



Category: Community Relations Campaign

Company: Greater Cambridge Partnership

Entry title: Our Big Conversation

Brief and objectives:

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is a local Government-based consortium delivering a growth deal for the area.

In spring 2017 the organisation went through a rapid period of change, redefining its vision, ambition and identity. As part of this refresh, a public engagement campaign was carried out in autumn 2017.

The campaign, called 'Our Big Conversation', aimed to create awareness of the challenges and get more people involved in finding solutions to the Cambridge growth phenomenon.

The campaign had the following objectives:

1. Raise public awareness of the Greater Cambridge growth story and GCP's role in supporting this.
2. Generate dialogue and involvement in the development of long-term solutions across the GCP work-streams of transport, housing, skills and new technology.
3. Generate a quantitative and qualitative evidence-base to help inform development of GCP's Future Investment Strategy, with a focus on transport.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

We were facing a busy period, with multiple consultations planned and negative voices were more prominent than those supporting the organisation. We wanted to change this and find out views from across Greater Cambridge and beyond. We needed a campaign that was engaging, multi-faceted and two-way.

We procured the agency, Social Communications, to assist in the planning and delivery of the campaign, including producing collateral for the campaign. Our in-house team planned the approach and ran day-to-day activity.

Research on the campaign was based on a review of consultations over the previous year, including interviews with staff, councillors and desktop research.

Recommendations from this review helped shaped aspects of the campaign, including targeted event locations, marketing collateral and using interactive, responsive new ways to capture feedback from the public.

The following key audiences were targeted:

- Residents;
- Commuters;
- Students;
- Businesses and sole traders;
- Elected representatives;
- Hard-to-reach groups;
- Children and young people.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

Our Big Conversation was delivered as an integrated campaign between September 25 and November 20 2017.

Communications had previously been focused on specific schemes; we simplified messaging to focus on geographic areas. This put residents and stakeholders at the heart of our communications and enabled people to see what would be changing for them in the areas where they lived and worked.

Tailored leaflets were produced for the city centre, east, north, south and west. We also produced a leaflet for cyclists, a core audience given the city's status as the UK's cycling capital.

We previously had organised events specifically for certain schemes, with limited attendance and needed to reach a wider audience. We decided to take the conversation to them and organised a series of events in popular locations across the region, including shopping centres, networking events, a football match and railway stations.

Implementation of tactics:

Raising Awareness

- We launched at a high-profile Cambridge United football match, attracting media coverage within local print and radio including That's Cambridge TV, Heart FM (online), Cambridge News and BBC Look East;
- Our website (greatercambridge.org.uk) was used to provide general information, regular news updates and promote events;

- Promotion of the campaign through #OurBigConversation leaflets, newspapers, and local residents' newsletters/community magazines as well as digital advertising on local bus services;
- A sponsorship deal with Cambridge United FC included adverts in match day programmes and engagement across its social media channels - Twitter (approx. 58k followers) and Facebook feeds (approx. 78k followers).

Creating conversations

- 38 public events held at high footfall venues including supermarkets, transport hubs, workplaces and hospitals;
- Five targeted business workshops, two elected councillor briefings, and events targeting children and young people at local community hubs, scout huts and Freshers' Fairs;
- A coordinated and sustained campaign across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. More than 100 tweets were posted during the consultation period, which were shared more than 200 times.

Measurement and evaluation:

We received over 10,000 individual comments to Our Big Conversation and all three of our campaign objectives were met.

The campaign included a number of surveys to generate a range of qualitative and quantitative data to create a solid evidence base. Through a telephone survey, we were able to get a representative view of over 1,000 Cambridge and South Cambridge residents. Furthermore, a self-selected and targeted residents and commuters survey provided a further 7635 survey responses. We also received over 400 completed feedback forms distributed at events and by partners.

As a partnership organisation, we were able to utilise our relationships with business, council and community organisations to use their channels and generate 505,812 opportunities to see through sharing our content their channels via e-newsletters, blog posts and news article. This directly increased our profile and raised awareness.

By attending 38 local events, we were able to speaking directly to over 3000 people and generate 2,883 comments. This included attending and/or organising events targeting specific groups such as Business Workshops, Young People's Takeover Day and a Family Lunch.

Further metrics include:

- Print materials: 5000 leaflets and feedback forms were distributed at events and by our partners, generating 75,161 opportunities to see;
- Media coverage: 15 articles in the local media, generating 675,661 opportunities to see;

- Social media (organic): #OurBigConversation posts were shared 179 times, with a combined reach of around 130,000;
- Social media (paid): Paid for event promotion generated a reach of 6,695;
- GCP website: 2,384 unique page views generated, and the videos were viewed 385 times.

The legacy of Our Big Conversation is an evidence-base that can be drawn on to help develop growth policy in Greater Cambridge for many years to come.

The campaign has also had long-term business benefits: it has increased our organisation's reputation and credibility, helping us build and enhance relationships with a number of community and residential groups.

The campaign has been welcomed across stakeholders and praised by elected members, who support a continuation of the campaign, the so-called Big Conversation II, later in 2018.