



## Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast Shopping Festival 2009
Date:	10 June 2009
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development ext. 3470
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### Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that, at the meeting on 10 September 2009, they approved the *Retail Sector Support Plan* which included a range of initiatives to assist in the development and promotion of the retail sector (with a focus on Independents) and markets across the City.

The *Retail Sector Support Plan* identified the following themes:

1. Marketing, promotion and branding
2. Capacity building and skills development
3. New product development support

Marketing, promotion and branding included the production of a new *Belfast Shopping Guide* in partnership with Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and the development of the City's first ever Belfast Shopping Festival 2009. The Belfast Shopping Festival 2009 was launched on 24 March 2009 and took place across the City during the month of April 2009.

The Belfast Shopping Festival 2009 was a major initiative to support the retail sector, and a platform to promote their business and attract new customers. Retail sector participation and development of initiatives was supported by a high profile and innovative marketing and PR campaign. Many local retail businesses participated in the four week Festival, involving a mix of independent boutiques, high street retailers, shopping centres, St George's and Smithfield Markets, speciality stores and crafts, art and antique outlets.

The Festival encompassed a mix of events, competitions, promotions, street entertainment and in-store activities, and the first fashion show in Smithfield Market.

The Shopping Festival also involved major partnership work with the Markets Unit and a number of external organisations including: Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM), Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB), Department of Regional Development (DRD), Department of Social Security (DSD), Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC), Arts Groups, Retail groups from throughout the City.

The aims and objectives were:

- To showcase the diverse and eclectic shopping offer in the City
- To encourage people to experience the city as a shopping destination and to explore areas beyond the City centre
- To increase footfall and spend

A full report on the Shopping Festival is included in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and attached Appendices.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

BCCM	Belfast City Centre Management
BVCB	Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
DRD	Department of Regional Development
DSD	Department of Social Security
BCTC	Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1	Belfast Shopping Festival 2009 Report
Appendix 2	Examples of a selection of press and PR coverage

## APPENDIX 1



### **Belfast Shopping Festival Report**

Belfast's first ever city-wide shopping festival was celebrated during the entire month of April. The festival was organised by Belfast City Council, in partnership with Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, Belfast City Centre Management and Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce. The event celebrated the city's evolution into a vibrant, dynamic shopping hotspot.

The Festival included an eclectic mix of events, competitions, promotions, street entertainment, in-store activities and included the first fashion show in Smithfield Market. Below is an update on the various elements of the festival with some excellent feedback and a remarkable return on investment made by Belfast City Council. The excellent PR coverage alone generated over £82,000 worth of free coverage.

### **Belfast Shopping Festival Product**

We worked on the development of the first Shopping festival and approximately 200 retailers signed up to participate. The festival involved retail sectors across the city including a unique mix of independent boutiques, High Street retailers, shopping centres, St George's and Smithfield Markets, speciality stores and abundant craft, art and antique outlets who participated in a range of ways through a selection of special offers, competition prizes, participation in the Belfast Telegraph Voucher booklet, running special events and in-store demonstrations.

### **Belfast Shopping Festival BCCM / BCTC Voucher Booklet**

The Belfast Telegraph Festival booklet was developed in conjunction with the Belfast Telegraph. The voucher booklet was very popular with the retailers and many were keen to get involved. Working with BCCM and BCTC we ensured that all retailers from beyond the city centre were given the opportunity to participate. Some key facts about the booklet are listed below:

- 87,000 branded Belfast Shopping Festival copies of 40 page voucher booklet including 80 discount retail vouchers unique to Belfast
- Distributed via Belfast Telegraph on 7 April 2009
- Distributed by branded segway teams every Saturday throughout April 2009
- 10 copies of Voucher booklet sent to every participating shop for in-store distribution

### **Belfast Shopping Festival Marketing and PR Campaign**

The Marketing and PR campaign was extensive and included the following:

- Belfast Shopping Festival Press and media launch

- 100,000 Belfast Shopping Festival postcards – for retailers, promotional teams and Welcome Centre Staff to create awareness of the Festival
  - [www.gotobelfast.com/belfastshoppingfestival](http://www.gotobelfast.com/belfastshoppingfestival) with online guide detailing all additional special in-store offers, events and promotions
  - Radio campaign with Cool FM and U105
  - 2 week promotion on bus sides – street liners
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- Belfast Shopping Festival Ad Vans promoting the event throughout April
  - 300 Posters attached to lamp posts in key locations
  - 200 window posters displayed by retailers
  - Month long advertisement and special feature in Go, Whatabout and the Ulster Tatler
  - Front page solus in the Belfast Telegraph
  - Competition/reader offers promoted via: Cool FM, Belfast Telegraph, Sunday Life, Community Telegraph, Sugahfix, Ulster Tatler, Northern Woman
  - Belfast Shopping Festival balloons
  - Branded segway teams wearing Belfast Shopping Festival t-shirts distributing information
  - Street dressing

The marketing and PR that was generated was critical in meeting the festival aims and objectives to: showcase the diverse and eclectic shopping offer in the city, encourage people to experience the city as a shopping destination and to explore areas beyond the city centre and increase footfall and spend.

