

## Hull 2017: Tell the World

### 1. Brief and objectives

To develop a PR campaign to support Hull's bid for the UK City of Culture 2017 title, which would:

- Demonstrate to the judges – and the nation – that Hull was a credible challenger.
- Raise awareness of the bid by engaging people in a debate about Hull's culture.
- Galvanise support for the bid - and prove to judges that we had succeeded in this.
- Change perceptions of the city through an increase in positive media coverage.

### 2. Strategy

We developed the *Hull 2017: Tell the World* campaign based on these simple principles:

Positive rivalry. The campaign focused on Hull's strengths, not the weaknesses of the competition.

A serious bid. Avoiding celebrity endorsement, we focused on winning the support of artists, communities and opinion-formers to convince the judges that Hull had most to gain from being UK City of Culture 2017.

Keeping it 'real'. Set against a backdrop of public sector cuts, we had to make a compelling case for bidding and the benefits it would deliver - whether or not Hull won. Being honest about the challenges facing the city would be critical to success.

Using a range of PR mechanisms to connect with different audiences. The judges were a primary audience, but we knew that the pride and passion of local people would be a powerful force in persuading them to award Hull the title.

### 3. Campaign mechanisms and tactics

Engagement - 250 people attended 40 bid events, with thousands more joining the debate on social media.

'Hull in the Frame' – Over 1,000 Hull residents were pictured inside our picture frame to demonstrate their support. Festival-goers, shoppers, businesses and students from each of the city's 86 schools took part.

Local media - We worked with local media to build awareness through a planned series of stories. Highlights included a culture magazine funded by local business and five hours of broadcasting on local BBC stations in the run-up to final bid submission.

Showcasing Hull - We produced a cultural map of the city and worked with musicians and authors to launch a CD and book. We branded Europe's largest sculpture on its journey from the Hull fabrication plant to its final destination at Heathrow and delivered our final bid to judges on artist-customised bikes.

Events - stand-out events demonstrated Hull's ability to deliver - from elephants walking city streets to a projection on to the side of Hull's iconic aquarium. At the annual Freedom Festival, we created a video diary room in a converted a VW camper van to record support.

Lobbying: We asked influential politicians, cultural figures and Hull alumni for pledges of support. Results included a reception hosted by Baroness Bottomley, a Guardian film featuring Hull's High Steward, Lord Mandelson and dozens of testimonials for our bid.

National media - We created a positive national context by pitching features to key nationals – something no other city achieved. Coverage included The Observer, FT, Guardian and the Independent. The Sunday Times Culture magazine concluded: "For PR effort, it must be Hull".

Social media - We engaged over 14,000 people through a community Facebook page. Our Twitter campaign attracted over 10,000 followers and saw #HullYes trend six times during the bidding process.

Hull 2017 Angels – We secured private sector support with pledges of £17,000 each from 22 local business 'Angels'. Over 200 city businesses displayed window stickers.

Film: 'This City Belongs to Everyone', was released days before our team delivered their final presentation to the judges. The film got 1,000 You Tube hits in one hour and reached 100,000 hits within weeks.

#### 4. Implementation

The Hull 2017 Tell the World campaign started in April 2013, intensified when the city was shortlisted for the title in June and ran through to the announcement in November.

The campaign was led by a small team from Hull City Council, who enlisted the support of partners including local media, businesses, community organisations, the city's cultural and education sector, individuals and groups with large social media followings and public sector agencies.

## 5. Research, planning, measurement and evaluation

The *Hull 2017: Tell the World* campaign achieved its aim of harnessing the support of local people and opinion formers to bring the UK City of Culture 2017 title to Hull. We know our campaign played a direct role in this because the judges' report highlights the following as reasons why Hull won:

- "... strong organisational involvement across the city and significant efforts to enthuse and engage the city's people."
- "... strong awareness of the bid in the city."
- "... strong media coverage and momentum."

Our evaluation shows:

- 88% awareness locally just before DCMS announced the winner in November 2013, with 85% of people saying Hull would benefit from being UK City of Culture (from a baseline of 60% of people saying that Hull could not win the title in April 2013)
- 626 positive/neutral stories in local, national and international print and online media;
- 1,093 positive/neutral broadcast stories or mentions in local, national and international media;
- total reach across all media 942,085,014
- 29% increase in the number of UK travellers researching Hull since landing the title
- 30% of UK travellers say they are more likely to visit Hull as a result.

## 6. Budget and cost effectiveness

The Council invested £150,000 in developing and submitting the bid for UK City of Culture 2017, which included the cost of all community and stakeholder engagement, PR, marketing, events, bid writing and production. In addition, many individuals, companies and agencies delivered in-kind support as an integral part of "Team Hull". This was a highly cost effective campaign in terms of the outcomes it has already achieved and the investment winning will bring into the city – a £60 million tourism boost in 2017 alone, 1,400 jobs for local people and a transformation of Hull's image locally, nationally and internationally.