0161 234 3706

E-mail: s.tomkins@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Dave Lea

Position: Director of Commercial Services

Telephone: 0161 234 3926

E-mail: d.lea@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Pat Bartoli

Position: City Centre Regeneration

Telephone: 0161 234 3329

E-mail: p.bartoli@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Angela Harrington

Position: Head of Regeneration

Telephone: 0161 234 3171

E-mail: a.harrington@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Sara Todd

Position: Deputy Chief Executive

Telephone: 0161 234 3286

E-mail: s.todd@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Geoff Little

Position: Deputy Chief Executive

Telephone: 0161 234 3280

E-mail: g.little@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers below.

- Christmas 2012 - Economy Scrutiny, March 2013  
([http://www.manchester.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1838/economy\\_scrutiny\\_committee](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1838/economy_scrutiny_committee))

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report summarises the Christmas performance this year compared with last year including the direct economic impact of Christmas communications, events and the markets organised by the Council. The report also provides an overview of the Christmas activity in the district centres and provides some national comparators on how well Manchester has performed compared to the UK.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The overall strategy for the Council's Christmas related promotions in Manchester is to drive economic growth and improve on 2012's economic performance. There are three elements to the Council's activity:
- The extensive markets offer that adds to the Christmas retail mix
  - The festive lighting scheme and events calendar
  - A coordinated communications campaign that supports the key attractions and promotes Manchester as a destination to shop and visit at Christmas.
- 2.2 The collaborative private and public sector Christmas marketing campaign for Manchester aims to attract new tourism and visitors, high spending shoppers and encourage repeat visits during this crucial trading period. This supports the estimated 25,000 jobs in retail and associated services and additional jobs created by the seasonal peak.

## **3.0 2013 Christmas communications strategy**

- 3.1 Marketing Manchester working with Manchester City Council and CityCo delivered a fully integrated campaign to promote Manchester as a short break destination for a Christmas trip.
- 3.2 The campaign was funded by a public and private sector partnership:
- £103k from Manchester City Council (down from £117k in 2012)
  - £50k from the Heart of Manchester Bid
  - £128k from Visit England Regional Growth Fund
  - £73k from 30 commercial partners from the public and private sector
- The total budget for the collaborative campaign was £354k in 2013 compared to £323k in 2012.
- 3.3 Commercial partners which accounted for £73k of the budget included APCOA, Bali Health Lounge, Cheshire Oaks, Chester Zoo, Cornerhouse, Cross Country Trains, First TransPennine Express, Haydock Park, John Rylands, Legoland, Lowry Outlet Mall, Magical Christmas Fair, Manchester Arndale, Manchester City Football Club, Manchester Craft and Design Centre, Manchester United Football Club, Marriott Victoria and Albert, Metrolink, MOSI, National Football Museum, NOMA, Salford Council, Sapporo Teppanyaki, Spinningfields Ice Rink, System One Travel, Tatton Park, The Mere Resort, The Music Show, The Royal Exchange Theatre and Virgin Trains. Contra agreements were also set up with First TransPennine Express and Virgin Trains who provided in-kind marketing opportunities.

