



**A PROMISING DEBATE ON A PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP
04/08/06**

LONG PORT has welcomed the public and political debate which is taking place following the publication of its response to the Public Service Department's public consultation on sewage treatment in Guernsey.

Last Wednesday, at the invitation of Public Services, the developer presented its ideas to States Members on a possible solution to the island's sewage and waste problems.

The plans included an integrated waste management plant but also proposed the regeneration of the east coast of Guernsey to include new marinas, a hotel and conference centre, underground parking and the relocation of the commercial port to a new facility at St Sampson's.

'We appreciate that these proposals are ambitious and that some people may think they will destroy the uniqueness of Guernsey,' said Long Port chairman Charles Billson.

'I don't believe that Guernsey will ever lose the qualities that make it so special but in order to provide a future for our children and the generations to come we do need to move forward. Progress and change is often unsettling but if we want the States to provide facilities such as schools, hospitals, a police force and links to the UK without increasing taxes then we will need to give serious consideration to ideas like ours.'

Long Port has been criticised by some for presenting their proposals now when the Eastern Sea Board is considering possible development along the East Coast.

'Our proposals have been developed over eight years and when Public Services instigated a public consultation we decide the time was right to approach them,' said Mr Billson.

'Once they had heard our plans they asked us to present them to all the States Members and we were happy to take up this invitation. We are fully aware of the Eastern Sea Board's existence and its remit and we look forward to hearing more about their review.'

He said he was disappointed that the focus was on the regeneration of the East Coast rather than on the integrated waste plant.

'Treating our sewage and finding a way to tackle our municipal waste are fundamental problems that need to be solved. The regeneration part of our response is for the future, it's the issues with our sewage and waste that need attention now.'

Mr Billson said that Long Port was in no way trying to be a hero at a time when the debate on waste management seems no closer to a conclusion.

'The timing has been determined by Public Services and what we are suggesting is a comprehensive menu that the public can think about it, debate and then let their deputies know their thoughts,' said Mr Billson.

'These ideas and solutions are exactly that, they are not proposals or plans and as a local company trying to improve our local environment Long Port wants to encourage islanders to voice their criticism or compliments.'

Concern has also been expressed about the housing element of the response which included the creation of 500 Local and Open Market homes in the new lagoons in Belle Greve Bay.

'People should not assume that these 500 homes will be built at one time. Belle Greve will provide a land bank for 10 years and even with a static population these houses will be needed due to reasons such as high earning youngsters buying homes on their own and divorced couples needing separate homes.'

Mr Billson said he would continue discussions with the Public Services Minister Bill Bell and has been invited to present the response to the States Members who were unable to attend last week's presentation.

'We will follow the lead of the Public Services Department but what we would hope to be able to do is hold a public consultation to present our proposals and listen to what Guernsey people want for the future of their home.'

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