



Northern Spire

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Northern Spire is Sunderland's first new bridge over the River Wear for 40 years. Our PR and consultancy support generated international media coverage, engaged local communities and ensured the project's success.

"Positive, proactive and innovative. We've put communications at the centre of the project. DTW have made a huge difference."

David Abdy, Project Director,  
Northern Spire

## The story

Sunderland Council had secured funding for its new bridge scheme from Government, but a sceptical public needed to be convinced that the scheme would come to fruition and deliver benefits for the city and the wider region.

## Their objectives

The council wanted to do three things:

- maintain public support for the project and for Sunderland City Council;
- position the project within the city's wider regeneration context; and
- initiate a 'community of interest' and generate excitement around the plans.

DTW was appointed as part of the team in summer 2015 and we've spent the past three years embedded on site delivering community engagement and PR.

## Our approach

Our research and experience helped us get 'under the skin', spot the reputational opportunities and risks and develop a strategy and programme to guide the project through to opening.

We've been:

**Pro-active and positive in our engagement to build trust/credibility** – knocking on doors, sending emails, listening to people and building relationships.

**Part of a bigger Sunderland story** – Northern Spire is paving the way for Sunderland's wider plans for job creation, regeneration and inward investment – and the relentless focus on economic benefit is a vital message.

**Visual** – using drones and animation to tell a stunning story of a unique construction project in a way that has captured the imagination and built positive momentum for Sunderland.

## The results

Positive national and international media coverage for Sunderland, royal and VIP visits, millions of people watching our construction videos, thousands of local school and college kids enthused by highly rated site visits, and a construction team and council leadership that speak as one when it comes to Northern Spire.

**195 million**  
media reach

**1,742**  
pieces of coverage

**98%**  
positive engagement

