



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 9.15 a.m. – 12.09 p.m.

Gibraltar, Friday, 17th October 2014

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 9.15 a.m.

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

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P E Martinez Esq *in attendance*]

Questions for Oral Answer

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Q557/2014

East Side project –

Expressions of interest; decision re final project

Clerk: Answers to Questions continue.

We are now going to proceed with the Deputy Chief Minister's Questions.

Question 557, the Hon. D J Bossino.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Chief Minister confirm how many expressions of interest there have been in the East Side projects and whether a decision has been made as to which project to proceed with; and if so, can he provide the House with details?

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

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia): Yes, Mr Speaker. Seventeen expressions of interest have been received in relation to the East Side projects. They are currently under consideration.

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Hon. D J Bossino: The obvious supplementary to that is can the Deputy Chief Minister give an indication to the House as to when he thinks he will be in a position to announce who the successful bidder is? Does he have an indication of that now?

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Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I do not want to give him a fixed timescale, but it is something which we need to do. It will take time, because there are 17 submissions to look at, so I think we are talking about a few months before there is any movement.

Q558/2014

Europa Point –

Update re eco-housing

Clerk: Question 558, the Hon. D A Feetham.

25 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, can the Government please provide this House with an update as to the proposal for eco-housing in the Europa Point area which it announced last year?

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

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr. J J Garcia): Yes, Mr Speaker. There have been no further developments in relation to this housing project since the concept proposal was announced last year.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, why is it that there has been no development in this housing concept since it was announced last year?

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, this was originally identified as part of a number of other housing projects in different parts of Gibraltar. At the time, the coach park site was being earmarked for commercial use – I think we were talking to the same developer who had been talking to them when they were in office. When it became apparent that that was not going to go ahead and that we could actually use the coach park site for residential use, then the pressure on these 35 houses really diminished, because first of all there were only 35, and secondly we could use the coach park.

The hon. Member will know we announced a similar scheme for North Gorge also at the same time. The North Gorge scheme has now gone out to tender and we are expecting to receive submissions from interested developers, but the reason why this project has been stalled is because we have given priority to the others.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, this particular project that I have been asking about, and the housing project in the coach park area... It is like comparing apples with pears: one was much lower density, eco-friendly; the other ones are effectively the type of housing that has been constructed in the past, both by our Government and indeed by the GSLP Government from 1988 to 1996.

Is he saying, in the second answer that he has given me, that this eco-housing concept and the numbers have been subsumed within what is now the North Gorge project, and that therefore the Government is going ahead, effectively, with the concept but in a different site in the North Gorge? Is that the Government policy?

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, there were two eco-housing projects announced at the same time – I think it was in August 2012 – at the DPC: one was for North Gorge and one was for the site at Europa Point. The one at North Gorge is proceeding – we have announced a tender and we are awaiting interest from developers; but the one I was referring to earlier, when I mentioned the coach park site, was more the *number* of flats, rather than the type.

Hon. D A Feetham: So, effectively, just so that I have this right, in effect what we are talking about is that the Europa Point eco-housing scheme has effectively been abandoned – I make no criticism of the Government in relation to that – and those numbers have not been subsumed within any other project that the Government has in hand.

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: No, except that the coach park site, with 400-odd flats, came on the scene when originally it was earmarked for something else, so effectively instead of these 35... we are having the other 400-odd. (*Interjection by Hon. D A Feetham*) That is true, but... That is the first one.

Secondly, it has not been abandoned, Mr Speaker; it has only been stalled. There are other developments happening in Europa Point. There is MOD land which is going to be released, and there is also the University project which is now happening, which was not envisaged at the time. So there have been changes also in the surrounding area, which is why this project is stalled.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, I understand that, but... So the Government policy, as I understand it, is to create the same numbers – eco-housing – as it announced at the end of 2012, somewhere else; unless what he is telling me is that part of the buildings that are being constructed in respect of the University are also going to be eco-buildings, which is not something that the Hon. the Minister for Education announced.

I am just trying to get a feel for how many housing units of an eco-type the Government intends to be building – certainly, it is not going to be this term, but intends to be building in the near future.

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: There will be accommodation for the University, but that is a different issue and my colleague is dealing with that.

There are 100 units in North Gorge. That was the original proposal that went to DPC. That is a concept design the developers are now looking at. It may be we end up with more than a hundred, or we end up with less – it depends on what comes back.

EDUCATION, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND JUSTICE

Q536/2014

**Proceeds of Crime legislation –
Consultation and publication as a Command Paper**

Clerk: Question 536, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Justice say, further to his Budget address in July this year, whether the Proceeds of Crime legislation he alluded to will be the subject of consultation as a Command Paper; and if so, can he tell us when this can be expected to take place?

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

Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, a draft of the Bill has been completed and is the subject of a consultation process with the Royal Gibraltar Police and the Attorney General's Chambers. Once the internal consultation has been completed, the draft Bill will be published as a Command Paper.

Hon. S M Figueras: The only obvious supplementary to that is: is there an indication of when that will happen?

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, I would like to do this as soon as possible, but clearly it depends on the consultation process and how long that takes. I cannot see this taking too long, in terms of drafting the Bill as a Command Paper, but I would not want to put a specific time scale.

Q537/2014

**Royal Gibraltar Police –
Chief Superintendent role**

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

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Justice explain to this House why, in his estimation, the creation of a Chief Superintendent role at the Royal Gibraltar Police, 're-establishes a needed rank between the Commissioner of Police and the three Superintendents, thereby providing the RGP with an improved management structure'?

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

Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, the post of Chief Superintendent was discontinued in 1992. At that time, the rank was being phased out in the UK and it was felt appropriate and desirable to follow suit. The Force, however, retained the post of Deputy Commissioner until 2009.

The UK reinstated the chief superintendent rank shortly after its removal. Upon taking over his appointment as Commissioner, Edward Yome inherited a senior management structure comprising three superintendents, who would on a rotation basis assume the responsibilities of Acting Commissioner. The Commissioner rapidly identified that the gap between superintendent and Commissioner was too great and he needed to fill the void, providing greater command resilience and a more focused emphasis on strategic performance delivery. The reinstated post of Chief Superintendent fills that void. This also enables the three superintendents to focus more fully on their divisional responsibilities and improve service delivery.

The portfolio for the reinstated post will comprise policy formulation and oversight, internal service delivery, strategic performance management, discipline, strategic stakeholder management and deputising for the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Speaker, in effect, what has happened is that we used to have a situation whereby there were superintendents, a Chief Superintendent, Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner. Over time, the Chief Superintendent and Deputy Commissioner posts were lost, so there was in effect a three-rank jump between superintendent and Commissioner, and it was felt by the Commissioner that that was too great a void and one of them needed to be filled. He identified that post as being that of Chief Superintendent, which was, as I have said, a post which was reinstated in the United Kingdom.

Q538/2014
Fixed penalty scheme –
Progress re draft legislation

Clerk: Question 538, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Justice say what progress has been made in relation to the preparation of draft legislation for the purposes of introducing the fixed penalty scheme which it is anticipated will be rolled out in tandem with the installation of fixed speed cameras in Gibraltar?

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

Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, a first draft has been prepared and is currently the subject of an internal consultation between the Ministries of Justice and Traffic and the Royal Gibraltar Police.

Hon. S M Figueras: And, as if it was not obvious that I was going to ask this, is there an indication of the timeframe we are looking at in respect of the consultation?

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, this is something that the Government is clearly giving some priority to, and we want to roll this out as soon as possible. In fact, we have moved – as the Minister for Traffic will confirm, because his Department is also involved – in the process of the speed camera system that is going to be in place, and I understand an order for some equipment has already been placed. Therefore, there is progress on the practical side and this is the legislative side that we need to get right, to make sure, as the Question says, rolled out in tandem with that particular system. But we are actually moving on it quite swiftly.

Hon. S M Figueras: I am grateful for the answer.

The Hon. Minister says that there is a consultation ongoing between the Ministry of Justice and the RGP. Obviously, part of that will be the identification of the location of fixed speed cameras. Will there be an element of consultation with the public, or tenant associations, or any other kind of consultation to help in the determination of where best placed these cameras are?

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, there clearly has to be consultation. This is not something that my colleague and I are simply going to decide and say, 'Put this there' or 'put that there', but the consultation primarily is with the Royal Gibraltar Police, who deal with these matters on a daily basis. We have had that consultation. We have identified four areas in which this scheme can go. We are in the process of finally narrowing that down, so that consultation is almost reaching its final stages and we expect to see some very swift progress on this soon.

Q539/2014
Royal Gibraltar Police Commissioner –
Cost of new car

Clerk: Question 539, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Justice confirm the total cost to the Royal Gibraltar Police of the Commissioner's new official car, a Mercedes Benz E Class? I think hybrid.

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

Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, the Commissioner's car cost £40,433.44.

As a follow-up to the last comment that the hon. Member made, where he said, 'I think it is hybrid,' it is in fact a hybrid vehicle, and I can tell the House that in the short time that the vehicle has been operating, fuel consumption has been reduced to almost half.

Q540/2014
University of Gibraltar –
Charter

Clerk: Question 540, the Hon. D A Feetham.

185 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, when will the Government grant the Gibraltar University a charter guaranteeing its independence and befitting its status as a University?

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

190 **Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Questions 541 to 544.

Q541/2014
University of Gibraltar –
Investment required

Clerk: Question 541, the Hon. D A Feetham.

195 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, apart from the £10 million initial investment by the Government in the Gibraltar University, what other investment, capital or otherwise, does the Government envisage it will need to make in that venture to make it viable?

Q542/2014
University of Gibraltar –
Projected annual costs

Clerk: Question 542, the Hon. D A Feetham.

200 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Government please provide details of the projected annual costs of the Gibraltar University over the first three years?

Q543/2014
University of Gibraltar –
Projected annual revenue

Clerk: Question 543, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Government please provide details of the projected annual revenue of the Gibraltar University, over the first three years?

Q544/2014
University of Gibraltar –
Breakdown of costs

205 **Clerk:** Question 544, the Hon. E J Reyes.

210 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Education provide details, by way of breakdown, of the entire costs of the University of Gibraltar project; who is involved in the educational side of the project; details of the precise courses which are going to be made available; details of the number of staff it is expected to have, once fully functional; and what he expects the running costs of the university to be?

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

Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, the various Questions posed are pretty wide-ranging and encompass quite a number of areas involving the university, so the answer is in fact quite lengthy.

There is also in the Order Paper, as hon. Members know, a Supplementary Appropriation Bill which has the exclusive purpose of appropriating funds for the University of Gibraltar. There is bound, therefore, to be an overlap between the issues which arise in the debate of that Bill and the answers to the various Questions which the Opposition pose on the university. I will, however, give them the answers to the Questions that they have raised.

It is important to state at the outset that the idea of a university in Gibraltar has been raised or considered on a number of occasions over the years by various political parties. The concept therefore is not new and is one which clearly enjoys cross-party support. The Government hopes that its plans for this university will indeed enjoy the support of the Opposition.

Last week, we announced the plans for the university. Much thought has been given to the makeup of the university. What we want to achieve is not a replica of what is available elsewhere, but to create something unique. It is not just the University *of* Gibraltar; it is a university *for* Gibraltar – a university that will serve the needs of the community and of industry, but also a university designed to become an international educational institution with a reputation for its high standards and for the quality of its research programmes in various fields. We have shown that, when Gibraltar sets its mind to something, we can become world class. We have done so in gaming, in financial services and in areas involving research – for example, the work done by the Gibraltar Museum on the Neanderthals. We can also do so on the higher education front, by bringing together and building on what we already do well.

Mr Speaker, the first issue which I would like to address on the specific Questions by the Opposition is the legal and statutory structure for the establishment of the university. This is related particularly to the Question on the charter.

Our research has shown that there is no specific model which predominates. There are, in fact, two models which are mainly used, but whichever model is used, there is one underlying theme which is fundamental to any university: that is that its academic independence has to be guaranteed, befitting its status as a university, as the Question from the Leader of the Opposition states. The Government is committed to these principles.

The two principal models, either of which will achieve the underlying objective which I have referred to, are as follows. The first is for the university to be established by Act of Parliament. In other words, the university would be a statutory body. In Gibraltar's case, that would be through an Act called the University of Gibraltar Act. Either the Act or regulations under the Act would contain all the necessary guarantees for academic independence. There would also be provision for the maintenance of standards by the university. With this Act, there may well be no need for a charter, as the Act or regulations would contain what would normally be in a charter. The other model is for an Act to provide for the establishment of any university to be authorised. In our case, this would result in a Universities Act. The University of Gibraltar would then be authorised under the powers given by the Act, and a charter could be provided with the required guarantees and provision made for the maintenance of standards. In either case, there would also have to be provisions to safeguard the framework under which the University is being established. This can be achieved by setting out – either in the Act, regulations or a charter – the objectives of the university as outlined in the plans which we have announced. The Government has not yet decided which of the two models to adopt. We have, in fact, two draft Bills and are considering which works best for Gibraltar. Ultimately, these are different ways of achieving the same result.

But none of this interferes with the preparation for the university, either from an academic perspective or from a resource or buildings perspective. An operating company known as The University of Gibraltar Ltd – or UniGib, as we have already started to call it – has already been incorporated and is the vehicle through which staff will be employed, equipment or materials procured and contractors engaged. All of that can and will proceed whilst the final decision on the legal or statutory structure is taken.

Mr Speaker, we have announced that the university will have four faculties: Health Studies and Sports Science; Business, to include specialisms in accounting and finance, law and ICT; Life and Earth Sciences with Gibraltar and Mediterranean Studies; and finally, Tourism and Hospitality.

No successful university anywhere in the world will have offered the same number or scope of courses at establishment as it offers 10, 20 or 30 years later. Every university evolves and develops over time, and the University of Gibraltar will be no different. It is, however, necessary to start somewhere, and whilst we can be and we are ambitious, we must not be overambitious at the start. The university will have four functioning faculties at the outset, with its own building or campus, containing all the facilities which one would expect in a modern university. Each of the faculties is expected to offer programmes starting in September 2015.

