

# Report reveals economic impact of Edinburgh's Christmas 2017

In a report out today Underbelly who organise Edinburgh's Christmas for the council say that last year's events brought an economic impact of £113 million, or the equivalent of 2,260 full time jobs to the capital.

BOP Consulting has produced an impact assessment report for both Christmas and Hogmanay events which Underbelly produce for the city. The impact of Hogmanay events was assessed to be £39 million in 2017/18.

In 2017 the Christmas festivities in the city centre brought in 919,344 visitors over 6 weeks which was up by 3.7% on 2015.

4,653 million people who went to the three main sites during Edinburgh's Christmas although overall numbers in the city centre during the November and December period were about five times that.

Ticket sales were up at 771,007 for all the rides and the shows with 64% of the visitors saying that the Edinburgh's Christmas attractions are a major reason for coming to Edinburgh, and in particular the Christmas markets.

McCarthy & Stone conducted a survey which named the Christmas Market in East Princes Street Gardens as the best in the UK.



Charlie Wood and Ed Bartlam Directors of Underbelly

Charlie Wood and Ed Bartlam, directors of Underbelly who produce Edinburgh's Christmas on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "It's fantastic to get this independent research and to read its finding of the vast economic impact that Edinburgh's Christmas brings to the city and to Scotland. We're very proud that Edinburgh's Christmas is now firmly on the map as a global winter destination with sky high levels of customer satisfaction and return visits, and visitors who consistently rate the event as their major reason for coming to Edinburgh. The research shows that the event supports thousands of jobs in the city but it's great to see how many residents also come and enjoy its attractions. This year, we're adding Silent Light, a significant new attraction which will raise funds for Edinburgh's One City Trust, dedicated to fighting inequality and exclusion in the city."

The Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, Frank Ross, said: "There is no better place in the world to celebrate Christmas

than here in Edinburgh and this report highlights just how valuable the attractions are to the city.

“As part of our Winter Festivals programme, Edinburgh’s Christmas supports the staging of our Hogmanay celebrations, while bringing in an estimated economic impact of £113.2m. The events are clearly a huge draw for visitors, but they are also for and enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of local people. Over 142,333 tickets were snapped up last year by Edinburgh residents with their 20% discount, and 69% of citizens said Edinburgh’s Christmas was the main or only reason they came into the city centre that day.

“These findings are clearly good news for our city centre retailers and other businesses, for local jobs and for the wider economy.”

Roddy Smith, Chief Executive of Essential Edinburgh, said: “Edinburgh’s Christmas delivers huge footfall gains and economic impact for the city centre every year and we expect this year, especially with Silent Light – with its combination of spectacle and fun – to be no different.

“We are delighted to be a partner in the creation of what promises to be the most fun and exciting attraction yet for George Street this Christmas.

“2017 was fantastic for the city centre and we are looking forward the attractions this year.”

Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport, said: “Edinburgh’s festivals and major events are internationally renowned and we should all take great pride in the fact they are recognised and enjoyed by visitors from countries all over the world, bringing significant benefits to the economy. More than 1.8 million people passed through Edinburgh Airport last November and December and we expect to see that rise this year as more people fly into the capital to experience Edinburgh’s Christmas and the other festive events.

“A big part of the success of all of our other festivals is our warm and welcoming hospitality which invites people to celebrate with us and the festive season always brings good memories for people. We want to help create new ones by showing off Edinburgh at its very best, and there’s no better time to experience that than at Christmas.”

John Donnelly, Chief Executive at Marketing Edinburgh, said: “The value that Edinburgh’s Christmas brings to Scotland’s capital is undeniable. Not only does it deliver a positive economic impact for the city through the millions of global visitors that it attracts, our residents also get to experience the ‘UK’s best Christmas Market’ on their doorstep. The success of events such as Edinburgh’s Christmas continues to position the city as a world leading destination in which to live, work, study, visit and invest.”