- 3.4 The main audiences for the campaign were middle class families, couples and people interested in short breaks and Christmas shopping in Manchester with the objectives of the campaign to:
- Drive visitors to [VisitManchester.com/Christmas](http://VisitManchester.com/Christmas) to plan a visit
  - Highlight the Christmas offering and events in Manchester, positioning the city as an exciting place with a unique Christmas offering on a scale that cannot be seen anywhere else in the UK
  - Motivate planning and booking of overnight stays/short breaks over the festive season
  - Increase footfall and visitor numbers by attracting new visitors to the city, driving repeat visitors and increase the frequency of repeat visits
  - Extend the length of stay of visitors by converting day trips to overnight stays
  - Increase hotel occupancy by 1% through the promotion of Manchester as a short break destination
- 3.5 Building on the success of the creative used in 2012, the marketing material evolved and was supported by a multi-channel campaign, using a variety of media. The campaign promoted Manchester as an exciting place, with a unique Christmas offering and focuses on the events, shopping, culture and nightlife – a vibrant city to visit for a short break. The call to action on all materials was to visit the website [visitmanchester.com/Christmas](http://visitmanchester.com/Christmas)
- 3.6 Media included:
- A 30 second TV advert broadcast in two regions (Central West and Granada). The investment for TV was £80k.
  - National and regional press advertising with a combined audience reach of 3.35m. The investment on press advertising was £44k.
  - Radio advertising and promotion across Yorkshire and the North West with a combined audience of 983k. Radio promotion reached an audience of 1,32m listeners. The investment in radio was £11k.
  - Out of home channels were used in high traffic areas and included digital sites, 6-sheets, lamppost banners billboard sites across Greater Manchester. Additional outdoor was provided in partnership with Metrolink and First TransPennine Express across trains and 23 selected rail stations in Yorkshire and Manchester.
  - Printed literature including listings of the main Christmas events was sent to targeted postcodes in Cheshire, Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester as well as distributed across the museums and attractions network and via Manchester Evening News vendors on the street. Handed out by Northern Rail and TFGM at selected stations and by the CityCo City Hosts and the Manchester Visitor Information Centre staff. A second version of the printed leaflet was distributed in the South East through the Guardian Weekend and through Virgin Trains' First Class lounges. The print and distribution investment came to £9k with some activity being given in-kind.
  - Online marketing featured Google adwords, banner advertising, use of social media and e-newsletters were sent to contacts in national and

international databases, a total of 636k were distributed. The online marketing investment was £20k.

- 3.7 All elements of the campaign were supported by in-house Public Relations to drive publicity in local, national and international media. The media value of the coverage achieved is estimated at £3.44m (Advertising Value Equivalent – the standard industry measure), an increase on 2012's £2.9m with almost 500 articles over the Christmas period both locally and nationally.
- 3.8 The increased media value was driven by broadcast coverage almost doubling between 2012 and 2013, with 259 broadcast items compared with last year's 132. The Christmas season was kicked off by BBC North West Tonight broadcasting live from the lights switch-on event on 8 November. Other highlights included BBC Radio 6 broadcasting its Radcliffe and Maconie show live from the Exchange Square markets on Friday 20 December and BBC Radio Five Live, ITV1's Daybreak and BBC Radio Five Live recording packages from the Christmas Markets. Even BBC1's Strictly Come Dancing got in on the act recording vox pops and to-camera pieces at the markets while CBBC used them for a full segment of its popular Hacker and Dodge show. Another successful partnership with Radio Manchester included their regional broadcast bus providing five days of live coverage from the Christmas Markets, which were also regularly featured on Key 103 and Capital FM.
- 3.9 National print and web coverage included mentions in The Daily Mirror and Sunday Mirror, Guardian, Independent/i, Daily Star and Metro and the MEN consistently ran positive pieces on all aspects of the Christmas campaign, including a comment piece on 19 November declaring that the festive markets were "worth their weight in gold" to the city.
- 3.10 Manchester's Christmas Markets were also featured in online photo galleries of the UK and Europe's top markets produced by The Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, AOL and MSN. Bath was the only other English market to feature in the MSN list while Birmingham and Leeds were the only other major English cities to feature in the others.

#### PR Coverage Details

	Print	Broadcast	Online	TOTAL
<b>Local</b>	38	66		104
<b>Regional</b>	88	187	66	341
<b>National</b>	13	6	12	31
<b>International</b>			1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>477</b>

- 3.11 Online Reach. The main call to action for the campaign was [visitmanchester.com/Christmas](http://visitmanchester.com/Christmas). This achieved 853,567 visits which was 237,439 more visits than in 2012, an increase of 38%.
- 3.12 Facebook likes of Visit Manchester increased by 158% from 12,405 following the summer campaign to 32,000 during Christmas. Compared to 2012, this

represents an increase of 256%. This increase was largely down to Facebook advertising which has not previously been used for these campaigns.

