

It is described as one of the prime development sites in Argyll and Bute — and no wonder. Helensburgh pier, with its open aspects to the south and west, can boast one of the finest outlooks on the west coast. And as FRANCES RIDGE now reports, the development of the site is central to the Burgh's future prosperity. However, a debate is raging over the type of development that should be included.

'Jewel in the crown' deserves the best



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Helensburgh's pier area is described as one of the finest sites for development in Argyll and Bute.

HELENSBURGH'S pierhead is again under the spotlight as the group charged with improving the town begins its "most important piece of work".

The Helensburgh Partnership has gone out to tender for consultants to prepare a master plan for the future of the waterfront site — considered by many as the "jewel in the town's crown".

Derek Anderson, chief executive of the Partnership, believes the public should be involved every step of the way to ensure the best possible outcome.

"We want community involvement throughout the process," Derek said.

"The pier site is important in Helensburgh — but I believe it's the most important site in Argyll and Bute so I feel it is essential to

listen to what the people think about how it should be developed.

"I will let the Helensburgh Civic Society know how things are progressing along the way.

"But our brief is different to their competition brief [see next page] so it will be interesting to see how things develop and what comes out of this."

He added: "The pier area and car park has often been described as the jewel in Helensburgh's crown and we fully agree with this.

"This site clearly demands a master plan that is imaginative, innovative and visionary. The master plan must of course also be deliverable. The last thing the town needs is a lot of pie-in-the-sky ideas."

The Partnership has drawn up a short-list of well-qualified and experienced consult-

ants. They have been given three weeks to prepare their proposals before they are submitted.

Bill Brackenridge, chairman of the Partnership, said: "We have deliberately said to the consultants that they will have a blank canvas to work on, except of course for no supermarket. I think it seriously damages credibility if you ask professionals to provide you with their best advice and then place a whole host of restrictions upon them. It will be critical that the proposals are financially viable. We will ask the consultants to determine if a development containing only leisure, recreation and tourism uses can be viable."

The Partnership is to appoint the successful consultant team early in the New Year with the commission due for completion by the end of May.

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