
**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Economy Scrutiny – 11 March 2015

Subject: Christmas 2014 Summary

Report of: Chief Executive

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.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to note the report.

Wards Affected:

All

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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 2013 - Economy Scrutiny, March 2014
(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 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 2013'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 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.
- 2.3 However, the mix of events and activities across the period, from the free Christmas lights switch-on, the markets and the Spinningfield ice rink, ensured that there were a broad range of activities for everyone in Manchester at Christmas.

3.0 2014 Christmas Communications Strategy

- 3.1 Marketing Manchester working with Manchester City Council, CityCo and The Heart of Manchester Business Improvement District (BID) 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:
- £105k from the Council (up from £103k in 2013)
 - £40k from the Heart of Manchester BID (down from £50k in 2013)
 - £129k from Visit England Regional Growth Fund
 - £88k from 31 commercial partners from the public and private sector

The total budget for the collaborative 2014 campaign was £363k compared to £354k in 2013.

- 3.3 Commercial partners which accounted for £88k of the budget included Afflecks Palace, Bali Health Lounge, Cheshire Oaks, Chester Zoo, Continuum (Coronation Street), Cross Country Trains, Halle, Hilton, Home, Ideal Home Christmas, Jodrell Bank, John Rylands Library, Manchester Arndale, Manchester Craft & Design Centre, Marriott V&A Hotel, MCFC, Metrolink, MOSI, National Football Museum, Oldham, Playfactore, Royal Exchange, Spinningfields, Stagecoach, System One Travel, Tatton Park, The Lowry, The

Mere Resort & Spa. Contra agreements to share in-kind marketing opportunities were also set up with First TransPennine Express, Virgin Trains and Metrolink. The total for marketing in kind for Christmas from partners is estimated at just under £3,500. The media space given as contra deals with Marketing Manchester was in excess of £600,000 in 2014.

3.4 The main audiences for the campaign were families, couples and people interested in short breaks and Christmas shopping in Manchester with the objectives of the campaign to:

- Showcase what Manchester has to offer
- Drive visitors to www.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 The creative approach was new for 2014 and took inspiration from 1930s travel posters to incorporate key buildings across the Manchester skyline such as the Town Hall, the Wheel of Manchester and Beetham Tower as well as the Christmas markets. The multi-channel campaign used a variety of media and promoted Manchester as an exciting place, with a unique Christmas offering which focused 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 www.visitmanchester.com/christmas.

3.6 Media included:

- A 20 second TV advert broadcast in two regions (Central West and Granada). The investment for TV was £70k.
- National and regional press advertising with a combined audience reach of 4.6m. The investment on press advertising was £34k.
- Radio advertising and promotion across Yorkshire with a combined audience of 742k. The investment in radio was £12k.
- Out of home channels were used in high traffic areas and included digital sites, 6-sheets, 48 sheets across Greater Manchester. Additional outdoor was provided in partnership with Metrolink and First TransPennine Express across both networks.
- 500k copies of a printed leaflet were produced. 300k were distributed via door drops to targeted postcodes in Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside, hand to hand via the Audience Agency, through key partners including City Hosts, Manchester Visitor Information Centre, First TransPennine Express and Northern Rail train stations and

via Metrolink and Manchester Arndale. 100k went to targeted postcodes in Birmingham/West Midlands and another 100k were distributed to targeted postcodes in London and South East.

- The print and distribution investment came to £11k 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 734k were distributed. The online marketing investment was £18k.