- 3.13 Twitter followers increased by 13% from 40,828 to 46,000 since the summer campaign and compared to the number of followers at the end of 2012, this represents a 64% increase.
- 3.14 The campaign also had an impact on visitors to the Council's website with a 70% increase in page views of 'Christmas related content' on Manchester.gov.uk throughout November and December compared to the same period last year. November and December also saw 3,942,900 visits to the wider Manchester.gov.uk website (a 12% increase year on year). This reflects the overall increase in usage across the site since the new site was launched in April 2012 (10% year on year increase). Manchester Markets page views also increased, by 42% year on year.
- 3.15 Once again there was a significant amount of social media 'buzz' with over 22,700 mentions of Manchester Christmas hashtags such as "#McrChristmas", "Manchester Christmas markets", "Christmas Manchester" and "Manchester switch on" across all social platforms - an increase of 68% compared to the same period last year (22.7k vs 13.5k).
- 3.16 Work with our social media partners (for example Manchester Airport, Manchester Arndale and Eastlands Homes) also resulted in Manchester Christmas social media messages being sent to a Facebook audience of 178,899 and a Twitter audience of 212,449 for no charge. The reach for this content is growing too with people in countries as far as the USA, Malaysia and Canada interacting with our content.
- 3.17 Rich media content (video, live streaming etc.) for Manchester Markets also increased by 14% with over 16,500 views through the Council's website. This again demonstrates how popular this type of media is and the need to continue to develop new rich content on the Manchester.gov.uk site for the wider Council.

#### **4.0 2013 Festive Lighting Scheme and Events**

- 4.1 The Council and its key partners continue to provide the vision and direction to create a festive portfolio of activity across the Christmas period that will differentiate the city centre offer and provide a solid platform on which the business and retail sector can build to deliver a positive festive experience for residents and visitors alike, driving economic growth and enhancing the visitor offer in the city centre to support the tourism agenda.
- 4.2 Manchester's festive package extends beyond simply the provision of illuminated street decoration and the city centre Festive Lighting scheme is the visual foundation of Manchester's Christmas 'offer' in what is an increasingly competitive marketplace for visitor numbers and the associated economic benefit.

- 4.3 The core city centre festive lighting scheme was augmented by the introduction of new programmable LED lighting to the Town Hall (the installation of 84 high output colour changing LED luminaries) and Piccadilly Fountain (360 LED energy efficient colour changing lights installed) and the test of a of new lighting product on King Street.
- 4.4 The Christmas Lights Switch On event on Friday 8 November launched the festive period with performances from 2012 X-Factor winner, James Arthur, who returned to Manchester almost a year to the day after his triumph performing his first Christmas Lights show of 2013. James Arthur was supported by 'The Vamps,' the National Theatre's hit show War Horse, 2012 Britain's Got Talent winners Ashleigh and Pudsey and new girl group Neon Jungle. There was also additional stage content provided by Manchester show Choir and 'Rejetz' -2013 winners of the Printworks Street Dance competition; and the show finale – a 10 minute fireworks and pyrotechnics display synchronised to music. The media partner for the show was Key 103 who provide the performers for free as part of the package.
- 4.5 Capitalising on an ever growing audience, the Switch On event was live streamed for the second year running – making it accessible to a worldwide audience. The live web cam feed, was seen in 41 countries by up to 8.5k viewers from as far afield as Mexico, Philippines, Puerto Rico, India and Brazil. The live stream connection was also embedded within media partner sites, MEN and Key 103 and also beamed to the screens in Exchange Square and Spinningfields giving greater visibility of the evening event.
- 4.6 The portfolio of festive activity spread across the key public spaces in the city centre from the 15<sup>th</sup> November with festive markets in Albert Square, Brazenose Street, Lincoln Square, King Street, St Ann's Square, Exchange St, New Cathedral Street, Exchange Square, Corn Exchange and Corporation Street.
- 4.7 Now in its sixth year, Spinningfields hosted the city centre open air ice rink providing a quality family attraction in Hardman Square from 8 November to the 5 January. Capital Properties who are the management agents estimated that 57,000 skaters utilised the facilities this year.
- 4.8 The festive period also saw the installation of the Wheel of Manchester in Piccadilly Gardens, opening to the public on 31 December 2013 and providing the private investment for the New Years Eve fireworks event.
- 4.9 The finale to the festive events programme was the New Years Eve fireworks display and support activation including rides on the observation wheel until 1am. The event was challenging to deliver in the new location of Piccadilly Gardens but saw attendance levels estimated at 12,000 spectators at midnight.
- 4.10 The event has grown from 2009 and 2010 when 5,000 attended in Exchange Square and Spinningfields – and provided a 50% audience increase on last years event in Albert Square. Partnership working with TfGM saw improved

