



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 9.15 a.m. – 11.40 a.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 29th May 2014

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<i>The House recessed at 11.40 a.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.10 p.m.</i>	<i>37</i>

The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 9.15 a.m.

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

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

PRAYER
Mr Speaker

Order of the Day

Substitute Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Thursday 29th May, 2014.
(i) Oath of Allegiance.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Substitute Clerk: (ii) Confirmation of Minutes – the Minutes of the last meeting of Parliament which was held on 20th and 21st March 2014.

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

Mr Speaker signed the Minutes.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Substitute Clerk: (iii) Communications from the Chair.

10 **Mr Speaker:** I recognise this morning among us Mr Melvyn Farrell, once again, and I thank him for standing in for Mr Paul Martinez, who is away in Cardiff on CPA business. (*Banging on desks and applause*)

Substitute Clerk: (iv) Petitions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

15 **Substitute Clerk:** (v) Announcements.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, can I join you in welcoming back Mr Farrell for this short cameo appearance.

20 Mr Speaker, I am delighted to be able to announce and to share with all Members the excellent news reaching me from colleagues at the CPA conference, that Gibraltar has been able to secure the 47th Regional Conference of the British Isles and Mediterranean Region of the CPA. It will take place in Gibraltar in the spring of 2017. (*Banging on desks*)

PAPERS TO BE LAID

Substitute Clerk: (vi) Papers to be laid – the Hon. the Chief Minister.

25 **Hon. Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Air Traffic Survey Report 2013.

Mr Speaker: Ordered to lie.

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

Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Annual Report of the Parole Board 2013.

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

Substitute Clerk: The Hon. Mr Speaker.

40 **Mr Speaker:** I have the honour to report that in accordance with the Standing Order 12(3) the Ombudsman Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2013 has been submitted to Parliament and I now rule that it has been laid on the table.

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

Questions for Oral Answer

TOURISM, COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE PORT

Q347/2014
Sandy Bay –
Importation of sand

45 Question 347/2014, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Tourism advise where the sand, which has been deposited at Sandy Bay, is being imported from?

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

Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, the sand is being imported from Morocco.

55 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I am conscious that there is another specific question in the Order Paper directed at the Minister for Health. I am told by the Minister for Health that in fact there are two, and I think he is absolutely correct that there are two questions. That is really as a result of the reports that we have been receiving on the Opposition side as to insect bites which we understand are being caused by spiders which were imported in the sand. As I say, these are unconfirmed reports.

60 Is the Government... is the particular Minister I am asking the question to able, to address this in his answers this morning?

65 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker as the hon. Gentleman just noted whilst my Hon. Friend, Dr Cortes, was making signs to him, there are two questions on that particular matter on the Order Paper. Whilst I know the answer, perhaps it would be appropriate for the Hon. Dr Cortes to answer at that point. But, if Mr Speaker wishes the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment to answer now that particular question, (*Interjection*) we are in his hands.

Mr Speaker: If you wish to call that particular question, we can do so.

70 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I have two questions I believe. One from the Hon. Mr Netto and one from the Hon. Mrs Ellul-Hammond.

Substitute Clerk: Could you identify the question numbers please?

HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Q363/2014

Sandy Bay beach –

Importation of sand; safety of users

75 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 363, the Hon. S M Figueras on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

Hon. S M Figueras: Is the Minister for Health and the Environment satisfied that the sand recently imported from Morocco and used in an attempt to replenish Sandy Bay Beach, is safe for users?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, yes, sir. The Department of the Environment is happy that the sand being used for Sandy Bay is safe for use. The Department's Officials regularly assess the sand and have *not* come across anything untoward.

Q367/2014

Sandy Bay –

Invertebrates imported in beach sand

85 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 367, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

90 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Can the Minister for Health update this House on the treatment and recovery of two patients who were allegedly bitten by invertebrates supposedly found in the sand at Sandy Bay a few weeks ago, who needed hospital treatment; and if bitten, whether the bites were identified with a particular invertebrate and which type?

Substitute Clerk: Answer the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

95 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the records show no such information specific to Sandy Bay. Thirty-seven incidents of bites and stings by invertebrates have presented at the Accident and Emergency Department at St Bernard's Hospital since 1st January this year. This is perfectly normal. So I repeat what I said, no such information specific to Sandy Bay is found in our records.

100 **Hon. D J Bossino:** When he says it is perfectly normal, Mr Speaker, I assume he means statistically it is nothing which should alarm us. Is that the case?

105 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, indeed. It is not alarming that we should have that number of bites and stings, particularly in the spring, as that is quite uneventful. It is eventful if you get a nasty sting from a wasp, but it is not statistically worrying.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, a wider question in relation to the same subject, and I think it is probably more appropriate for the Minister for Health, with your indulgence, Mr Speaker, that he should answer it.

110 Is there any standard procedure which is being carried out by the Government, in terms of checking the sand which has been imported from outside this jurisdiction, in terms of safety and other issues like that?

115 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, yes, the sand... when the appropriate Department identifies, they will inspect samples. They will make sure that it is screened, and as I said in my answer, Department of the Environment officials regularly go on to the beach and check that there is nothing untoward.

120 I believe that the original comment that I read about this was somebody saying in a jovial fashion, I think, 'Oh, it has come from the Sahara. Imagine if they have brought scorpions', and I think in the normal Chinese whispers, which is typical of some of the social media, it suddenly became people were actually in hospital, and then scorpions became spiders. So I have looked at it. In fact I have looked at the records myself and there is no indication that there is anything untoward happening there.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, this is a question now for the Minister for Tourism.

125 Is he able to tell this House what the cost of that importation currently amounts to? Is that information which he has available to him and he is willing to provide to this House? I do not know what the measurement would be. Would it be by cubic metre or any other relevant measurement?

130 **Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, I can actually tell him the price, including the supply, the delivery and spreading of the sand on the beach, which amounts to £1,490,500. That includes the supply, the delivery and the spreading of the sand at the beach.

Hon. D J Bossino: So, in other words, just to be absolutely clear, all told that will be the price tag once we have a fully replenished Sandy Bay. Is that correct?

135 **Hon. N F Costa:** That is the information that has been provided to me, Mr Speaker, by the relevant Department that is carrying out the supply... well, the contractor for the supply, delivery and spreading of the sand. So that is my information, yes.

140 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, who is actually carrying out the importation. Is it a Gibraltar company? Is it a company from outside Gibraltar? Can he give that information? But I do appreciate that it may not necessarily directly arise from the question on the Order Paper.

145 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, unless I am not recalling correctly, I believe that I was asked about the award of the contract in the previous session in Parliament when I answered, that the Sandy Bay contract for regeneration of the beach was awarded following a public tender concluded in March of 2014. The tender document specified the technical specifications for the sand and following a review of the tenders received, the contract was awarded to Van Oord on the basis that they had submitted the most economically advantageous and compliant bid. So it is being conducted by Van Oord.

150 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, is Van Oord the company which is... I do not know exactly how these things work, is Van Oord the company which is doing the importation? Does it then subcontract to another company who then does the importation. Does he have that information? In fact it probably does arise from the question in the Order Paper, but if he does not have the answer in this House then maybe I can ask it again next month or he can provide it to me later.

160 **Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I do not have exactly the answer as to whether Van Oord has imported and has subcontracted another company to spread the sand on the beach, but I can tell him that the contract was awarded to Van Oord. Whether Van Oord has then subcontracted to another company to spread the sand, I do not have the answer. He can either write to me and I will give him the answer or he can ask me at the next session and I will be happy to give him the information then.

165 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I assume he does not have the answer to the question which I actually posed. It was not necessarily to do with the spreading of the sand, but actually the importation of the sand. Does he have an answer to that question which is the one I posed? He is checking is he?

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, from the information that I have before me, I am quite certain that it would have to be Van Oord on the basis that the tender was awarded to that particular company.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

TOURISM, COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE PORT

Q348/2014

**Airlines operating from Gibraltar –
Subsidies and concessions received**

170 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 348, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Tourism advise whether any airlines operating from Gibraltar are receiving any subsidy or concessions from the Government or any Government-owned company?