With major efforts in partnership with BVCB the campaign resulted in extensive coverage in a wide range of media outlets including: The Belfast Telegraph, News Letter, Irish News, Daily Mirror, Letterkenny Post, Sunday Life, Irish Independent, Newry Democrat, Ballyclare Gazette, Ulster Tatler, U105, Cool FM etc. The PR coverage alone equated to a fantastic £82,398 of free PR.

	<b>No of Pieces</b>	<b>Circulation Total</b>	<b>Advertising Equivalent</b>
Editorial Coverage	45	1,657,207	£62,623.41
Competition	10	868,273	£16,784.90
Editorial Broadcast	3	154,000	£2,510.00
Online	13		£480
<b>TOTAL</b>	71	2,679,480	£82,398.31

Combining all of the marketing and PR it is estimated that the total reach of the campaign including the Spring campaign was to over 6.5 million people from throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland. The campaign was also directed at visitors to Belfast during that period.

## **Belfast Shopping Festival Online activity**

An online brochure was available on the special web site which listed all the discounts, events and further information on the festival. It was very popular and was downloaded a total of 7,494 times.

## **Belfast Shopping Festival Entertainment**

During each Saturday throughout the month Belfast Circus School, a number of music groups and Segway promotional teams were programmed to create a feel-good atmosphere in the shopping areas, bringing much delight to shoppers. The performers interacted with shoppers young and old and were able to share key information with the public. The Circus School performers provided excellent feedback on their experiences in all of the various locations and

in many cases the public got involved in the entertainment themselves. Some highlights included: an 84 year old hula oping on the Belmont Road; children interacting with the performers and loving the balloons; and an elderly gentleman who was so excited he actually went home to get his camera to take pictures of them and returned back an hour later to present the performers with the images.

The atmosphere was also developed further with the dressing of key areas with colourful ribbons. The key personnel from Roads Service were particularly helpful in this respect by giving the necessary permissions. Dressed lamp posts also had Shopping Festival posters attached to them. The ribbons were well received by the public and they created a talkability factor which helped to create interest in the festival.

## **Belfast Shopping Festival Retailer Participation**

### **Competitions**

52 retailers donated £9647 worth of prizes including a £1000 spending spree on Bloomfield Avenue and £1000 of vouchers from Connswater Shopping Centre. Retailers were very generous and donated a range of prizes including: a £500 pearl necklace from Fred J Malcolm, handbag from Karen Millen, £600 worth of shoes from Schuh and £100 worth of Build-a-Bear workshop vouchers.

There was a great response to the competitions in all publications.

The Sunday Life had a particularly popular competition which prompted a response of thanks for the Sunday Life Executive Editor Martin Breen. His email is copied below:

*We received a massive response to this competition, probably the largest of any this year and we have had some pretty big competitions, so thanks for that as it seems to have really fitted with our readers.*

*Thanks again, Martin*

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*Martin Breen*  
*Executive Editor – Sunday Life*

## Feedback from the Retail Sector

As part of the **Belfast Shopping Festival 2009** – Smithfield Market held its first Urban Edge 'Alternative Fashion Show' on Thursday 23 April 2009.

This fashion show was to promote Smithfield as a premier 'alternative shopping place' and was a fashion show with a difference. The majority of the models were amateur, volunteers consisting of customers and tenants from Smithfield. The clothes and accessories were again mostly from the shops in Smithfield, (some clothing was also provided by local art students from University of Ulster). Some other local shops assisted with sponsorship, providing make-up artists and hair stylists. The shows proved to be a great hit with tenants and visitors alike. Hundreds attended both shows and applauded the models with great enthusiasm. Most of the Units in Smithfield stayed open until 9.00pm and gave the visitors the opportunity to sample the alternative side of Belfast's retail offering.

Feedback from all was very positive, especially from the tenants who stayed open; they said it made them feel part of the City Centre. Below is a selection of quotes received:

Just a quick note to say 'Brilliant Job' at Smithfield last night. It was my favourite fashion show this year and a real find for a location. I got speaking to an owner later who was raving about it. He felt really included and very happy to be acknowledged as a shopping destination. I have to say it completely changed my perception of the place.

Harry Brown 'Impact Martial Arts Supplies'

'It was a great show, we didn't know what to expect but are really glad that we got involved. The idea to use customers and staff as models was brilliant; the shows highlighted what Smithfield has to offer. The shows from start to finish were really professional and a credit to those involved, very well done'

Gary McCann 'Army Surplus Supplies'

'loved the shows, everyone really enjoyed themselves and we even made some good sales tonight, all new customers too.'

Peter Gettka – Unit 23 – Exotic Pets

Smashing shows, great they way a lot of the tenants' goods were involved in this, even my reptiles, I had 3 new faces in my shop tonight and made 2 sales. Our involvement can only be good for Smithfield, thank you'.