- 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 £3.57m [Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) – the standard industry measure), an increase on 2013's £3.4m.
- 3.8 Although there was a slight decrease in the overall number of coverage items (from 477 in 2013 to 425 in 2014), an increase in the amount of national coverage (from 31 to 41 items) helped drive increased AVE. The Christmas Markets proved a go-to location for festive filming, with CBBC once again using them as a backdrop and the Blue Peter programme basing a package there. The markets were also featured in a discussion on Radio 4's You and Yours programme about the growing popularity of festival markets, and on the BBC network news and News 24. In another seasonal coup, BBC Radio 6's popular Radcliffe and Maconie show returned to the Christmas Market to broadcast their final show of the year in Albert Square.
- 3.9 Further national coverage underlined the reputation of the Christmas Markets, in particular, with The Guardian, Independent, Daily Mail and Sunday Times all featuring them prominently in compilations of Europe's best.
- 3.10 For all the national coverage, the Christmas programme continued to receive strong support from regional media. Broadcasters Radio Manchester, Key 103 and Capital FM together accounted for 236 mentions, with Radio Manchester broadcasting four live programmes from the markets during the period. The Manchester Evening News also threw its weight behind the campaign, with 96 separate pieces of print and online coverage including for the first time live blogs on the opening and closing days of the Christmas Markets.
- 3.11 Press activity from Marketing Manchester focused on hosting international journalists from India, China, Korea, Taiwan, the USA and Japan as well hosting Christmas themed trips for the Birmingham Mail and Nottingham Post.

PR Coverage Details

	Print	Broadcast	Online	TOTAL
Local	20	9		29
Regional	50	236	67	353
National	13	5	23	41
International		1	1	2
TOTAL	83	251	91	425

Online Reach

- 3.11 The main call to action for the campaign was www.visitmanchester.com/christmas. This achieved 900,490 visits which was nearly 47,000 more visits than in 2013, an increase of 5%.
- 3.12 The Council's Facebook 'likes' have increased by 17% since the summer campaign and compared to Christmas 2013, an increase of 189%. This increase was largely due to Facebook advertising for a range of campaigns including the Lights Switch-On and the Markets campaigns, with content that was widely shared by followers. Facebook likes of Visit Manchester increased from 66k to 75k over the Christmas campaign.
- 3.13 Council Twitter followers have also increased by 9% from 36k to 39k since the summer campaign and compared to the number of followers at the end of 2013, this represents a further 62% increase. Twitter followers of Visit Manchester increased from 49k to 56k for Christmas 2014.
- 3.14 The campaign also had an impact on visitors to the Council's website with a 37% increase in page views of 'Christmas related content' on Manchester.gov.uk throughout November and December compared to the same period in 2013. November and December also saw over 1.3m visits to the wider Manchester.gov.uk website (a 15.5% increase year on year). Manchester Markets page views also increased by 24% year on year.
- 3.15 Once again there was a significant amount of social media 'buzz' with over 20,000 mentions of Manchester Christmas hashtags and keywords such as "#McrChristmas", "Manchester Christmas markets", "Christmas Manchester" and "Manchester switch on" across all social platforms. Social media engagement, such as shares, likes, re-tweets and @mentions, has increased by 86% during the Christmas period compared to the levels of resident engagement received during the summer months.
- 3.16 Work with our social media partners (for example Manchester Metropolitan University, Transport for Greater Manchester, CityCo and I Love Manchester) resulted in Manchester Christmas social media messages being sent to a social media audience of 281,114 for no charge. The reach for this content is continuing to grow too with people in countries as far as Nigeria, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco interacting with our content.

4.0 City Centre Events Programme

- 4.1 The Council and its key partners continue to provide a solid platform on which the business and retail sector can build to deliver a positive festive experience for residents and visitors alike across the Christmas period, driving economic growth and enhancing the visitor offer in the city centre to support the tourism agenda.
- 4.2 In addition to the provision of illuminated street and tree decoration across the city centre and the iconic Santa feature in Albert Square, Manchester's festive

offer incorporates the Christmas Lights Switch On, Festive Markets, Spinningfields Ice Rink and New Years Eve fireworks.