transport provision to support the event and lay the foundations for future New Year celebrations.

- 4.11 Media coverage included national online images from Piccadilly Gardens alongside other New Years events across the globe.

## **5.0 Christmas Markets Summary**

- 5.1 Whilst the key objective of the Christmas markets is to animate the city and drive footfall by differentiating Manchester from other destinations, the Markets also makes a financial contribution of £770k to the Council.

- 5.2 Celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> year, the Christmas Market once again expanded its operation growing to occupy 9 individual sites. This year the market was able to take advantage of the road closure on Corporation Street and further developed the market offer on Exchange Square. These new developments included an addition of 43 Christmas houses and an elevated platform hosting the Christmas Vintage Lounge; a new food and drink area specialising in promoting local micro breweries and presenting live music entertainment 5 nights a week. All of which had the desired effect of establishing Exchange Square as the second major destination location of the market after Albert Square.

- 5.3 In addition to the developments in Exchange Square and Corporation Street other new innovations for the Christmas Markets included:

- New two storey Windmill House on Albert Square
- New hexagonal house on Albert Square
- Four new housing blocks on Albert Square.
- New bars and bespoke designed houses for King Street.
- New mug and glass wash facilities.
- New crowd management plan for St Ann's Square.
- New featured seating area in St Ann's Square including a children's entertainment area – a singing animated tree.
- Commissioning of commemorative coinage for use on the market, the Christmas Market Shillings.

- 5.4 Anecdotally, most market traders reported an excellent trading year exceeding their expectations given the present economic climate and in comparison with other events they have traded at elsewhere in the country. In particular, a number of traders reported that the Saturday 2 December 2013 offered them the best trading day since many of them had started the market, in some instances this is over 13 years.

- 5.5 The Vintage Lounge provided a suitable location to hoist live broadcasts from Key 103 and 6 Music Live.

- 5.6 A full Christmas Markets report was presented to Finance Scrutiny in February 2014.



## 6.0 City Centre Footfall and Retail Performance

6.1 Footfall in the city was up 14.4% in December 2013 compared to the previous year with Manchester far out performing the rather gloomy negative national picture. November 2013 also saw a small increase of 1.4% on the previous year.

Month	Total Footfall	2013-12 % change	National % change
Oct	2,821,475	-6.4	-3.6
Nov	3,661,606	1.4	-4.2
Dec	6,385,107	14.4	-3.7

6.2 There are four locations where there are footfall counters in the city centre (King Street, Market Street, New Cathedral Street and Exchange Square). The combined average shows an 11% increase in footfall figures during the Christmas campaign period when compared to the same period in 2012.

	2013	2012	% increase/decrease	Notes
Exchange Square	2,100,727	1,996,062	5%	
King Street	2,491,112	1,712,350	45%	Markets supporting footfall growth
Market Street	3,008,979	3,208,376	-6%	Possible issues with the footfall counter
New Cathedral	1,686,035	1,457,500	16%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,286,853</b>	<b>8,374,288</b>	<b>11%</b>	

6.3 On national retail sales measures, retail sales nationally increased by just 0.4% during December 2013 compared to the previous year, however, Manchester experienced a 4.6% rise in sales compared to December 2012 (Source: Springboard Retail Intelligence). Manchester Arndale reported that the centre exceeded the 41 million footfall mark for the year in 2012 - the highest ever on record. In 2013, this figure declined slightly by 0.6%. However, in December 2013, footfall increased by 0.6% with a total of 5,687,775 people visiting during the month with their busiest ever day recorded on 30th November with over 253k visiting.