In terms of feedback from retailers that participated in the **Belfast Shopping Festival 2009** the following were received by email:

Splash (Shoes)

Bloomfield Avenue

*Blandine Gillen – owner and member of Bloomfield Traders Association*

*Thanks, ..... all this is already paying off for me, lots of new faces in the shop today so thanx thanx & thanx!*

Fiddlesticks (Gifts & Home)

Belmont Road

Kieran Hill – Owner & Chair of Strand Town Traders Association

*Just thought I would send you a short note by way of a thank you to you and your colleagues for all your efforts at the weekend. Overall I thought Saturday was an excellent day. The girls on the road despite the poor weather were in high spirits throughout. They certainly more than did their bit to promote the shops and this was reflected in our turnover which certainly saw a good lift on the day even though we were competing with the Grand National Day in the afternoon. I know you may have encountered a few dissenters, but by and large most of the retailers were surprisingly up beat and enjoyed all the hype you injected into the area. If we are fortunate enough to see a repeat exercise in the future, we as retailers will definitely try to be more alert to making a greater effort. We were genuinely surprised at the effort and enthusiasm you put in – with it being the council I have to say we expected a more bland low key occasion – boy did we get it wrong so apologies if we didn't all appear to put enough time thought and effort in return – kind regards Kieran Hill*

Framar Health

Lisburn Road

Paul Maconaghie – Owner and Chair of Lisburn Road Business Association

*Thank you for all your hard work in connection with the 1<sup>st</sup> Belfast shopping festival.*

Beauty Culture

Upper Newtownards Road

Lisa Millar – Owner

*Belfast Shopping Festival has been very successful for me. I have welcomed new customers and many people using the vouchers.*

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APPENDIX 2 - Print Coverage – by date order

<b>Publication</b>	<b>Topic/Headline</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Go Belfast	Get Set for a Shopping Fest	Feb March
NI Homes & Lifestyle	In the diary...	April 09
Ulster Business	Photocall	March 09
Larne Gazette	Belfast's first ever 'Shopping Festival' arrives	25/03/09
Down Democrat	Shop 'til you drop	24/03/09
Ballyclare Gazette	Belfast's first ever 'Shopping Festival arrives	25/03/09
Carrickfergus Advertiser	Belfast's first ever 'Shopping Festival' arrives	25/03/39
Newry Democrat	Shop 'til you drop	24/03/09
Belfast Telegraph	Posh Puts the Spice into Belfast Shops	25/03/09
North West Telegraph	Posh Puts the Spice into Belfast Shops	25/03/09
Belfast Telegraph	Posh Spices up the Day for Belfast Shoppers <b>*FRONT PAGE*</b>	25/03/09
Ulster Tatler	Shopping Fever!	March 09
Farm Week	City Lights	27/03/09
Belfast Telegraph	Bloomin' Lovely – Bloomfield Avenue Feature	27/03/09
Business Eye	Boost for Belfast's Retail Sector as City's First Ever Shopping Festival.....	March 2009
East Belfast Herald	A Stadium Full of Eastern Promise?	27/03/09
Ballyclare Gazette	Photos	01/04/09
Larne Gazette	Photos	01/04/09
Carrickfergus Advertiser	Photos	01/04/09
Northern Woman	Win....Fashionista Goodies!	April 2009
Northern Woman	Travel Report	April 2009
Belfast Telegraph	5 Great Things to do	01/04/09
North West Telegraph	5 Great Things to do	01/04/09
News Letter	Fashion boutique is a real bride & joy – Profile Feature	02/04/09
South Side Advertiser	Belfast Shopping Festival 1-30 April 2009	02/04/09
Ulster Tatler	Shop 'till you drop (Emma Louise's Diary)	April 2009
East Belfast Herald	City's shopping festival opens in the East	03/04/09
Community Telegraph	Picture Parade	01/04/09
Belfast News	The Detail's in the Retail	02/04/09
City Matters	Shopping Festival	April 2009
Daily Mirror	Bargain Belfast	04/03/09
Ulster Tatler	Shopping Festival Arrives	April 2009
Belfast Telegraph	Get set to bag a great deal with our shopping festival discount vouchers	07/04/09
North West Telegraph	Get set to bag a great deal with our shopping festival discount vouchers	07/04/09
News Letter	Ladies lead the way for the city's chic boutiques - Feature	10/04/09
Daily Mirror	Shopping Mad City	13/04/09
Irish News	Shopping with a difference - Feature	14/04/09
Sunday Life	100 Things to do with the kids during Easter	12/04/09
Derry News	Belfast's Retail Scene	16/04/09
Letterkenny Post	Belfast Shopping Festival 1 <sup>st</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	09/04/09
Fate Magazine	Shop to you drop	April 09
Belfast News	Festival (photo)	16/04/09
Accent	Belfast Shopping Festival	31/03/09
NI Travel News	Fever pitch as shopping festival comes to town	23/04/09
Sunday Life	N-ICE Prize to Enjoy	03/05/09
Irish Daily Star	Belfast Shopping Festival a Shopper's Delight	01/04/09
Irish Independent	The flight of shoppers	06/04/09
Irish Independent	Irish Eyes focus on Belfast	06/04/09
Fate Magazine	Belfast Shopping Festival	07/05/09