- 4.3 The Christmas Lights Switch On event on Friday 7 November launched the festive period to a live audience of 15,000 people in Albert Square with appearances from Jason Manford, Britain's Got Talent winners Collabro, Warwick Davies, Shayne Ward and Shrek. There was also additional stage content provided by CBBC's Hacker and Dodge, The Piccadilly's and Superkidz, 2014 winners of the Printworks Street Dance competition. The show finale was a 10 minute fireworks and pyrotechnics display synchronised to music. The media partner for the show was Key 103 who provided the programme and the main performers at no cost to the Council as part of the partnership.
- 4.4 For those who couldn't attend the maximum capacity event, the Switch On event was live streamed for the third year running. The live web cam feed registered views from across the UK and from as far afield as Australia, USA, Canada, Poland and Germany. There were 53,490 registered content views and an average 15 minute watch as further 15,450 plays of the film after the event.
- 4.5 From the 14 November through to December 22 the festive markets animated the city centre in Albert Square, Brazenose Street, Lincoln Square, King Street, St Ann's Square, Exchange St, New Cathedral Street, Exchange Square and Cathedral Gardens.
- 4.6 Now in its seventh year, Spinningfields hosted the city centre open air ice rink providing a quality family attraction in Hardman Square from 6 November to 3 January. Capital Properties who are the management agents estimated that over 60,000 skaters utilised the facilities this year.
- 4.7 The festive period also saw the ongoing operation of the Wheel of Manchester in Piccadilly Gardens and the wheel operator – Wheel Entertainments Ltd - provided the sponsorship funding for the New Years Eve fireworks event. The finale to the festive events programme, the New Years Eve fireworks display was delivered in Piccadilly Gardens and saw attendance levels estimated at 15,000 spectators at midnight – who good naturedly overcame an unscripted four minute delay to welcome in the New Year. The event continues to grow – achieving a 25% year on year increase in attendance - and the Council is working with key partners including TfGM to review the event model and build in the required resilience for future delivery.

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 £670k to the Council.
- 5.2 Celebrating its 16th year, the Christmas Market once again occupied 9 individual sites and the overall number of stalls was broadly the same as in 2014. This year the market, due to TfGM works relating to the Second City

Crossing, was unable to trade on Corporation Street and The Corn Exchange. There was a further reduction of trading space on Exchange Square. We were, however, able to introduce new sites in Cathedral Gardens and Market Street. Cathedral Gardens hosted a windmill bar, food, craft and 12 weekly trading stalls. On Market Street offered 25 new craft and gift chalets, one coffee shop and a large Christmas flowers, plant and ornaments pitch. 74 % of traders are UK registered businesses. 42% are based in the North West of England.

5.3 In addition to the developments in Market Street and Cathedral Gardens other new innovations for the Christmas Markets included:

- New two storey Bavarian Beer House on Albert Square
- New layout on Albert Square to increase public space and ease movement.
- New layout allowing increased number of chalets on Brazenose Street.
- Additional new stalls on King Street.
- First year of Environmental Health Food Hygiene ratings. All traders achieved the rating of 5.
- Two wishing trees sited in Albert and Exchange Square. These raised in excess of £1,500 for The Macmillan Cancer Trust, Born again Children's Home and The Mombasa Orphanage..

5.4 The Christmas market on Market Street was introduced as part of the Christmas offer following the success of a market in this location as part of 'Dig the City' earlier in the year and requests from retailers to include a market there. Feedback from the retailers on Market Street, the Arndale Centre management and CityCo has been very positive. The view being that the market added to the Christmas feel in the area, helped dilute the proliferation of pedlars and played a significant role in driving footfall, which was recorded 41% higher than the previous year. Care was taken when selecting the mix of traders, for example no alcohol sales, in order to ensure the flow of pedestrians was not negatively impacted.

5.5 Manchester Christmas Market was the only UK market to be voted in the top ten of the European Best Destinations poll.

5.6 The Windmill House in Albert Square provided a suitable location to host a live broadcast by 6 Music Live.

5.7 Of the 158 tonnes of waste collected the recovery rate was 51%. This is the first time the Market has achieved over 50% recycling.

6.0 City Centre Footfall and Retail Performance

6.1 Manchester was named as the top retail destination outside London for the second year running in Callcredit Information Group's RetailVision Report. Ranked second only to London's Oxford Street in terms of retail spend according to new research which lists Manchester as generating £910m - followed by Birmingham and Glasgow.

- 6.2 Overall anecdotal evidence from retailers highlight footfall was slightly down but overall spend was up with some notable 2014 impacts including peaks on Black Friday (28 November) and a strong performance on Boxing Day. Most chains, especially high end, could be described as ‘one of the best performing stores in the country’ and ‘click and collect’ showed growth but this often benefited stores on the periphery of the city. Another factor that retailers cited as a footfall impact during December was the impact of less concerts at the Arena compared to last year. Shoppers noted not being able to find parking spaces as more people travelled in by car this year. NCP reported that volume in their car parks was up by 1.6% in November and 7.3% in December. For most of December however NCP had around 18 staff including all of their managers out on the street directing traffic to car parks with available spaces and received positive feedback from shoppers who appreciated their assistance in the busy Christmas build up. There were also some navigation issues due to the impact of the second city crossing works.
- 6.3 Footfall is difficult to measure and is not wholly accurate but in general the city’s footfall was up in October by 3.4% compared to the previous year, but down in November and December. It has been even more difficult given the movement of footfalls cameras and that people were taking different routes into and through the city centre due to hoardings, and this will have impacted the accuracy of the results.

Month	Total Footfall	2014-13 % change	National % change
Oct	2,917,405	+3.4%	-1.60%
Nov	3,504,157	-4.3%	-3.9%
Dec	5,714,671	-10.5%	-1.7%

- 6.4 Manchester Arndale reported that their busiest week was 15 December, attracting over 1.2m. There were also peaks in footfall on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day (+4.8% and +2.5 year on year respectively). However, the general the consensus was that footfall was down over the period.
- 6.5 On national retail sales measures (Source: Springboard Retail Intelligence), retail sales nationally increased by 0.9% in November 2014 compared to November 2013, decreased by 0.4% in December and increased by 0.2% in January as shoppers splashed out during the sales.
- 6.6 Manchester city centre experienced a 7.7% increase in retail sales for November when compared to the previous year (Source: Springboard Retail Intelligence), a 5.3% decrease in retail sales for December and a 1.9% decrease for January. Retailers anecdotally reported that the increase in November was in part due to ‘Black Friday’, the last Friday of the month where many retailers offer substantial discounts, sales and promotional offers. Alongside this, internet sales, click and collect, the increased use of parking in the core of the city centre and less music events at the Arena may have impacted December’s figures. The increase in January was also attributed to the sales.

7.0 Impact of the Regional Centre work / Project Grow

- 7.1 To address the challenge of disruption in the city centre as a result of the Second City Crossing (2CC) and other infrastructure and development works, additional marketing activities were put in place, to encourage all city centre users to continue to visit and shop. Ongoing engineering works have made navigation around the city both on foot and by car more difficult than in previous years. Regular communication and information was and continues to be provided to businesses, workers, visitors and residents across the Regional Centre and a series of joint marketing and PR activities were delivered jointly by the Council, TfGM and Network Rail.
- 7.2 This activity included a social media, PR and advertising campaign, to encourage visitors/shoppers to continue to visit the city, this will continue until the engineering work to deliver 2CC is completed. There are now over 900 followers of the Grow twitter account and the webpages have received over 21,000 views.
- 7.3 Alongside social media activity, clear way-finding signage was produced and placed around the city centre (focusing mainly on the Exchange Square and Cross Street area, where most of the work is taking place), signposting visitors to all the major attractions and retail outlets. TfGM were asked to provide signage that helped city users navigate through the works, together with signage for business where works were taking place immediately outside their front door. There was also an outdoor advertising campaign throughout December, using the digital screens on the Mancunian Way and across the City Live network in the city centre. Fixed hoardings were also used to tell the 'Grow' story together with signposting to all major attractions and retailers.
- 7.4 Over 100,000 promotional leaflets were distributed via the major retailers and partners throughout November and December; explaining the bigger picture of 'Grow', what is being delivered and its longer term benefits.
- 7.5 Finally, TfGM recruited a team of Metrolink Elves, the 'Elves', brightly dressed in yellow, engaged with shoppers and visitors, providing signposting information, distributing goodie bags (containing offers from major retailers) and ran the "Elfie Selfie" competition. TfGM and the Council are continuing to support shoppers and are regularly engaging with retailers to improve communications and develop the conversation over the coming months.

