

Partnership is making progress

THE letter from Richard Trail, secretary to the Community Council [Doubts over town plans, 4 January], is very disappointing.

Derek Anderson, the Executive Director of the Helensburgh Partnership made a presentation to the Community Council about the Partnership at the Council's December meeting. Mr Trail was at the meeting but raised none of the issues covered in his letter then.

The Helensburgh Partnership is precisely the kind of Special Purpose Vehicle the Community Council advocated to bring about improvement to Helensburgh's town centre and waterfront. Indeed, the

Community Council is one of the Partnership's partners and the Council's Chairman is a Director of the Partnership. The Partnership has been allocated very significant sums of money from its two sponsoring partners — Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Council — to fulfil its purpose.

If the Partnership is to persuade organisations to invest in Helensburgh, then it must be able to present a compelling case for that investment, based on facts and professional judgements. Simply taking opinions and aspirations to investors will not make them put Helensburgh at the top of their list.

The debate in The Helensburgh Advertiser over the past few weeks about retailing in Helensburgh confirms this point. What is needed, however, is an objective assessment of the situation. That is why retailing is one of the issues the Partnership will be studying. For some issues the studies will be conducted by consultants; some will simply require the bringing together of existing information; some issues might be researched for the Partnership by local groups.

Armed with facts, the Partnership will develop an 'Overall Development Brief' for the town centre and waterfront and several site or issue specific

'Development Briefs'. These will then be used to persuade investors to invest in Helensburgh and bring about changes we have sought for so long.

One of the issues that has often been cited for investors not coming to Helensburgh is that the town appears to be divided on itself. I had hoped that we had put such divisions behind us and that everyone would be doing all in their power to support the Partnership and to help it make Helensburgh better. Clearly I am being over optimistic.

W Brackenridge
Chairman
The Helensburgh
Partnership