



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 GOLD WINNER

Category: Construction, Property or Infrastructure Campaign

Company: Athene Communications and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation

Entry title: Ebbsfleet Garden City: 'Picnic in the Park' Consultation

Brief and objectives:

Ebbsfleet Garden City is the vision to create a brand-new city, with over 15,000 homes, a major new commercial centre, improved public transport and seven city parks spread throughout. Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) was formed by the government to deliver the Garden City by the year 2035.

42% of the Garden City will be park or open space. Major parks, village parks, and neighbourhood parks will be connected by green corridors to form a network across the city. The idea is that everybody in Ebbsfleet will be within five minutes' walk of a park.

Athene Communications delivered the public consultation on the future use and look of the seven city parks. The objectives were:

- To deliver a public consultation to generate ideas for the seven major parks
- Ensure the consultation was engaging and reached a wide demographic
- Bring residents to the parks being consulted on to aid with generating ideas
- Incorporate Ebbsfleet's partner organisations: NHS Healthy New Towns and Edible Ebbsfleet, into the consultation.

The idea, research and planning:

The problem faced by the Ebbsfleet team was a desire to bring residents to the parkland itself for consultation - but the areas did not have the infrastructure to be safe and accessible, particularly during the winter.

Athene provided a solution to this by suggesting the team recreate a 'Picnic in the Park' indoors. This would ensure the safety and accessibility of the consultation, as well as provide the opportunity to do something different, engaging and family friendly.

In order to reach a wide demographic, and ensure the design of the parks best reflect the desires of the local people, the consultation exhibitions were designed as fun, free, family days out.

Athene identified key local stakeholders and audiences, and through mailing tailored communications, spread awareness about the upcoming exhibitions throughout the community.

Stakeholders contacted included:

- MPs, local authorities and parish and ward councillors
- Community groups
- Schools
- Media.

Key messages were established to promote the exhibitions, and the parks as end products, based around bringing the community together, Ebbsfleet being a 'Healthy New Town' and that the parks would be the start of a larger change in the Ebbsfleet area.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

The two events were held at schools located within the heart of the community. In order to create an authentic 'Picnic in the Park' feel that would be engaging to all ages and still encourage idea generation for the parks, we used a number of tactics:

- A range of props to create different parks, including a woodland, urban beach and country park
- Information boards for each park, explaining the land's character, features and key functions, with artist sketches. The boards included questions about how the area could be used.
- Information boards containing case studies of parks from around the world and example concepts, which were created by the public during a competition
- Face-painters and balloon modellers to encourage attendance from a younger demographic
- Garden games to create a 'day out'
- A quiz, with answers on the exhibition boards – encouraging people to move around the room, reading the boards
- Activities hosted by EDC's partner organisation, educating attendees on healthy living
- Physical surveys and electronic versions on iPads at the exhibitions and online surveys

- A red post-box was used to receive completed surveys
- We encouraged attendees, especially children, to draw their thoughts on tablecloths
- A map identifying the seven parks was created and stickers were provided around themes (Getting active, Edible, Nature, Heritage, Creative, Play). Attendees were encouraged to write ideas around the themes on the stickers and place them on the map where they'd like to see them.

Delivery:

Promotion

We used multiple channels to promote the exhibitions:

- Adverts in local newspapers
- A series of messages posted on EDC's social media channels
- A flyer sent to residents in the Garden City area
- A letter emailed to local political figures, groups and schools
- Posters advertising the events were placed around the local area.

Exhibitions

The exhibitions took place on two consecutive days in January 2019. During the exhibitions, employees from Athene and EDC engaged with members of the community, answering questions, talking them through the boards and encouraging them to share their feedback using the various mechanisms.

Post-exhibition consultation

Following the events there was a two-week period for anyone who was unable to attend the exhibitions to provide ideas via the online survey or Freepost address.

The information displayed at the exhibitions was available online and the online survey was promoted via social media and EDC's website.

Analysis and report

Once the two-week consultation closed, all data received was collated, analysed and formed into a report, which EDC are using to inform the seven major parks.

Measurement and evaluation:

A total of 117 people attended the public exhibitions. 100 people completed the Parklife consultation survey, and three people submitted feedback via social media.

A total of 650 ideas or suggestions were submitted, resulting in 146 unique ideas including:

- 109 feature/facility suggestions
- 37 event suggestions.

A detailed analysis was produced for EDC of all the feedback received from all responses. From which a concise project list of the ideas, options and opportunities presented during the consultation was produced and EDC are currently running viability tests on the ideas.

Testimonial:

“Ebbsfleet Development Corporation really wanted our Parklife engagement programme to stand out as a fun and interesting family event for our local residents, and Athene provided ideation and creativity in abundance throughout the event planning.

“Athene provided a complete wraparound service coordinating all aspects of a complex project, creating a beautiful indoor park setting, and a series of inventive games and engagement activities that has allowed us to identify key needs and requirements for the planning and design of our city parks in Ebbsfleet.” Simon Harrison - Head of Design.