8.0 Shopper Research Highlights

- 8.1 To measure the success of the Christmas activity and the economic impact, research was commissioned with Enventure, who interviewed shoppers during the festive period.
- 8.2 Enventure conducted 823 face-to-face interviews between 3 December and 21 December 2014 on the streets of Manchester. The locations covered by the fieldworkers were St. Anne's Square, Exchange Square, Albert Square, Piccadilly Gardens, King Street and Market Street.

8.3 Economic impact is based 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:

- 30% (46% in 2013 and 23% in 2012) of respondents were in Manchester that day to specifically visit the Christmas Markets
- 79% of respondents had visited the Christmas Markets so far already in the Christmas period
- 78% had visited or intended to visit the Albert Square Christmas Markets on the day they were interviewed.
- Average spend per person was £99.96. This compares favourably with previous years and corroborates the anecdotal feedback from retailers about increased basket spend and breaks down as follows:

	2014	2013	2012	2011
Shopping	£74.08	£41.11	£34.98	£40.02
Attractions	£1.69	£1.82	£2.58	£5.88
Food	£16.72	£28.54	£12.81	£15.14
Accommodation	£4.94	£5.42	£4.12	£2.79
Travel	£2.24	£3.81	£2.22	£2.67
Other	£0.28	£0.21	£0.45	£0.38
Total	£99.96	£80.80	£57.15	£66.88

8.4 Spend and footfall comparison since the last commissioned research are summarised in the table below.

Markets Customer Research	2014	2013	2012	2011
Average spend of shoppers interviewed at just Albert Square Christmas Market	£43.94	£49.14	£42.71	£49.54
Estimated visitor numbers for markets	2.00m*	1.85m*	1.67m	1.50m
Total markets gross spend	£87.88m*	£90.91m*	£71.33m	£74.31m
Total spend of those who specifically came for the markets (of those interviewed in Albert Square: 53% in 2014, 46% in 2013, 23% in 2012, 16% in 2011)	£46.58m	£41.82m	£16.41m	£11.89m

*Estimate only. No footfall counters in 2013 or 2014.

8.5 The highlights can be summarised as:

- The interview locations changed slightly for 2014 with the addition of St Annes Square and no interviewing taking place at the Spinningfield's Ice Rink. This could explain the reduced spend on food and attractions and the increase in shopping spend experienced.
- There were a number of particularly high spenders interviewed in locations such as St. Anne's Square and Exchange Square.

- There were people interviewed that had travelled some distance to be in Manchester including from Canada, France, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa as well as visitors from across the UK.
- 39% (same as 2013) of respondents had seen some sort of advertising promoting Manchester at Christmas showing the communications campaign had strong awareness and 37% (30% in 2013) had seen the advertising images when prompted showing increased recognition of this years campaign.
- 7% (6% in 2013) of respondents said the advertising they had seen greatly influenced their visit that day, 11% (7% in 2013) had been slightly influenced.
- Based on the 4.256m shoppers counted on Market Street during the Christmas period and the 7% of those who came as a result of the communications campaign with an average spend of £99.96, the value of those additional attracted shoppers through communications is £29.78m.
- Therefore the communications campaign return on investment of £82 (£41 in 2013) for every £1 spent on communications (£363k total communications allocated budget with the Council's contribution being £105k).

8.6 The survey also asked various perception measures of the city. Those that strongly agreed that Manchester City Centre is family-friendly dropped from 72% in 2013 to 48% in 2014. Overall satisfaction in the city centre dropped slightly to 58% that were very satisfied from 73% in 2013. However those fairly satisfied increased to 35% from 22% in 2013. The change in perception measures could be as a result of the second city crossing program of works as discussed earlier in the document.

8.7 All figures based on spend are based on a survey with a fairly limited sample size of 823 and footfall for the markets is based on estimates. Therefore, the spend figures quoted should be used as an indicator as to the success only.

