



Category: Community Relations Campaign

Company: Holyrood PR

Entry title: Building Communities in East Lothian – CALA Homes

Brief and objectives:

CALA Homes is the UK's largest, upmarket homebuilder. An important area for the developer is East Lothian, where 10,000 new homes are needed and where CALA has a large concentration of proposed developments.

Following a successful pilot scheme in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire in 2016, CALA Homes set up dedicated community funds in many of the areas where it is most active. These "CALA Bursary" schemes underline its reputation for supporting and enhancing communities where it builds.

In March 2017 a community fund was established for East Lothian, recognising CALA's links with the area and significant pipeline of new developments. It would offer £10,000 in cash to be distributed among good causes, with maximum donations of £2500.

The PR brief was to deliver a successful launch. Measurable objectives were:

Deliver five significant items of media coverage to drive community engagement
MEASURABLE – Attract 30 applications

Demonstrate that knowledge of the CALA Bursary reached every part of East Lothian
MEASURABLE – At least one applications from each of the five most populated areas

Ensure applications of appropriate quality and suitability
MEASURABLE – Ensure entire £10,000 fund would be disbursed at first time of asking, avoiding CALA worries of a protracted process requiring repeated calls for further applicants

Achieve credibility and influence via independent, third party advocates
MEASUREABLE – Secure an influential member of the local community to join selection Panel

Support CALA's wider business objectives
MEASURABLE – Help CALA achieve at least one successful planning application in the area during the campaign period

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

CALA has delivered numerous, well-received developments in East Lothian. It was keen to

emphasise its long-term commitment to the area and its established support of diverse local causes.

The housebuilder also wanted to underline its strict adherence to the local planning process.

Since any surge in planning and construction activity can bring local opposition, CALA wanted to carefully and sensitively offset possible negative messages, by ensuring widespread understanding of its positive influence on communities.

To match the success of the pilot project in the north east of Scotland (population 489,490, served by 14 news titles), creativity would be required since East Lothian has a population of 104,090 served by a single, weekly newspaper.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

A media collaboration was sought with the East Lothian Courier (ELC), guaranteeing the title both partner status and regular, exclusive content. This required careful negotiation to reflect that it was about earned media and not a paid or advertorial partnership.

A reflection of the success was that ELC editor, Robbie Scott, agreed to sit on the selection panel.

A strict timeline was set down with an agreement that relevant copy and images would be provided each week, urging local causes to apply for funding.

To launch the scheme, large numbers spelling out “£10,000” were sourced in CALA corporate colours and a photocall was arranged with North Berwick Minis, a children’s rugby group which has enjoyed long-term CALA support.

Implementation of tactics:

The campaign had five distinct highlights to match the timeline:

Round 1- Launch of fund in partnership with ELC - front page teaser, full page and application form. Further coverage achieved in Edinburgh Evening News, construction and charity titles

Round 2: Full page coverage in ELC, with examples of beneficiaries from pilot scheme and application form.

Round 3: ELC coverage on the successful uptake three weeks after launch.

Round 4: Article on local club, the North Berwick Minis, highlighting benefits of local funding and urging groups to apply.

Round 5: Final reminder – with a week until cut-off date, a call for groups to apply.

BONUS ROUND: In response to the weight of applications, CALA doubled the fund to £20,000, yielding a page lead in the ELC.

Demonstrate tangible benefits to the communities where the campaign was targeted, including any sustainability:

The success of the campaign led CALA to double the size of the fund to £20,000 in East Lothian – the only one of seven funds across the UK to see such success.

In early June 2017, the East Lothian selection panel agreed pay outs to 20 successful applicants, meaning groups, charities and causes across East Lothian will be able to keep delivering their vital services to local communities for the coming year.

Measurement and evaluation:

TARGET – 30 applications

ACTUAL – Generated 129 applications, double that of the next most successful CALA Bursary from seven across the UK

TARGET – At least one applications from each of the five most populated areas in East Lothian

ACTUAL – 10 of the 12 largest communities in East Lothian were represented, including all five most populated towns

TARGET – Ensure entire fund was disbursed at first time of asking

ACTUAL – Fears of poor uptake were neutralised. CALA responded to unprecedented demand by doubling fund to £20,000

TARGET – Secure a local influencer to sits on the selection panel

ACTUAL – ELC editor Robbie Scott joined the panel. The campaign also generated supportive quotes from a number of groups and good causes

TARGET - Help CALA achieve one successful planning application in the area during the campaign

ACTUAL – In early June East Lothian Council's planning committee approved two CALA developments in Gullane, which had faced stiff opposition

Robert Scott, Editor of the East Lothian Courier, said: "This partnership was an innovative approach for us. With our knowledge of Holyrood PR we knew that we would get quality editorial, not runaway advertising - and that turned out to be the case.

"The quality of the content was key to the success along with our great reach. If that standard on the pages was poor people wouldn't read it and the result wouldn't have been quite so outstanding.

"The response to this campaign tells you everything you need to know."

Budget and cost effectiveness:

40 hours - £3200

Photography - £250

Photo props - £450

TOTAL - £3900

10 media articles generated to date, creating 91,184 Opportunites To See, 23 OTS for every £1 spent.

A spend of £30 for every application received.

Fund for good causes, charities and groups doubled to £20,000, meaning vital funding for 26 groups.

Two highly scrutinised developments, worth tens of millions of pounds to CALA, approved during the bursary campaign.

Partnership with East Lothian Courier to continue for six months, focusing on the work of CALA Bursary recipients with the cash received.