



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 9.30 a.m. – 10.45 a.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 18th July 2013

## The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 9.30 a.m.*

[MR SPEAKER: Hon. A J Canepa GMH OBE *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: M L Farrell Esq RD *in attendance*]

### PRAYER

*Mr Speaker*

## Order of the Day

### OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

**Clerk:** Meeting of Parliament, Thursday 18th July 2013.

(i) Oath of Allegiance of the Minister for Financial Services and Gaming, the Hon. Albert Joseph Isola.

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**Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola):** I, Albert Joseph Isola, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

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**Mr Speaker:** May I congratulate the Hon. Albert Isola on his election and welcome him to this House.

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**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

20 **Clerk:** (ii) Confirmation of Minutes – the Minutes of the last meeting of Parliament, which was held on 20th, 24th, 25th and 27th June 2013.

**Mr Speaker:** May I sign the Minutes as correct? (**Members:** Aye.)

*Mr Speaker signed the Minutes.*

25 **Clerk:** (iii) Communications from the Chair; (iv) Petitions; (v) Announcements; (vi) Papers to be laid.

**DOCUMENTS LAID**

30 **Clerk:** The Hon. the Chief Minister.

35 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Annual Accounts of the Gibraltar Government for the year ended 31st March 2012; the Annual Report of the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority for the year ended 31st March 2013; the Import Duty (Franchise Regulations) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2013; the Import Duty (Integrated Tariff) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2013; a Review by the Principal Auditor on the Payments made by Government to S P (Butchers) Ltd; and a Review by the Principal Auditor of the Payments made by Government to the OEM Group of Companies and Haymills (Gibraltar) Ltd.

40 **Mr Speaker:** Ordered to lie.

**Clerk:** The Hon. the Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice.

45 **Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Annual Report of the Gibraltar Prison Board for the year ended 31st December 2012 and the Annual Report of the Gibraltar Police Authority for the year ended 31st March 2013.

50 **Mr Speaker:** Ordered to lie.

I have the honour to report that, in accordance with Standing Order 12(3), the Report of the Principal Auditor on the Annual Accounts of the Government of Gibraltar for the year ended 31st March 2012 has been submitted to Parliament and I now rule that it has been laid on the table.

55 I have the honour to report that, in accordance with Standing Order 12(3), the Ombudsman's Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2012 has been submitted to Parliament and I now rule that it has been laid on the table.

60 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker.

**Mr Speaker:** The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

65 The hon. Gentleman mentioned two Reports from the Principal Auditor. Are the two Reports in question subsumed within the Annual Accounts of the Principal Auditor, or are we going to obtain copies now, because we do not have copies of those two Reports on this side of the House.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I understand that they are the ones being circulated now by the lady usher.

70 **Clerk:** (vii) Reports of Committees; (viii) Answers to Oral Questions.

## Questions for Oral Answer

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### TOURISM, COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE PORT

#### ITB fair in Berlin Attendance; cost; results

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**Clerk:** Question 515/2013, the Hon. D J Bossino.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism advise who attended the ITB fair in Berlin, what the cost of such attendance was to the Government/GTB, and what the result of such attendance was?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

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**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, Tracey Poggio of Gibraltar House in London and Stuart Finlayson of the Gibraltar Tourist Board attended the ITB fair in Berlin, Germany, on 6th and 7th March of this year.

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Germany is the largest European outbound travel market. This was a fact-finding mission for the two attendees as observers, investigating the possibility of exhibiting at ITB in the future. The visit was also aimed at establishing contacts with German PR companies with a view to attracting city-break tourism from Germany to Gibraltar. Proposals have been received and these are being considered, as is attendance at this trade fair.

The details of the costs to the GTB on the attendance are outlined in the schedule I hand over to the hon. Gentleman.

#### SCHEDULE TO QUESTION NO. 515/2013

##### ITB BERLIN

SUBSISTENCE	201.71
HOTEL ACCOMMODATION	741.40
TRAVEL EXPENSES	205.75
FLIGHTS	834.90
MISC	111.90

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker – whilst I get a copy of the schedule – the Hon. Minister has mentioned the potential that Germany has for outbound tourism, and indeed he made a similar statement during the course of his Budget contribution where he said that Germany, in particular, is a country holding great potential in outbound tourism for Gibraltar.

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Can I ask him how he has come to that conclusion and whether any market research has been carried out by the GTB, because of course he also says in his Budget address, and also in his reply just given to the House, that the two attendees from Gibraltar, from the GTB, went on a fact-finding mission. So I just wanted to marry those two issues together and find out whether any *prior* market research had been carried out by his Department before sending these two individuals to Berlin.

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**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, in respect of the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question, as to the number of Germans that travel abroad on holiday, that is research that we have been able to obtain from different sources. It is not an empirical study that the Gibraltar Tourist Board or the Gibraltar House in London has carried out. We have been able to rely on research and studies conducted by other people. We do know from those studies and from that research that Germany is the largest outbound tourist market, as I have said in the answer to the Question.

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The reason why we have attended as observers is primarily because of cost. To attend the ITB fair is not a cheap or a low-cost exercise, so we have to value whether attendance and marketing at a particular fair is cost effective, and as you know, that is one of the main planks from which we conduct our marketing and attendance at any of these fairs.

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Secondly, in order to establish contacts, we understand, again from the contacts we have had so far, that 80% of the outbound tourism from Germany is conducted by German tour operators. In other words, in order to be able to crack into that market, Gibraltar needs to be able to sell herself by these tour operators in Germany. So we have established contact with two of them to see how best we can sell Gibraltar through them and that was the purpose, mainly, of the attendance as observers at the ITB fair in Berlin.

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130 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, can he just confirm that the result of the attendance is the contact that has been made in relation to these tour operators? Is that the totality of the results of the attendance?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, there were various objectives achieved. The first was to establish contacts with – as I said in the original answer to the Question – PR companies. These PR companies will be able to advise us how to best approach/target the German market.

