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# Report

**Subject** : Christmas in Salisbury 2008

**Report to** : The Cabinet

**Date** : Monday 28 April 2008

**Author** : Economic Development Manager

**Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Tourism:** Councillor Peter Edge

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### CHRISTMAS IN SALISBURY 2008

**1. Report Summary:**

Cabinet are asked to make a decision on funding for the 2008 Salisbury city Christmas lights display and event, based on six costed options presented in the attached report by Salisbury City Centre Management Ltd

**2. Background and introduction:**

- 2.1. Salisbury District Council has had a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Salisbury City Centre Management to coordinate the Christmas Lights and Christmas Switch On Event since 2003. The level of funding for Christmas has been agreed annually following the February Cabinet meeting, for the last three years this has stood at £20,000 for Christmas lights and £17,000 for the Switch On Event.
- 2.2. In 2007 approval was given to amalgamate these budgets to enable investment in new lights for the centre of the Market Place, the Christmas tree and Guildhall with no big event. However, due to additional funding gained through corporate sponsorship and fundraising it was possible to stage a small event in the Market Place.
- 2.3. The decision to hold a small Switch On event with limited external funds resulted in a great deal of criticism from members of the public. Even though there was no publicity leading the public to expect a big event it has become expected and looked forward to because of the success of previous large events over the last few years. Specific criticism was based on there not being a proper stage, no fireworks, lack of quality sound system, lack of build up to the switch on. Many families were disappointed on the night that they could not hear what was going on and they felt 'let down' by the scale of the event.
- 2.4. In response to this criticism and in recognition of the need to rebuild the reputation of Salisbury - as the place to be to celebrate Christmas and to do Christmas shopping - City Centre Management have identified different funding options and what they will achieve for the city.



*Awarded in:*  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



### 3. Options for consideration:

3.1 The attached report prepared by the City Centre Manager presents six different options for Christmas 2008 that shows what can be achieved based on different levels of funding and investment (see page 6). Option 1 requires no new investment as it only involves erection of lights purchased in 2007 on the Guildhall, in the Market Place and on the Christmas tree and an event. However this would have very little impact, benefit or 'wow' factor for the city and would not achieve the longer term aims for Christmas in Salisbury. Option 6 requires the greatest investment that will achieve the greatest benefit for the city and will leave a legacy of lighting that can be used for years to come.

### 4. Consultation Undertaken:

4.1 The attached report has been produced as a result of feedback received from members of the public after the 2007 Switch On event. It has been agreed by members and directors of Salisbury City Centre Management Limited and in consultation with relevant Salisbury District Council officers.

### 5. Recommendation:

Cabinet are asked to consider the attached report and make a decision on the preferred option for Christmas 2008 taking into account the legal and financial implications listed below. The Cabinet can only approve an increase in the budget if a compensating adjustment can be identified elsewhere in the Council's budget.

### 6. Background Papers:

None

### 7. Implications:

- **Financial:** There is an allocation of £37,000 available for this project in the Council's 2008/09 budget. Should Cabinet wish to vary the budget it would need to identify a source of virement in order to finance the increase. Any variation over £100,000 would require Full Council Approval in addition.
- **Legal:** Should Members decide on option 4-6 any funding arrangement that ensures that the council becomes the owner of the lights and trees will require that either the council contracts directly for the purchase of the lights and trees or employs CCM as its agent to do so. If the total value of any proposed contract with an individual supplier exceeds £139,893 then the contract will have to be tendered in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. If the total value of any contract falls between £30,001 and £139,893 Cabinet will need to agree waiver of contract standing orders. Under a direction made by the Government under section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 the council may not enter into any capital contracts relating to the same or a similar description or matter under which the consideration cumulated from and after 31.12.2006 exceeds £1,000,000 without first obtaining Wiltshire County Council's consent otherwise the contract will be unenforceable against it. So if the total capital element of any chosen option together with the capital element of any similar contracts going back to 31.12.2007 exceeds £1,000,000 consent will be needed. The revenue element of any chosen option will not be caught by section 24 provided the period of any contract does not extend beyond 01.04.2009.
- **Human Rights** : None
- **Personnel** : None
- **ICT** : None
- **Climate Change** : The installation of a temporary ice rink in the cathedral would be dependent on considerable energy use.
- **Council's Core Values** : Promoting a thriving local economy
- **Wards Affected** : City



# Christmas in Salisbury 2008

Report by Lindsey Brown, City Centre Manager

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## 1. Report Summary

This document is prepared in partnership with Salisbury District Council to enable discussion regarding the Christmas Lights in Salisbury, associated celebrations and festivities for 2008. It endeavours to be wide reaching in its creativity and provide, where possible, costings to assist with decision making.

