

George Clarke champions design ethos at complex-needs site

TV presenter George Clarke hopes to inspire Scottish youth with a new creative design challenge.

The Architect launched an intensive young persons' design process and challenge to support a cutting-edge £25 million complex-needs facility in Perth.

Young Scots are being invited to create and submit ideas on what a new inclusive community and sustainable building project at Bertha Park in Perth should include as part of a challenge organised by MOBIE (Ministry of Building Innovation and Education) – the charity established by George Clarke.

Bertha Park High School and neighbouring primary schools have already signed up to take part in the innovative challenge which is open to schools in Perth and Kinross as well as colleges and Universities in Scotland.

Young people will be challenged to design an attractive and sustainable community for future living and education – while creating an environment that enables disabled people to flourish at Bertha Park.



George Clarke

Clarke said: "I'm delighted that MOBIE and Capability Scotland is challenging young people across Scotland to design this amazing new community at the Upper Springland campus.

"It's brilliant that they are being asked to imagine this new community and submit their design ideas. I hope this challenge will give them a taste for design that they'll be able pursue further and that they can follow the development over the coming years as it comes to life.

"Capability Scotland is putting in place the foundations for a facility that will change the way that people with complex needs live and it is exciting that young people are being asked to be part of the development of the facility and new community.

"The design challenge is focused on community development, sustainable design and the use of new technology. It is open to all ages from primary school to post graduate covering a broad range of tasks depending on an individual's design

interest.”

An interactive workshop took place at Bertha Park High School with keynote addresses from George Clarke, Brian Logan (Capability Scotland CEO) and Sheena Devlin (Perth and Kinross Head of Services for Children, Young People & Families) to kick start the project.

The workshop session was attended by representatives from Capability Scotland’s Upper Springland residential facility and their schools and college online together with the local high school and primary students working from Bertha Park High School. Further workshops are planned in the coming months.

MOBIE, the brainchild of the Sunderland-born Channel 4 regular, puts young people at the forefront of shaping the future of homes and communities.

This challenge will focus around the opportunities to better connect and build a more cohesive community around a residency of 60 self-contained studios for high-dependency adults who have complex needs, a new primary school and high quality, energy efficient housing.

It is hoped the new development will create a nationwide exemplar of what is possible in providing housing and care for people with complex needs – which is why the charity wanted to acknowledge and capture the impact young people have in shaping the future of homes and communities.

Stephen Oswald, Capability Scotland Project Lead, said: “George Clarke’s vision that design should be accessible to everyone and have the power to transform and enrich lives is exactly the reason we got involved with MOBIE – as we believe this too.

“It’s fantastic to have such a well-known figure in the industry backing our project and praising the various levels of co-design we are undertaking to make the full Bertha Park

project an exemplar build.

“Our engagement with MOBIE will help build key relationships with future neighbours which was an important part of our ambition. The imagination of our youth is impressive and something we were keen to capture throughout.

“Ultimately this is about making sure that our new development and the wider community are well connected and we’re really keen to tap into each age group and unleash their imagination.”

George Clarke is an architect, television presenter, campaigner and educator. He is best known for his work on the Channel 4 programmes The Home Show, The Restoration Man, George Clarke’s Old House New Home, and George Clarke’s Amazing Spaces.

The closing date for entries is 31 March 2023.

Capability Scotland’s Upper Springland campus on Isla Road has three registered services and offers residential and respite care to 59 adults with physical and learning disabilities. There is also a day service, as well as a hydrotherapy pool, theatre and walled gardens.

However, while the quality of care is outstanding, the site is now more than 40 years old and becoming more difficult to maintain. Climate change also means it faces an increasing flood risk from the River Tay – and the charity wants to create state of the art new flagship services.

For more information on Capability Scotland’s ambitions at Bertha Park, please visit: <https://www.capability.scot/about/resources/bertha-park>