In Health Studies, we currently have 38 students carrying out foundation, undergraduate and post-graduate programmes in Nursing and Health Management. These programmes, which are validated by Kingston University, will form part of the university.

In Sports Science, we expect to have a research programme starting in September 2015.

The Faculty of Business is expected to offer courses which are part of the international programme of the University of London. These are courses which will be developed over time. The faculty is, however, expected to offer, in September 2015, two courses which are being developed locally. These are the Diplomas in Gibraltar Tax and in Gibraltar Law. These two courses will be invaluable, particularly for accountants and lawyers, although the courses will of course be open to others. They will provide not just local knowledge, but also a local qualification in these fields.

The Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences will offer research programmes, the precise title of which will be announced in the next few months.

The Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality will initially offer courses in hospitality, similar or developing from the pilot programme which my colleague already talked about earlier in this session and which started last month as part of a collaboration between the Gibraltar Tourist Board and Oxford Brookes University.

Mr Speaker, we have determined that it is absolutely essential that we continue to develop collaborations with other major universities, such as Kingston, London and Oxford Brookes. We will therefore be seeking to enter MOUs with a number of other universities. These MOUs could lead to collaborative programmes at post-graduate and post-doctoral levels, student exchanges and the provision of facilities by the University of Gibraltar for fieldwork to be carried out in Gibraltar in areas such as, for example, marine biology and primatology.

I would add that we have already seen, both before and after last week's announcement, a great deal of interest by academic bodies outside Gibraltar in collaborating with our university. I have, in fact, been overwhelmed by the manner in which everyone to whom we have spoken about our university has welcomed the idea and has been willing to participate in our programmes. Clearly, we will choose our partners wisely.

We have already signed an MOU with the University of Seychelles. One of the specific areas we are talking to Seychelles about is the creation of a two-centre joint Masters between the two universities in Marine Science and the Blue Economy. This is a programme which the Government is particularly excited about and which we feel could be extremely popular with local, Seychellois and, in time, international students.

It is important to emphasise that collaborations will not just be with foreign entities. There is a wealth of talent in Gibraltar, which we will naturally want to tap into. The university will work closely with local bodies such as the Gibraltar Museum, the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens and the Garrison Library. The expertise, assets and facilities which these bodies have will be crucial to the success of the university.

We have also announced that the university will include an Institute of Professional Development and Continuing Education. This will provide courses leading to professional qualifications – for example, in accounting – public and private sector continuing professional development, and courses developed to meet industry needs. I will be happy later on to give specific examples of this, if hon. Members opposite wish. The University of Seychelles has a similar institute, and we were able to see during our visit there how it operates very successfully to deliver the professional and industry needs of the community.

The other component of the university is the Language Centre, which is intended to deliver teaching of English as a foreign or business language. We expect that these courses will be very much in demand.

As hon. Members will appreciate, we are being ambitious in our approach, but we need to get it right. There is much to be done in the course of the next 10 months to get this off the ground. What we have presented is a blueprint for the university and what we want the university to develop into over time.

Mr Speaker, this leads me to financial and staffing issues. The Supplementary Appropriation Bill will allow £10 million to be provided as a grant for the university. I hope that hon. Members will understand why it is undesirable for specific breakdowns to be provided at this stage. UniGib is in the process of obtaining quotes from contractors for the refurbishment of the Europa Point site and the construction of the new facilities within that site for the university. It would, for obvious reasons, be unwise for us to state whilst this process is ongoing what we would expect the refurbishment and new build to cost. I would, however, say this: it is expected that the £10 million grant will cover not just start-up costs but also provide running costs for the first two to three years.

Staff will have to be engaged in a number of areas. These will include senior management, heads of faculties, lecturers, library, IT, finance, administration, campus and facilities management, as well as maintenance and support staff. We anticipate that this could result in the employment over time of up to 40 people, with further staff, such as additional lecturers or visiting professors, being engaged as required. Clearly, not all the staff will be required from the outset, but we will see recruitment over the next few months for various positions within the university.

We have already put together a project team, which is led by me. It includes the Director of Education, Joey Britto, assisted as necessary by the Senior Education Adviser, Darren Grech.

Dr Darren Fa was seconded to this project in January of this year and has been working full time on this since then. He will continue to be part of the project team on a full-time basis. Dr Darren Fa was, until recently, Deputy Director of the Gibraltar Museum, as well as being their Education and Research Officer and Co-Director of the Underwater Research Unit. A chartered biologist and an elected Fellow of the Linnean Society of London, he has particular experience of university-level research, having participated in and jointly developed a number of international projects and studies. He has experience in the development of higher education research and continues to act as academic adviser for several Masters and PhD students from various European universities.

Kevin Pizarro of the GHA has been seconded to UniGib for two days a week. Mr Pizarro was instrumental in the setting up of the School of Health Studies at the GHA and brings with him valuable experience and expertise.

Chris Riddell, the Director of Strategic Planning, Project and Business Development at my Ministry, is also part of the team and will be in charge of all aspects of the refurbishment and development of the Europa Point site.

In addition, the project team is being assisted by two consultants with extensive university experience.

Prof. Daniella Tilbury is the first Gibraltarian to be recognised with a Marie Curie Professorship by the European Commission. She has held multiple university leadership roles in the UK, Hong Kong and Australia, as well as having served as an adviser for newly established universities and innovative ventures in the sector. She is currently a Dean, Pro Vice-Chancellor with institutional leadership responsibilities at the University of Gloucestershire, UK. In her current post, she is responsible for strategic and financial, as well as operational performance, of a key university portfolio. Prof. Tilbury has been shortlisted for a national university leadership award and is competing against the Vice-Chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University at a ceremony to be held in early November.

The other consultant is Prof. Malcolm Jones, who was the first alumnus of Cardiff University Dental School to become Dean of the School. He was then Pro Vice-Chancellor for Health in Cardiff University, overseeing strategy for all six health-related schools in the university. Concurrently, he was Pro Vice-Chancellor for Estates, leading on development of a strategic plan, which included a new med school building and a new research institute. He was a member of the Senate and Council, as well as Emeritus Professor at Cardiff University. Prof. Jones retired at the end of 2010. Following his retirement, he has assisted the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in developing research links with some chosen European universities.

Mr Speaker, this is an exciting project, which we expect will bring numerous benefits for Gibraltar. We very much hope that it will be embraced by the Opposition, and indeed by the whole community. (*Banging on desks*)

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I suppose that in the debate on the Appropriation Bill the hon. Gentleman could just simply stand and refer to the answer he has given gave a few moments ago. I remember a long answer that he gave in June of this year – I do not know whether this one takes the gold or the silver medal!

Mr Speaker, am I right in saying that the hon. Gentleman has answered that the £10 million – which is the concern that certainly I have; hence my Question – is envisaged to cover the running costs of the university for the first three years?... which is the question that I have asked specifically, the two supplementaries that I have asked.

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, what I said was that the £10 million is expected to cover not just start-up costs, but running costs for the first two to three years.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, may I briefly, just to avoid any confusion in the notes I have made... The Minister mentions four faculties, and when I was making a note of these... am I right in assuming the faculties are Health Studies, as one, Sports Science, as two... No? Then perhaps can the Minister then repeat the four, so that I know clear nomenclature for future references?

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, the first one is the Faculty of Health Studies and Sports Science, the second one is the Faculty of Business, the third one is the Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences, and the fourth one is the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes Mr Speaker, before I move on to my second supplementary, I want to say this: that it is something that the Opposition welcomes. As he rightly points out, it is something that has been considered in the past by a number of Governments. I think going back to the first GSLP Government, if I

recall, from 1988 to 1992, I think it was something that was being considered even then and it was something that was being considered when we were in Government. I think it is extremely worthwhile.

If we make any points about the public finances, it is a separate point not intended as a criticism of this particular venture. Obviously, we have our criticisms of the fact that the Government is spending money as if there is no tomorrow, and the Government said there was no money in 2011 but now is prepared to spend not only on this but on other issues. It does not detract from the fact that we are supportive of this particular venture.

The hon. Gentleman has mentioned a number of areas that initially the university is going to be concentrating on – educational areas, the teaching areas that they are going to be concentrating on. How long in any business plan is it envisaged that the Government will take for the university to break out perhaps into other fields? Has that been considered, or is it envisaged that we are going to be concentrating... that these are the core areas and really there is going to be very little branching out into other areas? That is really what I want to explore: the branching out, the breaking out into other areas – if that is envisaged; and what kind of timeframes are we talking about in terms of that?

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member made certain comments in relation to finances. Any issue related to public finances, whether it is related to this or any other thing, are best left to be debated during the Appropriation Bill, which is on the Order Paper if the hon. Member wants to make any point. I will not go into that debate at this stage. Suffice to say that the Government always considers that prudent economic management is very important. We have shown that in the past and will continue to do so, as the various Budget speeches during our time in Office have shown.

With regard to the core areas and the business plan, hon. Members will recall that this is something we have been looking at for a long time. We started by commissioning Prof. Tilbury to do a feasibility study for us in 2012. That has evolved through various phases into the current thinking of the Government and we have identified the faculties and areas which we think are best suited for Gibraltar and which could make this into a unique institution.

As I said earlier during my answer, this is something, a project, which is going to evolve and develop over time. How far and how soon is a matter which we will have to wait, but what we have done, as I said is to develop this blueprint: this is what we would like the university to look like.

There is a lot that can be done, beyond what we are going to start with in September 2015, in the four faculties. In Tourism and Hospitality I mentioned the pilot programme. A lot of that is vocational, as the hon. Member indicated, but there is much that can be done from the academic point of view, in terms of BScs and BAs and those sorts of areas as well. So there is much that can be developed, from within the basic structure that we are creating and within that, which we feel are areas of great interest in and for Gibraltar that can be branched out. Life and Earth Sciences can become, in theory, a huge faculty, dealing from historic matters, to environmental matters, to scientific matters and marine biology, a lot of it research based.

What we have done is set out the core structure as to what we envisage the university to be. In 10, 15, 20, 30 years, the university might branch out and be something different, but certainly it will not be the Government that is necessarily directing the university to say, 'You *have* to do this and you *have* to do that.' We are setting up, at establishment, that core structure with our ideas of what we would like the university to look like and develop into; and then clearly, because as I have mentioned there will be academic independence, it will be for those running the university to consider which particular courses at which particular time ought to be offered. So it is something that will be able to evolve over time.

If there is identified, for example, a need for a fifth faculty, for which there is demand and which would be particularly popular and fit in with the model of the university, then by all means that may happen, but that is not currently in our thinking and in our plans. We need to start with what we have said we want to do. The Institute of Professional Development and Continuing Education is going to be particularly interesting and something that is going to allow the whole community – the whole business community and the whole community as such – to be part of the university and participate in elements of the university. It is primarily what is going to bring the university to the community itself, in terms of business and industry.

So again, there are *many, many* areas in which that can be developed and expanded over time, but this will take time. We have said what we want to achieve from the outset, and then it will be a baby that will be born and will grow over time, and we hope – we expect – very successfully.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, in terms of the student base for the university – which ultimately, if it is going to be run as a business, is going to be the client base – presumably that is where the fees are going to come from for the university to run properly: tuition fees.

Can he give us some information as to the type of breakdown and where these students are going to be coming from? Are they mainly Gibraltarian students that the Government is envisaging will go to the university, and therefore what the Government effectively pays for these students to study in England, they

455 expect them to study here in Gibraltar; or is it overseas students? What type of breakdown and percentages? I would have expected, in a business plan, for some very considerable research to have actually gone into this and for the Government to have an idea of the type of breakdown – certainly in the first three years, which are going to be critical for the success of this university.

460 **Hon. G H Licudi:** Mr Speaker, one of the things that we announced and that we made clear during the press conference is that this does not change at all the scholarship scheme that is run by the Department of Education. In other words, students will not be discouraged from going away to the UK. Anybody who has a place in a university in the UK for a course that would normally qualify for a mandatory scholarship – and indeed hon. Members know that we expanded that when we came into office... Those same opportunities
465 will continue to arise. So no-one will be told, 'You cannot go to the UK; you must study in Gibraltar.'

But what we have also seen in recent history is that where facilities and courses are offered locally there is local take up, and we see that in particular... I mentioned the School of Health Studies. We have foundation, undergraduate and post-graduate courses being done in Health Studies, foundation and undergraduate in Nursing, and the post-graduate in Leadership and Management in Health Studies. There
470 are 38 students currently taking up those courses, so where there is availability then that will happen. In the School of Tourism we have seen the take-up that the hon. Member explained in terms of the pilot programme. That is something that we will want to develop and we will see quite a lot of interest from local industry.

But clearly, as the hon. Member says, over time we will want to attract international students and we see the area that international students in particular will want to come to Gibraltar for is research. We have already a number of students who come to Gibraltar to carry out research – for example, in conjunction with the Gibraltar Museum. I mentioned that Dr Darren Fa supervises some of these students at Masters and PhD level, so we have already that interest, and that interest we expect to continue.

We clearly have done a lot of research in this area, but what I am not going to do is constrain what the university could look like by saying this is a percentage that we... This is not about quotas. We are not setting quotas in terms of local and foreign students, but we do expect, again over time, once the university is up and running, once we develop the partnerships that we clearly have said are crucial for the university – for example, the partnerships we already have with Kingston, what we want to do with London and what is happening with Oxford Brookes, which we want to develop into a collaborative project for the university –
485 then it is not just people coming to do a University of Gibraltar course, but a course which is validated by institutions elsewhere.

Let me just give the hon. Members an example. We have had a number of meetings already with the University of London and various colleges of the University of London, including the London School of Economics, on accounting courses, which is one of the areas that we want to develop and which we have
490 already discussed with the London School of Economics. The intention is, over time... It will not be starting in September 2015, but we will be planning for what we will be offering in September 2015 going forward for people to enrol. So we could have courses being run in Gibraltar, taught in the University of Gibraltar, directed and validated by the London School of Economics, and people ending up with a University of London degree – and that, we think, is a valuable combination, and Gibraltar has much to attract.
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But as I said, this is something that is going to evolve and develop over time, and those who manage the university will have to put together the marketing programme in order to be able to attract the right calibre of students. And not just the right calibre of students: as I mentioned, collaborative programmes are absolutely crucial and it is important that we choose those partners wisely to be able to offer high standards
500 of academic excellence in Gibraltar, so that Gibraltar, over time, develops that reputation which we expect it to develop as a university of high standards and high academic repute.

Hon. D A Feetham: But Mr Speaker, I understand all that, and certainly we wish the Government every success and the university every success in building on any foundations and expanding the future in terms
505 of its academic curriculum and otherwise. But am I right in saying – just reading between the lines in the answer that he has given me – that in terms of the business plan... because of course in any business plan you would have thought that the main focus would have been on where we are getting the critical mass, in terms of the client base, that will allow us then to break out and expand in the future. Is that critical mass envisaged to come from local people, as opposed to foreign students; and then, of course, as other
510 universities do, they do marketing and other things in order to attract overseas students? Is the intention really to make this university successful based on local students first, and then add onto that in the future with overseas students?

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, the intention is to build on what we already do, and an example that I
515 gave was the School of Health Studies. The critical mass for each particular area really depends on what

that faculty is and what that area is. For example, in Health Studies we already have a critical mass, in terms of 38 students doing these programmes validated by Kingston University. We expect, over time, that that programme will continue to attract local students, but will also be able to attract international students to study those nursing courses in Gibraltar with the university, in conjunction with the Gibraltar Health

520 Authority carrying out the practical side of those particular courses.

In, for example, Life and Earth Sciences, a lot of what will be done will be research, and we expect that there will be some local take-up but we expect a lot of international interest in coming over and taking up research programmes within the university. So it really depends on the area.

525 The Language Centre, for example, is not intended to teach English to local people. There will be courses of different natures. As I mentioned during the press conference, more and more we are seeing English used not just as an everyday language that everybody wants to learn, but as the international language of business, and there is a huge demand for courses for professionals inclusive for English as a business language and not just a foreign language. Those will be shorter courses, which will attract, we expect, international students and international professionals for batches of two, three or four weeks at a

530 time, for intensive courses.

The Institute of Professional Development – the core areas there will be with a local client base. That is intended to meet the professional and industry needs in Gibraltar, whether it is the needs of lawyers, accountants or other professionals. I mentioned how we envisage that this can work and that I can give some examples of the sort of areas that the institute... The institute is something... In fact, we have in our

535 manifesto the idea of a commitment for a National Institute of Adult Education and also a commitment to continuing professional development, and this institute brings both of those things together.

When I visited the University of Seychelles, which was in fact a very successful and fruitful visit, I mentioned that they have a similar institute. It is an institute that we were developing, and quite by coincidence, when we got there they said, 'We're going to take you to another campus: it's called the Guy Morel Institute,' and precisely what they do is professional development – courses developed with the private sector and with the public sector particularly to meet industry needs. We went into one of the classrooms where a lecture was being given there and it happened to be a human resource management course. What they have done is develop a 12-week course by getting in touch with the associations that deal with human resource management within the community, and develop a 12-week course, whereby

545 employers provide day release to their human resource managers, or human resource employees, for one day a week over 12 weeks to do a diploma in human resource management at the university – and that is something that we can do very successfully here.

Whether it is human resources or whether it is in conjunction with the Association of Compliance Officers – a course over that period of time, say 12 weeks, on say money-laundering and compliance issues, about what Gibraltar law is, what Gibraltar practice is, what compliance officers are expected to do in terms of the legal requirements – and do it in conjunction with the Association, and employers being prepared to release, say on one day a week over that period, so that the people within their organisation can benefit from this professional development and also a specific qualification which would be offered by the university, by the institute in particular.

555 I mention compliance just as an example – we can do it with fund management; we can do it with insurance. The insurance industry keeps growing. We get professionals here and we get local people who go into the insurance industry in Gibraltar and would benefit enormously from these sort of courses, getting some sort of diploma, professional development in the fields they are working on in Gibraltar. So throughout the whole spectrum of industry – on gaming, financial services, and tourism – the institute can be absolutely crucial for the training of our people. So that is an area where we see local interest developing over time.

560 So it depends on which area; but of course, as I mentioned, international students we think will be attracted to Gibraltar. We think there is a lot to offer in Gibraltar. The idea of coming to a location like Gibraltar and being able to study in Gibraltar and have a course which is validated by an internationally

565 recognised university, seems to me is a win-win situation.

Hon. Sir P R Caruana: I will not keep the House much longer on this subject. First of all, I am very glad that the Leader of the Opposition has indicated that the Opposition would officially support this in principle. I think in principle it is a jolly good project.

570 I accept what the Hon. Minister says: that these things have got to start somewhere and evolve. That said, listening to him, I get the impression that that start – which is a place to start and I will acknowledge it... If that start is a sort of consolidation, rationalisation, reorganisation, or even with a supplement of existing local training resources and/or supply of training needs such as the ones he has just outlined, both in the private sector and indeed in the public sector... One possibility that he has not mentioned, but he

575 could just add it to his list, is a sort of public administration school. So there is all manner of things; he is absolutely right.

That would be useful, but I would urge them not to take... to set their sights higher. I think the University of Gibraltar has potential. First of all, I welcome it because it is another institution that makes Gibraltar not look... it takes Gibraltar further along that road that successive Governments have been trying to travel and take Gibraltar in, as acquiring the institutions and the trappings of a modern, developing, evolving first world European country – and the university is such a thing.

So if it is, and I am glad that he has said that it is, the aspiration at some time in the future – and indeed I think it should be the case from the beginning – to have courses which are capable of attracting international students, I think that would be a good thing, because it has an economic value, the export of education. Malta has done this quite successfully. The export of education through the establishment of a university in Gibraltar is a potential source of direct and indirect economic activity in Gibraltar. In that context, just to follow on from what the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition has said, is there at some stage... and if there is not, will the Government at some point carry out some sort of business case or business modelling to see what measure of success we might have to have before this university became more or less self-funding? Or will the Government be content to see it just as an addition to our publicly funded education infrastructure in Gibraltar, just added to the schools and the university funding, and any revenue that comes from overseas students is just a welcome contribution but not part of the business case?

My question is this: given that I am particularly interested in the sort of... I am not disinterested in the local provision – I think it is a jolly good thing, provision of local demand for such things, but given that I am particularly interested in the export side, in other words in attracting students to Gibraltar, not least because it allows... rather like the Erasmus thing is designed to do, it brings in new thinking into our student... Will the hon. Member say whether any thought has been given to the issue of residential accommodation for overseas students? Presumably there is not a residential block attached to the campus. If there is, I think that would be a jolly good thing. If there is not, you would have to consider the extent to which it might put pressure on the already difficult for locals housing rents, if students were added as a competitor to that. I am sorry – he mentioned the accommodation block just before I walked in. He had just started when I arrived. I am sorry if he has already mentioned that. Will there be an accommodation block?

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member is absolutely right. This is something that we want to see develop over time, not just in terms of consolidation of what we already do – for example, the School of Health Studies or the pilot programme in relation to... This is not just about bringing those together. It is about bringing those together, adding other things at the outset and then developing and branching out from that base, but having that solid base to start with, and we already have these things as a solid base.

Apart from the things that have already been done, specific areas that I mentioned that we want to see starting in 2015 are, for example, the specific diplomas in Gibraltar law and Gibraltar tax. These are not being done. These are courses that are being developed specifically for accountants and lawyers and others who want to have a knowledge in Gibraltar tax. What we find is that accountants do their professional exams, they study the tax system – usually the English tax system – and then advise on Gibraltar law, where the tax system is clearly different than the English tax system.

Gibraltar law is the same. We have lawyers going and getting professional qualifications, learning about the English legal system. Clearly, those of us who are lawyers have gone through that and are able to adapt, but having the specific knowledge of what Gibraltar law is about, in terms of learning about the Constitution; the specific legal structure in Gibraltar; the courts structure; the jurisprudence that has developed through the Gibraltar courts, which we do not get anywhere when we go off to university; the local idiosyncrasies in terms of local legislation that are particular to Gibraltar and from which jurisprudence is developed... All those things clearly need to be part of this course, and we expect that to be in place for starting in September 2015.

So it is not just about consolidation. It is about consolidation, including some research programmes – and I said we would be announcing some titles in due course on Life and Earth Sciences and in Sports Science as well – adding those at the outset, and then developing from there.

I entirely agree with the hon. Member that there is an enormous economic value in this, and we said so at the press conference: economic value in terms of employment opportunities in itself creates economic value to the community, but economic value in terms of people coming to Gibraltar and spending their money here, as well as paying the fees and funding the university. We do expect our university to have a place within the family of European universities. We should be able to benefit, for example, from the Erasmus... and the other one I think is called the Bologna process, whereby there are exchanges between European universities. That clearly takes some time. It is not something where you open the doors and automatically everybody starts exchanging students with you, but that is certainly very much in the plans.

The hon. Member specifically mentions accommodation. I had not mentioned accommodation when I referred to the answer, but with the press release that we issued we issued a number of concept drawings and one of them was specifically an accommodation block in the Europa Point area, so we already have plans for the accommodation block in the Europa Point area. We have, in fact, identified two sites in the

Europa Point area which are suitable for student accommodation, because we identified that if we are going to attract international students, international students will need to have somewhere to stay. Not just international students, but visiting professors and lecturers. Sometimes they come for a short period of time. You do not necessarily need, for a research programme, your lecturers and professors here all the time. Sometimes they come for a short period, do an intensive part of the course, and then let the student get on with it in terms of research.

So there are two areas which can be developed. The first one can be developed over two to three phases, giving us an element of flexibility, which would give... the plans are for approximately 200 student rooms in that one. And then there is another one opposite the road, again within the Europa Point campus. Let's recall that what we have had back, as the hon. Member knows, is the St Christopher's site, but the southern end of the site, starting with a car park, stone building and then a block at the bottom, which has I think nine or 10 vaults, that has been given back and that is what is going to be the core campus of the university. St Christopher's School still uses the top end, which includes a large assembly hall and a number of other buildings, plus two playgrounds which they still use for reception and nursery, which the Government is in the process of re-providing as part of the Lands Agreement, and eventually that will come back and will allow for expansion within the university. So we have physical room for expansion, and one of the plots, one of the areas which is currently a playground, has been earmarked as a second plot, which can be used for student accommodation in which... Again, at the press conference I showed a slide with a drawing of what that block would look like, and that is envisaged to hold in the order of 70 to 80 student rooms.

So, over time we believe that we can develop those two sites within the Europa Point campus to have almost 300 student rooms. That, I think, will be a valuable addition to the university and will do precisely what the hon. Member rightly says, which is that, for this to work successfully and have economic value, we need to attract those international students.

Mr Speaker: The whole question of universities is, of course, a fascinating subject. We have had a series of very lengthy exchanges and long supplementaries followed by even longer answers from the Minister, who no doubt is full of enthusiasm and knowledge about the whole project.

But we have to be proportionate. Time is of the essence and I think I must ask hon. Members, if they have any other supplementaries, to make sure that they are short; and equally ask the Minister to provide short answers. Otherwise, I think we should move on. It will not be the only opportunity that Members will have to discuss the matter: there is a Bill, and no doubt in future meetings other matters will arise.

Next Question then.

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GAMING

Q533/2014

**Minister for Financial Services –
Travel costs**

Clerk: Question 533, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Financial Services provide updated details of all his travel costs, broken down in the same manner as Table Tc4 in the Government website, beyond the information as at 8th October 2014, which ends with a trip on 16th to 17th June 2014?

The Hon. the Minister, in private conversations with me, has already indicated that the information is now on the website and has been for a few days, but certainly after I filed the Question – so I am grateful for that indication and I do not know whether he wants to reply formally.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services and Gaming.

Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola): Yes, Mr Speaker, as the hon. Member has already said, I had communicated to the hon. Member that the information was submitted to the Statistics Department by my Ministry on 13th October and subsequently posted on the website on the 14th, the following day.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful for that.

Is the Minister able to provide me with further particulars in respect of some of the trips he has attended? Some of them are obvious from the face of the description provided under the 'purpose of the trip' heading – for example, you have gaming meetings in London or, the last one, gaming meetings in

Nevada; Hedge Fund World, Asia. But others, for example, and I refer them to him... Casablanca Financial Services – I think he may have given an explanation at the last House; but London, Bermuda and Monaco are each described as ‘financial services meetings’. I suspect that the Bermuda one probably had a focus on insurance, given the nature of the jurisdiction, and indeed he may have stated the facts in press releases, but is he able to provide me with those further particulars, certainly the ones I have just referred him to?

Hon. A J Isola: Yes, Mr Speaker. Some of these, the ones you have referred to – Bermuda and Hong Kong – are centred around what we call the ‘Gibraltar Days’ in each of these jurisdictions. For example, in Bermuda it was centred around a huge insurance conference which was housed in Bermuda, and so Gib day was on the perimeter of that function. In Hong Kong, there was Hedge Fund World Asia, which is a large conference there. Again, the Gib day was centred around that event, at which I spoke.

What we try to do in these events is to not just turn up and have meetings arranged for us – which is of course what we do – but centre them around big events, where players are brought into those jurisdictions and we can capture those people too. It was the same in South Africa. The Nevada one is the G2E conference, which is the largest US conference, and I was advised that I should at least do one US conference on gaming, so I was told that we should do G2E in Nevada, which we did. Monaco was another conference on hedge funds that I addressed at the plenary session. So they are all primarily centred around large conferences which I am advised we should be attending and speaking at, and we organise our own events on the peripheries to that. We normally spend one day at the conference, or half a day at the conference, then two days outside that – and that really is the makeup of most of these events.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful for that reply, but is he able to provide me with the particulars?