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

Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):
180 Mr Speaker, this question is very similar to the question that the hon. Gentleman asked me, namely Question 826/2012. As I informed him at the time, all commercial discussions are commercial in confidence as part of the Government's continuing drive to increase air connectivity.

I am happy to advise the hon. Gentleman, however, that the Government continues to operate the incentives and discount scheme implemented in 2010 and that the GTB discusses marketing collaborations with its airline partners.

185 As I advised the hon. Gentleman in the question that I just mentioned, I will not be drawn to publically announce across the floor of the House whether any airline enjoys an incentive scheme, subsidy or concession from the Government, as to do so would undermine any negotiating advantage of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar in any discussions.

Q349/2014

**Bunkering services in Gibraltar –
Measures taken by Government after Spanish actions**

190 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for the Port state what measures, if any, the Government has taken in connection with the Spanish actions relating to bunkering services being conducted in Gibraltar?

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

195 **Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):**
Mr Speaker, in the first place I do not accept the premise of the question.

200 As far as Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is aware, there have been no Spanish actions relating to bunkering services in Gibraltar. Bunkering services continue in Gibraltar as they have always done. Notwithstanding and irrespective of any reports in the Spanish media, the Gibraltar Port Authority and I have agreed a series of measures to stimulate all economic areas of port activity. These new policies will be announced during the course of the Budget debate.

205 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I welcome the answer that he has given. Obviously I base myself on what I hear in the press. I am not privy to any other information, and certainly on the basis of various sources and various press sources that one reads, there is certainly a threat of action.

210 Now, he says that, and I quote, 'no Spanish actions' have been taken. Have there not been incidents of filming by Spanish authorities of our bunkering operations in Gibraltar territorial waters? Is he able to confirm or deny that?

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, if I may be helpful to the hon. Gentleman, the question asks the measures that the Government has taken in connection with Spanish actions relating to bunkering. I can tell this House confidently that the Spanish Authorities have *not* taken any actions in relation to bunkering and I am sure that the House would be delighted to know, that bunkering operations in Gibraltar continue as fruitfully as they have always done.

215 There have been instances where foreign vessels have taken pictures, not just of certain operations in the Port, but also in relation to the groyne in Sandy Bay, but that does mean that any actions have been taken in relation to that project either, simply that we are aware of reports of photographs or filming taking place.

220 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, there was a report in *The Telegraph* I think it was, albeit back in
August when we were suffering from the brunt of the troubles, where it was reported that apparently Spain
had actually approved legislation. I have not checked that myself, but actually approved legislation banning
permanently anchored fuel storage tankers from operating in its protected waters, and included in their
view, the disputed waters around the Rock in the framework of the legislation. Would the Minister not
225 consider that to be specific Spanish action, which ought to be addressed by the Government in terms of the
immediate and long-term future economic viability of this particular activity?

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, as the hon. Gentleman will know, the position of Her Majesty's
Government, and I dare say of the Opposition, the Government's position clearly is that no legislative
230 action could possibly in any way affect the legal jurisdiction, powers, controlled sovereignty and
jurisdiction of British sovereignty in Gibraltar waters. So as far as we are concerned the Spanish
Government may legislate at their leisure and at their whim, but certainly it would not in any way impact on
Port operations or indeed any other sphere of life in Gibraltar.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, in his first reply the hon. Gentleman said bunkering activities
235 continue as they have always done, and then in a second he said bunkering activities continue as fruitfully
as they have always done. Can the Minister confirm that he has not noticed any statistical downturn in
bunkering activities in the Port of Gibraltar?

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, unfortunately the downturn started under their own administration in
240 2009. Between last year and this year there has been a very *negligible* decrease.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q350/2014
Bus fleet replacement –
Update

Substitute Clerk: Question 350, the Hon. S M Figueras.

245 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Transport provide an update on the replacement
of the bus fleet?

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

Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):
Mr Speaker, Government is currently in the award stage of the tender for the replacement of the bus fleet.

255 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, I recall in the House, at either the last session or the one before where
we last dealt with this matter, that there were some issues relating to the technology that was going to be
used in the buses.

I was wondering whether perhaps the Minister would be able to confirm whether doubts in that regard
have now been resolved and what the time frame for delivery of the buses, or rather for award of the
260 contract in the first place and then delivery of the buses is as at today's date.

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, let me tell the House that I will advise the Gentleman what I understand
the process to be because this is dealt with by the Procurement Office.

As I understand it, once the Government has decided on the award of a contract, a letter has to be sent to
the successful company and the unsuccessful company. I am then advised that there follows a mandatory
265 Alcatel period known because of the Alcatel case. It is a standing period, which is a 10-calendar-day period
following notification whereby the unsuccessful tenderer has the chance to submit as to why they thought
that the tender should have been awarded to them, so until then there will not be an actual allocation. We
are currently at this standstill or Alcatel period.

270 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Of 10 days?

Hon. N F Costa: Yes, 10 days.

275 **Hon. S M Figueras:** I am grateful to the Minister for the clarification in that respect. Is he – notwithstanding that answer – in a position to say, once the contract is agreed with the successful tenderer, when the buses can be expected to begin to be delivered?

280 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, as the hon. Gentleman will remember from the last time he asked me questions on this subject matter, I told him that there were two companies that had proceeded to the final stage. So there are two companies. Those two companies will obviously know when they have told us that they will be able to deliver those buses. If I were to give the hon. Gentleman the time frame, they will know who has been successful and who has not. So I cannot at this stage say anything else.

285 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Well, you see, Mr Speaker, I had understood his previous answer to mean that both successful and unsuccessful tenderers would have already been notified in any event. (*Interjection*)

Hon. N F Costa: Sorry, as I told the hon. Gentleman, I could tell him what the process was, but because it is dealt with by the Procurement Office, I cannot tell him whether the letters have gone out. It is not done by me.

290 **Hon. S M Figueras:** So being at this stage of the process, Mr Speaker, it is not unreasonable to expect that at the next session there should be some more certainty in that regard.

Hon. N F Costa: Absolutely Mr Speaker.

Q351/2014
Peter Sardeña case –
Conclusion of matter

295 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 351, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Transport say whether the Peter Sardeña matter has now concluded?

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

305 **Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, as the hon. Gentleman knows, the hearing of the claim has concluded and a decision from the Industrial Tribunal is awaited. So we are in the same position as we were when the last question was asked.

310 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Just to recollect where we were. Presumably the judgment, exclusively in relation to quantum, I think that that was the position as I understood it, but my memory is somewhat hazy on this one because it has been sometime since I dealt with it. But I thought that in relation to the substantive liability issues there had been a concession by the Government, and if you recall... the Minister will recall, Mr Speaker, that was the subject of much debate and time spent on this in relation to that matter in this House.

As I recall, all that is pending at this stage is a decision by the Chairman of the Industrial Tribunal in relation to quantum.

315 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman would be right in saying that there has been across the floor of this House, I would say, sufficient discussion on this matter. In fact in respect of this particular question, there was Question 237/2012, where we go into eight pages of *Hansard* where we discussed whether the judgment is in respect of anything other than quantum or just quantum, and us saying on this side of the House the matter is *sub judice* and when the judgment is handed down, it will be handed down.

320 I will repeat that in less than seven pages to the hon. Gentleman, given that the matter is pending a judicial decision, I will limit myself to just making that comment.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q352/2014
GibiBikes –
Update on progress

Substitute Clerk: Question 352, the Hon. S M Figueras.

325 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

Can the Minister for Transport say whether there has been any substantial progress in the GibiBikes matter?

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

Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, my answer remains the same as the answer to Question 126/2014.

335 Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar has entered into litigation with a contractor and it will make a public announcement on the conclusion of these legal proceedings, including any appeals by either party.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

PROCEDURAL

Substitute Clerk: Question 353/2014 is going to be answered by Minister Balban on behalf of Minister Linares and will be taken later on today.

