

next plc

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Photographs: <http://press.next.co.uk/media/company-images/campaignimages.aspx>

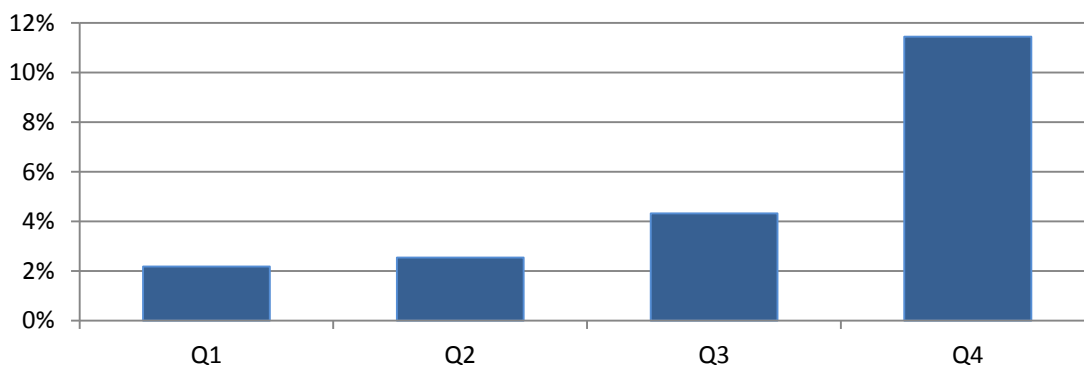
Next plc Interim Management Statement 30 April 2014

SALES PERFORMANCE TO 26 APRIL 2014

Next Brand sales for the first thirteen weeks of our financial year were up 10.8%, of which 2.2% came from the opening of profitable new space. NEXT Retail sales were up 8.8% and NEXT Directory was up 13.7%.

Sales are currently ahead of the 4%-8% full year guidance we gave in March and we are increasing our sales guidance for the full year to 5.5%-9.5%. This new guidance might look conservative in the light of the first quarter's performance. However, we always expected the first quarter to show above average sales growth as the comparative period last year suffered from a particularly cold Spring and Easter Holiday period. The chart below shows how last year sales progressively improved through the year and that the final quarter presents particularly challenging comparatives.

Last Year Sales Growth by Quarter



Next Brand sales growth year ending Jan 2014 vs Jan 2013

The Company's revised sales and profit guidance ranges for the full year are set out in the table below. For clarity our previous guidance is shown in the right hand column.

Guidance Full Year to January 2015	New Guidance		Previous Guidance	
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Total Brand sales growth	+ 5.5%	+9.5%	+4%	+8%
Profit before tax (PBT)	£750m	£790m	£730m	£770m
PBT growth	+ 8%	+ 14%	+ 5%	+ 11%
Earnings per share growth	+ 8%	+ 14%	+ 5%	+ 11%

SPECIAL DIVIDEND AND SHARE BUYBACK PRICE LIMIT

At our results in March we set out the way we would determine the maximum price at which the Company would buy back shares. At that time, using a prospective profit before tax of £750m (which was the mid-point of our guidance range), our share price limit was £62.45. Our shares traded consistently above this level in the first quarter and, as a result, we will return surplus capital to shareholders through a third special dividend of 50 pence per share. This will be paid on 1 August 2014 to those on the Company register at market close on 11 July. The shares will trade ex-dividend from 9 July.

The mid-point of our new Profit before tax guidance is now £770m and accordingly we are increasing our buy back price limit, in line with this guidance, to £64.00.

ORDINARY DIVIDEND

At the Company's AGM on 15 May a final ordinary dividend of 93p will be proposed, making 129p for the year. Subject to shareholder approval, this will be paid on 1 August. So the total of dividends to be paid on 1 August will be the 93p final ordinary dividend and a 50p special interim dividend, making £1.43 in total.

TRADING STATEMENT 29 JULY 2014

Our next statement will cover the first 26 weeks of the year, to 26 July 2014, and is provisionally scheduled for Tuesday 29 July 2014.

END