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The most ambitious land reclamation scheme for Guernsey since the Braye du Valle project joined two halves of the island 200 years ago is stimulating debate about the future of Guernsey.

While some islanders, businesses, politicians and financiers have given support for Long Port's public private partnership to invest £600m. in Guernsey's east coast infrastructure, others have expressed concern for such a large scale project.

The media has given extensive coverage to the vision but has focused on the development of Belle Greve Bay and overlooked perhaps the most important part. Long Port's proposals solve many of the island's most pressing problems – waste, sewage, shortage of housing and employment land and dwindling financial resources.

But even though it offers solutions there is unfortunately a feeling amongst some that, despite the support, the project may never get off the ground.

'With the best will in the world – and ignoring all of the other complications for a minute – the chance of it actually happening seems slim when you consider how long it takes to muster political will for other, much smaller things,' said one businessman.

Despite the concern one thing cannot be ignored - the man who unveiled it to States members. Long Port Chairman Charles Billson is passionate about delivering the scheme for as he quoted 'the benefit of every man, woman and child in Guernsey'. He says he wants to cut the red tape and deliver the vision as soon as possible.

Mr Billson is a respected partner, investor and regenerator of communities and has first-hand experience of urban regeneration and who knows how to fast track complex issues. He has overseen the redevelopment of a number of communities in the UK, providing homes, jobs, leisure facilities and major environmental improvements. He is well-known locally as the developer who is transforming the former Royal Hotel site into a fabulous gateway to Guernsey.

He also partners with the local community and this year has sponsored the North Show and the SeaGuernsey Regatta, given the Le Rondin School team football kits, raised £5,000 for the MRI Scanner Appeal and, together with Deutsche Bank and Cable & Wireless, has covered the cost of maintaining the mast and set up a charitable trust to support maritime activities.

'I am passionate about Guernsey, its future and our community. I completely understand the concerns that have been raised about maintaining the island's beautiful coastline. Our proposals will respect the island's environment, its heritage and invest in the future for our children and grandchildren,' he said.

'The vision I have presented to the States is an a la carte menu that will allow the people of Guernsey to have a say in what they want for their island.'

Mr Billson recognises that States' coffers are depleted following the zero-10 debate and so his solution is to form a public private partnership to provide the capital to solve the island's sewage problem and build an adjoining municipal solid waste to energy plant for household waste.

'I am very keen to work with the States to transform this vision into a proposal and then eventually into a reality. By working together we can solve the island's most pressing problems with little risk to the States and I am delighted by the positive reaction given by States members.'

The waste treatment facilities, which would be located on the Longue Hougue reclamation site, will be funded by the adjoining east coast development which will include up to 500 homes on a series of lagoons, covering 135 acres and many with their own moorings. There are similar projects nearer to home in Dartmouth and many across the world.

Employment and housing land would be a key element of the scheme and would include partnering with the Guernsey Housing Association to provide affordable housing, shared ownership and key worker housing for islanders.

'This scheme is not just about providing exclusive homes but homes for all the community,' he said.

North Beach would see the car park moved under ground with a five-star hotel and conference centre, department, duty free and food stores. The commercial port would be moved to improved facilities in St Sampson's which would make room for an extension of the marina for cruise ships so that passengers could simply walk ashore instead of having to be ferried in from deepwater anchorages.

Investment in marina facilities including the provision for the increasing number of larger yachts has been welcomed by the island's marine industry as Guernsey is believed to be missing out on this business because of an extreme lack of deep-water facilities when compared to other locations.

Mr Billson accepts that the scheme is ambitious but believes it is essential for the Guernsey way of life to continue to have desperately needed increased investment in homes, health, education and other infrastructure or be left behind in the wake of our competitors.

'The Guernsey finance, tourist and marine industries need to have a world class shop window to maintain and enhance their positions in the future,' he said.

A public consultation will include fully engaging with the community to decide on the housing mix, architectural style, massing with ideas being provided by both international and local architects for comment by the public and determination by the States. The project would be approached on the basis that it will be sympathetic to the existing Guernsey waterfront and take into account islanders' opinions.

'It is not our proposal to build skyscrapers or Burj Al Arab style hotels on our seafront. We want a sympathetic, quality, low-rise development that enhances the waterfront and does not detract from it and pays homage to the heritage of Castle Cornet, St Julian's Emplacement and other icons in St Peter Port,' he said.

The downside, according to those with opposing views, are that the environmental impact needs to be considered, it could be inflationary and lead to a surge in population totals as workers are brought in to progress the 10-year project and others follow to staff the hotel and commercial premises developed as part of it.

However, supporters of the overall scheme say that it will respect Guernsey's heritage and environment and its advantages include an integrated approach to maintaining Guernsey amongst its peers, sustainable economic growth, higher tax revenues, capital for States' programmes including housing, health and education and a solution to waste and sewage problems. Consultants say that this type of project will be needed to ensure that the islands finances remain healthy in the long term and go a little way towards meeting the forecast 4,000 population decline over the next 30 years.

Whatever the future holds, whether all or part of this vision becomes a reality, it has sparked a debate about how Guernsey's people perceive the future of their island.