## 2. Project Aim

To provide a legacy of Christmas lighting that is befitting of a Cathedral city and might be expanded into a December Christmas Festival for 2008, while achieving;

- ❖ A WOW factor
- ❖ Enhancing the city's profile
- ❖ Increasing first time visitors
- ❖ Increasing spend
- ❖ Offering long term benefits

## 3. Background

Salisbury City Centre Management (SCCM) under a council Service Level Agreement (SLA) has co-ordinated the Christmas Lights and Christmas Switch On Event since 2003. The SLA was each year subject to confirmation of annual funding and the last agreement of three years expired on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. The level of funding was confirmed following the February Cabinet meeting and for each year of the past three was at a total of £37K (£20K for the Christmas lights and £17K for the Switch On Event).

In 2007 approval was given for the amalgamation of budgets to be spent on lighting with no 'big' event being hosted. However, through corporate sponsorship and other fundraising it was possible to hold a small event in the Market Square, which was further supported by the Christmas Market, children's rides and the skating rink.

It was decided that white lighting was the most appropriate for a Cathedral city and in 2007 the focus would be the Guildhall and Market Squares, which would be the foundation for future development and growth of the city's Christmas lights program.

### 3.1 Long Term Lighting Investment Achieved in 2007

By combining the two budgets the nativity scene made its return to the city and was in prime position on the canopy of the Guildhall. The Christmas Tree in the Guildhall Square was beautiful with excellent coverage of LED lighting which can be enjoyed for many years to come, as will the canopy of light that adorned the Market Square. All new lighting belongs to the city of Salisbury and being LED has a five to ten year life span.

Ice lights were purchased for the Guildhall but due to the infrastructure work required on a listed building were not erected and this can be rectified in 2008 at no additional cost.

### **3.2 Existing City Lighting**

Where budget allowed existing coloured lighting was erected and in some streets was successful eg High Street and Butcher Row.

## **4. Salisbury Christmas Festival 2008**

A Christmas Festival in Salisbury should include all elements from the Christian, which without we would not be celebrating Christmas, to the important Civic role of the Charter Trustees.

The Cathedral special lights service, which is the start of celebrations for the Christmas Lights Switch On event is very popular and an integral part of proceedings.

The Festival should bring together all communities, incorporate local schools and groups, bringing together the people of Salisbury. The occasion should be joyous, fun, accessible and where possible activity should be FREE.

In 2008 our wishes and hopes include:

- German Market (4-weeks)
- Ice Skating Rink in the Cathedral grounds, which **has been approved in principle**
- Thursday night street entertainment (stilt walkers, walkabout characters, statues)
- Open Top bus tours
- Father Christmas to turn on lights
- Best shop window display competition
- Schools lights motif competition
- Choirs, bands and musical arrangements
- Living nativity – crowd involving
- Carnival
- Santa's Grotto
- Family Treasure Hunt
- Mayor's Appeal Christmas card competition
- Christmas market

The Light up a Life Salisbury Hospice event is a tradition that is dear to many people's hearts and is considered a significant part of Christmas celebrations in Salisbury.

City Centre Management already has commitment from Vision News for a shop window competition and received interest in a charity Santa's Grotto which might be located under the Poultry Cross. There is no reason why the Salisbury Hospice could not be supported in organising an activity that further adds to the programme and enables funds to be raised.

Both the German Market and Ice Skating rink would require permanent venues and the Maltings and Cathedral are two examples of where this might occur.

The street entertainment is a possibility for the late night shopping Thursdays but also Saturdays in the month of December. We are extremely fortunate that Salisbury boasts a wonderful mix of entertainers and the late nights and Saturdays could be offered to different local artists to co-ordinate themed activity.