135 Then we had two additional meetings with the representatives of local travel marketing companies that have a specialty in promoting Germany in small countries, such as Jersey. These are the people that we met so that the Tourist Board and Gibraltar House in London – which he knows does a lot of work for the GTB in terms of promoting Gibraltar as a city break destination – know how best to be able to sell Gibraltar in Germany.

140 There were also additional meetings with, for instance, a particular travel organisation that we met in Fitur this year in Madrid – in fact, two tour operators that we met in Madrid – and they were also at the ITB fair in Berlin and further discussions were also held with them.

145 **Niche markets  
Pursuance by GTB**

**Clerk:** Question 516, the Hon. D J Bossino.

150 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism provide details of how the GTB is pursuing niche markets?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

155 **Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, the niche market sector of the Tourism industry is wide and varied. At present, the Gibraltar Tourist Board is pursuing the following activities.

160 Event-led tourism – This is actively being pursued in partnership with the Ministry of Culture. As this House knows, events such as the Gibraltar International Jazz Festival and the Gibunco International Literary Festival have been established, to name but a few, giving visitors an incentive to travel to Gibraltar for these events. The markets will not only cover the cultural aspects of Gibraltar's product, but also sporting events.

165 Bird watching – As detailed in my Budget address, an initiative was taken by the Bland Group earlier this year to invite journalists and tour operators in this field to visit Gibraltar. The event was supported and endorsed by the Gibraltar Tourist Board. It is hoped that this will generate more interest in this particular activity. The GTB has also advertised in the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds magazine this year and has met with experts in the field locally and has already engaged specialists in the tour-organising aspect of this market.

170 MICE markets – As also detailed in my Budget address, the GTB formed part of the Meet and Talk Forum, which was held in Gibraltar and organised by the Bland Group. The forum brought together top agencies and meeting planners from the United Kingdom and Europe specialising in the MICE market, or the Meetings, Incentive, Conferencing and Events market. The GTB is also in the process of launching a new meetings folder with participation by the local industry. As the hon. Gentleman knows, this year the GTB exhibited for the first time at the IMEX trade fair in Frankfurt. This event is specifically aimed at the MICE markets. Gibraltar is ideally placed to host small-to-medium-sized events in this category and it is vital that the GTB supports local industry partners in pursuit of this market.

175 The weddings market – The GTB has now set up a weddings committee, which will meet regularly so that all those selling this product can work together to improve on the services on offer. The GTB continues to advertise in wedding publications in the UK. The administrative process for marriages and the marriage procedure is currently being reviewed by my Ministry and the GTB to see if any improvements can be made.

180 Diving – Diving is another important area for expansion and the Ministry for the Environment is working initially on the regulatory aspects of this market before we can develop further in terms of tourism.

185 Golf – The Rock also, Mr Speaker, is ideally placed as a base and a gateway to some of the most important golf courses in mainland Europe. Of course, we are referring to Spain. We are keen to attract more visitors to Gibraltar in this respect and are actually working on this in conjunction with a potential tour operator based in Spain.

190 New tours – As the hon. Gentleman will have already heard me say on various occasions, the GTB have explored new tours and brought these to fruition – such as wine tasting and other events at the Garrison Library; tea at the Mayor’s Parlour – and are now actively considering even more options with industry partners.

195 In many of these activities the GTB has also encouraged all its industry partners to enter into joint marketing activities to promote the expansion of these markets.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for his very full and comprehensive reply and I must say from this side of the House that I do congratulate him for setting up all these potential avenues to develop the niche markets. I think it is something that we certainly welcome and I congratulate him for doing so. I will certainly be very keen to see the fruits of that over the next... well, now two-and-a-bit years of the life of this Parliament.

200 The one point he... just to home in, and the reason why I ask this question is because firstly... and I know he has conflated both issues at the beginning of his reply when he refers to event-led tourism and niche markets; he nevertheless, during the course of his Budget address, separates both of those two markets, and in relation to niche markets he only made a reference to bird watching. So I am glad to hear that there is, in fact, much more than just that particular niche market which is being pursued.

205 But in relation to bird watching, he refers in his Budget speech in the following terms, he says in particular bird watching is of significance. I would ask him in what way does his Department think that bird watching is of significance in this area; and, indeed, if I can just add, what the measure is of this conclusion?

**Mr Speaker:** Whilst I can understand that the Hon. the Minister for Tourism says that there are tourists interested in coming to Gibraltar to see the birds, I am frankly surprised – and perhaps he might clarify the matter – why they should be interested in coming to see the mice?

215 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, yes of course, well, obviously the Minister will answer, *(Laughter)* but I think we all certainly have understood...

220 **Mr Speaker:** I think on this occasion the Speaker should be allowed a supplementary question as well.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** It was not a reference to the rodents! *(Laughter)*

225 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker in respect of the first question asked by the hon. Gentleman on bird watching, this is one of those times that I wish somebody else was answering for me, and of course I refer to the hon. Gentleman to the right.

230 The reality is that, in fact, the bird watchers that I have met and who have come to Gibraltar have always told me of the spectacular site that Gibraltar is for this phenomenon and the fact that when they were considering, as enthusiasts of bird watching, where to go, Gibraltar was one of the places that they themselves thought of first as being the crossroads of the world, but had not been able to find adequate literature or promotion of it on websites etc.

235 This is why I say in the answer to the Question that we have been in conjunction with one particular local travel operator in Gibraltar who invited certain people over so that Gibraltar could be promoted as a bird-watching centre. There is a lot more work, I think, that has to be done here, because of course Gibraltar is known for certain things, but not necessarily for bird watching; and yet bird watching, in my view – and certainly, I think, in the view of the Hon. the Minister for the Environment – should be one of the main touristic platforms by which Gibraltar should be sold.

240 Of course, whereas the GTB is not in the business of selling tours, it is certainly in the business of promoting those parts of Gibraltar which lend themselves to tourism, and bird watching is one of them. This is why we have partnered with, in this particular case, Blands, and why we supported the invitation of journalists and other tour operators from across the globe to come to Gibraltar and see how bird watching could be conducted in Gibraltar.

In respect of the question of the Hon. Speaker...

245 **Mr Speaker:** I will allow the Hon. Minister to get away with having to answer that question. *(Laughter)*

**Hon. D J Bossino** I am grateful. I agree! *(Laughter)*

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**UKGTA**  
**Details of meetings**

**Clerk:** Question 517, the Hon. D J Bossino.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Further to his answer to Question 85/2013, can the Minister for Tourism state how many further meetings of the UKGTA have been held, together with the dates and locations of such meetings, who the attendees were, to include details of who ordinarily attends such meetings but failed to do so.

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

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**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, as the hon. Gentleman knows, there have been two meetings of the UKGTA since Question 85/2013.

A meeting was held on 20th February of this year at the Copt Horne Hotel in Birmingham, UK, on the same day a tourism road show was being held at this location. Another meeting was held on 6th June of this year at Gibraltar House in London, also coinciding with a tourism road show held on that same day in London.

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I now hand over to the hon. Gentleman a schedule with the detail of those who were invited to attend the meetings and those who sent apologies. The detail of who ordinarily attends these meetings was answered in Question 85 of this year.

**SCHEDULE TO QUESTION NO 517**

**Meeting of the UKGTA - Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

<b>Attending:</b>	<b>Apologies:</b>
Minister Neil Costa MP (MC)	Keith Chute BA
Nicky Guerrero GTB	Mary Kinch O'Callaghan Elliott Hotel
Peter Canessa GOG	Tim Mitchell – Gala Casino
Audrey Vella GTB	Bob Kumar My Gibraltar
Terence Lopez Gibraltar Int Airport	Franco Ostuni Caleta Hotel
Sophie Thackeray Classic Collection	
Charlotte Earless Superbreak	
Liz Mason Thomas Cook/Cresta	
Ali Gayward easyJet	
James Massey Monarch	
Nuria Saccone Bland Group	
Sixto Parody - Parodytur	
Bob Pugh Parodytur	
Ronald Ignacio Gibraltar Taxi Association	
Mandy Gaggero MH Bland	
Ian Leyde - GTB	
Tracey Poggio – GTB	

**Meeting of the UKGTA - THURSDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> June 2013**

<b>Attending:</b>	<b>Apologies:</b>
Minister Neil Costa MP (MC)	Ali Gayward easyJet
Nicky Guerrero GTB	Tim Mitchell – Gala Casino
Peter Canessa GOG	Vanda Bauer Classic Collection
Audrey Vella GTB	Liz Mason Thomas Cook/Cresta
Terrence Lopez Gibraltar Airport	Franco Ostuni Caleta Hotel
Keith Chute BA	
James Massey Monarch	
Simon Lester Lester Hotels	
John Prentice My Gibraltar	
Chris Hagan Superbreak	
Nuria Saccone Bland Group	
Bob Pugh Parodytur (Chair)	
Mandy Gaggero MH Bland	
Henry Catania MH Bland	
Ronnie Ignacio Gibraltar Taxi Assoc	
Mary Kinch O'Callaghan Elliott Hotel	
Ian Leyde - GTB	
Tracey Poggio – GTB	
Justin Bautista GTB	

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, whilst I await delivery of the schedule, simply to point out to him that I was not aware of the fact that there had been a UKGTA meeting on 6th June. I know he smiles, and no doubt he will tell me why he thinks that I was aware. I am just briefly looking at his reply in February and there is a reference to the meeting of 20th February.

280 The other point I would just like him to clarify is he says that in an answer which he provided in a schedule to my Question 85, he says that he stated who ordinarily attends but failed to attend. I do not see, from my reading of the schedule, that that is in fact the case and maybe he can lead me in the right direction on that score as well.

285 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, the reason why I told the hon. Gentleman that I know that he knows when there have been meetings with the UKGTA is because I know from sessions of this House that he is a passionate and avid reader of my press statements. I refer him to press release 397 of this year, which mentions the latest UKGTA, and also number 110 of this year, of 21st February, which also sets out the date of the UKGTA.

290 In respect of the second question he asks me, what I said in my original answer was that the detail of those who ordinarily attend the meetings was answered in Question 85/2013; but in any event, if he cares to look at the schedule which I hand over to him now, he will see in any case that I have given him the answer again. I set out who attended and who sent apologies, so he will be able to...

295 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, Mr Speaker, that is the extent of the information that I received back in February, and whether I am an avid reader or not of his press releases is something that we can put to one side for the purposes of my question, but simply to point out that I missed out on that particular press statement... is it has been a particularly – two, he says – it has been a particularly busy couple of months.

300 Mr Speaker, there is one... and I wonder if he can assuage any concerns that I certainly have from this side of the House, just to predicate this question on this bit of intelligence which I have received from his predecessor bar one, and that is that I am told that UKGTA meetings – and it is important to emphasise the letters ‘UK’ – were attended by, on average, 10 to 12 people within the UK tourism sector.

305 The worrying trend and the concern that I have arising from that worrying trend – as far as I can see from the answers that he has given us in this House – is that both April, June, October and now the two meetings that he has had during the course of 2013, the average seems to be, of outside attendees, i.e. from the UK it seems to be in the region of between four and five. Indeed, Mr Speaker, the UK GTA meeting, which was held on 26th June in *London*, had zero attendees.

310 So we had a UKGTA meeting held in London – unless he can clarify the position to me, and I know he is creasing his forehead – and it seems odd that all the attendees there were Gibraltar attendees. Can he just assuage any concerns that I may have that there seems to be a depletion from what the position was when we were in Government to what the position appears to be now?

315 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, in respect of the preface to his question to me that we should leave to one side whether or not he is an avid or passionate reader of my statements, he only needs to consider the *Hansard* in respect of every session of the House, when not only does the hon. Gentleman refer me to my press releases, but he in fact chastises me when I do not issue a press release and he finds out intelligence on the street that there has been some observer status or some attendance at a fair and he asks me a question and he prefaces his question by saying, ‘The hon. Gentleman has not issued a press statement.’ So he is a passionate reader suddenly of my press releases and those which the hon. Gentleman thinks I should be issuing.

320 In respect of the concern that he has, which I hope to be able to assuage him to his full satisfaction, let me tell him that in respect of the UKGTA of 20th February, there were six attendees from the UK, on 6th June there were three, and in respect of this particular UKGTA – and I remember that I told the hon. Gentleman that we held a roadshow to be able to promote the London catchment area from UK London airports to Gibraltar – that was the best-attended UK roadshow ever. So, if he had any concerns, he should not have any concerns because, as I told him then, the event was so popular and was so oversubscribed that we had to turn some travel agents away.

330 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I am just somewhat concerned with my hon. Friend... sorry, the hon. Member – who is obviously my friend, but one should not refer to friends on the opposite side of the House on that basis – the Hon. the Minister, that maybe, given that there has been a minor reshuffle, he should make representations to the leader of his Party and the leader of the Government, the Chief Minister, and seek an alternative position in Government, because clearly his adversarial and combative style, which is suited to his time when he was practising as a barrister, is not suited to the position which he currently holds as the Minister for Tourism. He seems to have the ability to find political controversy in the most innocuous and, I think, least political questions which I pose.

335 But putting that preamble to one side, Mr Speaker, can I ask him a specific point: in the apologies sections, which he has given to me in relation to the previous meetings, I think...yes, in fact in all of them during the course of 2012, Mr Albert Poggio, who is the UK representative, as we all know, is cited as providing an apology for being unable to attend, whilst he then disappears in the other schedules – unless

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he is an attendee, but I do not think he is. Can he ask why that is the case, or rather, can he reply as to why that is the case?

345 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, contrary to my hon. Friend, I have absolutely no hesitation in calling him my hon. Friend. It has always been the convention of the House that we are all parliamentarians and therefore friends, and I have no hesitation in calling him that (*Laughter*), notwithstanding my alleged combative style in this Parliament.

350 Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman, if he were to have any degree – and now I shall be combative – of political credibility, he cannot start a question by prefacing it by saying, ‘In order to assuage my concerns...’ He already puts me in a defensive position because he is already suggesting, implicit in that statement or preface of the question, that I have done something which is not quite right. So he should forgive me that I should adopt this position when he prefaces the questions in the way that he does. Were he to ask a perfectly objective question in an open manner – ‘Could he say why...?’ – rather than the implicit statement within that question which he makes... So the hon. Gentleman should not presume to be mortally wounded by the way that I answer his questions when he prefaces them the way that he does.

355 Why Mr Poggio does not attend meetings of the UKGTA in 2012... I am afraid that I have not yet enquired or sought to enquire why people do not attend the meetings and I have not sought to enquire why Mr Poggio did not attend in 2012, but I can tell the hon. Gentleman that, now that he has asked me in this House, I shall ask him.

360 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, with respect, he misses the point completely. He misses the point completely.

365 The issue that I am raising is not as to why Mr Poggio in this case has been unable to attend. The point is that he is listed as an apology in the apologies section, but he is no longer, he does not feature in the 2013 schedule. That is the only point I am raising, and I am afraid that the Hon. Minister, despite his bluster, has not answered the question. Can he please answer the question?

370 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, for the hon. Gentleman to become so upset over whether I have answered his question when he just chastised me for being combative... Really, it is the Twilight Zone, at times, here in this Chamber.

375 The reason why Mr Poggio may have appeared as having provided apologies in 2012 was, as a matter of fact, I imagine, because he could not attend. Why he does not appear now as an apology can only be because – and I am speculating – there was a transition with him in respect of the tourism matters that he may have been assisting Mr Canessa with, and now he does no tourism matters at all. Those are dealt with exclusively, from my work with Mr Canessa, by Mr Canessa, and they may have, between them, decided that there is no need for him to attend all UKGTA sessions. I am speculating. The truth is I do not know.

380 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, Mr Speaker, that is an answer, but I would ask the Minister to find out, rather than base his answer on speculation because he does not know. I would ask him to find out the true facts, sir. I would be grateful for that.

385 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, I will be delighted to answer the questions of which I am given notice.

#### **Airport runway tunnel Update on Government plans**

390 **Clerk:** Question 518, the Hon. S M Figueras.

395 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Yes, Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister for Transport say whether he is now in a position to tell the House whether the Government has developed options for an alternative runway crossing for public service vehicles during peak times; and, if so, what options it has or is considering?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

400 **Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Yes, Mr Speaker, the position remains the same as set out in my answer to Question 217 of May of this year.



405 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, is the Hon. the Minister able to indicate whether this is a matter that the Government considers something it needs to give any attention to, either in the current context or in the context of future plans for the tunnel under the runway and trying to alleviate the difficulties that public service vehicles encounter every day?

410 **Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker, simply to tell the hon. Gentleman that because I am not able to give him any specifics does not mean that the Government is not dealing with the matter and is considering its options.

415 What I have said in the answer to my Question is that it remains the same – in other words, the matter is being actively considered. I am doing so with the Hon. the Chief Minister. We just do not have, at this particular juncture, the ability to provide him with a particular specific plan because we have not been able to finalise that yet. It is not that we are not actively looking, meeting and discussing it.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Just one final supplementary, Mr Speaker – and I am grateful for the Minister's intervention in this respect – am I to take from the hon. Member's answers this morning that there are, in fact, realistic options that are being looked at as a possibility for the future?

420 **Hon. N F Costa:** That is correct, Mr Speaker.

## 425 HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### New mental health facility Progress; interior design details

430 **Clerk:** Question 524, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

435 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say if he is satisfied with progress on the interior of the new mental health facility at the former RNH site and advise what the dimensions of the different bedrooms for patients are and whether they have en-suite bathrooms or just sinks in the rooms?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

440 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I can confirm that I am satisfied with the progress to date on the interior of the new mental health facility.

The accommodation provides a number of habitable rooms – 16 twin and 20 single rooms – specifically designed for the relative care provided on each floor, such as for patients with enduring mental illness, Rehab and Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit/Acute.

445 At the outset, bedrooms did not provide en-suite facilities or individual wash hand basins. As the scheme developed, it has been possible to develop and include a high dependency en-suite room on the rehabilitation wing. Also, three high dependency rooms in the acute ward now have an en-suite WC with wash hand basin.

450 The length and widths are provided as per the schedule that I will now hand over and have been designed respecting the existing cultural heritage of the building. There is more information in the schedule.

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 524**

MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY BLOCK C (BEDROOM ACCOMMODATION)

LOCATION	TWIN	LENGTH	WIDTH	SINGLE	LENGTH	WIDTH	
UGF WEST (EMI WARD)	R2108	4.089	3.193				1 No Respite bed
	R2106	4.088	3.193				
	R2105	4.084	3.193				
	R2104	4.105	3.193				
	R2103	5.597	3.193				
	R2114	6.125	2.244				
	R2117	5.887	2.244				
1st FLOOR WEST (REHAB)	R3108	4.107	3.208	R3114	3.012	2.221	<b>HD En-suite EXCLUDED</b>
	R3106	4.077	3.208	R3115	3.027	2.221	
	R3105	4.089	3.208	R3117	3.017	2.221	
	R3104	4.082	3.208	R3118	3.199	2.221	
				R3102	2.508	2.191	
1st FLOOR EAST (REHAB FLATS)				R3302	2.690	3.020	
3 bed unit				R3303	2.831	3.020	
				R3305	3.013	2.840	
4 bed unit	R3313	2.900	3.775	R3311	2.460	3.555	
				R3312	2.281	3.594	
2nd FLOOR WEST (PICU)	<b>R4108</b>	<b>4.107</b>	<b>3.208</b>	<b>R4103</b>	<b>2.675</b>	<b>3.160</b>	ample rooms
	R4106	4.078	3.160	R4114	3.021	2.502	
	R4105	4.088	3.160	R4115	3.015	2.502	
	R4104	4.082	3.160	R4117	3.014	2.502	
				R4118	3.020	2.502	
2nd floor east				R4302	2.166	2.836	Vulnerable 1
				R4303	2.848	2.836	Vulnerable 2
				R4309	3.162	1.919	HD 3 (En-suite WC)
				R4311	2.271	3.583	HD 2 (En-suite WC)
				R4313	2.397	2.278	HD 1 (En-suite WC)

11 July 2013

BEDROOMS (CURRENT)		CURRENT	ASSISTED	COMMENTS
TWIN	SINGLE	BED SPACES	BATHROOMS	
0	0	0	0	1 new bed lift and 1 passenger lift
0	0	0	0	
		0		
7	0	14	2	1 no respite in R2103
0	0	0	0	
		14		
4	5	13	1	1 high dependency en-suite
1	5	7	0	R3313 is twin room
		20		
4	5	13	1	
			0	
	3	3		
	1			Not counted in 52 beds
	1			Not counted in 52 beds
	2	2		
		7		
		52	4	

455

**EQUALITY, SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE ELDERLY**

**Looked-after children  
Reports from schools**

460

**Clerk:** Question 525, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

465

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services say what reports have been submitted from schools 'Looked After Children' attend on the following issues, broken down by number, whether first, middle or secondary school and per term for the academic year 2012-13 for: (a) habitual inappropriate uniform; (b) habitual lack of an adequate packed lunch; (c) habitual anti-social behaviour towards other children; and (d) habitual anti-social behaviour towards teachers?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly.

470

**Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly: (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, the following reports have been received from schools, reference LAC, on the following issues for the academic year 2012-2013: (a) none; (b) none; (c) none; (d) none.

475

**TRAFFIC, HOUSING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES**

**CPC courses for bus and lorry drivers  
Cost of qualified instructor**

480

**Clerk:** Question 526, the Hon. S M Figueras.

485

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister for Traffic provide details to this House of the cost of securing the services of a qualified professional CPC instructor to carry out the relevant courses for bus and lorry drivers?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

490

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the cost of securing the services of a qualified professional CPC instructor to carry out the CPC periodic training courses for bus and lorry drivers in accordance with Directive 2003/59/EC is as follows: course 1, which ran in the week between 25th February and 1st March, a cost of £3,017.60; course 2, which ran between 15th April and 19th April 2013, was £3,281.05; course 3, which ran between 28th May and 1st June 2013, was £3,551.25; and the fourth course, which was run between 1st July and 5th July 2013, was at a cost of £2,623.00.

495

The final course, which was the one I have just mentioned, course 4 – flights for July have still to be invoiced and it is not the final figure.

500

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for the answer.

Can he say at what stage, or how soon, it is anticipated that a local instructor will be qualified in order to be able to deliver these courses?

505

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, at present I am not in a position to be able to say when this would happen, but it is the intention of the Government to obviously train someone locally to be able to run this course so that we do not have to forgo this cost.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister say whether someone is already training locally for the post?

510

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, not at present.

I would like to raise awareness to the gentleman because this has had to be done in a rush, so to speak, because this was a Directive which commences on 9th September 2013 – in a couple of months' time – provision was not made when it was meant to have been made to ensure that persons could be trained for this date, because this course requires that CPC, there are actually five modules that need to be completed

515 within a given period of time. So we have had to cram these courses to ensure that our drivers locally can be up to date by the time the Directive comes into effect on 9th September 2013.

As the first course is carried out and underway and our drivers are qualified, then it will obviously be one course per year which they will undergo, as opposed to having to cram five, as has been the case, because of lack of prior preparation.

520

**Hon. S M Figueras:** So is it then the Government's intention that by the time the one annual course is in place, post-September this year that there will be a locally qualified instructor to deliver these courses?

525

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, as I said earlier, we are still not in a position to know exactly when it is happening. It will entail having to train someone for as long a period as is necessary for that person to be up to date in all the issues relating to the course; so, as I say, I am not able to provide that information at the moment.

530

**Naval Grounds/former Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club site  
Availability of new parking facilities**

535

**Clerk:** Question 527, the Hon. S M Figueras.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister for Traffic tell this House how long the Government expects the new parking facilities in and around the Naval Grounds, as well as in the area of the former site of the Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club, are planned to be available to the public?

540

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 528/2013.

545

**Naval Grounds/former Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club site  
Cost of additional parking facilities**

550

**Clerk:** Question 528.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister for Traffic provide details to this House of the cost to Government of providing additional car parking facilities in the Naval Grounds area and the former site of the Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club and the surrounding area?

555

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the public continues to have access to parts of the area around the Naval Grounds and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

560

The area of the ex-Royal Gibraltar Yacht Club car park will be available for use as from today at 11.00 a.m. The works to convert this site into a car park have just been completed and therefore it is not possible to provide an exact contract sum, pending the agreement of the final accounts. The anticipated cost, however, is expected to be in the order of £500,000. This figure excludes the cost of works not directly related to constructing the car park, such as road realignments.

565

No works are at present being undertaken in the Naval Grounds area to provide additional car parking facilities. These works are related to preparations for the annual fair.

570

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, in relation to the Naval Grounds, I was referring to the laying of tarmac in the area where the NAAFI used to be – where the crossing originally used to be to Queensway from Reclamation Road – where parking has been provided, although I understand that parking is provided for residents of the former Regal House site. Is that correct?

575

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, the area there is still being used; in fact, it is being used to decant vehicles, as the hon. Member has just rightly said. It is to do with the provision for parking in the area that used to be Engineer Lane before the car park was built.

580 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister has told us that, as far as the areas of the Naval Grounds are concerned, the public will continue to have access to that area for the foreseeable future. I note that it is not definitive by any means of how long that will be, but he makes no mention of how long the new car park that is opening today at 11.00 a.m. will be available to the public as well. Is he able to shed any further light on those two matters?

585 **Hon. P J Balban:** The car park that is opening today will be open for as long as... I mean it is a permanent parking space for the time being. Again, plans may change in the future, but as things stand at the moment, it is a permanent parking.

590 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister for trying to assist, but the point I am alluding to is that in the manifesto, the Government committed to providing double the number of car parking spaces that there were at the now site of the Commonwealth Park that is currently being built.

The reason why I ask how long the new facility that has opened today at 11 o'clock – or will open today – is going to be available is in the grand scheme of the jigsaw puzzle that is talked about regularly in this House, that is Gibraltar, in terms of planning where you are going to locate various different things, I am trying to understand whether it is in the Government's contemplation that that is a temporary parking space in the context of any new developments in the area which are intended during the remainder of the life of this Parliament.

600 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, in the grand context of things that is a big plot of land and for as far as we are... at the moment it is indefinite. That could change in the future, in the bigger context of things, as the hon. Gentleman rightly says.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** So, in other words – may I, Mr Speaker? – it will remain a car park for as long as there is no offer in relation to that plot of land for development by somebody – for example, in the private sector – that is acceptable to the Government. That is one supplementary.

605 And two: is the Government actively looking to perhaps receive potential offers of investment in relation to that plot of land, which as the hon. Member has rightly pointed out is a flat premium piece of land virtually in the centre of town?

**Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Mr Speaker, the answer to both questions is yes.

610 The second question: it has been ongoing for a long time, since they were in Government, and there is still interest in the plot but nothing has materialised. So we wanted to do something with it (*Interjection*) and a car park is a good idea.

615 **Sustainable Traffic and Transport survey  
Report on findings and recommendations**

**Clerk:** Question 529, the Hon. S M Figueras.

620 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister for Traffic now say when he expects to receive a report of the findings and recommendations of the Sustainable Traffic and Transport survey recently conducted in Gibraltar?

625 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the situation has not changed since the reply given in answer to Question 318/2013. The first draft of the Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan is still expected to be completed in late 2013 for internal review. It is expected that the final version of the Plan will be ready during the first quarter of 2014.

630 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

**Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan survey  
Expenses incurred**

635

**Clerk:** Question 530, the Hon. S M Figueras.

640

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister for Traffic provide this House with a breakdown of all expenses totalling £35,000 incurred in respect of the Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan survey as set out in the Estimates book?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

645

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, I now hand the hon. Member a breakdown of the expenditure incurred to date in respect of the Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan survey.

The hon. Member will note that the total expenditure to date is close to £24,000 – exactly £23,917.18. This represents costs incurred in respect of the household survey exercise, together with sundry costs in relation to the survey generally.

650

The original estimate of £35,000 actually provided for an element of staff overtime costs in relation to the survey; however, Mr Speaker, as it is considered more appropriate to account for overtime costs under the Department's provision for payroll costs rather than under other charges, all such overtime costs will be charged to a new overtime subhead, under head 32, Technical Services.

655

Overtime costs on the survey are now estimated to be around £25,000 and the overall estimated cost of the survey has therefore been revised to around £50,000.

Answer to Question 530

Financial Year 2013/2014

Head 32 Subhead 2(5) - Traffic, Transport & Parking Plan Survey

Expenditure to date including commitments

Household surveys	£17,810.00
Printing & Stationery	£4,493.33
IT equipment	£555.00
Personal Protective Equipment	£346.00
Traffic signs	£202.20
Communication equipment for survey supervisors	£141.00
Miscellaneous items	£369.65

TOTAL £23,917.18

660

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the hon. Member say whether the total overtime cost of £25,000 that he has referred to in his answer a moment ago includes the time spent not just on the household surveys, but in respect of the survey that was conducted on Gibraltar's roads some months ago?

665

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, the actual survey conducted started, if I recall correctly, at around seven o'clock in the morning and they finished around 7.30 in the evening; hence, overtime was incurred during the actual survey of roads, so it would include those as well.

670

**Mid Harbour Estate  
CCTV and garage barriers**

**Clerk:** Question 531, the Hon. E J Reyes.

675

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 472/2013, can the Minister for Housing say by when Government hopes to have CCTV and garage barriers fully functional at Mid Harbours Estate?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

680 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar has issued a request for quotations for the supply and installation of a CCTV system at Mid Harbour Housing Estate. The closing date is 2nd August 2013.

685 With regard to the garage barriers, this is at design stage. Once the process has been completed, the Ministry for Housing will be in a position to provide further information on both these issues.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, obviously, because the Minister has provided me with a date by which he intends to, or he hopes to have the quotations for CCTV, then one can accept that nothing much can be said further until 2nd August. But the garage barriers are in the design stage and so on: does the Minister at least have some fairly flexible date by when the barriers should be functional at the Mid Harbours Estate?

690 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, the barriers will definitely not be functioning before a CCTV system is in operation. At the moment, it is impossible for me to provide the hon. Gentleman with even an estimate, and obviously this will happen as soon as possible.

695 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister enlighten me a bit further: why is it absolutely necessary to have CCTV before the barriers are functional?

700 I believe in other estates there are barriers without necessarily having a CCTV, and so perhaps there is some information there that could help not only myself but mainly the residents of Mid Harbours Estate to understand why it is necessary to have one in place before the other.

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, by ensuring that the CCTV cameras are there, it will be possible to actually monitor the use of the barriers. It is feared that if the barriers go up before the CCTV cameras are in operation there is a risk that there could be damage and so forth to barriers, which could be expensive. So once the surveillance is there and the barriers can be monitored, then the Government will proceed with installing the said barriers.

710 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister perhaps help me with this: this CCTV, or intended CCTV system, will this be connected to the CCTV system that is currently in place at various points in Gibraltar – that we commenced when we were in Government, and indeed it was finished by the Hon. the Minister for Justice when they were elected in 2011 – which is then connected to the control room at New Mole Police Station, or is this separate to that?

715 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, as the hon. Member mentions, it is actually the Minister for Justice who is leading on this project, but what I can say is that the cameras will be connected to the police control room at New Mole House.

720 **Hon. D A Feetham:** And if it is going to be connected to New Mole Police Station, will there be the need for any infrastructure works, because the way that this was done in 2011 and 2012, before you could set up CCTV cameras you had to lay the fibre optic cables to enable the CCTV cameras to then be linked to the New Mole Police Station. That may require some major infrastructural work that will then impact on the actual timing and the amount of time that it will take for CCTV cameras to be installed. Can the Hon. the Minister perhaps help me with that?

725 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, the extent of the Ministry for Housing's involvement in the CCTV cameras was because this estate is a Government estate. It is the liaison and the links between the tenants' association and the Royal Gibraltar Police and the Ministry for Justice; hence, perhaps I am not in the best position to be able to answer that question. Obviously, again I would not be able to answer a question which is best asked of the Minister for Justice.

730

#### **Reallocation of empty homes Expenditure incurred**

735

**Clerk:** Question 532, the Hon. E J Reyes.

740 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing provide updated details in respect of expenditure incurred since the answer to Question 474/2013 in respect of contracts awarded for making empty homes suitable for reallocation; stating how many contractors were engaged, to whom payments were made, the

number of residential homes involved and indicating if the services contracted were for repairs or cleaning?

745 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, I will now hand the hon. Member a schedule containing the information requested.

Mr Speaker, I will just mention that all services contracted were for repairs.

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 532**

Contractors	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	No. of Properties
501 Construction	Nil	Nil	£10,000.00	1
Abegon Fitters	Nil	£9,484.00	Nil	1
Andy Holding's	Nil	£5,500.00	£10,286.00	2
Bright Co Ltd	Nil	Nil	£30,000.00	1
Building Consultancy Services Ltd	Nil	£18,138.34	Nil	1
C.I.A.P Constructions Ltd	Nil	£13,721.00	£3,841.30	3
G & G General Construction Co Ltd	£2,100.00	Nil	Nil	1
E. Lopez & Sons Ltd	Nil	Nil	£19,408.91	1
Plumbrite	Nil	Nil	£5,500.00	1
Rutherford Construction Ltd	Nil	Nil	£9,250.00	1
S J Builders	Nil	Nil	£2,340.00	1
SA Construction Ltd	Nil	£4,460.00	£11,507.00	3
W&N Works Ltd	Nil	Nil	£7,500.00	1

**ALL SERVICES CONTRACTED WERE FOR REPAIRS**

**18 properties in total**

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, last month after the Questions session, I had a word with the Minister so that we could clarify some things, since I tend to repeat this Question if not every month, then every other month.

755 On the schedule, Mr Speaker, the information provided lists the contractors, broken down by dates and the number of properties. Those number of properties... Am I right in assuming that the number of properties to which each contractor was engaged... but what is the overall total number of properties, because if we take, for example, the first two or the first three listed there, one property each, are they all referring to the same property or are they different properties?

760 So what I am missing is the grand total number of properties that is referred to fixing – you know, two homes, three homes or 20 homes. How many properties, as such, were overall repaired?

765 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I cannot say whether they were for more than one property, or not. I would not like to hazard a guess and say that 501... that the property... that both contractors were working on the same property. As I say, I would not like to assume. I can try to revert with that information later on, if the hon. Member wishes.

770 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, please, Mr Speaker, I would be grateful. The information contained here is useful, but I am still missing – and this is why we discussed it a little bit further the last time... Overall, is it just referring to one property, or could it be 10 properties or whatever? I am interested in that grand total number of how many properties were, as such, involved.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

775 The Question actually asks the number of residential homes involved, so we are quite prepared to accept the information later on this afternoon, but if the Hon. Minister were kind enough to go back to his officials and provide us with that information, we would be grateful.

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I would be pleased to do that.



780

**Assigned rental homes  
Repairs**

**Clerk:** Question 533, the Hon. E J Reyes.

785

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing provide details in respect of rental homes assigned since the answer to Question 476/2013, indicating how many will be repaired by (a) the Housing Works Agency; (b) subcontractors; and (c) the assigned tenants themselves?

790

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, since the answer given to Question 476/2013, 12 flats have been assigned.

The repairs are to be undertaken by the following: the Housing Works Agency, three; subcontractors, six; and the assigned tenants themselves, three.

795

**Old Police Barracks site  
Tender for redevelopment**

800

**Clerk:** Question 537, the Hon. S M Figueras.

805

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister say whether, further to Question 411/2013, there has been any progress with the tender for the redevelopment of the Old Police Barracks site, and provide this House with details?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

810

**Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr. J J Garcia):** Yes, Mr Speaker, the Government continues in discussions with a preferred bidder. A preliminary survey is being carried out.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, is the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister at liberty to discuss the nature, even in very general terms, of what is anticipated for the site?

815

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, what they are doing at the moment is a structural survey. This is expected to take a couple of weeks so once they have the results of the survey they will be in a position to know what can be done on the site, but it will be housing. The intention is for housing.

820

**Gibraltar airspace incursion  
Details**

825

**Clerk:** Question 538, the Hon D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Deputy Chief Minister explain why there is a contradictory version of events between the MOD and HMGOG in relation to the incursion of Gibraltar airspace by Spanish Air Force aircraft as alleged by the Government?

830

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

**Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr. J J Garcia):** Yes, Mr Speaker, the Government version of events was based on at least two eyewitness accounts which observed the Spanish aircraft flying over Gibraltar.

We cannot answer for the MOD in this House.

835

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister can rest assured that, certainly on this side of the House, we take a very serious view of any incursion of our airspace, particularly because it raises issues of sovereignty; but in this case it seemed potentially to also raise issues of aircraft safety. I think there was a BA flight which was stopped from taking off for about 12 to 18 minutes and was left on the Gibraltar Airport tarmac but this incursion, is of course, particularly acute because it was perpetrated by Spanish military assets.

840

Now there is a concern on this side of the House that there should be such a divergent account of events between what the Gibraltar Government has said in a press statement and what the MOD has said in their press statement.

845 The Gibraltar Government came out with its press release – not on the day of the incursion; I think it was the day after the incursion – where it said that four Matador aircraft of the Spanish Air Force entered Gibraltar’s airspace from the north-west. And indeed in a quote, which is referred to in the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, a spokesman from No. 6 is quoted as stating:

850 ‘The Government of Gibraltar has called on the UK to take up the matter of this military incursion into the airspace of Gibraltar at the highest diplomatic and military levels.’

The concern on this side of the House is that the MOD, on the other hand... and I appreciate that the Hon. the Chief Minister cannot answer as to why the MOD has come up with a *completely* different analysis of events, where it says very clearly that there is no evidence to suggest that the aircraft flew into Gibraltar airspace.

855 I ask the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister whether he has made any enquiries as to why there is this divergence of a report in respect of a matter which is indeed very, very serious.

860 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, yes, the Government takes a very serious view of this incident and we welcome the support of the hon. Members in that respect; but this is not the first time this has happened, as there have been incidents with Spanish assets – helicopters and aircraft – over a number of years.

865 I can tell the hon. Member there are sensitive and serious issues relating to the definition of airspace in the case of Gibraltar that I would rather not expand upon across the floor of this House, and perhaps I will be perfectly happy to brief him in private on the matter. But I think once he receives that explanation he will understand the differences of opinion that are expressed in the two statements.

870 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, certainly on this side of the House we will accept the offer of being briefed in relation to this.

We are curious as to why there are two divergent views of the matter. We will not pursue it. I understand that my Hon. and Learned Friend, Mr Bossino, has further supplementary questions, but they do not impact on this.

875 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the hon. Member. I must say also that we have taken up the matter with the United Kingdom and we are awaiting a response in that respect.

880 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, Mr Speaker, in fact my supplementary question is indeed whether... The press reports are that the Government has made – in fact, I have just read the quote – very stern representations based on the Gibraltar Government’s view of events. Indeed, one would have thought that the Government would not have made such a protest in those terms if we accepted the MOD version of events, but my supplementary question was going to be whether the Government has received any response to the protest which it has delivered to Her Majesty’s Government?

885 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** I have already answered that by saying that we are waiting for a response. The issue was discussed at the time and we are waiting for a full response.

890 But I think it is not a subject I would rather expand upon further, if the hon. Member would bear with me. I think we can certainly have a discussion in private which will throw some light on the inconsistencies which he has been highlighting.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I look forward to that discussion.

895 **Mr Speaker:** We will now recess to this afternoon at 3.00 p.m., when we will be dealing with Questions to the Chief Minister.

The House will now recess to 3.00 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 10.45 a.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.00 p.m.*