

Charrette guide set to shape proposals

By Robert Boddy

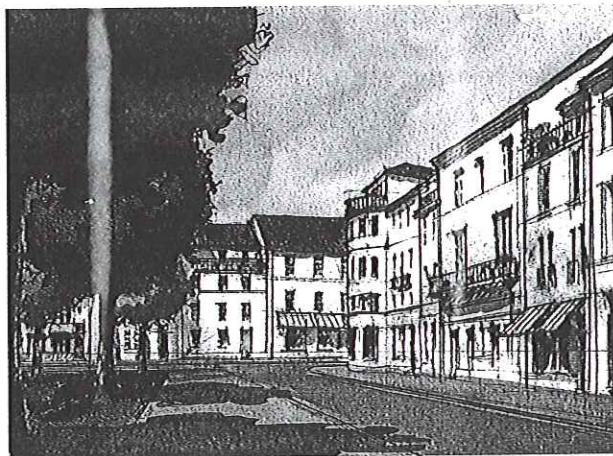
Scottish ministers are to produce a report paving the way for the increased use of charrettes as part of a consultation on major development.

Transport and infrastructure minister Stewart Stevenson described the process, which brings developers and the public together to prepare masterplans for larger schemes, as a truly innovative and exciting approach to empowering communities.

"It allows people to positively shape the decision-making process in their communities in a dynamic and effective way, improving the quality, attractiveness and success of places across Scotland," he said.

Charrettes were first used in Scotland in 2006 to shape plans for the proposed Tornagrain settlement east of Inverness.

In March this year the Scottish sustainable communities initiative charrette series took place involving schemes



Tornagrain: community engaged on project masterplan

at Lochgelly in Fife, Ladyfield in Dumfries and Grandhome on the edge of Aberdeen. The report will sum up the findings of these events.

Stevenson was speaking as he unveiled updated advice on public engagement calling for contact with communities at the earliest stage.

"We want to ensure that planning authorities and developers are clear on the need

to engage with communities when policies are developed and when proposals are being brought forward," he said.

Planning Aid for Scotland helped produce the guidance. "We look forward to working with our partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure a fully inclusive planning system," said chief executive Petra Biberbach.

Limits set for plant inquiry

A public inquiry into proposals for a gas-fired power station at Cockenzie will only hear evidence on four specific issues.

The hearing into the plan by ScottishPower was triggered in April when East Lothian Council objected to the development.

Ministers announced last week that the directorate for planning and environmental appeals had been told to only consider matters raised by the council.

These include the environmental impact, transport, noise and air quality and the possibility of an alternative heat and power plant.

ScottishPower wants to convert Cockenzie from a coal to a gas-fired power station with the aim of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 50 per cent.

Labour pledges rail link reinstatement

By Robert Boddy

The Glasgow Airport rail link, controversially ditched by the Scottish Nationalist government, will be reinstated if Labour wins next year's Holyrood election.

Scottish Labour leader Iain Gray made the pledge last week in a speech to the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce. The £120 million scheme, which was to open in time for the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, was dropped last year after ministers expressed concern about rising costs.

Gray also promised that his party would deliver the proposed £2 billion new Forth Road Bridge, although he added that a review would be held into how the project should be funded.



Gray: transport promises

However, he ruled out making more money available for the troubled Edinburgh tram project, which is expected to exceed its £545 million budget and is well behind the scheduled 2012 completion date.

"I want to see this project delivered, but it is up to the council to do that," Gray said. "If it can't deliver, it will have to explain itself to the city."

£30m

Cost of an extension to Kettering General Hospital given the go-ahead by the government. The hospital will boast an intensive care unit, paediatric outpatient department and acute and surgical ward

20,000

Number of direct neighbour notifications served by Cardiff Council every year, chief planning officer Phil Williams revealed last month.

73%

Increase in the number of town planners since 2008

There are now 24,000, making it the eighth fastest-growing career in the UK, according to the Office for National Statistics.

63

Number of bollards in a Salisbury town centre with space for 53 cars, the local civic society said. The Wiltshire city has become cluttered with its character undermined, the society says.

30 MW

Amount of electricity to be generated by a biomass plant planned for County Antrim. The plant will produce poultry bedding and meat and bone meal

13

Number of backlogged major cases at Northern Ireland's Planning Appeals Commission. The commission revealed that it can only deal with one case at a time

Online now...

Visit PlanningResource.co.uk today for a chance to follow the discussion forum debate on the grounds for appeal for a first-floor extension and coating for a garage roof. Also online See the latest video content on who is to blame for bad design