## 7.0 Shopper Research Highlights.

7.1 To measure the success of the Christmas activity and the economic impact, research was commissioned with Alterline, an independent Manchester based research company who interviewed shoppers during the festive period. The results of the fieldwork were collated and analysed by the Research and Intelligence team at the Council.

7.2 Alterline conducted 828 face-to-face interviews between 30th November and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013 on the streets of Manchester. The locations covered by the fieldworkers were Exchange Square, Albert Square, Piccadilly Gardens, Spinningfields Ice Rink, King Street and Market Street.

7.3 Economic impact is measured on footfall and average spend. The value of the communications activity is assessed on the effectiveness of the communications to influence someone to visit Manchester. The headlines have been summarised for this report based on the shoppers surveyed:

- 46% (23% in 2012) of respondents were in Manchester that day to specifically visit the Christmas Markets, 88% of respondents had visited the Christmas Markets so far already in the Christmas period and 86% had visited or intended to visit the Albert Square Christmas Markets on the day they were interviewed.
- Average spend per person was £80.80. This breaks down as follows:

	2013	2012	2011
Shopping	£41.11	£34.98	£40.02
Attractions	£1.82	£2.58	£5.88
Food	£28.54	£12.81	£15.14
Accommodation	£5.42	£4.12	£2.79
Travel	£3.81	£2.22	£2.67
Other	£0.21	£0.45	£0.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>£80.80</b>	<b>£57.15</b>	<b>£66.88</b>

- Spend and footfall comparison since the last commissioned research are summarised below:

Markets Customer Research	2013	2012	2011	2012 v 2013
Average spend of shoppers interviewed at just Albert Square Christmas Market	£49.14	£42.71	£49.54	+15%
Estimated visitor numbers for markets	1.85m*	1.67m	1.50m	+11%*
<b>Total markets gross spend</b>	<b>£90.91m*</b>	<b>£71.33m</b>	<b>£74.31m</b>	<b>+27%</b>
<b>Total spend of those who specifically came for the markets (46% in 2013, 23% in 2012, 16% in 2011)</b>	<b>£41.82m</b>	<b>£16.41m</b>	<b>£11.89m</b>	<b>55%</b>

\*No footfall counters in 2013. Estimate based on average rise in footfall across the city centre in 2013 compared to 2012

- Therefore, based on those surveyed, average spend has increased for the festive period.
- There were a number of particularly high spenders interviewed in locations such as Exchange Square and King Street, that had travelled some distance to be in Manchester including from Wales, the wider North-West and from abroad (France, Ireland and Oman).

- The estimated increase in footfall at the markets, combined with a larger proportion of people who came specifically for the markets accounts for the large rise shown in gross spend attributable to the markets.
- 39% of respondents had seen some sort of advertising promoting Manchester at Christmas showing the communications campaign had strong awareness and 44% had seen the advertising images when prompted.
- 6% of respondents said the advertising they had seen greatly influenced their visit that day, 7% had been slightly influenced. Therefore, based on the 3.01m shoppers counted on Market Street during the Christmas period and the 6% of those who came as a result of the communications campaign with an average spend of £80.80, the value of those additional attracted shoppers through communications is £14.6m.
- Therefore the communications campaign return on investment of £41 for every £1 spent on communications (£354k total communications allocated budget with the Council's contribution being £103k)

7.5 The survey also asked various perception measures of the city:

- 47% of respondents thought their visit to a Christmas event (e.g. Markets, Spinningfield Ice Rink) was excellent, an increase of 5% on 2012. 45% of respondents thought their visit was good, up 9% from 2012.
- The overall majority of respondents were satisfied with their visit on the day of their interview, 95% responded in a positive way. 73% were very satisfied, an increase of 8% in comparison to last year and 22% were fairly satisfied.
- The majority of respondents (72%) strongly agreed that Manchester city centre was family friendly up from 58% in 2012.

