



Design charrette

Design charrette is an intensive session in which a small group of participants explore topics related to a specific problem and redesign project features. All significant stakeholders should be invited to have a representative participant. A charrette can also contribute to sharing information and increasing participants' understanding in planning issues. To start, the group leader presents principles that underpin the planning and design process for participants. The group can then be divided in subgroups, which discuss ideas and assess alternative solutions to agreed issues, and then present them to the larger group. The group then seeks consensus and tries to decide on final resolution of the approach to be taken. At the final stage, a report presenting the whole process and its outcomes is produced for public discussion. Presentation, graphic images, design standards and implementation strategies produced in a charrette provide documentation for the planning process. The Design charrette may generate a prioritised action plan regarding the problems being addressed. It is essential to be clear at the start about how the results of the charrette will be used.



Involvement in design begins with an introduction to the forest and key issues.

Resources and requirements

Skills

- Good facilitation and personal communication skills are primary requirements; hiring trained facilitators is often advisable.
- The leader should be familiar with group dynamics and the substantive issues faced by the group.

Level of engagement

INFORMING:

CONSULTING:

INVOLVING: ★★ ★

PARTNERSHIP: ★

Strengths

- Design charrette can turn the attention of the attendees to possible solutions and constructive ideas instead of negative aspects.
- The technique helps to generate partnerships and positive working relationships with the public.
- It allows a more interactive learning process between planning experts and local community representatives.
- It provides a more in-depth understanding of planning issues.

Weaknesses

- Participants may not be considered to be representative by the broader public.
- The effects may not be long lasting if the charrette is used as a one-off technique.
- An experienced leader or facilitator is needed to guide the process.
- Intensive preparatory work is required.

Equipment

- A room large enough to arrange the group meeting is needed and possibly to accommodate the sub-groups.
- Facilities (computer/printer) are needed to produce a report on the results.
- Other useful materials may include maps, printed background information and display boards.

Time

- A moderate amount of time is needed to make the necessary arrangements and identify the participants prior to the meeting.
- The session usually takes five to seven days, possibly less, depending on the issues and goals of the process.

Useful sources of information

Web

- The International Association for Public Participation: www.iap2.org
- Public involvement techniques for transportation decision-making by United States Department of Transportation: www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/charrett.htm

This toolbox is designed to assist Forestry Commission staff when they are considering which tools they could use to involve the public in the forest and woodland planning process. For more information please visit the website at: www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox