



PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS TO BE HELD NEXT MONTH 06/10/19

PUBLIC presentations to properly present the proposals behind the so called 'Little Venice' vision will be held next month.

Long Port is planning several open exhibitions at venues to be announced towards the end of November so that the public can see for itself the presentation in all its detail.

It will respond to the public comments made through the Guernsey Press in early November and answer the questions and concerns that islanders have.

'Since the proposals were made public in the summer we have welcomed, and read with great interest, the letters and opinions which have given both support and expressed concern,' said chairman Charles Billson.

'It is vital that the public's views are heard but unfortunately a lot of the concerns have come about through misinterpretation and misunderstanding. It is our intention to 'set the record straight' and answer the questions that islanders have raised.'

Long Port has welcomed the extensive media coverage given to the vision but said that it had focused on the development of Belle Greve and overlooked that it solves many of the island's most pressing problems – removing the existing pollution of Belle Greve Bay, sewage and waste management, shortage of housing and employment land and dwindling financial resources.

Mr Billson said that Belle Greve Bay is heavily polluted as 90% of the island's sewage is discharged raw and untreated from the Belle Greve Bay sewage works outfall just a mile from the shore – even after the recently announced £10m. six year project to install screens, which will only remove plastics, the Bay will still suffer badly from bacterial contamination and fail by large margins the EC guideline standards for shellfish waters and east coast bathing waters.

The plans include waste treatment facilities for sewage and refuse which would be located on the Longue Hougue reclamation site and this would be subsidised by the adjoining east coast development which will include waterfront homes on a series of lagoons in Belle Greve, covering 135 acres and many with their own moorings.

Mr Billson said as a result of the plans some people were worried about Belle Greve Bay marine environment issues.

'These issues will be dealt with fully by an Environmental Impact Assessment as detailed in our presentation to the States and will be in the public domain,' he said

Mr Billson said that the intention is to partner with the Guernsey Housing Association to provide affordable housing, shared ownership and key worker housing for islanders on the Vivian Reclamation.

'It would be up to the States to decide the mix of community housing and the allocation of desperately needed employment land. This scheme is not just about providing exclusive homes but homes and employment land for all the community,' he said.

Many concerns have been raised about how the island would cope with an additional 500

homes which protestors have said would mean an extra 1,000 cars, more people and as a result the need for more education, health and social facilities.

'What people do not realise is that the States have already looked at population and housing for the future. The 2000 Strategic Corporate Plan stated a need for 250 new homes a year in the urban area only and the 2002 plan was for 300 new homes a year,' said Mr Billson.

'Our vision will be a small part of these forecasted figures as we are promoting 500 waterfront homes which would be built over a period of 10 years ie 50 homes a year against the States' requirement of between 250 and 300. '

At the recent IOD conference Mel Carvill, head of strategy at Generali, forecast a population decline of 4,000 over the next 30 years which Mr Billson said proved that the concern about a rising population as a result of the development were unfounded.

'There will not be a massive number of jobs involved in the construction of the facilities. The infrastructure construction will be undertaken by off-island specialist contractors who will be here under licence and subject to the normal rigorous Housing controls,' he said.

'There will be an opportunity for local contractors to be involved in the building construction should they have the capacity. If not, then again we will use off-island contractors controlled by licencing as has been the normal practice for years.'

The vision promises to deliver over £100m. in taxes and other benefits to the States for the benefit of every man, woman and child in the community to provide capital for many cash-strapped essential States' programmes including housing, health, education, waste management infrastructure, car parking in St Peter Port and sustainable economic growth.

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 or be left behind in the wake of our competitors and questions where the money is going to come from.

'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.

He said that if the States wants Long Port to move forward with turning the vision into reality then the States would undertake public consultations with the community and would then decide on the housing mix, architectural style and massing with ideas being provided by both international and local architects for comment by the public and final 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.

'Despite what some people have said 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.

'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 and enhance the island's environment, its heritage and invest in the future for our children and grandchildren.'