7.6 Given the importance of Christmas and the Christmas Markets in particular, it is suggested that for Christmas 2014, funding is provided to carry out a full economic impact study of the markets. This study would be wider than just spend at the markets but also the impact upon jobs and the wider Manchester economy. This would be a repeat of the last research conducted in 2009, and therefore it would be five years since it was last completed.

7.7 All figures based on spend are based on a survey with a fairly limited sample size of 828 and footfall for the markets is based on average increases in footfall across the city. Therefore, the spend figures quoted should be used as a guide only.

## **8.0 Additional information**

8.1 Hotel occupancy largely remained unchanged in December with over 72% occupancy in 2013. November saw a slight increase in occupancy of 1% over the same period in 2012.

8.2 All major travel providers into Manchester are reporting growth in the number of journeys into the city centre. Metrolink are reporting an increase of 8.2% in November and a 16.0% increase in December compared against the same period in 2012. On the Trans Pennine Express, journeys to Manchester in December grew by 5.6%. Northern Rail report an 11.3% growth in journeys to Manchester in December compared to 2012. Metroshuttle reported a growth in

passengers of 10.9% in December compared to 2012. The growth in passengers largely mirrors the pattern of footfall increases in the City Centre.

## 9.0 District Centre Activity

9.1 Christmas activity is focused on the City Centre as a major attraction for the regional centre. The scale and focus of activity at district centres is much more local and in most district centres, it is extremely difficult to measure footfall. However, across the City Neighbourhood Regeneration team and local stakeholders used Christmas and the build-up to it, as focus for driving footfall into district centres by funding and facilitating a number of activities across areas. Examples of this activity city wide and more locally are:

### Small Business Saturday

9.2 The build-up to Christmas provided the focus for the UK's first "Small Business Saturday" that happened on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2013. Championed in the UK by Chukka Umunna, the Shadow Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills, and supported by the Prime Minister, the campaign highlights small business success and encourages consumers to 'shop local' in the run up to Christmas and support small businesses in their communities.

9.3 In Manchester, the day was used to raise the awareness of small businesses and the value they bring to neighbourhoods and communities and to drive footfall and spend with small businesses.

9.4 The communications in the build-up focused on how businesses could be involved in 'Small Business Saturday' and drove businesses to the national website where they could order a marketing pack and download materials to support promotion of the event.

9.5 The day was promoted to businesses through:

- Corporate social media accounts including LinkedIn
- Emailers to the Enterprise Service Network and Regeneration colleagues who could promote the initiative to their contacts and relevant businesses
- Emailers to partner organisations and contacts to promote the initiative to their businesses
- Engagement with business networks and traders associations across the city via regeneration colleagues

9.6 Communications to residents around Small Business Saturday included:

- Press releases to all Manchester media featuring three businesses in Manchester and the value that they add to their local community. This was picked up by Mancunian Matters and the M.E.N who produced a 1/2 page article with accompanying picture of Manchester business Sidnie Couture. The case study was also highlighted in the national campaign
- Main home page advert on [www.manchester.gov.uk](http://www.manchester.gov.uk) during the busiest month of the year for web traffic (over 650k visits per month)

- Continued presence on the corporate Twitter and Facebook social media accounts focussing on the resident message and encouraging residents to shop local
- Inclusion on various resident focussed emailers.

9.7 In addition, via regeneration colleagues, the national campaign's bus tour came to Manchester on 25th November. Levenshulme was chosen as a way of giving a boost to traders in the local area and to recognise the work of a very active and developing trader association. Regeneration colleagues with partners made the most of the PR opportunity to engage local businesses and provided a day of training, workshops and seminars covering a range of subjects from social media, finance and tax advice relevant to small business.

9.8 In terms of results, it is difficult to assess how many Manchester businesses took part and the impact on footfall and spend with small businesses. The national campaign was asked to provide this information but it hasn't as yet been provided. Improved measurement and evaluation will be looked at for next year however, areas with very active trader associations such as Northenden and Chorlton in particular, really embraced the day and used it to focus Christmas activity.