## **5. Christmas Lights**

It is only budget that limits the Christmas light programme in Salisbury and it is unfortunate that due to funding being agreed annually there has not been the opportunity to implement a 3-year plan. Salisbury is a city of chequered streets and individual shopping centres, which presents difficulties for any scheme due to size, multiple ownership and width of roads.

In 2008 we would hope for a scheme to build upon the new lights of 2007 in a co-ordinated fashion to consist of cross street banners, lamp column lighting, cross street festoons and much more.

A three year programme would allow for a phased payment scheme while developing a good working relationship with one company to our mutual benefit. Most important is to recognise the long term investment this would provide and how this would ensure the scheme compliments future development of the city under the Salisbury Vision.

If timing allows (and resources available) the businesses should be encouraged to contribute through Christmas Sponsorship Packages (frankincense, myrrh and gold levels) or a Christmas levy and donation of prizes for competitions and in-kind support. Commitment to sponsorship packages over a number of years would help to meet future annual costs e.g. lighting erection, maintenance, power etc.

The city deserves to be lit in a sophisticated manner suitable of a Cathedral city, we should create an atmosphere that draws visitors from across the District and beyond; and that local people are proud.

The Salisbury Library, Clock Tower and Poultry Cross lend themselves well to lighting and could be areas for consideration. The canopy of Debenhams has in the past been used to add to the ambient scene in the Market Square and how fantastic would it be to again locate Christmas scenery here.

Christmas trees for buildings are a simple means of lighting streets and might also be incorporated into the city's lighting scheme.

To ensure sustainability engagement with Wiltshire County Council, the new council and the future City Council is important.

## **6. Switch On Event**

The Switch On night is not about the late night shopping but a celebration and lead up to Christmas. The evening has always begun with a service at Salisbury Cathedral and is a traditional element many local families enjoy. With the Cathedral celebrating its 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary SCCM feel sure that this year's service will be more wonderful than ever.

In previous years we have seen an informal procession of our dignitaries from the Cathedral to the Market Square following the service and SCCM would suggest a more formal procession is created fitting of a Cathedral's celebrating its 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This might be the opportunity to introduce a Christmas Carnival and possibly incorporate the annual Lantern Parade.

The event itself can be as bold, loud and large as budget allows and the return of the big stage, screen and PA system should be seen as a must in response to 2007 comments, as should be the firework finale.

Father Christmas is always an essential element of the evening and would our very own Christopher Biggins be available to turn on the lights of Salisbury we wonder?

In addition, more involvement from local schools and the scouts and brownies would be welcome and we should perhaps consider how local Lions Clubs might participate. The Fire Service is always looking for ways of raising their profile and funds and the event or the suggested month of festivities might suit their needs.

## **7. Shopping Experience**

The experience we offer has to rival our competitors and offer something different; it is not just about the atmosphere that can be created from lighting the streets but also the involvement of all businesses, but in particular our retailers. We need to encourage retailers to work together and give reason for shoppers to choose Salisbury. This might be achieved in a number of ways including:

- Window dressing competition
- Customer service award for each week in December, voted by the public
- Environmentally friendly generic shopping bag for the city
- Generic badge for retail staff
- In-store competitions and discounts
- Store entertainment from carol singing to tabletop magic
- City discount cards

The experience we create is of course beyond shopping alone and would need to include the pubs and restaurants to increase dwell time, all of whom should be encouraged to join the city festive programme.

As we are fully aware arriving at your destination and the ease of doing so is often a factor in choosing where to spend time. The offer of FREE parking after 6pm is an excellent marketing tool for late night Thursdays but parking for retail staff and others working outside of the Park & Ride hours has always been an issue and flexibility is key.

## **8. Impact of Christmas Festival to the Economy**

It is our opinion that a Christmas Festival throughout December under a spectacular light display has the potential of bringing in a greater number of visitors to the city, some for the first time.

By targeting our marketing across the district it may well bring those in from the west who might have previously looked to Shaftesbury and Yeovil. We should also be looking across the borders with our promotion to draw visitors from Fordingbridge, Romsey, Tidworth etc.

This could be an opportunity to steal from our competitors market and certainly an ice rink and German Market would allow us to compete with Winchester, Poole, Southampton and Bournemouth.