340 Questions 354 to 359/2014 will be answered by the Chief Minister on behalf of Minister Linares. This will be done this afternoon.

HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Q360/2014
Ministry of the Environment –
Companies providing services; details of changes

Substitute Clerk: Question 360, the Hon. S M Figueras on behalf of Mr Netto. Yes?

345 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment please say if there has been any variation to any of the companies providing services to the Ministry of the Environment through contract since 2012; and, if so, provide full details to Parliament?

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

350 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, it is not up to the Government to assess variations to companies as long as the contract is adhered to, which is the main concern of the Department of the Environment.

355 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I note the Hon. Minister's reply to the question. I suspect that it is being taken on the meaning of the language of the question, which I again suspect has been drafted perhaps in an unfortunate manner, given that the Question certainly to me, and I am asking it on behalf of my Hon. Friend Mr Netto, that the question was intended to elucidate information about variations to the contracts themselves, rather than the companies.

360 I will grant that on the language of the question itself, the Hon. Minister may not have noticed, but if the Minister is in a position to provide any details in relation to any variations that he is aware of, I would be very grateful, but again concede that he may not have had appropriate notice in this instance.

365 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I think I would inevitably give an incomplete answer as the question was phrased... it seemed that it was asking as to a variation in the composition of the company, which is the answer that I have given. If there has been any changes, variations in the companies or in the contracts, I

have knowledge of some, but it would be an incomplete answer and I would hesitate. What I can say is that those companies that have had contracts, still valid and in force in December 2011, still retain those contracts.

370 There are some contracts which had expired and were being run either by the same companies or in some other way out of contract and we are in the process of regularising that. But I would not like to give any more details, because I am likely to get something wrong and I would rather have notice of a question for a future meeting.

Mr Speaker: Next Question.

Q361/2014
Fishing Report –
Implementation of recommendations

375 **Mr Speaker:** Question 361, the Hon. Selwyn Figueras on behalf of Mr Netto.

Substitute Clerk: Question 361, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond on behalf of – (*Interjection*) No? Question 361, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

380 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, further to Written Question 137/2013, can the Minister for the Environment state which recommendations of the Fishing Report have been implemented in the last 12 months, which ones will be implemented over the next 12 months and which recommendation/s the Government feels it will not be able to implement and why?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, I apologise I had assumed that Mr Figueras was continuing with Mr Netto's question.

390 **Hon. S M Figueras:** [*Inaudible*]

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: That is absolutely fine.

395 Mr Speaker, in addition to the recommendations implemented already, as highlighted in my response to Written Question 137/2013, the following measures have also been implemented, which are relevant to some of the recommendations made in the Fishing Report: (1) Employment of Environmental Protection Officers within the Department of the Environment who will be assisting in the implementation of the upcoming Marine Protection Regulations; (2) Review of the Artificial Reef Programme within the southern waters of Gibraltar; (3) Implementation of a tagging initiative in conjunction with local fishing clubs for sea bream species. The intention is to extend this initiative to migratory species found in the Straits of Gibraltar, such as blue fin tuna.

400 Implementation of all the recommendations is continually under consideration.

Q362/2014
Sewage treatment plant –
Construction tender; details

Substitute Clerk: Question 362, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

405 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Further to Question 55/2014, has the Government now awarded the tender for the sewage treatment plant and, if so, please provide details of the work to be carried, location, the company that has been awarded the contract, the timeline for operations to start and the cost associated with the works to be carried out?

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

410 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the tender for sewage treatment has still not been awarded. It is currently in the assessment stage.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister say when the award... the submission deadline for this particular tender expired?

415 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker. I am involved in this matter peripherally. The main Minister would be my colleague, the Minister for Utilities, who is not here. I do not have that information I am afraid.

420 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Is the Minister able to say whether the delivery of the sewage treatment plant will be complete by the end of this term of office?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, there is a possibility. If the tender were awarded quickly, then that would be a possibility.

Q364/2014

**Illegal enticing/feeding of macaque –
Number of individuals fined or cautioned**

425 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 364, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment say how many individuals have been fined or cautioned for the illegal enticing or feeding of macaques, contrary to the recent changes in legislation passed in Parliament, either inside or outside the Upper Rock Nature Reserve, stating where, the nationality, the amounts imposed, which entity imposed the fine and whether some cases are waiting to be heard in the courts?

430

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

435 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, one individual of Spanish nationality was cautioned by the Royal Gibraltar Police for the illegal feeding of macaques outside the Nature Reserve. I will add that it was in the area of Sandy Bay.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q365/2014

**Gibraltar Nature Reserve Management Plan –
Update on progress**

440 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 365, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment say if he is now in a position to provide Parliament with a copy of the Upper Rock Management Plan?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Nature Reserve Management Plan is still being drafted and will be published as soon as possible after a period of consultation.

450 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister will concede that the Plan has been being prepared for some time now. Is there any definitive timeline that he or his Department has in mind for the conclusion of the Plan and publication thereof?

455 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I would have liked it to have been ready by now. It is a complex piece of work. Already some of the aspects of the recommendations that would be in the Plan are being carried out routinely, like improvements in the habitat management and other improvements that we have seen in the Upper Rock. Remember that the Upper Rock, although it is one of my Ministerial responsibilities, that I work very closely with my colleague the Hon. Minister for Tourism in this and we

460 are aware of a lot of improvements that form part of this. So I am hoping that it will be completed relatively soon. Certainly we are talking about a couple of months. I would not have thought it would be much more than that and believe you me, Mr Speaker, it will be well worth the wait.

465 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, I wonder whether perhaps the Minister, who so very kindly offers information in relation to those aspects of the Plan which have already been implemented and are being implemented continually as he has referred to on a number of occasions today and on previous occasions, it strikes me, Mr Speaker, that there must be certain parts of the Plan which are either more controversial or simply more complicated and have therefore not yet been concluded.

470 Whilst that is understandable, I wonder whether the Hon. Minister would be so kind as to give the House a flavour of the issues that remain the source of such controversy and therefore make the publication of this plan something that has not yet happened.

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: No, Mr Speaker, because it is my intention to resolve the controversies and then the hon. Member opposite will be having nothing to worry about.

Q366/2014
Smoke Free Environment Act 2012 –
Zone excluded from Act

475 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 366, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say whether he has received any application under the Smoke Free Environment Act 2012, in order to declare a zone excluded from such Act?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, yes, sir.

Q368/2014
Abdominal aortic aneurism screening –
Start date of programme

Substitute Clerk: Question 368, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

485 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say when the abdominal aortic aneurism screening programme will start?

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

490 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, work is progressing steadily and we hope to be able to launch the programme towards the end of this year.

Q369/2014
Cancer Registry –
Public access

495 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 369, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say when the Cancer Registry will be made available for public access?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the Cancer Registry is a research database that is available as a data source to answer general questions of public health value that may be put to it.

505 Currently, the data is available for the period 1999 to 2009 and further years will be added as and when the data are validated and cleaned. It was never intended that the Cancer Registry would be made available for public access. Cancer Registry data is held on people, many of whom are alive, and is subject to prevention of disclosure for several legal and ethical reasons, including data protection, confidentiality and privacy.

510 While the raw data will not be publically disclosed, questions of public health value may be put to the GHA and where such questions would benefit from the analysis of the Cancer Registry data, the data will be used. Any results returned will be subject to the restriction that disclosure or identification of individuals, directly or indirectly, is not permitted.

515 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, what about making available just the numbers? Getting rid of the personal data... but the numbers of cancers per year and type of cancer?

520 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, if it is possible to do that in a way that it is totally... in that we can ensure total confidentiality, then that is not a problem. The problem is that in a community the size of Gibraltar and with the family links and friendship ties that we have, it is often possible, particularly in the rarer conditions, to identify individuals. But if it is possible to do this and we can be absolutely certain that individuals will not be identified, these data are not secret.

Q370/2014
Primary Care Centre –
Prescribing ‘morning after’ pill

Substitute Clerk: Question 370, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

525 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health advise if all the GPs and nurse practitioners at the Primary Care Centre prescribe the ‘morning after’ pill, and if not, how many opt out and why?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, all GPs and Nurse Practitioners may prescribe the ‘morning after’ pill if they feel it is clinically appropriate. Prescribers may refuse to supply on grounds of religious or ethical objection as per their professional code of ethics.

535 There are clinicians that refuse to prescribe on ethical religious grounds, but those that do object will refer the patient to another GHA prescriber, therefore not negating the patient this option if deemed clinically appropriate.

540 Mr Speaker, once again, because we have a relatively small number of practitioners and there is a relatively small number of those who do not prescribe it, and in order to protect their confidentiality, I am not going to reveal the numbers across this House, but I am happy to advise the Member opposite behind the Speaker’s chair.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

545

Q371/2014
Family Planning Services primary care–
Public Health Department initiatives

Substitute Clerk: Question 371, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

550 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health explain what the GHA’s primary care Family Planning Services are at present and how far the seven Public Health Department initiatives, announced by the Minister in answer to Question 818/2013, have progressed?

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

555 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the components of Family Planning Service forms part of the Well Woman Clinic which offers prescription and advice on contraception and other related subjects.

Further to the reply given to Question 818/2013, the Public Health Department has progressed the initiatives within this programme as follows:

(1) Supporting education about sex and relationships in schools and youth settings.

560 The Health Promotion Officer has met with the Child Health Team on several occasions to discuss sexual health promotion in schools. A meeting is being arranged with the Education Department to review the PSHE curriculum on sexual health and support the Education where necessary.

(2) Providing access to good quality advice for all persons on sexuality, family planning and sexually transmitted diseases.

565 People can receive a sexual health check from the infection control nurses, nurse practitioners or general practitioners. Persons needing family planning and other sexual health advice would also have the same options.

(3) Campaigning to reduce the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in our community.

570 Dr Vassallo visits the Girls Comprehensive School to present an awareness talk every year. There is no similar service for the Boys School, this is being addressed. A Sexual Health Awareness Day for the general public is under consideration. The Department is also considering the production of infomercials on the subject of teenage pregnancies.

(4) Supporting the establishment of a nurse-led sexual health clinic.

575 The nurse practitioners are interested in developing a nurse-led sexual health clinic and this requires further planning, which is in process.

(5) Encouraging access to HIV and STD testing for people who may be at risk.

580 The infection control nurses provide a drop-in service for people to come and be tested, which is usually through referrals from GPs, other health professionals or word of mouth. Sexually transmitted disease still carries a stigma and some people are reluctant to get tested in Gibraltar for fear of disclosure in a small community, and many persons prefer to get tested in Spain or UK. GPs and nurse practitioners also provide HIV testing.

(6) Improving the collection of anonymised local data to inform sexual health strategies.

585 Counts of sexually transmitted diseases according to organism detected are obtained from the St. Bernard's Hospital Laboratory every month on an anonymised basis. From 2013, anonymised records are also being kept of people using the drop-in facilities for sexual health screening.

(7) Producing relevant printed material.

590 The Department has procured a number of leaflets on sexual health issues from the UK and these are distributed within the Primary Care Centre. It has a stock of separate leaflets for boys and for girls which are distributed to schools. The Department is in the process of developing local leaflets.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, how is the group Equality Rights helping and advising for the expansion of the GHA's Family Planning Services?

595 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, meetings have been held with the group, both with myself, with the Infection Control Nurses and with the Health Promotion Officer, and we are going to be meeting again shortly in order to see how we can support each other's work in this respect.

600 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, what work is this specifically? How are they involved? What are the qualifications of the group in order to advise and support a Family Planning Service?

605 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the question of what are the qualifications in any group who involves itself in promoting health is a question that can be asked widely. Community groups often have people with no formal qualifications, but with a great deal of interest and experience, and the Government works together with all of them, as many of them as want to work with the Government, in developing ideas and planning strategies.

610 What the Government will ensure is that any clinical or professional work is carried out under the guidance of its own qualified and trained personnel, but certainly we are open to discussions and to be informed by the experiences and by the interests of all community groups, including the Equality Rights Group.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, will the Gibraltar Women's Association also be consulted and be involved in part of this process?

615 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Women's Association is already involved in the process. I have held meetings with them and we have raised the subject. In fact the question of... the fact that there was not a service to the Boys School as well as there is to the Girls School came up during a meeting with the Committee of the Women's Association and that matter, as I have said in my answer, has been taken up. So clearly any group that has an interest in developing this sort of initiative is more than welcome and my office is open, not just to them, but as a lot of people in the community knows, virtually to anybody...well, to anybody who wants to see me about any of these things.

620 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, in relation to the fourth initiative to be led by the Public Health Department, supporting the establishment of a nurse-led sexual health clinic, could the Minister give a little bit more information about this? Would the nurses be taking over the role from the Well Woman Clinic and the GPs?

625 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, it is too early in the day to have any indication, but certainly the role of the nurse practitioners and GPs in this sort of initiative would almost always – sorry, I did not mean almost. I mean always be paramount.

630 There are a number of nurse-led initiatives which are very successful in the Primary Care Centre, the dermatology initiative being one which has very recently been in the news, both for the success of the nurse who leads it, Linda Castro, in getting an award in the UK and also the initiative of a walk-in cancer screening, which was carried out for the first time a few weeks ago, and that is a nurse-led clinic that involves GPs and involves visiting consultants. So there need be no fear that a nurse-led clinic is going to be diluted in any way. On the contrary, this in many ways is the future for healthcare and the professionalism, dedication and expertise of nurses is something that we cannot understate.

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Q372/2014
NaProTechnology treatment –
Patient referrals

Substitute Clerk: Question 372, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

640 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health advise who the GHA doctors are that can refer patients for the privately provided NaProTechnology treatment as an alternative to IVF treatment?

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

645 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, access to this technology is currently under discussion.

650 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, is the Hon. Minister saying that at the moment there is no access to this treatment or there has been access up until now and it has been stopped and is being reviewed?

655 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes;** Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that the use of this technology is currently under discussion with the entity that is offering to provide it, but that does not mean that if there were any patient who it was felt was indicated to have this technology, that this could not be dealt with in advance of an agreement being reached with the provider. This happens in a lot of situations.

What I am saying is that there is no formal arrangement at the moment, nor have I detected a demand for it either.

660 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, I was under the impression that this service was on offer by the GHA. Can he explain why it is under discussion? Is this because of lack of evidence?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: No, Mr Speaker. The GHA will provide services. Some of these services are under contract – for example, IVF is under contract following a tender process. Other services are dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis. There may be things that we do not regularly do at the moment.

665 As I said before, if this was clinically indicated it would be made available, but we still do not have a service level agreement or a contract with a provider and we are discussing that at the moment.

Q373/2014
A&E reception –
24-hour manning service

Substitute Clerk: Question 373, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

670 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, as per the Government Press Release 173/2014, can the Minister for Health say when the 24-hour manning of the A&E reception will start and how that will improve the patient experience of A&E?

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

675 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the A&E reception staff will be recruited shortly. This will allow a point of contact for patients through the night and at weekends and will also mean that these duties do not have to be carried out by nurses, hence allowing these more time to attend to patients.

Q374/2014
Primary Care Centre –
Redesign details; extra services offered

Substitute Clerk: Question 374, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

680 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, as per the Government Press Release 173/2014, can the Minister for Health say how the Primary Care Centre will be redesigned and what extra services will be offered in the extra clinic space?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the alterations which have been carried out at present in the PCC have been aimed primarily at offering more clinic space to the professionals working within it and also to create the possibility of improving services.

690 The alterations have consisted of: redesigned office space to provide conditions for administrative staff; four clinics and a waiting area, which can be used by both GPs and nursing staff; one unit which will be used to consolidate all the various professionals working in dermatology into one cohesive unit; a new smaller boardroom; and as part of the exercise storage units are being created away from the main clinical areas, the long-term aim being to convert stores in existence in these main areas into more clinical space.

695 These alterations will immediately provide a better clinical environment for service users and staff alike. It will create enough clinics to allow professionals the ability to arrange clinics more efficiently. It will avoid incidences of double booking of clinics, as can happen. It will create the infrastructure necessary for expansion of services and reinforces the creation of the Dermatology Unit as a service.

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Q375/2014
Repeat prescriptions –
Improvements to system

Substitute Clerk: Question 375, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

705 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, as per the Government Press Release 173/2014, can the Minister for Health say what the further improvements to the repeat prescription system will be?

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

710 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, further information has been published and disseminated to service users and stakeholders to assist with informing patients of the current procedures in place to obtain chronic repeatable medication.

In addition, we are currently in the final stages prior to launching a repeat prescription pilot scheme, which we anticipate will provide benefits regarding medicines management.

715 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister give us a little more information about the pilot scheme?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I can give a little bit more information, but I am not leading on this. It will allow the possibility, in certain situations where the doctor does not need to see the patient, for the prescription being provided without the patient needing to see the doctor. We are working out whether that should be done manually or whether it can be done electronically and that is where we are at the moment.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker that is very welcome. Can the Hon. Minister say who is leading on this?

725 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** The team at the Primary Care Centre, which will involve the GPs, nurse prescribers and the Health Centre administration.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Minister say when the pilot scheme will be launched?

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: No, Mr Speaker, I would have to ask the people involved. I am told that they are very close to it, but I do not have a starting date.

Q376/2014
Primary Care Centre –
Chronic Disease Management Care

Substitute Clerk: Question 376, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

735 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say what the plan for Chronic Disease Management Care is at the Primary Care Centre?

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

740 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, chronic disease management represents a substantial percentage of the current GP workload. Some general practitioners also incorporate areas of special interest, such as diabetes, dermatology and elderology.

745 The medical element is further supported by the multi-disciplinary teams of specialist nurses and allied health professionals, who work in partnership with patients and relatives through a process of case management, regular reviews and evaluation, providing patients with support, information, education, self-management and lifestyle changes. Evidence based guidelines and prodigals provide the standards for optimal care.

The list below – which I am about to read – highlights some of the services currently providing chronic disease management.

750 **Diabetes Service:** case management and annual reviews, DAFNE programmes for Type1 diabetes and Desmond self-management programme for ongoing and newly diagnosed diabetes.

Cardiac Rehabilitation: new patient and self-help programmes.

Hypertension: halter monitoring and nurse-led assessment/review clinics.

Mental Welfare Officers: case management of GP referred patients.

755 **Respiratory:** nurse-led for primary care, offering spirometry, management of COPD/COAD, paediatric/adult asthma clinics, smoking cessation service.

Dermatology: nurse-led light therapy and case management and review of chronic skin conditions.

Chronic ulcers and corresponding lymphedema management: nurse-led case management and reviews.

760 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker is there a chronic disease register?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, a chronic disease register, as such, with that title, I am not aware of, but certainly we do have data on chronic diseases. All these clinics will have their own database.

765 As for a chronic disease register labelled as such, I would need notice of the question to see in what form such information is kept.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, will the Hon. Minister be able to say if there is a system in place to manage each chronic diseased patient annually to ensure that they receive monitoring and treatments, prescription monitoring and so on for each different chronic disease?
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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, it depends on the disease – that is I am not aware of all the information. I can say for example that the diabetes service, which is very, very effectively run, we are shortly going to be introducing an annual review by a consultant for Type 1, which is something that is done in the UK and other countries and has never been done in Gibraltar before.
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Certainly for hypertension, the GPs will normally want to see a patient every six months or every 12 months. I would have to... for such specific detail as to the frequency in which each patient is seen in each of these chronic disease management protocols, I would need notice in order to be able to give factual details of every single case.

780 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Again, Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware of any incentivisation or how GPs are encouraged to manage chronic disease and other perhaps more time consuming or difficult patients?

785 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, again that is pretty specific. I would have thought that our GPs would be... well, I know for a fact that they are dedicated and responsible enough to manage their patients in whichever way their clinical condition requires, so I am confident that this is happening.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: And finally Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister mentioned the new system that is going to be put in place for Type 1 diabetes, where patients will be seen or reviewed by a consultant annually. Will this system be introduced or is it being considered for other chronic disease management – annual reviews with a consultant locally?
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795 **Dr J E Cortes:** It depends on the condition. There are some conditions which do not require a consultant to carry out an annual review, conditions in which a GP perhaps with specialist interests and knowledge of a particular condition or nurse practitioners can deal with the routine and they would only be referred to a consultant for when it is particularly indicated.

It so happens that for Type 1 diabetes it is recommended. It is part of NICE guidelines in the UK and this is a programme that we are about to introduce using our existing consultants.

Q377/2014

Gibraltar Health Authority – New contract with Xanit Hospital; details

800 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 377, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health explain what the arrangements, fees, terms and conditions are in the new contract the GHA has with the private hospital Xanit to provide healthcare services for GHA patients and provide a copy of such contract to this House?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, Xanit Hospital is used by the GHA as a tertiary referral centre. The Authority refers patients to Xanit in the same way that it refers patients to other centres in the UK and Spain. The nature of the referrals depends on the judgment of the referring clinician or the preference of the patient.
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The Authority entered into a contractual arrangement with Xanit last year, which in the main catered for the pattern of referrals that had been in existence over a number of years during which the patients were referred without a formal contract being in place. As a result of the formalised arrangements, the Authority was able to obtain a reduction in costs for most of these services – for example, we have been able to lockdown the prices of certain procedures regardless of how long the patient requires admission at the hospital. A number of specialities and procedures have since been added to the list on the recommendation of clinicians.
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820 The Government does not consider that it is appropriate to disclose details of the commercial arrangements that the GHA has entered into with Xanit Hospital.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Minister say do we pay then a monthly fixed rate or is it based on the number of patients we send to Xanit? Is it based on the treatment type or the length of time the GHA patients use the services?

825 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, there is no fixed rate. We pay for the services provided according to a schedule of prices that are agreed and fixed. As I say, Mr Speaker, when I took over the role of Minister for Health and Chairmanship of the GHA, patients would be referred on an *ad hoc* basis and the bills would come in without any fixed price.

830 The contract has a set fee, agreed and comparable to fees in other hospitals, and in some circumstances has actually, as I have said before, locked the prices for certain procedures, which means you cannot always know how long a person has to be in hospital. In the contract, we have been able to arrange that for certain procedures, no matter how long the patient stays, the price is the same, and therefore we have obtained, I believe, a reduction in the cost per procedure and also certain guarantees. We pay as we use the service.

835 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, if I ask the Hon. Minister for the cost over the last financial year for the use of Xanit and the list of the fixed prices, I know he may not have that information with him today, if I write to him or ask him next month, will he be able to provide me with that information?

840 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I believe the hon. Member has asked me the Xanit question. In fact the hon. Member has asked me a host of Written Questions. I am obviously very popular. I think I get more questions than anybody else. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Either I have more. I do not know. Maybe it is just that I do a lot. (*Laughter*)

845 But some of the questions ask for some details down to a breakdown of costs in the GHA per month, per department, which makes me wonder why an earth these questions are asked, because I cannot see any benefit in the Opposition knowing how many bandages, how much money is spent on bandages in a month in any particular department, and it is a serious concern for me, Mr Speaker, because there are public servants who are spending a lot of time answering questions. By all means, the Opposition has every right to ask questions.

850 But questions I think that will be of benefit to them in their contribution to a better Gibraltar. But asking such kind of detail, which takes public servants many hours and many days to answer, for no apparent effect in the end, to me that time would be better spent in doing other things. But anyway that is just an opinion and I take the opportunity.

855 Now I have forgotten what the hon. Member has asked me, so she had better ask me again.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, she has asked the question that I have asked her to ask, the first part of the question, which cannot possibly be characterised in the way that the hon. Gentleman has characterised it, which is how much has been paid to Xanit over the last financial year. The Opposition is perfectly entitled to that information.

860 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Oh, absolutely, Mr Speaker, and that information has been given in the Written Answer that the hon. Member is going to get.

865 What I am alluding to is other questions like how much sick leave over three days per grade for the whole of ... the monthly figures of cost for the Department. The monthly cost per hospital per condition in the UK. These are things that... I mean monthly figures really have not much value, because if you do not get all the bills one month, you might get them the next month and therefore these things are not relevant. I think an overview of a year comparing year with year is fine, but getting down to the nitty-gritty of these details and asking, for example, on the question of sick leave, in which you have a Human Resources Department spending three or four days there and not being able to perhaps process vacancies. Then I get a question as to why I have got so many vacancies.

870 Mr Speaker, I think the Opposition has to really take stock of how they are asking questions or the manner of questions they are asking and of the negative effect they can have on the public service for no benefit for Gibraltar, Mr Speaker. But on the question of Xanit, that information will be given on an annual basis.

875 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, obviously he was not a Member of the Opposition at the time when we were answering a battery of statistical questions on a regular basis. But look, we will be the judge, as

Her Majesty's Opposition of Gibraltar, of what is relevant, what is not relevant, and what is good for Gibraltar, what is not good for Gibraltar. His role is to answer questions. (*Interjections*)

880 But, Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman said that in relation to Xanit, originally there had been an *ad hoc* arrangement, which has now been consolidated into an overall agreement. I note that in the past there have been referrals to, for example, other institutes in Spain, such as the very well-known excellent institute in Navarra, the Pamplona Institute, Cancer Research and Treatment Institute, and I wonder whether the Government is also thinking of conducting that same exercise in relation to that Institute.

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, he may be the judge, but I think his judgement is flawed.

Certainly I have not had the experience of being in Opposition. I hope I never will, but certainly I doubt whether questions like how many partridge chicks have been born on the Upper Rock, which I have got again as a Written Question this time round, when I have explained that it is impossible to tell to the hon. –

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Mr Speaker: May I intervene?

This question of the sort of information which the Opposition asks of the Government is nothing new; it is something that has been happening over the years. There is only one Member here, apart from myself, and that is the Hon. Mr Bossano, who will recall that during a Budget session in Committee, a particular Member of the Opposition persisted in asking for every single item of overtime in all the subheads of the Public Works Department. We used to spend a week, *a week* in Committee during the Budget. Now, that does not happen any longer. (*Interjections*) No, it was not Mr Bossano. (*Laughter*) No, it was not. Mr Bossano took a much broader view of matters. It was not Mr Bossano. All it succeeded in doing was tying down the Ministers of the Government for a whole week here. So that is nothing new and I am sure that all Members when they are in Government feel that an excessive amount of time is perhaps being devoted in having to provide answers to questions, but it cuts both ways.

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Certainly, Mr Speaker, and I apologise if I have gone on too much on the subject.

I have no problem at all in – (*Interjections*) I am going to Pamplona in a minute – supporting public servants when they do this work, but I do question whether there is any point in some of the questions that are asked. But anyway, that is another...

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Pamplona. Let us go to Pamplona. Mr Speaker we do refer patients to the Universidad de Navarra facilities in Pamplona and we are currently under discussion with them looking at possibilities of firming up the relationship in various different ways. We are in discussions and we will see what comes of them.

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Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, if I may just end with one final supplementary?

Going back to the information on Xanit, what I have not requested and will be requesting is a schedule of the fixed prices for the different treatments.

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I have no problem in giving that to the Member opposite. I would ask her to keep those confidential because obviously if we are discussing with other hospitals – and we are, not just with Pamplona... we are open to discussions with other hospitals – that would be commercially sensitive.

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Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q378/2014

New GHA management structure – Xanit's role in negotiation and establishment

Substitute Clerk: Question 378, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

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Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say what role, if any, the Spanish private hospital Xanit has played in the negotiation and establishment of a new GHA management structure or in the consultant's contract?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, this is probably one of the most bizarre questions I have had to answer because I just cannot see... anyway, Mr Speaker, none, sir.

935 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm that no GHA meetings or negotiations for new GHA services have taken place at Xanit?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Oh, Mr Speaker, now I see.

940 Mr Speaker, one meeting was held there because – (*Interjections*) No, let me explain. (*Interjections*) No, this says – (*Interjections*) What role... No, Mr Speaker, this is mischievous and totally unjustified. The question clearly says (*Interjections*) what role has the Spanish private hospital played in the negotiation? (*Interjections*) That is – (*Interjections*) No role.

Mr Speaker, the meeting was held in Xanit because one of the members of the negotiating team was a patient in Xanit and in order to allow the negotiations not to be delayed, the meeting was held there.

945 Mr Speaker, I think the Members opposite should think about what they are asking and get a little bit information before they make allegations. (*Interjections*)

Substitute Clerk: Question 3...

950 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm whether or not the acting Chief Executive, who is now a consultant, Mr John Langham, has been operating out of Xanit as part of his remit for the establishment of a new GHA management structure or if he has held meetings there on behalf of the GHA?

955 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker.

I repeat, *one* of the Members of the team, and I will not mention the name here, was a patient there, a long term patient; therefore, in order not to delay the negotiations, a meeting was held there so that he could attend, and that is it. Absolutely no relationship at all to Xanit as an organisation, other than the use of a room.

Q379/2014

Transmissible blood born viruses – Screening for GHA staff; vaccination programme

960 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 379, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health explain how GHA staff are screened for transmissible blood born viruses and what the vaccination programme is?

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

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, staff members are tested for exposure to transmissible blood born viruses in the event of a needle stick injury. There is also a programme to screen all existing GHA staff for hepatitis B immunity and offer them a vaccination against hepatitis B, if indicated.

970 This is part of a wider programme for the public service, which was long overdue and which the Government is proud to have introduced.

975 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I understand that the hepatitis B vaccination programme for emergency and public service staff, including the GHA, was introduced. It was reported in the media. But what about the actual screening for all new entrants into the GHA, into the emergency services, a screening programme for hepatitis B and other viruses, such as HIV, hepatitis C and so on, where they are automatically screened before starting work within an emergency setting or health environment?

980 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, this has never been carried out in Gibraltar. I would need the advice of the Director of Public Health if he thought that was indicated.

TRAFFIC, HOUSING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Q380-Q386/2014

**Charles Bruzon House –
Construction work; concerns raised**

985 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 380, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Government say whether any concerns have been raised by residents of neighbouring estates in relation to the construction of the Charles Bruzon House?

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

Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 381 to 386.

995 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 381.

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Government say whether it has taken steps to ensure that any heavy machinery required during the construction of Charles Bruzon House will be operated in a manner that does not put the children and staff at undue risk of injury?

1000 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 382.

1005 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Government say what procedures are in place for access by emergency services vehicles to Governor's Meadow and Bishop Fitzgerald Schools during the continued closure of Europort Avenue and the building of Charles Bruzon House?

Substitute Clerk: Question 383.

1010 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Government say what steps it has taken to ensure that children, staff and students at the three schools in the vicinity of the Charles Bruzon House construction site, have adequate exit and assembly locations in the case of emergencies?

Substitute Clerk: Question 384.

1015 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Government say to what extent if any, the sports facilities adjacent to the site of Charles Bruzon House will be affected by the construction of the new building?

Substitute Clerk: Question 385.

1020 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Government say whether any concerns about the safety of the staff and children at Governor's Meadow House have been raised with the Government since the announcement of Charles Bruzon House, by members of staff from any of the schools in the area?

Substitute Clerk: Question 386.

1025 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, is the Government satisfied that the children of Governor's Meadow School are safe from hazards arising from the construction of Charles Bruzon House?

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

1030 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the Government has not received any representations from residents of neighbouring estates in relation to the construction of Charles Bruzon House.

1035 Representations have however been received from a group of parents whose children go to Governor's Meadow and Bishop Fitzgerald Schools. The Department of Education, through the Director of Education, have also raised a number of issues to be taken into account during the construction of Charles Bruzon House.

Meetings have been held between the Government's project team, the contractors management team and health and safety advisers with the Director of Education and the head teachers of the three schools in the area to discuss all issues and explain how these will be addressed.

1040 A meeting has also been held with the representatives of the concerned parents to similarly address their concerns and explain how they will be addressed.

The full re-opening of Europort Avenue to traffic on 23rd May 2014 meant that access for emergency services to the Governor's Meadow and Bishop Fitzgerald Schools will be the same as it has always previously been.

1045 The housing project site is self-contained within what used to be the car park and so there should not be any effect on the access arrangements for emergency services whilst construction of the building is ongoing.

1050 The issue of emergency exits and assembly points have been discussed and reviewed by the City Fire Brigade's Fire Safety Officer, together with the heads of the three schools. Revisions have been made to the school's emergency plans to reflect changes made to exit routes and assembly points, all of which are in place.

1055 The sports pitches located on the south and west of Westside School will not be affected whilst Charles Bruzon House is being built, other than for the scaffolding which will be erected along the boundary wall. This will only encroach one and a half metres into the school area and will not prevent the pitches from being used for the same purposes as they currently are.

1060 Responsibility for health and safety on site lies with the main contractor in accordance with current laws and regulations. As is the case for all building sites, the Government's Health and Safety Inspectorate will carry out inspections and take action against the contractor should there be any breaches or unsafe practices. The contractor's mandatory health and safety plan includes for all heavy machinery to be operated within the constraints of the site, including the transportation of heavy loads.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for the comprehensive answer he has given to the series of questions I have asked him.

1065 I would be grateful if he could just confirm, because I heard in the answer – I mean it was substantial and I may have misheard – that Europort Avenue has reopened on the 23rd May. I am grateful.

1070 Also, in relation to the site where the building is being constructed, I understood from representations that were made to me that that was indeed the assembly site in emergency scenarios for the schools. Can I confirm that the Minister has actually said that those arrangements have been reviewed and that different processes are now in place in that respect?

Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, given that the arrangements concern the schools, I will deal with the supplementary.

1075 It is indeed correct that all those matters, including health and safety issues, evacuation procedures and emergency procedures have been fully reviewed. The site in question was an area where people would congregate in the event of any emergency and certainly other sites have been identified, including areas of Bishop Fitzgerald and, as you know, there is access also to Westside School and that has also been identified.

1080 In case there is a need to have a full evacuation of both the Governor's Meadow and Bayside School area, everybody will congregate on the Westside area. So alternative arrangements certainly have been made and that has certainly been taken into account.

Hon. S M Figueras: I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

1085 One of the representations that was made to me was that exit from the area of the two schools into what is effectively the Montagu Gardens area, that there were certain issues relating to that, including restricted access to the area. Is this something that has been considered by the Government and dealt with appropriately?

1090 **Hon. G H Licudi:** Mr Speaker, it is something that has been considered by the Government and it is something that has been dealt with appropriately. There has now been an agreement with Montagu Gardens Estate for the opening of another exit from Westside into Westside Estate, Montagu Gardens Estate directly, that is in the course of being done.

1095 Although the question says that all emergency exits and revised arrangements are in place, this is an additional item, over and above all the other arrangements that are in place in order to have, in the event of an emergency, whether there is a need to evacuate through Westside and outside of Westside School into the Montagu Gardens area. So that is certainly something that has been considered and has now been fully agreed and will be implemented very shortly.

Hon. S M Figueras: I am grateful Mr Speaker.

1100 Just two short supplementary questions left on this issue and that is in relation to the use of the heavy machinery and in particular the cranes on site. Representations received by myself from concerned parents suggested – in fact I saw some video footage – of heavy machinery operating in a manner that represented, to the layman, an unnecessary...well, not unnecessary, but an undue risk to students in the area.

1105 I suppose that the second supplementary, the last supplementary I was going to ask can be asked in conjunction with that, and that is whether there are any concerns that have been raised with the Government that remain outstanding or that have not been dealt with to the satisfaction of those who have raised it with them... to the Government's knowledge clearly?

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, in relation to the crane, we were advised that it is perfectly normal in any construction site to have a crane where the jib, the front part of the crane, goes over adjoining areas. 1110 Unless you have a large enough site and you have the crane in the middle, generally a crane will encroach over the adjoining areas...in other words the jib, the front part. In this particular case there will be some, what is called, free sailing of the jib around the adjoining area.

1115 However, what we have made absolutely sure is that there will be absolutely no lifting and no goods will be transferred in that part of the crane which will go beyond the area of the site itself, and that is an absolute restriction that has been placed on the contractors and the contractors will have confirmed to us. They need to confirm because I understand this is all part of health and safety regulations and they will have to do it in any event, but it is in fact a strict restriction in relation to this construction site and the contractors have clearly confirmed that this is a restriction which will be very, very strictly adhered to.

1120 The hon. Member also asks about other concerns and other issues which have been raised and issues that have been raised concern noise, dust, vibration and traffic. All those issues have been adequately addressed in a comprehensive plan which has been put together by the contractors. There have been numerous meetings between the Department of Education, Technical Services Department and the contractor. I attended a site meeting myself with both the contractor's representatives and members of my Hon. Friend Mr Balban's Department of Technical Services in which we looked at all these issues. 1125 A comprehensive plan has been put together and all the issues have been addressed, certainly to the Government's satisfaction.

1130 With regard to the parents, there was recently a meeting attended by the Deputy Chief Minister, hosted by the Deputy Chief Minister, with a group of concerned parents and the Director of Education and members of Technical Services Department were also there. I understand – and the Deputy Chief Minister can further enlighten us if necessary – that all those issues were addressed and explanations were given and satisfactory explanations were given to the group of concerned parents, who appeared to leave the meeting satisfied with what... Whether they were entirely satisfied or not it is not for me to say, but certainly those issues have been addressed, meetings have taken place and they appeared to be satisfied with the explanations that were given to them.

Q387/2014
Europa Avenue –
Partial collapse; details

1135 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 387, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Government provide details of the partial collapse of Europa Avenue in March this year?

1140 **Substitute 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, during maintenance work, it was discovered that there was a partial collapse of the main drainage system on Europa Avenue at two places where it crossed the road. At said location, there was an old storm water culvert and a sea water intake which were constructed using corrugated iron sheets surrounded in concrete. 1145 Over the years, and given the lack of maintenance, the corrugated iron sheets corroded and lost their structural integrity leading to loss of material into the culvert.

1150 The works carried out have involved the complete replacement of the existing system from the entrance of the school up to the corner of Chilton Court, using new plastic pipes. Works are currently progressing on the reconstruction of a manhole on the Chilton Court side and the laying of the last short section of pipe.

The final items of work shall be the partial reconstruction of the existing manhole in front of the school and repairs to the inlet culvert.

These works will be undertaken during the school summer break.

Q388/2014
Europort Avenue –
Re-opening to traffic

1155 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 388, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I suspect that we have already covered this answer, but I will ask the question in any event and just ask any relevant supplementaries accordingly.

Can the Minister for Traffic say when he expects Europort Avenue to re-open to traffic?

1160 **Substitute 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, Europort Avenue was re-opened to traffic on Friday 23rd May 2014.

1165 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, in the context of his answer to Question 387/2014 and that there are certain parts of the work yet to be completed, can he confirm whether there is any need for traffic arrangements which will limit flow through there? I have not been in the area since I asked the question, as the Hon. Minister for Justice is suggesting. I have not been in the area. I do not know what arrangements are in place, if any.