9.0 Additional information

9.1 Hotel occupancy was up to 85% in October (compared to 83% in 2013) and November remained at 87% (the same as the previous year). The table below identifies the Greater Manchester and city centre hotel occupancy performance compared with last year.

	2013		2014	
Month	GM	CC	GM	CC
October	82%	83%	83%	85%
November	83%	87%	84%	87%
December	71%	72%	73%	76%

9.2 Travel providers had a mixed experience over the Christmas period in 2014. Metroshuttle patronage was down 8.8% in November and down 9.9% in December compared to 2013. Metrolink reported a decrease in tickets to the city centre of 0.5% in November and 1.7% down in December when compared

with the previous year. The reason for this small reduction is the closure of the Victoria stop as part of the redevelopment of the station. Northern Rail reported an increase of 3.1% passengers in December and First TransPennine Express increased by 9.5% in November and by 12.8% in December on journeys to Manchester.

10.0 District Centre Activity

- 10.1 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 teams 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. The main example of this was Small Business Saturday.
- 10.2 Launched in the UK in 2013, Small Business Saturday UK is a grassroots, non-political, non-commercial campaign, which highlights small business success and encourages consumers to 'shop local' and support small businesses in their communities. The day itself takes place on the first shopping Saturday in December each year, but the campaign aims to have a lasting impact on small businesses. In 2014 Small Business Saturday (SBS) took place on Saturday 6 December.
- 10.3 Many local authorities signed up to organise events and thousands of small businesses delivered activities on the day. Corporate supporters such as O2 are also developing tools for small businesses to help them make the most of the day.
- 10.4 There were three main phases to the campaign in Manchester:
- The Communications Team worked with EDU and Neighbourhood Regeneration Teams to understand current business engagement and promotion activity, identify businesses that could be used for case studies, and develop and encourage activity in the district centres.
 - From 20 October general promotion activity began for businesses to ensure they were aware of the campaign and to encourage their involvement on the days itself.
 - From early November a resident focused campaign aimed to raise awareness of the day, the value of small business to communities across the city and to encourage footfall on SBS. This included the national SBS Bus Tour which took place in the Northern Quarter.
- 10.5 The events and activities that took place in the district centres that were facilitated by the Regeneration teams for SBS and the Christmas period included:

Area	Activity
Northern Quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Quarter market with 20 independent businesses including local traders, three local schools provided traders for

Area	Activity
	<p>a teenage market and the finalists of Test Town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manchester Craft and Design Centre offered free gift wrapping. Shoppers were also entertained by carol singers. Kate Day, Director of the Centre, was interviewed on Radio Manchester.
North SRF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of activities, performing artists and prize-giving competitions held at Harpurhey Market. Christmas promotional campaign with promoting shopping in Harpurhey
East SRF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive social media support to promote SBS locally and used their community e-groups to promote the event
South SRF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter sent to 800 businesses advising them of the business rates relief and promoting their involvement in SBS. Traders set up specific SBS twitter accounts in support of the national campaign and designed shopping bags to advertise the traders Twitter site. NRT distributed over 300 SBS promotional packs throughout their district centres.
Central SRF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition held at Longsight market linked to the Christmas lights switch on. Music event organised on SBS with the NRT and Rusholme Business Association with a number of local businesses offering special discounts. Hulme high street traders extended their opening hours to coincide with the Christmas lights switch on.
Wythenshawe SRF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Festive fun day in Northenden including the Christmas lights switch on with DJ, street dance exhibitions, a marching pipe band and carol singing. Noticeable improvement in footfall in the village and has been uniformly positive. Christmas lights switch on held in Wythenshawe Town Centre featuring an X-Factor star and other local acts. Each weekend also saw a local radio station broadcasting from the precinct along with Elf make-overs, donkey carriage rides and rides in a husky sledge.

More information on the activity above is provided in the Appendix.