The involvement of the Twinning Associations is also an idea that could add to celebrations and would perhaps bring overseas visitors to our city that would benefit our accommodation and eateries.

## **9. Marketing**

This is essential to bring in locals and those from outside the area to the city and budget needs to reflect the participation and activity during the month of December. Our knowledge and

experience recognises untapped customers such as army personnel and these should be a targeted audience in any campaign.

Word of mouth is key; we need to create ownership of our celebrations so our residents and business community become our mouth pieces and spread the word.

## **10. Monitoring & Evaluation**

Footfall data is already collected and will help to ascertain the success of the Christmas Programme. A retailer survey undertaken could be benchmarked against the results gathered in 2003.

The footfall data collection might be extended to include the late night Thursday shopping evenings at an agreed time over a number of locations across the city. Data could also be collected on a number of Saturdays in the month, again at various locations.

## **11. Budget**

- The annual grant has in the past been split £20K for Christmas lights and £17K for the Switch On Event.
- All costings provided are based on information and quotations gathered from companies chosen for their reputation and experience (some actually in Salisbury).
- The costings used for the lighting programme are based on individual schemes and therefore by choosing more than one option savings would be made e.g. staff, transportation costs, etc.
- The quotations have been provided for this budget exercise and are not final however; it is the opinion of City Centre Management reductions can be made.
- No provision has been made for management fees, marketing or performance monitoring in any of the options.

**Option 1** is the erection of the lights purchased in 2007 and a switch on event but no fireworks.

**Option 2** is the erection of the lights purchased in 2007 and the lights of 2006 which covers Winchester, Queen, Milford, Catherine, Butcher Row, Silver, High, Fisherton & Minster Streets. The 2006 lights will require refurbishment, maintenance and a fair amount of infrastructure work to meet present legislation, which is shown in the budget. A 30-minute event and approximately 5 minute firework finale has been included.

**Option 3** is option two with an 8-minute firework display off two rooftops.

**Option 4** is the purchase and erection of new lights and erection of those purchased in 2007. In addition, LED's lights in the tress of the Guildhall and Market Square will be erected and these shall remain in situ all year round. The event finishes with an 8-minute firework display off three rooftops.

**Option 5** is option 4 with a synthetic skating rink located in the Cathedral grounds.

**Option 6** is option 4 with a real ice rink located in the Cathedral grounds.

Description	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
<b>Capital Costs</b>						
Replace / maintain infrastructure of the 2006 lights		10,000	10,000			
Purchase of new lights for 2008				39,000	39,000	39,000
Infrastructure for new 2008 lights				15,000	15,000	15,000
Erection of lights in Guildhall & Market Square trees (x 27)				40,500	40,500	40,500
Installation of lights in Guildhall and Market Square trees (x 27)				5,200	5,200	5,200
<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	0	10,000	10,000	99,700.00	99,700.00	99,700.00
<b>Revenue Costs</b>						
Erection of multi-coloured pre 2006 lights (Winchester, Queen, Milford, Catherine, Butcher Row, Silver, High Fisherton Bridge & Minster Streets)	0	10,000	10,000	0	0	0
Erection of 2007 lights (Guildhall & Market Square LED's)	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Erection of new lights 2008	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	20,000
Event (30-minutes)	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Fireworks (various timings)	0	5,000	8,500	12,000	12,000	12,000
Sundry Items e.g. power	2,000	4,000	4,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Synthetic Skating Rink	0	0	0	0	40,000	0
Ice Rink	0	0	0	0	0	120,000
<b>Total Revenue Costs</b>	37,000	54,000	57,500	72,000	112,000	192,000
<b>Annual Revenue Funding</b>	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000
<b>Additional Revenue Funding Required</b>	0	17,000	20,500	35,000	75,000	155,000

## 12. In Conclusion

Option 4, meets all the criteria that we have been trying to attain in Salisbury, but most importantly will leave a legacy of lights that the city can enjoy for many years to come. It meets all of the aims stated in point 2. The Project Aim;

- ❖ A WoW factor
- ❖ Enhancing the city's profile
- ❖ Increasing first time visitors
- ❖ Increasing spend in the city
- ❖ Offering long term benefits