**Northenden:**

9.9 The Wythenshawe Regeneration Team worked with and helped to fund the Northenden Business Association and the Northenden Civic Society to arrange a festive event to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> December that also coincided with Small Business Saturday. In addition, a Christmas Tree was placed in Northenden Village. The day consisted of a Christmas market, carol singing, pipe band parade and Father Christmas and culminated with the Lord Mayor switching the tree lights on.

**Chorlton:**

9.10 An Art Market and a community Christmas Light switch-on in Chorlton District Centre on Saturday Dec 07, was supported with a Cash Grant. Anecdotal feedback is that retailers reported an increase in footfall.

**Longsight:**

9.11 Longsight Market had a small Christmas tree and lights. Market traders reported an estimated 15 to 20% increase in footfall over the Christmas period, which is what they would expect to see on average for that time of the year.

**Cheetham:**

9.12 North Manchester Neighbourhood Regeneration Team used the pop up shop in Cheetham to support a number of Christmas activities including a community bazaar, Christmas fair and craft market.

**Wythenshawe**

9.13 The Regeneration Team work with St Modwen, who fund and deliver a Christmas lights switch-on, which grows in popularity year on year. This year's Christmas switch on event on Friday 29th November included headline acts: - X Factor Matt Cardle and Stavros Flatley (Britains Got Talent). Over

5000 people attended the Xmas light switch on (despite atrocious weather).  
Over 600 children visited Santa's grotto up to 16th December.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

- 10.1 Overall the Christmas strategy supported the Council's priority of economic growth. The markets remain a huge draw to the city, helping to attract people from beyond the city and supporting the Manchester economy.
- 10.2 The communications campaign delivered over £3.86m of added value through in-kind support, PR coverage and through media partnerships and tie-ins. Overall the campaign delivered a return on investment of £41 for every £1 invested in communications.
- 10.3 Markets attracted more people, estimated to be 1.85m visitors, with almost half of visitors interviewed saying they came to Manchester specifically to visit the markets, a significant increase on 2012 and 2011, and underlines the importance of the markets in driving footfall, spend in the city and Manchester as a Christmas shopping destination of choice.
- 10.4 Residents and visitors overall enjoyed the Christmas offer and 92% described it as excellent or good and 9 out of 10 visitors interviewed were satisfied or very satisfied with their Manchester Christmas experience. Satisfaction has increased on previous years and in particular the number of visitors that said that the city was family-friendly. The Christmas offer, especially the markets and light switch on generate extremely positive media coverage and help engender pride in the city.
- 10.5 Based on the increased footfall and satisfaction ratings Manchester was a destination of choice for shoppers this Christmas and continues to be a key driver of retail performance that is bucking the national trends of declining high street footfall and marginal retail sales growth. Although city comparisons were not possible to get hold of, due to a lack of published data Manchester's performance compared to the national British Retail statistics show a healthy growth in both footfall and sales compared to the gloomy national picture.
- 10.6 Manchester City Council supported Small Business Saturday for the first time in 2013 and Communications is working with Regeneration colleagues on how this can be developed and improved for next year for the benefit of Manchester's small businesses. In addition, another event to promote the value of small businesses is being considered for the summer with Independents Day happening on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 as a way of highlighting again the benefits of small and independent businesses.
- 10.7 The communications, events and market teams are already working with partners on next Christmas to ensure we maintain growth and to support the jobs dependent on the retail and service sector in Manchester. The opportunity of a new lighting scheme, further innovation to the markets offer and a continued collaborative marketing approach will support Christmas 2014.

- 10.8 However, the challenge of disruption in the city as a result of the second city Metrolink crossing could impact the overall growth next year. A strategy is being developed to address this, by providing regular information and communication updates to businesses, visitors, and workers to the regional centre; by ensuring businesses can continue to trade effectively; and by putting in place mitigation measures. This is being delivered in partnership with TfGM.
- 10.9 The Chief Executive supports the need for more rigorous evaluation and analysis to underpin and inform current evidence gathering measures, which are in some cases e.g. footfall recording are ad-hoc in their approach. A more consistent approach to information gathering will help create a sound evidence base around the requirement for tactical interventions to drive future growth.