- 10.5 The Northern Quarter Bus Tour stop offered the opportunity to hold a Market for local traders with the opportunity to profile their businesses to a new audience and to bring in additional footfall to the area. Unity Radio delivered a live broadcast from the market, whilst actively promoting the market they also conducted interviews with key guests from the Federation of Small Businesses, the Blue Orchid and Teenage Market, as well as a number of small businesses. SBS UK sponsors O2 provided their O2 Angels to promote the event in and around the city centre. Northern Quarter Loyalty Scheme Cards were given away to those who registered on the SBS Facebook page and as part of a Northern Quarter Treasure Hunt. The aim of the giveaway was to attract shoppers to SBS activity whilst promoting the loyalty scheme

which encourages shoppers to visit the Northern Quarter's small businesses on a longer term basis.

- 10.6 Communications activity in Manchester mirrored the timing of activity at the national level but the objectives, messages and actions were localised to meet the needs of Manchester and its neighbourhoods. All activity scheduled as part of a channel plan produced by the Communications team.
- 10.7 The majority of activity was digital and allowed more creative ways of getting messages out to businesses and to residents across the city. Three business case studies were identified and a short film for each produced. The films focused on the personal stories behind the businesses, what they do for their community and why small business should be supported. These were used in social media updates, on the dedicated SBS web pages on Manchester.gov.uk, shared with the national campaign, promoted through the local Twitter accounts and partner social media channels. The films were viewed over 215 times. The dedicated SBS web pages were visited over 3,200 times.
- 10.8 Each tweet and Facebook post included the hashtag #SmallBizSatMCR. The national campaign were informed about the hashtag being used in Manchester and were asked to retweet/share messages where appropriate. The local hashtag was used 1,405 times confirming support for the campaign and businesses promoting offers. The SBS pages on our website received 3,005 views. The outreach activity carried out resulted in fifty-six social media accounts sharing our messages.
- 10.9 The SBS message was further endorsed with online engagement of relevant bloggers, communities, associations and networks. The CityCo website shared information and news to its members and the NQ website disseminated updates on the event through to local businesses and devoted NQ followers.
- 10.10 Partner organisations supported the campaign and made their channels available. This included Pro-Manchester, the GM Chamber, Federation of Small Businesses. The Economic Development Unit and Neighbourhood Regeneration Teams (NRTs), worked with local trader and business associations. CityCo utilised the monthly Northern Quarter Small Business Forum meetings to drum up support and disseminate information to local businesses.
- 10.11 A full PR strategy complimented activity with articles in the MEN and Business Week amongst others. Unity Radio was commissioned to promote the campaign. Two adverts were commissioned, the first in the run-up to the bus tour and the second to encourage consumers to shop locally and to promote small businesses as places to find unique Christmas gifts.

11.0 Conclusion

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 Overall the campaign delivered a return on investment of £82 for every £1 invested in communications.
- 11.3 Markets attracted more people, estimated to be 2 million visitors, with just under a third interviewed saying they came to Manchester specifically to visit the markets and underlines the importance of the markets in driving footfall, spend in the city and Manchester as a Christmas shopping destination of choice.
- 11.4 Based on the footfall, spend and satisfaction ratings, Manchester continues to be a destination of choice for shoppers this Christmas and is key driver of retail performance despite the transport works currently underway in the City Centre. Annually (year round including Christmas period), 2014 did see a slight reduction in footfall estimates for the City Centre with a 1.8% decrease against the previous year, although footfall in competing regional cities decreased by 2.1% and nationally fell by 1.1%. However, once again consideration should be given to accuracy of the figures given the movement of the monitoring cameras and the need for people to take different routes given the construction and development work in the city centre.
- 11.5 The communications, events and market teams are already working with partners on next Christmas to ensure growth is maintained and the jobs dependent on the retail and service sector in Manchester are safeguarded and / or grown. This is essential given the challenge of further construction and development works in the city as a result of a number of key infrastructure projects underway and about to commence. The communication and engagement strategy for this work will continue to develop, shaped by the insight gained by the first Christmas period of infrastructure activity.