The four examples I have provided him with refer to ‘financial services’, but what I was really looking for is whether he is able to provide which particular financial service was being concentrated on or was being marketed. I offered to him that I suspect that the one in Bermuda related to insurance, and if he could confirm that that is the case I would be grateful for that; but, for example, what financial services were being marketed in Monaco, London and Casablanca, which are the other three that I have identified under that particular description?

Hon. A J Isola: Yes Mr Speaker, of course all of these events are on our business development plan from Gibraltar Finance, which tells you 12 months in advance every single event that we are going to be attending, so all of the events that he has referred to, with the exception of Casablanca, are on that business plan. For example, Bermuda was insurance and primarily insurance-linked securities, and you will, I hope, have seen press reports of the arrival in Gibraltar of the largest provider of insurance-linked securities in the world, from Bermuda, who is now setting up and being licensed in Gibraltar – which is fantastic news. Monaco was hedge funds; it was a specific hedge fund conference. But again, the details of all these are in our business development plan, and if my friend would like to have details of any in particular, I would be absolutely delighted to pass them through to him.

With respect to Casablanca, that was slightly different. Meetings were arranged there with the stock exchange in Casablanca, with two large banks in Casablanca and two investment groups, specifically to look at what opportunities there were to link up the now licensed Stock Exchange in Gibraltar and a number of the banks that are interested in seeing how they can partner up with different Gibraltar businesses.

So yes, financial services focus totally.

Q534/2014

Gibraltar International Bank – Update on progress

Clerk: Question 534, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Financial Services provide an update on progress in relation to the Gibraltar International Bank, and particularly when he expects it will open in the new premises?

Again, in relation to this Question there has already been notice, after I filed the Question, that a specific month has been provided as to the opening of the bank – I think it is March next year. The only information that I had when I posed the Question was that it was expected to be opening in the early part of the next year, but now we have a date. But I will allow the Minister to answer.

Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola): If I can just say that the timing of that announcement was not prompted by the hon. Member’s Question, but very much more by the

announcement that he will have seen by Barclays Bank – probably the same day that he filed his Question, or the day before – of the extension of the closure of the bank until 29th May. As hon. Members will know, Barclays Bank was originally going to close at the end of this year. In discussions with them, they agreed to extend that; and in further discussions with them, as our date has drawn further away so has theirs, and I am grateful to them for having acceded to that request. So the timing of the response, or rather the release about the date, was more to ensure that people knew that before the Barclays date came – in other words, 29th May – there would be sufficient time for those without other alternative arrangements for their banking requirements had an option with the Gibraltar International Bank, which would open in March. That was the reason for the timing.

If I can just deal with the Question, to give a little bit more information, Mr Speaker, as Government has announced this week, it expects the bank to be open for business in March 2015, with the building works being completed in February 2015. Almost all of the staff have now been employed and are in the training process. IT and operational systems are on track and the board of directors are now having monthly meetings with the executive team. A huge amount of work is now being undertaken in preparation for the opening, and I am most grateful to the CEO and COO, Laurence Podesta and Derek Sene, for the professional manner in which they are driving this important project forward.

From press statements, Mr Speaker, the hon. Member will also be aware that what we call the ‘client on-boarding’ system has already opened, where people are able to go online, make appointments and submit their administrative forms to enable their accounts to be opened once the licence has been issued and the premises are open. So it is really just trying to get as many people through the administrative process as we possibly can before the opening date in March 2015 – which is going extremely well, I am delighted to report.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, the press release states that the opening will be in early March 2015 but subject to... it talks about all pending issues, including operational matters and all the rest of it. It also makes specific reference to meeting the conditions of the licence, which has been in principle granted by the FSC.

Is he able to provide the House with an indication as to when the full licence will be granted? Obviously, it will be before March, one would have thought, but is he able to give me an indication as to when he expects that to be granted, especially in the circumstances which he himself has alluded to – and it is certainly in all the adverts that we have seen in the local press – where the bank is already accepting applications to open new accounts?

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, the bank is *not* accepting applications to open new accounts. What we are doing is making administrative arrangements for the account process to be prepared in anticipation of the bank being opened. Obviously, once you go through that process and... If you want to call it an ‘account’... You cannot put any money in it and you cannot use it, because obviously there is no licence in place, so we call it the ‘client on-boarding’ process because we have to be careful to ensure that people understand that we are not opening an account – because we cannot yet, because we are not a bank.

With regard to the question as to the conditions of the licence and by when we would expect those to be satisfied, I have to say that obviously there is no question of the licence being issued until the bank is open. One of the things that the regulatory authority is required to do is to inspect the premises, ensure that everything is in situ and in place and fully functional. Primarily, the operational systems – obviously, as you can imagine – those have to be in sight and tested before the licence is granted. I would expect the licence to be granted and the conditions to be met literally in the very short period before the bank opens its doors. The majority of the conditions, with the exception of the one that it is open, I expect to be satisfied long in advance. They meet on a regular basis and they are ticking through the conditions as and when they go through, as you would expect, leaving the final items – which will be operational systems tested and premises are open and functional – until the very end. But certainly all the conditions that can be met before are being met and very good progress is being made in the normal way.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, just to point out that the advert does actually say that the Gibraltar International Bank will begin accepting applications to open new accounts, so I literally took it from what has been – (*Interjection*) Yes.

Is he able also just to clarify in my own mind which premises the bank will be operating from? We have got the premises by the Ince’s Hall Theatre, which I think is probably going to be the main premises, but are there not also premises where the old Lloyds Bank used to be? Can he confirm that those are going to be the two premises of the bank?

Hon. A J Isola: No, Mr Speaker, the only premises of the bank will be Ince's House. The premises opposite have got nothing to do with Gibraltar International Bank, nothing at all; just Ince's House – 310 Main Street, I think it is.

Hon. D J Bossino: The premises opposite... he is referring to the ones I referred to in Main Street, which used to be the old Lloyds Bank. Is he able to give an indication as to whether there is any Government involvement in relation to that? I think we have already asked a Question in relation to that, and I thought the answer that came back was that it was going to be GIB premises – but clearly I am wrong. Can he provide any explanation in relation to that?

Hon. A J Isola: Yes, Mr Speaker, my understanding is – and I am not certain of this – that that may be related to Gibraltar Savings Bank. It has got absolutely nothing to do with the Gibraltar International Bank.

Q535/2014
Gibraltar International Bank –
Equity funding

Clerk: Question 535, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Financial Services provide details of the breakdown of expenditure in relation to the £25 million which is being estimated for 2014-15 in respect of the equity funding of the Gibraltar International Bank?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services and Gaming.

Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, the amount of £25 million referred to in the estimates for the year 2014-15 is for the allocation of capital by Government in the Gibraltar International Bank Ltd, covering regulatory and working capital. Of this sum, the amount expended to the 30th September 2014 is £975,000, broken down as follows: staff costs, £244,000; temporary premises rental, £24,000; IT costs, £470,000; professional fees – which I have to say includes licence application fees to the Regulatory Authority – £208,000; others, £29,000.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful for that reply, Mr Speaker. Is he able to give me an indication – *(Interjection)* Yes.

Hon. A J Isola: Sorry, Mr Speaker, I am just being reminded that I had not finished the answer.

At the meeting of the board of directors held on 6th October 2014 – this may be where he was going – it was resolved to issue 4 million shares in favour of the Government of Gibraltar, worth £4 million. The remaining unissued share capital, up to a value of £25 million, would be issued before the opening of the bank in March 2015.

Hon. D J Bossino: It is probably an unfair question, given that it is –

Mr Speaker: In that case, don't ask it.

Hon. D J Bossino: No, if it is early days. I am just being kind to the hon. Member. He may think it is not unfair and he is more than capable of answering it.

Does he have an indication as to when he expects the bank will be self-financing? Again, I do admit that it is very early days, but does he have a plan as to when he expects it to be self-financing?

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, I have a dream, but – *(Interjection by Mr Speaker)* Yes, of course we have.

Hon. Sir P R Caruana: You know what happened to the last bank? *(Laughter)*

Hon. A J Isola: Yes, that is what Mr Speaker has just referred me to.

Of course we have the business plan, the cashflows, and they give estimates on the best-case and the worst-case scenario, but I do not think it would be appropriate for me to share that across the floor.

What I certainly am happy to say is that within a relatively short period of time I expect it to be profitable – and significantly profitable – so within a short period of time.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful for the answer – so it wasn't *that* unfair!

Mr Speaker, can I take it from that answer that he expects that the Government itself will not need to expend any more money in relation to this particular project? In other words, that the £25 million is expected to be the 'price tag', if you like, that the Government will have to expend on this particular project?

Hon. A J Isola: No, that is not the case. As the hon. Member will know, in banks the more successful you are the more capital you require to invest. With the ratios that are used to calculate regulatory capital, the more money you lend the more money you are going to have to invest as capital. So I would not be surprised if, within a relatively short period of time, there was not a need to inject further capital to maintain the buffers you are required to have, because your multipliers of deposits to loans are very much regulated and controlled. Consequently, the more successful we are, the more capital we are going to have sitting in the bank. So it is really something that very much depends on how good and successful we are able to be, particularly in the mortgage and the lending space.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, no... I understand that – that the more one lends, the more deposits, the more one is expected to have by way of, effectively a solvency buffer, and there are specific solvency requirements and capital requirements for banks – but of course the Government must expect to also have some return in terms of the profit from the bank up to the Government; or am I wrong in relation to that?

Is the model expected to be one of, effectively, the Government injecting money – albeit into a profitable bank, but the Government is injecting money – but expects to have nothing back from the bank? Are the profits going to be just simply reinvested in the bank, and also the money that the Government is going to be putting money in? What is the type of model that is envisaged in that regard by the Government?

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, the Government hopes and expects that it will receive a good return from its investment in the bank and that the shareholders of the bank will be able to receive their benefits like other shareholders do.

But of course what I cannot do is pre-empt what the situation is going to be at that time. For example, if there is a requirement to inject a further £1 million of capital and the profit is £1 million, it may well be that it is reinvested. That is something that is well premature for us to be considering, but certainly the Government's intention is to make a profit and have its shareholder returns from the profit of the bank, absolutely.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, I understand that and it may well be that, although there are going to be further requirements in the future for further investment in to the capital of this bank, that part of that – or indeed perhaps the entirety of that; we do not know – is then going to come from the profits that the bank declares up to the Government, so effectively the bank becomes self-sufficient, so to speak. There is no further money that is being injected by the Government; it is all done from profits of the bank up to the Government, and effectively going back into the bank.

This may be an unfair question, but does he have an idea of timescales within which the Government expects this bank to be self-sufficient in that way? It is a question that I asked the Hon. Gilbert Licudi, the Hon. the Minister for Justice and Minister for Education, in relation to the university, and he said 'Well, look, the business plan envisages that within two to three years the initial £10 million is going to cover two to three years.' I would expect that the thinking there is that within two to three years that university hopefully is going to reach a level keel, where the Government is not going to have to be investing any more money. Does he have any idea about this at all?

Hon. A J Isola: Yes, of course Mr Speaker. I indicated to his colleague, the Hon. Mr Bossino, that of course there is a business plan and projections with best-case and worst-case scenarios, and there are timescales attached to all of those things.

If I can just give you an example of how some of these projections can be adjusted so easily: as a result of having to do the client on-boarding, which I have just referred to earlier about the application process for the opening of accounts – and again, I say that word cautiously – we have had to bring forward the employment of the 50 staff that we have. They were originally going to be taken on, the bulk, at the end of this year. As a result of our requirement to do that earlier, we have had to bring the staff further forward. That has an impact: it is an extra cost.

Estimates are great, as you well know from your professional lives, but to what extent I can stand across this House and ask you to rely on them is extremely difficult. I am happy to stick to the same timeframe. I would certainly expect the bank, within two to three years, to be profitable. I certainly expect that to happen and I would hope that it happens long before then.

Q563/2014
Hong Kong Office –
New investment from China

Mr Speaker: Next Question.

920 **Clerk:** Question 563, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: It reads ‘the Chief Minister’, but I assume the Hon. Minister is going to answer it.
Can the Chief Minister state what new investment has come from China since the Government opened its office in Hong Kong?

925

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services and Gaming.

Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, it is widely acknowledged by the private sector that the previous Government wholly failed to make any real investment in time or resources in the promotion of Gibraltar internationally, particularly in the area of financial services – unlike many other small jurisdictions, which have been busy promoting themselves over these past years. We are, in effect, playing catch-up for the lost years, but as the private sector also acknowledges, we are taking giant strides to recover that lost ground.

930
935 The Gibraltar Hong Kong Office has already hosted, in its short time since opening, two visits from Gibraltar Finance, including one in which I participated, and will shortly be focused on shipping matters as it hosts my hon.Friend, the Hon. Mr Neil Costa, the Minister with responsibility for this area. These initiatives are crucial in delivering potential new markets to our private sector, and we are confident that these will bear fruit.

940 I am unable to detail any investment made, as business conducted during and after each of these visits will have been carried out by any of the four private sector firms, or indeed others, that joined and join our marketing initiatives.

945 The Gibraltar Hong Kong Office co-ordinated, arranged and introduced our delegations to senior partners in the major international law firms, international accountancy firms, international banks, senior regulators, fund manager administrators and influential politicians and businessmen. It also, in addition, arranged, co-ordinated and prepared the Gibraltar Day lunch in Hong Kong, which was attended by some 60 professionals in the particular funds sector and hosted by me.

950 We have a long way to go in realising our potential in the Asian markets, but I firmly believe that the opening of the Hong Kong Office is an enormous step forward – a view shared by many in the private sector. We are delighted with the work undertaken by the Hong Kong Office and hope it will continue to bring new opportunities to our community. I hope the Members opposite wish similarly.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, after that – to be honest, unexpected very partisan – answer, I take it that the answer to the question as to what new investment has come is no.

955 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, if my hon. Friend would like me to read the answer again, I am very happy to do it, but I will paraphrase it for him, just in case he missed any of the bits.

960 When you are involved in business development and promotions, I hope my learned friend will know, it takes an awful amount of time, and so for the hon. Member, after a number of months, to ask what investment has come to Gibraltar from China following the opening of the Hong Kong Office is ridiculous in the extreme.

965 As an example, as I have just mentioned in response to one of the earlier Questions, as a result of the visit that we carried out in Bermuda, and as a result of a marketing visit that we did to New York, the largest insurance-linked securities provider in the *world* is setting up in Gibraltar. That is *only* as a result of these marketing initiatives, but that has taken time – more time than he has allowed our Hong Kong Office to function and deliver what we believe it will deliver in the months ahead.

970 When I say that the Hong Kong Office arranged and co-ordinated the visits, what I am saying is that each day that we were there, for the three days that we were there – with private sector firms joining us, which you can happily verify from any of them; in fact, my learned friend’s firm, I am delighted to say, was with us in that visit – there were six or seven meetings organised with senior partners of these institutions, every single day that we were there. Unfortunately, because of flight connections and flight cancellations, we arrived at eight o’clock in the morning on the Monday, going straight into our first meeting at 10 o’clock, and carrying on for three days until we flew back at 11 o’clock at night the third day following.

I was *hugely* impressed by what Jason Cruz had managed to put together during that visit; *hugely* impressed at the quality of the people that we met and the quality of the individuals that he has come across

975 alone. There are some names that I would like to be able to throw across the floor, but I think it would be inappropriate to mention the names of individual firms that we met; but outside this Chamber I would be very happy to share them with my learned friend, so that he can have a flavour of the type and quality of people we are talking to. I firmly believe that it is only by engaging in those meetings, in those discussions and those initiatives that you will succeed in attracting business and investment to Gibraltar.

980 As I said, if I may, the people who will do the business and do the investments are the private firms, and although I have, on occasions – particularly following a visit I did with a specific private sector firm to Holland – received a very sweet thank you message a couple of weeks later, where they confirmed that as a result of that visit they had secured a huge client... These things happen, but I am not normally told, so I would not expect to know what the answer to the specific question is, as to whether business or investment has come.

985 I firmly believe that this is the only way that we will do it, and consequently we have to persevere and we have to invest in time and resources, and financially, to see the fruit of that work – there is no question.

990 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I take it from the answer that he has given and the eulogising of Mr Jason Cruz, a former GSLP activist, that the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services agrees with a payment of nearly £250,000 annually to Mr Cruz – inclusive of the private education of his children and also a housing allowance – and agrees too with the Government policy of making those payments, having made that appointment without that having gone out on advertisement and without that having gone out to competition to anybody else other than Mr Cruz.

995 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, I see that there was not actually any interest in listening to the answer to the question as to how the business development of this Government is working or functioning, or indeed any comments as to how one might be able to do it better, and that the sole purpose of the Question was for the usual political tripe that we hear from Members on the opposite side of this House. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

1000 Mr Speaker, when you consider that the previous Government, and indeed to an extent we can –

Mr Speaker: You are beginning to debate now.

1005 **Hon. A J Isola:** I am not, Mr Speaker. I am going to answer specifically the question that he has raised – talking about whether the money is justified; I need to answer that.

Mr Speaker: But do not draw and make comparisons between what the previous Government and you... Answer what it was you were asked.

1010 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, I would like a little bit of latitude to deal with the suggestion that this man is being overpaid and to put it into context and into perspective.

1015 When you consider that Gibraltar Day in London – that function that was started, and which I agree and support, by my hon. Friend, Sir Peter – that cost £150,000 for one day, I could have stood or written to you each of those years and said to you, ‘Is that value for money?’ Well, actually, I believe it was value for money, but that is for one day. So when you start talking about the quantum, I think these things need to be put into context. The question that I would have asked: is the Hong Kong office value for money? My answer to that question would have been, ‘Absolutely, yes.’

1020 As to whether he is a GSLP man or not, Jason Cruz happens to have lived in Hong Kong for 20 years, and if you would have cared to listen to my answer – and I told you specifically and I offered the names of the firms, outside this Chamber; the quality of the people that he is introducing us to, because he knows them and he has worked with them – you could not have a better introduction to the hierarchy of financial services in Hong Kong than we have obtained through Jason Cruz. So again: is the Hong Kong office value for money? Absolutely.

1025 Finally, Mr Speaker, as to the point as to whether the post was advertised, I think the hon. Member should know better than to ask this side of the House whether they advertised for positions or not, bearing in mind the record his Government had. (*Banging on desk*)

1030 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I am the one who posed the Question, and it was a very simple one: is there any new investment? He has said, ‘No, it takes time,’ – (*Interjection by Hon. D J Bossino*) I am just going to deal with it. I think he said in relation to... He has just said across the floor of the House that he did not say no, and he said it *could* be that new investments may have arisen from the trips he has undertaken and the establishment of the office in Hong Kong, but he is unable to verify that because...

1035 That is really what I want to explore further. Does he have, or should he not consider, if he does not – clearly he does not, but should he not consider having a system in place where he is able to identify whether

there have been any new investments arising from this particular initiative? It does cost money, that is a fact; and I think from a Government expenditure point of view he ought to be able to, I think, analyse whether it is value for money and whether Gibraltar plc is seeing the returns from that particular investment.

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, a very fair and sensible question, if I may say so myself.

If the hon. Member looks to his right, he will see a business development manager from a law firm whom I have spent an awful lot of time with in the past, and he will be able to tell him just how difficult it is in the function of business development to evaluate how successful in real terms that system is, or that work is. It is *extremely* difficult.

But there are two aspects that I see to it. One of them is the raising of the profile of Gibraltar as a jurisdiction, which I believe is fundamental and we have to do. So what does that mean? That means getting to people and explaining to them what Gibraltar is all about and what you can do from here. That could take the form of trade press, trade media and interviews where that sort of work can happen. Then you have also got the direct: going to meet people, spending time with people in the major firms, banks and institutions.

To put a system in place to monitor that is extremely difficult. As I mentioned earlier, we do not get the feedback from the firms individually as to whether they have been successful or not; but what we do do is, as we are now sitting to evaluate the business development plan for Gibraltar Finance for the next 12 months, of course we go back – we look at which events we thought were value for money and which were not, and we will be making some changes, absolutely. We will be seeking to identify which we thought we got real value back from and which we did not. Don't forget that that business development plan came across, or was conceived, following a whole range of meetings that I had with Gibraltar Finance and of course the Finance Centre Council and all the different members of those associations and individual member firms. We sat down with them and said, 'Which are the functions you think we should be at?' But of course what we also said at the time was, 'When we look back over the last 12 months we are going to see where you have come with us,' because that indicates whether they believe they are good events. Very easy to say, 'We think that was a fantastic event,' but if they do not come with us, how good do they really think it is? At the same time, we appreciate they cannot come to all of them. So we are going through that process now to see which of the events we believe are really good value.

But in terms of monitoring I think it is almost impossible – and we have to accept that – to get a real tick box as to which ones have produced direct business or not. That is extremely difficult to do, as I am sure his friend to the right of him will confirm to him.

Hon. D J Bossino: Given that the Hon. Minister is obviously very keen with the idea of having a presence in China – well, Hong Kong is in China. We have had answers in relation to Mr Cruz. I think the intention is, in the medium term, that he will be shifted to the London Office. If and when that happens, what is the Government's intention in relation to the Hong Kong Office? I suppose once he has done that analysis he has just spoken about and he thinks it is a going concern and still a valid and profitable idea to pursue for Gibraltar plc purposes... What is the Government's intention? Is it the intention to continue to staff that office for the future?

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, I am not, myself, involved in the planning arrangements as to where Mr Cruz is, or is not, or will be, or indeed what the future plans for the office are; but certainly it is my hope and expectation that that office will continue and will be manned. As to who will man that, if Mr Cruz is to move, it is too early days for me to be able to honestly tell you the answer to that question.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, does the hon. Gentleman know what the cost of the Hong Kong Office is, apart from the moneys that are being paid to Mr Cruz for running that office – which is obviously part of what we are discussing today, which is the cost effectiveness compared to the returns of the office?

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Minister does not have to answer that question. It does not arise from the original Question.

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, I agree and I do not know the answer to that question.

What I can tell him is that the office itself, which I have been to, is an extremely modest office which barely fits the two desks that are in there, but in a reasonable location, which we thought was more appropriate than having a bigger office somewhere else.

I cannot tell you the costs, because I am not familiar with them.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, the thought does cross my mind, and I think it does arise from the Question: is it fair to say that the Government did not really have a business plan as such – in other words,

did it send somebody over just to investigate that particular market and whether there was a possibility... it is a question of setting up the office and then seeing how that goes, and then assessing, as he mentioned in answer to one of my previous supplementaries, whether it is actually value for money? I suppose the question is: did the Government have a business plan *before* it decided to take the policy decision of opening up an office in Hong Kong?

Hon. A J Isola: Yes, Mr Speaker, as the hon. Member will know, we have focused on a number of non-EU markets – which obviously include Hong Kong, including New York, South Africa and Bermuda, which are the four jurisdictions that we targeted some time back – to see how we could best promote and develop bigger and better relationships with these places. This is part of that process.

I think there has been a lot of interaction with Hong Kong people and firms. You may know that there are Hong Kong interests in a number of very large firms in Gibraltar today and so, to seek to continue to develop those relationships, and links were identified quite some significant time ago – long before I did my business development plan for this year, 14 or 15 months ago. So, yes.

TRAFFIC, HOUSING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Q514/2014

Parking – Plans for airport

Mr Speaker: We go back to Question 514, the Hon. Selwyn Figueras.

Clerk: Question 514, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Traffic say whether there are any plans in place for the additional provision of parking, whether short or long term, in the vicinity of the Airport?

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 Government is currently considering expressions of interest submissions for the old air terminal site and the provision of parking within a future development is one of the requirements.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, what exactly is the Government doing to deal with the difficulties that people are experiencing with the absence of parking, particularly in light of the loss of the parking that was allocated to... I am not sure who it was, but what used to be the long-term Airport car park?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, I am not clear... Could you please repeat the question? I am not clear what...

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Government say what it is doing to address the concerns expressed by citizens and the difficulties that they are enduring, in particular since the loss of the long-term Airport car park that was opposite the site of the old airport?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, the actual site people used to use as the long-term car park was taken over by the Bus Company. There have been people requesting similar facilities, which are not possible at the moment, but the Government is looking to see whether there is any possibility of providing some sort of longer-term parking within the area; but at present it is not possible to say anything more.

Hon. S M Figueras: Yes, Mr Speaker, that is a medium to however long-term solution at some point in the future, and of course the difficulties are being endured now. So there are two supplementaries. The first would be: when is he expecting that these expressions of interest will become anything like progress towards delivering a solution for the problems that people are enduring today; and secondly –

Mr Speaker: Let him answer the first one.

Hon. S M Figueras: Yes.

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, proposals are actually being looked at at the moment. As to a timeframe, it is not possible for me to say.

1155 Obviously, the loss of that car park... It was a big car park and it will not be possible to provide parking for as many vehicles. What does happen at the moment is there has been a change to the way that the big car park is being operated so that people can leave their cars overnight, and that was not possible before. That is in the big car park closest to the Frontier.

1160 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Would the Government perhaps consider some kind of park-and-ride solution for the time being, for people who typically used to park their cars in the long-term car park to cross over into Spain on foot and leave it there for a few hours? Is this something that the Government is or could consider in respect of an interim solution?

1165 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, there is a car park presently at the Western Beach area, just close to the Frontier itself. That is available overnight and can be used as a long-term parking facility. I am not sure what the cleaning campaign is, but there is regularly cleaning – I think it is once every month at the moment. But other than that, the car park is free to be used by people for long-term parking.

1170 **Hon. S M Figueras:** And can the Minister say whether that facility will be of... The complaints that I have received I have received notwithstanding the fact that I am certain those who have brought the complaints to my attention are aware that that facility is available, and it strikes me that it may well be that despite the availability of that facility the situation is unsatisfactory in respect of those who have made the complaints.

1175 Will the Minister confirm that there is no end in sight, as far as he can say today, in relation to the problem of parking in the vicinity of the Airport?

1180 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, no; as I said, there is parking available at Western Beach. The truth of the matter is that people who have complained to me about the loss of the longer-term parking, as you have mentioned, when they have been told that there is availability for long-term parking at Western Beach they are surprised. We have announced it. It is something which should be known, and obviously just by mentioning it today I am hoping people will become more aware of it, but once they know that it is available they say, 'Well, that is an alternative.'

1185 **Hon. S M Figueras:** So would the Government consider reissuing some kind of notice to let the people know? Because it appears to me that many people simply do not know that it is available.

1190 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, yes, that is fine, we can issue something; but it *has* been advertised, a press release *was* issued and it is something that people should know. Perhaps because of the fact that they have to drive through the old boat area is maybe something they feel they are not aware of, but most definitely there is ample parking there for people who want to park long term for the Airport.

1195 **Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** Almost as a user I am interested in, rather than as a Member of the House. He said that one of the parking's was now, as a novelty, available overnight. Did he mean the one immediately outside the Air Terminal, or the one where the old air terminal stood, that is now a coach park? Or neither of those?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, the parking at Western Beach is totally free, as opposed to having to pay. The old car park was a pay car park, the old long-term. The one that we actually use at the moment, not only has it got more parking spaces available, but it is free.

1200 **Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** Would the hon. Member consider the possibility – I accept that you would not wish to interfere with the operation of the Air Terminal, or indeed the coach park the following morning – whether there would be scope for allowing overnight – say, cars to be away by nine o'clock in the morning, which is long before any flight arrives – the use of one of the car parks nearer the border?

1205 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, in fact, as I mentioned earlier, the larger car park, which is north of the old airport terminal and which is a pay-and-display facility, after a given hour – I think it is seven o'clock in the evening, if I am correct – can be used until the next day. I am not sure whether it is nine o'clock in the morning, but there is a relaxation of pay and display during the evenings.

1210 **Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** That is what I had asked. I had understood him to say that it was neither of those, but it was the one that... So the one immediately outside the terminal, the one that we might use when going to the Air Terminal, that is available overnight on a pay-and-display basis?

1215 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, it is the one north of the old airport terminal and east of North Front. It is the large one.

Hon. Sir P R Caruana: North or west... To me the old airport terminal means... (*Inaudible*) He means...

1220 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, it is the one where the Bureau de Change is.

Hon. Sir P R Caruana: Oh!

1225 **Hon. Chief Minister:** *'El que hace esquina.'*

Hon. Sir P R Caruana: Yes, yes.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, just for the avoidance of doubt, the constituents who have lodged these complaints with me – one of them is *not* my hon. and learned Friend, Sir Peter Caruana.

1230 I suspect this may have something to do with the lack of awareness that we have just touched upon: would the Government consider perhaps... I do not know what kind of signposting is up in the area of the access to that Western Beach parking area. Is there something that perhaps the Minister could undertake to have looked into, to see whether perhaps it could be made a little more apparent, if it is not already?

1235 **Hon. P J Balban:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

Q515/2014
Parking –
Plans for town area

Clerk: Question 515, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Traffic say whether there are any plans to provide further parking in the town area in the short to medium term; and if so, what these plans are?

1240 After asking this Question, a statement has come out in relation to the 400 new parking's that have been painted on the site in the area of where the old Naval Ground car park was. It is not yet operational, but I have asked the Question in any event because it was posed before the press release.

1245 **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 Government has recently opened two new car parks: one at Coaling Island and the other on the Mid-town site where the fair was held. Together they will provide in excess of 500 parking spaces. These car parks will remain in use at least until the new multi-storey car park, delivering 1,000 parking spaces, is completed next year.

1250 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Sorry, Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister says that they have opened the two car parks, but it is not in fact the case, because certainly this morning at half past eight, when I was coming in, the car park on the site of the Mid-town area was not yet open. When is it expected that it will open?

1255 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, yes, the hon. Member is correct. The car park at Coaling Island is open now, and because of inclement weather – it was raining last week – it was not possible to paint all the lines, but its opening is imminent.

Q516/2014
Cycling safety awareness –
Plans for campaign launch

1260 **Clerk:** Question 516, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Traffic say when he plans to finally launch cycling safety awareness campaigns in Gibraltar?

1265 **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 do not recall ever having said that the Ministry would be launching a cycling safety awareness campaign in the future.

1270 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Yes, Mr Speaker, that was the point of the Question! (*Laughter*)

I was wondering whether perhaps I might well prompt the Minister into contemplating what certainly Members on this side of the House and some on that consider is a reality, i.e. the growth of cycling in Gibraltar, and that perhaps it may now be time, three years into their term of office, to contemplate, in addition to other campaigns that they have had – for example, in respect of recycling – one in relation to cycling awareness, because yes, and I pointed out to you and you just didn't have... (*Interjection*) Re cycling yes – yes, indeed! (*Interjection*) Yes, there was 'cycling' in it, but it is not the cycling of the kind I had contemplated.

1275 So, Mr Speaker, the question is: will the Government now contemplate, in the face of what certainly in my view is the inescapable reality of the increase of the use of bicycles in Gibraltar, will it contemplate a cycling safety awareness campaign – in addition to what is already done by way of cycling proficiency at a very young age, but something that is done in respect of the increased use by adults of cycling in Gibraltar?

1280 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I apologise for... I would not say 'misreading', because if I actually read the Question, it says 'Can the Minister for Traffic say when he plans to *finally* launch cycling safety awareness campaigns?' When you say 'finally' it is as if I have said it in the past and when am I going to *finally* do it.

1285 It is something which, as I mentioned before... Apart from the cycling proficiency campaign, as you rightly mention, which the RGP does – I don't know with what frequency – the Government will contemplate, if need be, some sort of campaign regarding cycling. We are extremely happy that, as the hon. Member says, that more people are using bicycles, so that is something which we are very happy about.

1290 The fact that he mentioned that we have had long enough to actually do some sort of cycling awareness campaign... Well, you had, in the previous Administration, even longer to have some sort of cycling awareness campaign done, and apart from the GibiBike scheme, which might be a good thing to recycle, as opposed to help or to encourage people to cycle, as far as I am aware was the only thing that was done on that side.

1295 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, in respect of interpretation of the English language, the Minister has found himself in hot water in the past, and I shall not revisit those particular examples but suffice to say that the Question really very clearly intimated the exasperation on this side of the House with the lack of cycling awareness campaigns launched by this Government in the three years.

1300 He also says, as if it were some kind of legitimate defence, that the Members on this side of the House who were in Government for 16 years had that much longer to launch that. However, the cycling phenomenon is one which has seen significant and recent growth, and that is the reason why this Question has been asked. (*Interjection*) Yes, fine. I do not have proof, I am not going to adduce any kind of evidence – I am not in court – and other Members, including the Minister himself, have acknowledged that there has been an increase in cycling in Gibraltar in recent times. (*Interjection*) Yes, I was going to ask a question.

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Question.

1310 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Could the Minister say, can the Minister say, because, of course, a cycling awareness campaign is not just about awareness of cycling safety for the cyclist themselves, will the Minister consider a cycling awareness campaign which targets certain issues in relation to the interaction of cyclists and motorists on Gibraltar's roads – which is, at the end of the day, what causes perhaps the most significant danger to cyclists on our roads?

1315 **Hon. P J Balban:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

Q517/2014
New road to the south –
Plans for creation

Mr Speaker: Next Question.

Clerk: Question 517, the Hon. S M Figueras.

1320

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Traffic now say whether the Government will be investing in creating what many consider a necessary and additional road south from Queensway through New Harbours?

1325

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, as already stated in answer to Question 164/2014, the Government is considering the options and necessity of providing a new road to the south as part of the Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan process.

1330

Hon. S M Figueras: What a shocker!

Mr Speaker, I suspect that we will cover this again, as we have done on many occasions in the past. Is there any indication of when that phenomenal – as it must be by now, surely – Sustainable Traffic and Transport Plan will see the light of day, and others beyond the Minister, because I am not certain even other Cabinet Members have seen it, will be able to see it?

1335

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, soon.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, ‘soon’ is really a very elastic term. Is he able to commit to a week, two weeks, a month, three months, on the eve of the next election in their manifesto?

1340

Hon. P J Balban: No, Mr Speaker.

Q518/2014
Parking –
Plans for pilot schemes

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

1345

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for Traffic say whether the Government is planning on launching any pilot parking schemes in Gibraltar?

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

1350

Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, the Government is considering various parking options and strategies as part of its Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan. These will be piloted as and when deemed necessary, either in the run up to the STTP publication or afterwards.

1355

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I note with increasing concern that Members on the other side of the House find it very entertaining that the Minister for Traffic is holding the community to ransom on the basis of a plan – which has been paid for by the Taxpayer – which has been ostensibly created following the user trip survey that was also conducted here in Gibraltar and should have been ready, according to what the Minister himself has said in this House, in the first quarter of this year.

1360

Does the Minister consider that it is right and appropriate, and ultimately entertaining or a matter that is not important enough, to continue to hold the community to ransom by not publishing *anything* that is in that plan or giving *any kind of insight*, Mr Speaker, into what is contained in that plan?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member... [*Inaudible*]

1365

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, yes, I will. Yes, of course.

Mr Speaker: It is very serious language...

Hon. S M Figueras: I will very happily, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: I wonder whether...

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, no-one is suggesting –

Mr Speaker: I wonder whether it is proper language to use... to hold the community to ransom.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I will –

Mr Speaker: I would advise the hon. Member to be more temperate in his use of strong language.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I do not feel passionate enough about the use of that term to not be happy to retract it – which I do, if that will make it easier.

Mr Speaker: Carry on. Thank you.

Hon. S M Figueras: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Does the Minister think it is right that, in respect of a plan where Taxpayers' money has been invested and so much effort has gone into it by so many different people, that he should be holding on to the results which ostensibly he has without revealing the detail, or at least some general ideas that have emerged from the process, for as long as he doing?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): That is a general point, and I am going to answer it on behalf of the whole Government.

Mr Speaker, one of things that we spent a lot of time arguing when we were in Opposition was that plans prepared by the Taxpayer should be published. We are going to follow up on that policy and we are going to publish our plan. The timing of that is a matter for us, and the hon. Member will have the next election campaign to go around Gibraltar telling people that we have not published things and that we have not done them – *if* we have not done them.

What I can give the hon. Member an assurance of is that we will take our own medicine and we *will* publish the plans that we have had prepared from the Taxpayer – quite unlike the plan into the future of GBC, which was published in the first week after our election, after the previous Administration failed to publish it; the plan into the future of the Customs Department, which was paid for the Taxpayer and which the previous Administration failed to publish, and which we published to the unions and to members of the Customs Department – and nobody in the media seemed very interested in it, I must tell you.

All of the plans that we criticised had not been published were published and all plans that we undertake at Taxpayers' expense will be published – unless there is a very good reason not to publish them, and there are some things which are internal documents to the Government, but plans like this, which are undertaken for the community, will be published.

So the hon. Gentleman is, in effect, having had that assurance from me and previously from the Minister, just timing our compliance with that commitment. Well, fine; so be it. He can time us and he can ask us every month whether the time has come when we will publish. We will publish when we are ready to publish, but publish we will.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, the Hon. the Chief Minister misses the point entirely of the line of questioning.

My only interest in the publication of the plan is to understand what it is that this Government is planning to do vis-à-vis the traffic problem, which is, as many people tell me on a daily basis, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) nothing short of a nightmare. Because frankly, since they did the Commonwealth Park and since they started work on the – and this is not to make any comment in relation to the suitability or the desirability of any of those projects – since they started work on the Commonwealth Park and on the coach park site for the new housing, it has been diabolical trying to find a parking in town area, and all they have done is gone after any flat piece of ground and thrown white paint at it to try and play the game of catch-up that they themselves have put themselves into.

What I am getting to, Mr Speaker, is the fact that they do not give us any idea of what solution –

Mr Speaker: Ask a question and get there.

Hon. S M Figueras: The question, Mr Speaker, is: is the Government content that, in light of the very real concerns and the very real difficulties being experienced by many Gibraltarians from a wide cross-section of this community on a daily basis... are they happy to continue to keep us in the dark in relation to what solutions, if any, may be coming in the short, medium or long term, so that we know whether they have any idea of how to deal with the problem?

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman wants to make a point because he thinks that there is an opportunity for political advantage, but what he needs to understand is that he is soon going to find himself in a position where there is more parking available now in the town area than there was in the time when they were in Government, and that when we finish the multi-storey car park facility that we are providing at the Naval Ground in the area of the old Regal Cinema, there will be even more and they will be denuded of an opportunity to challenge the Government even on parking.

But the fascinating thing about all of this, Mr Speaker, is that I thought that the hon. Gentleman was a proponent of the 'In town without my car' campaign who wanted to see less parking, people on buses and people on bicycles! (*Laughter*) But now he has become the champion of the motorist. He has got to choose which side he is on: if he is on the side of the motorist, he will soon find more parking's than ever; and if he is on the side of 'In town without my car', he will find the fabulous new buses are rolling out as from this week. Either way, he has got a way to get into town but no political argument against the Government.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, the party that is politically schizophrenic in this respect is the party in Government today. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) (*Banging on desks*) The party in Government today pretends to be the Government of the environment. It is the party in Government today that has that environmental filter they talk about, Mr Speaker, yet all they do is build car parks, yet all they do is try and cover the gap in parking, because they are the ones who committed to building twice the number of parking spaces under the Commonwealth Park and then failed to deliver spectacularly on that manifesto commitment. *They*, Mr Speaker, are the ones who committed to more parking, and therefore if they are only a quarter of the way to fulfilling that commitment, they are only a quarter of the way and they are failing the community on their own schizophrenic commitment to the community.

Will this Government publish?...Will this Government give the community that is facing the difficulty that it is facing today any indication of what it is that they are planning to do to alleviate the traffic problem in Gibraltar, and in particular the school and office run?

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am not going to use mental health terms, which I think are inappropriate. (*Interjections*) Yes, yes, I think they are inappropriate. I know that the hon. Members will mock anything, even mental health if they have to, but I am not going to fall into that trap.

Mr Speaker, I will tell you what we are doing: we are doing a serious plan that will deal with these issues, which should have been before. It is going to be published soon and you will be able to see what it provides for then.

The hon. Gentleman has gone on another soliloquy – I heard a couple yesterday from the Leader of the Opposition and I have heard one from him today – about how we are failing and have failed a manifesto commitment. But is it that *he* actually is the one who has a problem with the English language, as he has suggested to the Hon. Minister a moment ago? Because if he reads our manifesto it is very clear what is going to happen under Commonwealth Park, in what circumstances it is going happen and when it might not. And as a result of not providing double the number of parking's at Commonwealth Park under Commonwealth Park, he now knows that we are going to provide them... in fact even more than double the parking's that we would have provided under Commonwealth Park are going to be provided, as I have told him before, in the area of the Regal Cinema.

So he needs to go away, reflect on what he has been told today, reflect on what is out there, and really come up with other issues that he might try and hit the Government on, rather than continue to try and make an attempt to go down this road, because it really is a dead-end for him.

Q519/2014
Eastern Beach car park –
Budget and final cost

Mr Speaker: Next Question.

Clerk: Question 519, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for Traffic say what the budget for the Eastern Beach public parking, completed in June this year, was; and how much the final cost of this parking has been to the Taxpayer?

1485

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 total cost of the multi-storey car park project to the Taxpayer was £2,085,832.52.

1490

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister has not answered the aspect of the Question that asked him for what the budget was.

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, I will get that information for the hon. Member. I have taken it as what was the final cost to the Taxpayer of the parking itself, and that is the information I have provided. I have not got the information regarding the budget part of things – I will get that to him.

1495

Hon. S M Figueras: So he is saying that the Question, which asked what the budget for the parking was and the final cost... and he is only able to deliver the final cost? Is it because there was no budget for this project?

1500

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, if I can assist the House, this is very simple: the Eastern Beach car park was put to the three-quotes system, which is the system that Government has been using for some time now, including under the previous Administration, and therefore the quotes that came in were the budgets which were accepted and were the final costs. In other words, it was a turnkey operation, and what we were told was the budget is what has been the final cost.

1505

Q520/2014

Eastern Beach car park – Payments to contractors and subcontractors

Clerk: Question 520, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Traffic say which contractors and subcontractors worked on the construction of the Eastern Beach public parking facility, providing details of the payments received by each contractor and subcontractor and in respect of which services such payments have been received?

1510

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

1515

Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, the information requested is set out in the table which I now hand over to the hon. Member.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 520

SUB-CONTRACTORS	WORKS PROVIDED
CK TRANSPORT	Excavation and ground compaction
ZAMBRANO	Foundation and upper floors
SILMAT	Underground and suspended drainage
ON THE LEVEL	Manholes bricklayers
GENERAL LIFTS	Lift Installation
VANADIUM	Parapet walls and columns render
ADELON	Stainless steel balustrade, columns protectors, aluminium posts, fire staircases
JAMENA	Roof floor slab Sikadeck, columns paint, parking bays paint
SHERIFF	CCTV, Lighting, lightning and fire detection installation
AMANO	Access and exit barriers, payment machines
AMCO	Entrance asphalt works
GIBELEC	Power supply - Service provider
GIBRALFLORA	Landscaping
CONCRETE PUMPING	Concrete pump
SERGEYCO	Concrete cubes and ground tests
CHUBB	Dry risers test
AQUAGIB	Service corridor pipe - Service provider
FILL-A-SKIP	Site Cleaning
HSE	Health and Safety Services
HUNE	Lifting platforms hire
MERIDIAN	Setting Out Surveyor
KS	Design

Hon. P J Balban: Due to commercial considerations, it is not possible to provide the payments made to each of these subcontractors. The value of the subcontractor's works is approximately 60% of the overall project cost.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I recognise how, in the planning stages of a project and even during a project of this kind, that to give information in relation to how much you are budgeting for it and the individual projects and how much you are expecting to pay or how much you are paying during the life of the project could be commercially sensitive – though not always, but sometimes certainly. Why is it that after the event it continues to be commercially sensitive?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the Government has no reason not to give this information. We have been advised it is commercially sensitive. I will go back and ask and try and drill down whether it is.

I see no reason why, after the works have been finished, it might not be provided, unless... What I can imagine is – but I will go back – that some of the prices that these entities give the entity that has done this car park, they might not want to disclose to others. That may be the issue, but I will go back and try and understand that.

Hon. S M Figueras: I am grateful and I will certainly write to the Minister to request him –

Chief Minister: To No. 6.

Hon. S M Figueras: It is a No. 6 problem? I will write to No. 6.

Mr Speaker, a further supplementary in relation to the schedule: the second subcontractor referred to is Zambrano: is that Zambrano, the Spanish company or Zambrano Ltd, the Gibraltar-based entity?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, I am not aware, so if the hon. Gentleman cares to write, then I will furnish him with that information.

Hon. S M Figueras: I will add that to the letter to No. 6 when I write in relation to the split and payments made.

Further along the schedule, item 5, the fifth subcontractor is General Lifts. Is that the name of the company: General Lifts?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, I believe so; that is the name of the company, General Lifts.
(Interjection)

1555 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, further along the schedule, fourth from... the imaginatively named Concrete Pumping is... what is provided is a concrete pump. That is also the name of the company?

1560 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, if the schedule actually sets it down as a subcontractor, it must be the name of the subcontractor. I will pursue this – this is information that has been provided to me – when I pass this to the technical staff.

Q521/2014
Government rental homes –
Unpaid rents written off

Mr Speaker: Question 521.

Clerk: Question 521, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1565 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Sorry, Mr Speaker, I was waiting for the Clerk to call out the number.
Mr Speaker, further to Question W145/2014, can the Minister for Housing provide updated details of how much has been written off in respect of unpaid rents pertaining to Government rental homes so far in 2014-15?

1570 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

1575 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, no moneys have been written off so far in relation to 2014-15, because this is a lengthy and continuing exercise. Unfortunately, many millions have had to be written off once the exercise has been completed for the reasons already discussed, namely the fact that rents over six years due are not recoverable under the Limitation Act.

1580 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, I understand that part, that after a period of limitation... but in the current financial year no-one has entered into that period, and therefore it is automatically written off. Is that what the Minister is confirming?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, that is correct.

Q522/2014
Refurbishment of Government rental homes –
Damage by rainwater ingress

Clerk: Question 522, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1585 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details of the extent of damages caused to rental homes as a result of rainwater ingress during ongoing refurbishment works during the months of September and October 2014?

1590 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

1595 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, to date 16 flats have been affected by water ingress. I am advised that the immediate internal surfaces have been affected and the contractor has already undertaken effective repairs. One flat sustained damage to personal effects. These were immediately replaced by the contractor, GJBS.

Hon. E J Reyes: So the Minister is saying that in the 16 flats affected one personal effects were damaged and replaced by the contractor: what sort of damage was caused to the other 15 flats? Can I have a general picture?

1600 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, the 16 flats affected were mainly minor internal ceiling damage. There were also two flats that had... in fact, there were three flats with minor sill damage. I presume that was windowsill damage.

1605 **Hon. E J Reyes:** And as far as the Minister is aware, none of them suffered damage where the water ingress could have caused a danger to electrical installations and so on? Is he aware of anything of that nature that could have happened?

1610 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, no, the information I have received is that the damage, which has already been taken care of or is in the process of being taken care of, was minor in nature, and as I said it was minor internal ceiling damage and minor windowsill damage. The actual personal effects that were damaged were replaced and they were of a minor nature because of the water ingress.

1615 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, in the same way that the personal effects damage was repaired by the contractor or subcontractor, these sort of damages – which we are glad to hear were mainly of a minor nature... will that increase now the cost to Government in respect of the refurbishment works, or does the contractor have to assume making right what damage was caused?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether that will be an extra cost or whether the insurance of GJBS will cover the damage in that respect. I can find out.
I have just been informed that it is not at extra cost to the Government.

1620

Q523/2014
Mid-Harbour Estate –
Details of outstanding works

Clerk: Question 523, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1625 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Further to the answer to Question W146/2014, can the Minister for Housing provide updated details, together with estimated completion dates, in respect of works still to be completed at Mid-Harbour Estate?

1630 **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, as informed in my answer to Question W146/2014, the CCTV project at Mid-Harbour Estate has now been completed.

1635 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes Mr Speaker, I am glad to note that the CCTV is now completed.
My Question is saying is what works still have to be completed. If I can give him an example, I know the barriers at the entrance to the parking areas seem to be installed but I do not see them functional, so probably that is still an ongoing work. Can we therefore have an estimated completion date?

1640 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, no, that has also been completed. That is just pending... The barriers have been operating for quite a while now. We are actually in the process of deciding how we are going to issue fobs to the persons who live there and parking permits, so we are actually speaking to the tenants' association to see what is the best way forward in that respect, but we are quite advanced with that at the moment.

1645 **Hon. E J Reyes:** And does the Minister have any hopeful date by when this will be completed?

1650 **Hon. P J Balban:** As I said, Mr Speaker, we are at an advanced stage now of seeing how we are going to do this, in terms of the delivery of fobs to the different households. There are different options: whether we give just one fob per household or we give numerous fobs per household, or we give one permit or numerous permits. It should be quite soon now, but I cannot give him an exact date though.

Q524/2014
Refurbishment of empty homes –
Expenditure incurred

Clerk: Question 524, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1655 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing provide updated details in respect of all expenditure incurred since the answer to Question W147/2014 in respect of contracts awarded for making empty homes suitable for reallocation, stating to whom payments were made, how much has been paid, the number of residential homes pertaining to each payment, as well as indicating if the services contracted were for either repair works or cleaning services?

1660 **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.

Answer to Question 524

Contractors	No. of Properties	Cost
S J BUILDER	1	£11,647.32
BROTNS WOOD WORKS	1	£4,827.00
CRJN CONSTRUCTION	1	£7,660.00
SARAH JANE CONSTRUCTION	1	£4,739.00
JOAQUIM PACHECO DA CRUZ	1	£4,510.00
BROTNS WOOD WORKS	1	£6,461.57
NP CONSTRUCTION	1	£5,300.00
C.I.A.P CONSTRUCTION	2	£5,065.00
LIMATRON LTD	1	£12,020.00
RIBEIRO	1	£3,520.00
W & N WORKS LTD	1	£5,000.00
CEPRANO LTD	1	£4,900.00
NCS CONSTRUCTION	1	£8,000.00

ALL SERVICES CONTRACTED WERE FOR REPAIRS
NONE WERE FOR CLEANING

1665 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, if I may, as I do every single month when this Question is asked, I will mention that all services contracted were for repairs and none were for cleaning.

1670 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, sorry, there are a couple there that stick out. The first one, for £11,647, seems to be more than double what the average costs of the others are. The same as just under halfway down: another one for £12,020. Given that these are substantially more than the others, does the Minister have any additional information to explain why these are much higher costs than the others?

1675 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I can only assume that there was much more work involved in repairing those flats. I do not why they are double the amount, but clearly it is because more work was involved.

1680 **Hon. E J Reyes:** It does follow a bit, Mr Speaker, that the higher the costs the more work is involved. What I was getting at... Perhaps I have not explained myself properly. Is it because, in this particular case for example, one of them being doubled – unlike normal refurbishments that lead to figures of £4,000 or £5,000 as the majority is – being doubled – is it because there was major work, for example re-roofing or something like that? Does he have any particular notes, or does he simply want to look into it and then he can come back to me when his technicians have been able to furnish him with the required information?

1685 **Hon. P J Balban:** Yes Mr Speaker, I have the actual addresses of the flats, but the information that he is requesting I do not have available. Again, I can find out why exactly it was that these figures were higher than the average.

Q525/2014

**Government rental homes –
Responsibility for repairs**

Mr Speaker: Question 525, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1690 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing provide details in respect of rental homes assigned since the answer to Question W148/2014, indicating how many will be repaired by (a) the Housing Works Agency; (b) subcontractors; and (c) the assigned tenants themselves?

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

1695 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the Housing Works Agency, 2; subcontractors, 10; and the assigned tenants themselves, 10.

Q526/2014

**Government rental homes –
Urgent decanting of tenants**

1700 **Clerk:** Question 526, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Housing provide details of how many tenants required urgent decanting from their homes since the answer to Question W149/2014, indicating the reason why, the date when said decanting became necessary and the date when the tenants were able to return to their home?

1705 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

1710 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, since the answer to Question 149/2014, a total of six tenants have required urgent decanting from their homes. These are as follows: tenant 1 was decanted because of fire, they were out since 27th May 2014 and they returned to their flat on 29th May 2014, so only two days afterwards; tenant 2 was decanted because of the need for works, they were out on 28th July and they came back in on 29th September; tenant 3 once again was works related, they were decanted on 9th August 2014 and they are still out at the moment – they have still not returned to their property; tenant 4 again was works related, they were decanted on 27th August and were allowed to return home on 15th September; tenant 5 once again was also works related, they were
1715 decanted on 21st September and they returned to their house the day after, on 22nd September; and tenant 6 was another unfortunate incident of fire, the tenant was decanted urgently on 22nd September and unfortunately has not been able to return as yet.

Q527/2014

**Residential homes –
Allocations and assignments**

Clerk: Question 527, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1720 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing say how many residential homes, since the answer to Question W150/2014, have been (a) allocated and (b) assigned, showing the room composition of the respective homes?

1725 **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 start off with the allocated ones: 1RKB, 3 have been allocated; 2RKB, 25 have been allocated; 3RKB, 19 have been allocated; 4RKB, 8 have been allocated; 5RKB, 2 have been allocated; no flats of composition 6 have been allocated.

1730 Assigned: 1RKB, 2 have been assigned; 2RKB, 9 have been assigned; 3RKB, 7 have been assigned; 4RKB, 4 have been assigned; 5RKB and 6RKB, neither have been assigned.

Q528/2014
Government rental homes –
Numbers vacant

Clerk: Question 528, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1735 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, further to Question W153/2014, can the Minister for Housing say how many Government rental homes are currently vacant, providing details of the dates from which such homes have been unoccupied and stating how many of these are pre-war and post-war homes?

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

1740 **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.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 528

Pre_Post_W	Date_Handover	PreWar		PreWar		PreWar	
PreWar	22/10/2003	PreWar	07/12/2010	PreWar	16/07/2013	PreWar	14/05/2014
PreWar	22/10/2003	PreWar	07/02/2011	PreWar	16/07/2013	PreWar	15/05/2014
PreWar	22/10/2003	PreWar	04/04/2011	PreWar	16/07/2013	PreWar	22/05/2014
PreWar	23/02/2004	PreWar	04/04/2011	PreWar	16/07/2013	PreWar	12/06/2014
PreWar	23/02/2004	PreWar	17/06/2011	PreWar	30/07/2013	PreWar	18/06/2014
PreWar	23/02/2004	PreWar	12/07/2011	PreWar	06/08/2013	PreWar	02/07/2014
PreWar	23/02/2004	PreWar	20/07/2011	PreWar	09/09/2013	PreWar	04/07/2014
PreWar	23/02/2004	PreWar	15/09/2011	PreWar	09/09/2013	PreWar	09/07/2014
PreWar	23/02/2004	PreWar	15/09/2011	PreWar	08/10/2013	PreWar	22/07/2014
PreWar	23/02/2004	PreWar	04/10/2011	PreWar	15/10/2013	PreWar	26/08/2014
PreWar	25/02/2004	PreWar	20/01/2012	PreWar	16/01/2014	PreWar	26/08/2014
PreWar	26/04/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	04/09/2014
PreWar	04/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	04/09/2014
PreWar	04/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	04/09/2014
PreWar	04/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	04/09/2014
PreWar	04/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	23/09/2014
PreWar	04/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	23/09/2014
PreWar	16/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	24/09/2014
PreWar	19/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	24/09/2014
PreWar	19/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	24/09/2014
PreWar	19/06/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	24/09/2014
PreWar	03/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	24/09/2014
PreWar	03/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	24/09/2014
PreWar	14/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	25/09/2014
PreWar	14/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	22/01/2014	PreWar	26/09/2014
PreWar	15/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	23/01/2014	PreWar	06/10/2014
PreWar	17/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	23/01/2014	PreWar	07/10/2014
PreWar	17/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	23/01/2014	PreWar	07/10/2014
PreWar	17/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	24/01/2014		
PreWar	21/07/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	24/01/2014		
PreWar	11/10/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	24/01/2014		
PreWar	01/11/2004	PreWar	03/02/2012	PreWar	28/01/2014		
PreWar	29/03/2005	PreWar	08/02/2012	PreWar	28/01/2014		
PreWar	12/05/2005	PreWar	06/06/2012	PreWar	28/01/2014		
PreWar	15/02/2006	PreWar	09/01/2013	PreWar	28/01/2014		
PreWar	15/02/2006	PreWar	02/05/2013	PreWar	28/01/2014		
PreWar	23/05/2006	PreWar	02/05/2013	PreWar	28/01/2014		
PreWar	29/07/2006	PreWar	02/05/2013	PreWar	28/01/2014		
PreWar	29/07/2006	PreWar	20/05/2013	PreWar	05/02/2014		
PreWar	30/08/2007	PreWar	21/05/2013	PreWar	14/02/2014		
PreWar	18/09/2008	PreWar	21/05/2013	PreWar	18/02/2014		
PreWar	18/09/2008	PreWar	23/05/2013	PreWar	18/02/2014		
PreWar	18/09/2008	PreWar	28/05/2013	PreWar	18/02/2014		
PreWar	03/12/2008	PreWar	19/06/2013	PreWar	18/02/2014		
PreWar	14/09/2009	PreWar	19/06/2013	PreWar	18/02/2014		
PreWar	14/04/2010	PreWar	19/06/2013	PreWar	18/02/2014		
PreWar	07/06/2010	PreWar	16/07/2013	PreWar	25/02/2014		
PreWar	18/06/2010	PreWar	16/07/2013	PreWar	14/04/2014		
				PreWar	05/05/2014		

Pre_Post_War	Date_Handover
PostWar	13/01/2005
PostWar	26/09/2014
PostWar	18/06/2014
PostWar	07/04/2014
PostWar	13/08/2014
PostWar	26/09/2014
PostWar	26/09/2014
PostWar	02/09/2013
PostWar	26/09/2014
PostWar	18/06/2014
PostWar	26/09/2014
PostWar	26/09/2014
PostWar	11/07/2014
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PostWar	24/07/2014
PostWar	07/01/2014
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PostWar	19/08/2013
PostWar	07/10/2014
PostWar	11/06/2014
PostWar	03/12/2008
PostWar	18/09/2008
PostWar	18/09/2008
PostWar	18/08/2014
PostWar	02/05/2013
PostWar	16/07/2004
PostWar	02/05/2013
PostWar	21/05/1998
PostWar	03/02/2012
PostWar	03/02/2012
PostWar	04/04/2012
PostWar	03/02/2012
PostWar	18/07/2011

Mr Speaker: This is a lengthy schedule, purely factual. I suggest we move on to the next Question, and if anything arises the hon. Member can come back to it.

Q529/2014
Housing waiting lists –
Breakdown of applicants

Clerk: Question 529, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1745

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, further to the answer provided to Written Question W154/2014, can the Minister for Housing provide updated details in respect of the number of applicants on the housing waiting lists, inclusive of a breakdown for the medical and social lists?

1750 **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, there are 1,111 applicants on the waiting list, inclusive of medical and social lists, as follows.

1755 On the waiting list: 1RKB, 725; 2RKB, 90; 3RKB, 157; 4RKB, 117; 5RKB, 18; 6RKB 4. A grand total of 1,111.

On the medical list we have: 1RKB, 105; 2RKB, 45; 3RKB, 48; 4RKB, 27; 5RKB, 8; 6RKB, 0. The total is 233 persons on the medical list.

On the social list we have a total of 77 families, and they are: 1RKB, 58; 2RKB, 4; 3RKB, 8; 4RKB, 7; and none for either 5RKB or 6RKB. Please note that there are applicants who are on more than one list.

1760 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, thank you for that.

Therefore, I am right in concluding from the final remark from the Minister that the 233 on the medical list and the 77 on the social could actually overlap – someone could be on both medical and social. Are those two figures included in the 1,111, or is it over and above the 1,111?

1765 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, most of these on the medical and social lists would actually be part of the 1,111, but not necessarily because you could have a person who is socially categorised and is homeless and hence would not have an application. He would just exist as one on the social list.

1770 **Hon. E J Reyes:** By chance, does he happen to have today in just an analysis... Would the Minister know, for example, of the 233 and 77, would the vast majority be already catered for in the 1,111, even though the numbers may vary... but the vast majority, one can take it for granted, are already included in that figure?

1775 **Hon. P J Balban:** Yes, Mr Speaker, most of them will be there. It is just that I said the occasional homeless person would come out as on the social list.

Q530/2014 Housing pre-list – Number of applicants

Clerk: Question 530, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1780 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Further to the answer provided to Written Question 155/2014, can the Minister for Housing provide updated details of the number of applicants on the housing pre-list?

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

1785 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, there are a total of 670 persons on the housing pre-list: there are 543 applicants for the 1RKB; there are 19 applicants for the 2RKB; 66 applicants for the 3RKB; 41 applicants for the 4RKB; 1 for the 5RKB; and none for the 6RKB.

1790 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, given that the Government has signified that it is their intention to do away completely with the pre-list and we still have 670 people on it, obviously some of whom – or all of whom, because the pre-list just exists for a year – have joined since their tenure in office, does the Minister have any updated details of by when he expects the pre-list to be done away with completely?

1795 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, that commitment will be carried out by the time the next election is called.

Q531/2014
Government rental homes –
Cost of evicting squatters

Mr Speaker: Next Question.

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

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Housing say how much expenditure has been incurred in respect of legal costs relating to the eviction of squatters from Government rental homes since the answer provided to Question W156/2014, providing a breakdown showing the number of homes involved and to whom payments were made?

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, in the financial year 2014-15 there was one property, and that was Triay & Triay who represented, and the actual cost was £665; another property was once again Triay & Triay for the sum of £255; and the third property, also Triay & Triay, was £760.

Q532/2014
Co-ownership housing projects –
Assignment and allocation details

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

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Housing provide details of how many houses have already been assigned or allocated in respect of Government's new co-ownership housing projects and how many still remain unsold, giving the room size composition in each case?

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.

Answer to Question 532

Mons Calpe Mews

RKB	ALLOCATED	UNALLOCATED
4 Bed flats	20	Nil
3 Bed flats	156	Nil
2 Bed flats	146	Nil
1 Bed flats	9	Nil

Beach View Terraces

RKB	ALLOCATED	UNALLOCATED
4 Bed flats	39	Nil
3 Bed flats	308	13
2 Bed flats	126	40
1 Bed flats	21	17

Mr Speaker: It is a short schedule. I will give the hon. Member an opportunity to ask any supplementary before we terminate Question Time.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, I am going to deal with two issues.

Before, you gave me time to look at the schedule in respect of Question 528. For the time being, I am satisfied with this information, save to say if anything is arising it can wait until the next parliamentary session. So thank you, Mr Speaker, we no longer have to refer back to this one straight away.

1830 In respect of Question 532, I see that all the properties pertaining to Mons Calpe Views have been allocated, and therefore there are none remaining as unsold.

1835 In respect of Beach View Terraces, there are still some there remaining to be allocated for potential purchasers. If I take this list to be as up to date as the Minister has possibly been able to there... is it a question that there are still applicants who need to go through the process and so on, or is it because all expressions of interest have been exhausted?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, with the resounding there were 3,000 applications, a lot of people were interested in these flats. The process is still alive and we are still going down the list of people interested. Within a couple of weeks, we should have all the properties allocated.

1840 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Perhaps I can take advantage, and the Minister might know this: I believe there is a cut-off date by when applications have to be filed for a person to be eligible to be called in. Can the Minister confirm that? I think the date was sometime in March. In other words, anyone coming onto any list post March is not at present being considered for... taking it in turns. Is there any truth behind that? One constituent was saying it, but I am not entirely certain of the veracity. Perhaps that applicant has got the information slightly mixed up.

1850 **Hon. Chief Minister (F R Picardo):** No, the deadline was for *applications* for the purchasing of the homes, but the list was a live list. So the applications had to be in by a particular time; but, for example, people might go off the list and people would move up the list as a result. There would be people who applied to purchase who have decided to purchase elsewhere, or people who have applied to purchase who have then decided that they wanted to stay on the list and wait a little longer for a rental home rather than purchase. But the list has continued to be dynamic for that reason. What was the deadline was for the filing of applications.

1855 It has been possible for people to file applications later in one or two instances when they have come onto the list saying they are on the list, but they are not going to be able to buy in these developments but they want to buy for future developments and they have sent in a late application. All of those applications, I think, have been accepted in the sense that they are the end of a queue of 3,000 people. Right there are going to be other projects coming, and hopefully we will be able to satisfy the demand... and a queue of 3,000 people, but obviously not all of them for the same room composition etc, so somebody may have filed a late application and wanted two bedrooms and may eventually be got to, even if there are not 3,000 flats.

But the clear dynamic with which we have moved is the housing waiting list and the pre-list etc that has been announced.

1865 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, that does shed a lot of light.

In the event that once even the currently unallocated homes are hopefully sold and so on, anyone who unluckily stays out, would that person automatically be eligible and towards the top of the list of any future other project, or would a brand new list start from scratch, from zero? Does the Government have any indication at the moment, so that those who will be unlucky enough not to get one now at least have an indication that they may or not have priority in any future projects?

1875 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, priority has always been on the basis of the housing lists, so not on the basis of when people have put in applications. If we run out of people on the housing lists who wanted to purchase – and the hon. Member will know that there are people who have filed applications who are not on the housing list – then we have to work out the priority for those people, which will likely be social rather than simply who sent their application in.

1880 Of course, we are dealing with housing which is subsidised by the Taxpayer and by the community. It is not like buying in Imperial Ocean Plaza – who gets in first; this is who has the greatest social need. So we are considering how we will handle the next affordable housing schemes that we put out for sale. Obviously, we would not want people to simply have to reapply, but people might not like the next one – they might not like the location, they might not like the look of it, they might prefer to wait for the one after that – so we may have to go through all the applicants who are left after these sales are done and ask them, when we issue a new scheme, ‘Do you like the new scheme? Do you want your application to remain live for the new scheme?’ Alternatively, we simply invite people to write in again.

1885 We are considering which is the fairest and which is the best way to deal with these issues, and it is very likely that all the applicants who have written in indicating their interest will be communicated with after

we have finished the sales of the remaining properties at Eastern Beach, to gauge what options they would like to be given in future schemes – whether they want to stay live for future schemes or whether they will want to consider future schemes completely afresh and withdraw their applications now and see what comes out. That communication is going to be quite fluid between GRP and the remaining 2,000-plus applicants who will not have been satisfied with the 895 flats that have been made available.

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes. And just for clarification for certain applicants, Mr Speaker, those who have expressed an interest to buy but are way down on the list and have not been called up and so on, because they have expressed an interest to buy it does not mean that they lose out on a chance of being given a rental home should one become available – they will not be penalised because of that, will they?

Hon. Chief Minister: No, Mr Speaker. People will have to make a choice though: they either buy or rent – it is one of the two. Until they have bought, they have the option to rent; once they have bought, they cannot rent. I think that was the way it was run from 1988 to 1996 and from 1996 to 2011 and has to be run from now; otherwise, you get caught up in a vicious circle.

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, I agree with you, Chief Minister; it makes sense to me. It is just that some applicants I think unnecessarily have got worried and said that because they have expressed an interest to buy and they have not been able to buy one now, they might – wrongly, I think – be of the opinion that, ‘Because I have expressed to Government a willingness to buy if a rental home becomes vacant, they are going to bypass me and keep me holding on.’ They will not lose their normal process in the normal housing allocation system?

Hon. Chief Minister: No, but we would want them to buy anyway; so even though they might be allocated a home, we will still offer them the opportunity of buying a home. Many people, the hon. Gentleman will know, who are in rental homes nonetheless want to buy. Many people do not just see it as a shortcut to a home. Many people see it as an important investment in their lives, and because they have the ability to buy they do want to buy, even if a rental home becomes available and even if they are lucky enough to be able to have that rental home.

The perfect scenario is you are on the list, you get a rental home, you nonetheless still get the opportunity to buy and you are in your rental home for the two years of the build, for example. That scenario is possible.

Questions for Written Answer

Clerk: Answers to Written Questions, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to table the answers to Written Questions W210/2014 to W227/2014 inclusive.

Mr Speaker, I have the honour to ask you to recess the House now until 3.30 in the afternoon.

Mr Speaker: The House will now recess until 3.30 this afternoon.

The House recessed at 12.09 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.30 p.m.