



Category: Transport or Automotive Campaign

Company: Social Communications and Bradford Council

Entry title: Next Stop Bradford

Brief and objectives:

Social Communications (SC) was appointed by Bradford Council (BC) in February 2017 for an initial 3-month period to support BC and create a Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) campaign. SC was asked to develop an effective narrative, build a supportive business network and make the case to civic and political leaders across the North to include Bradford on NPR.

Throughout 2017, the primary campaign objective was to influence Transport for the North (TfN) to commit to an NPR station in Bradford in their Draft Strategic Transport Plan.

This objective was achieved in January 2018, leading to SC being commissioned to deliver a second phase of the campaign with new objectives.

Primary campaign objective:

- Influence government and TfN to commit to a Bradford city centre station in their Strategic Outline Business Case for NPR (due to be released late 2018)

Overarching PR campaign objectives:

- Galvanise support from influencers and opinion formers across the North
- Engage the local community to demonstrate the benefits of NPR
- Engage the business community in Bradford, Leeds and Manchester to understand the potential impact on business growth
- Ensure Bradford's voice is heard locally, regionally and nationally through positive media and social media activity.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

Target audiences:

- National – Government (DfT / Treasury)
- Regional – TfN, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Leeds City Region LEP, Chambers of Commerce, Network Rail, Northern civic and business leaders
- Local – businesses, MPs, councillors, Civic Society, schools, community groups and sports clubs

A campaign strategy has been developed outlining activity targeted at the above groups.

SC also developed a calendar of upcoming events and speaking opportunities to ensure the campaign was at the forefront of all relevant discussion and debates.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

The campaign needed to capture the hearts and minds of local people whilst resonating with a senior business audience and national government. The campaign name and brand are memorable, eye-catching and have become a mantra for our campaign advocates – delivered in ways ranging from pin badges to a hashtag, and key messages given to all supporters.

SC has created a suite of branded collateral to raise awareness of the campaign, effectively engaging with a wide range of audiences.

Campaign channels included:

- Local, regional, national and trade media
- Leeds and Bradford events
- Transport and economic growth events
- Tour de Yorkshire - starting in Bradford
- Face-to-face meetings with influencers and decision makers
- Political events in Westminster and Whitehall and questions / debates in the House of Commons
- Partnership working with transport and public-sector partners
- Advertising opportunities in the public realm
- Campaign website and social media presence

Implementation of tactics:

From February to June 2017, SC developed the Next Stop Bradford brand, executed a media launch, created a range of campaign collateral, arranged a well-attended business event and created a PR stunt.

Since June 2017, SC has continued to develop the Next Stop Bradford brand.

In October 2017, the campaign became more visible with the launch of a Twitter account and website – both delivered and managed by our team. The Twitter account is growing steadily, with early followers including many of the campaign's key advocates and target stakeholders.

The website's "pledge my support" page is capturing the growing community and stakeholder support. Nearly 500 pledges have been received and comments are uploaded to the website and posted on Twitter, demonstrating to TfN the level of community support.

In November 2017, we worked with BC to utilise their own communication channels – with campaign information included with Council Tax information, staff payslips, monthly newsletters and more.

In December 2017, Bradford Bulls rugby league club backed the campaign, including promoting it at their Boxing Day game and through their social media.

In January 2018, TfN released their official draft Strategic Transport Plan which includes a Bradford station, marking a key milestone for the campaign. SC helped to secure widespread regional and national press coverage.

Supporters were subsequently prompted to take part in the TfN consultation on their draft Transport Plan to help make the case for Bradford to TfN and government. 50 business, political and community leaders attended the consultation event in Bradford following promotional activity led by SC.

The start of the campaign was about ensuring Bradford was part of the NPR debate. This has now been achieved and the focus has shifted to where Bradford's station should be, instead of whether it should be included.

In March 2018, SC worked with BC to arrange the unveiling of new CGIs and emerging economic research demonstrating the benefits of a city centre station at MIPIM.

Before SC was appointed, Bradford was not under consideration for an NPR station – now they are the most visible, vocal and well-supported station on the proposed network.

Measurement and evaluation:

The primary result was to secure Bradford's place in TfN's January 2018 announcement on Northern Powerhouse Rail.

This result has been achieved by focusing on the PR objectives:

- Creating a network of supportive stakeholders

- Over 80 pieces of print, online and broadcast media coverage
- Raised awareness with political stakeholders by working with MPs on questions in the House of Commons
- Launched a website to share information about the campaign and enable people to show their support (nearly 500 people have pledged)
- Launched a Twitter account which has over 650 followers
- Secured speaking slots / stands at 13 regional business events
- Presented at Bradford, Leeds and Manchester Chamber of Commerce meetings to engage the business community
- Created a suite of campaign collateral including brochures, animated video, pin badges and banners
- Prompted a number of positive comments on Bradford's campaign from Chris Grayling, the Secretary of State for Transport

SC has been appointed to continue this campaign until December 2018.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

Between July 2017 and June 2018, campaign fees will have totalled £43,000.

The campaign has been supported by the full range of SC's services:

- PR – securing local, regional and national coverage across print, digital and broadcast
- Public Affairs – engagement with regional political leaders, business community, northern transport body, central government
- Digital – website design & development, social media management
- Creative – graphic design, brand development