Appendix One

The following outlines activity Small Business Saturday and other events in the run-up to Christmas across the city:

- **Northern Quarter** - Two Northern Quarter markets were co-ordinated between the Council, CityCo and the Northern Quarter Small Business Forum. Around 20 independent businesses including local traders had a stall. In addition to established businesses, three local schools who had been working with Young Enterprise and supported by the Federation of Small Businesses took up stalls along with Teenage Market. The Federation of Small Businesses contributed £400 towards the event. Free stalls were also taken up by two of the finalists from the TestTown Manchester competition – young entrepreneurs that have just set up their own businesses.

The Manchester Craft and Design Centre opened its doors and offered free gift wrapping for all purchases made on the day. Shoppers were also entertained by carol singers the 'She Singers'. Kate Day, Director of the Centre was interviewed Radio Manchester.

Following this activity, discussions are now being held about establishing a permanent market in Stevenson Square. Anecdotal feedback suggested that the businesses welcomed the opportunity to raise their profile.

- **North** - The North Manchester Neighbourhood Regeneration Team (NRT) led on development of a programme of activities, performing artists and prize-giving competitions which were held at Harpurhey Market. Linked to this the team worked in partnership with Manchester Markets and the Habro (Harpurhey Shopping Centre Management Company) to deliver a Christmas Promotional Campaign with the aim of getting people shopping in Harpurhey in the run up to Christmas. A number of businesses and market traders signed up to the scheme which involved shoppers taking part in a Christmas tree hunt to win a prize. Initial feedback on the scheme has been good.
- **East** - The East NRT extensively tweeted #SBS locally, for example @MCCGorton has over 1100 followers on Twitter and used their community e-groups to promote the date and event. Following the feedback from the Retail Group, who have been tasked with developing a SWOT of the key district centres in East Manchester, the NRT plans to further engage and support local businesses with the SBS campaign in 2015.
- **South** - A letter was sent to 800 businesses in South Manchester advising them of the business rates relief and also asking them to get involved in the Small Business Saturday campaign. This has enabled the NRT to build a database of businesses to continue to engage with on businesses related matters.

Through partnership working with traders groups in South Manchester, the traders have now established Twitter accounts to tweet their retail offers to customers. Traders also set up specific Small Business Saturday twitter accounts in support of the national campaign. Traders have designed shopping bags to

advertise the traders Twitter site to encourage shoppers to visit the site and to shop local

The NRT distributed over 300 SBS packs throughout their district centres. These included national and local publicity material including empty belly posters and counter top displays. The SBS campaign also provided a hook for South Manchester Regeneration to further engage with traders in the local district centres.

- **Central** - A number of events were held across the District Centres in support of SBS. In Longsight a competition was held on the market sponsored by Great Places to promote shopping locally and this linked to the Christmas Tree lights switch on. The team worked with Rusholme Business Association (RBA) and a range of partners to organise a music event in the district centre to attract more people to the centre on SBS. A number of local businesses offered special discounts on the day. The music event and the discount offers were promoted through twitter, distribution of leaflets, mailing lists and by posting the information on 'your neighbourhood' web pages and the Council's SBS pages. In Hulme, the high street traders extended their opening hours to coincide with the Christmas Tree lights switch on.
- **Wythenshawe** – In Northenden, the Regeneration team organised a festive fun day, in partnership with the Northenden Business Association to take place on SBS. To complement the regular Street Market, the NRT arranged for a Christmas lights switch on with DJ, street dance exhibitions, a marching pipe band and carol singing by the tree before the light were switched on by Father Christmas. There was a noticeable improvement in footfall in the village and feedback from traders and the community has been uniformly positive.

Each year, St Modwens working with the Wythenshawe Regeneration Team, run a successful Christmas lights switch on and events every year encouraging people into the Town Centre during the festive period. This year, the switch-on happened on 22nd November and featured X-Factor star Amelia Lily along with other entertainment and music acts from the local area. Other events that happened in the run to Christmas included the radio station Imagine FM broadcasting live from the precinct each weekend, Elf make-overs, donkey carriage rides and rides in a husky sledge were also on offer throughout the festive period.