1170 Is the Hon. Minister for Traffic able to provide us with details of what arrangements, if any, are in place for the management of traffic during the time that the remaining works are conducted?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, I believe that no more works will be done on that road per se. I think the works will be done within... carried out within Chilton Court, as far as I believe.

Q389/2014
Dudley Ward Way Tunnel –
Details of ongoing works

1175 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 389, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Traffic detail the works currently ongoing in Dudley Ward Way Tunnel?

1180 **Substitute Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

1185 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the works currently ongoing in Dudley Ward Tunnel comprise the following: (a) the provision of brackish water wet main and fire hydrants at intervals along the tunnel; (b) the provision of fixed emergency telephone call points at intervals along the tunnel; (c) the provision of fire extinguishers at intervals along the tunnel; (d) the removal of redundant exposed pipes and supports.

The works are programmed to be completed by the end of August 2014.

1190

Q390/2014
Europa Road –
Cost of works; completion date

Substitute Clerk: Question 390, the Hon. S M Figueras.

1195 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Minister for Traffic detail the costs relating to the widening of Europa Road and the addition of pavements along various stretches of it, as well as confirm when these works are expected to be completed?

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

1200 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the sections of new pavement that has been constructed along the southern end of Europa Road have been built as part of the new water mains infrastructure project being undertaken by AquaGib. The new mains were being encased so the opportunity was taken to upgrade this to a pavement.

1205 Technical Services Department have supplied the paving slabs and railings along this section. The section of new pavement between the ends of the AquaGib works and the start of the section of new pavement being constructed as part of the Buena Vista development project has been undertaken by the Technical Services Department. The total cost of this, including the paving slabs and railings for the southern section, is £28,459.60.

The works to the pavements undertaken by AquaGib and Technical Services have been completed.

1210 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to commend the Government on that initiative. Certainly it is one that is welcome on this side of the House and by many residents in the area.

1215 I wonder whether the Minister is able to tell us – though he has no notice of this question, but it generally arises in the context of it – whether there are any plans for the development of pavements along the northern section of Europa Road, particularly in the area between Brympton and the access to Sunset Close?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, no, not receiving notice of that question, I would not be able to answer correctly. The issues there I would presume are the actual size of the road itself and the constraints with it being such a very narrow road.

1220 The road that has been repaired in question was one which many residents in the area were concerned about and a stretch of road where cars do travel at a reasonable speed and there was no protection for pedestrians; hence the Government took this available opportunity by making these pavements, which was possible. But there is that area, the curvy area just passed Brympton, which I would presume... I would think that it would not be possible to build a pavement along the whole length of that road.

1225 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I have actually given the issue some thought from a personal point of view, because I used to live at Highcliffe House. In fact, I also raised it with a former Minister for Trade and Industry, Mr Joe Holliday, and he said that in fact it may well be possible because part of the... I cannot remember which part, but part of the land, either the wall on the left-hand side as you walk south or on the right-hand side, parts of that are actually owned by the Government of Gibraltar. So it may well be possible to keep the width of the road as it is, but build a pavement in areas that are owned by the Government.

1230 In any event, actually if you were to ask the residents there whether they would be amenable to losing... what is it, a metre in front of their drives just to have a pavement that actually works to their advantage? It may be possible that they would also agree.

1235 But my question is would the Minister perhaps look into this, because it is one of the most dangerous parts of Gibraltar? There are a lot of people who walk their dogs. There are a lot of people who walk with their children in that particular area and it is very, very dangerous.

1240 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, we will most certainly, we do agree that it is something which could be looked at and we will most certainly be looking and addressing it within this next 16 years of Government. *(Laughter and interjections)*

1245 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

A Member: That was very droll.

1250 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, in relation to the... Congratulations on your confidence in the –

Hon. D A Feetham: Well, arrogance actually; not confidence. But anyway –

Several Members: Oh!

1255 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** In relation to that area, the Hon. Minister has been talking about the stretch from Brympton to the bottom of Windmill Hill, has the Government considered having a partial one-way system with the road that takes you partly down Naval Hospital Hill and then up out via Brympton and then that stretch of Europa Road from Brympton to the bottom of Windmill Hill, perhaps considering a one-way system there that would enable to provide room for a pavement?

1260 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I do not believe that that has been considered, but as part of our Traffic Plan we will be looking at every single aspect that could help. Remember, one of our priorities is to increase the safety of pedestrians throughout Gibraltar in many locations and it is something which if can be done will be looked at. I do not believe the Government has looked at that, but I will ask in the Department.

Q391/2014
Large-scale resurfacing of roads –
Government plans

1265 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 391, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Traffic detail what plans the Government has for the large-scale resurfacing of Gibraltar's roads?

1270 **Substitute 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 contracts to carry out the first phase of a major highway resurfacing programme has recently been awarded to AMCO (Gibraltar) Ltd in the sum of £577,231.75.

1275 The works will involve the full resurfacing of Line Wall Road, from Smith Dorrien Bridge up to Cloister Ramp, and the full resurfacing of Rosia Road, from the Trafalgar interchange up to its northern junction with Cumberland Road.

1280 **Hon. S M Figueras:** I am sorry, could the Hon. Minister just repeat the last bit from Trafalgar interchange to ...?

Mr Speaker: The northern junction.

1285 **Hon. P J Balban:** I said the works will involve the full resurfacing of Line Wall Road from Smith Dorrien Bridge up to Cloister Ramp and the full resurfacing of Rosia Road from the Trafalgar interchange up to its northern junction with Cumberland Road.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the reply. I wonder whether he could repeat the cost. I did not quite get the cost.

1290 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, the cost was £577,231.75.

1295 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, this question does generally arise from the original one, in terms of the actual deployment of the resurfacing. Has the contractor encountered any issues with the siting of the equipment that they are using to prepare for this resurfacing, mainly on the east side reclamation?

Mr Speaker: I will allow this supplementary, but I find it very difficult to see what connection it has with the original question. But I will allow it.

1300 **Chief Minister: (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, this is an issue which is being dealt with generally, also in my office because it involves all different parts of Gibraltar, and as I can see the hon. backbencher looking at me, he will know that this is the part of the jigsaw puzzle that is Gibraltar.

1305 There have been no issues because the plant that is there is simply there at the moment not to operate; it is only there whilst an area in a different part of the reclamation is made available which was presently taken up by rock and sand which is being used for the Sandy Bay project. So it will move into an area where there will be no issues with the operation of the plant.

Hon. S M Figueras: I am grateful to the Chief Minister.

1310 Could the Hon. Minister for Traffic say whether in addition to the contract that has been awarded in respect of Line Wall Road and Rosia Road, whether there are any other plans in the pipeline for resurfacing in other areas of Gibraltar?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, we are looking at the next phase in the programme and would be the southern section of Line Wall Road and Queensway.

Q392-396/2014
Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan –
Publication of report; cost to taxpayers

1315 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 392, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Traffic provide an update to this House in the context of the findings of the Sustainable Traffic and Transport Management Plan?

1320 **Substitute Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 393 to 396.

1325 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 393.

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for Traffic say when he expects the Sustainable Traffic and Transport Management Plan will be published?

1330 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 394.

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for Traffic provide details to this House of initiatives which the Government is intending to pursue or is indeed pursuing as a result of the findings of the Sustainable Traffic and Transport Management Plan?

1335 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 395.

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for Traffic provide details to this House of the traffic measures he expects to be carried out in consonance with the findings of the Sustainable Traffic and Transport Management Plan?

1340 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 396.

1345 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Minister for Traffic say what the total cost to the taxpayer has so far been in the context of the Sustainable Traffic and Transport Management Plan?

Substitute 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 first draft of the Government's new Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan has been completed. This is currently undergoing an internal review process and so it is not possible to give a definite date for its publication. It is not possible to provide details at this stage of the findings, the initiatives that will be pursued, nor the measures that will be implemented as these are still subject to review.

1355 As has been previously stated in this Parliament, the Plan will look at ways of encouraging alternative forms of transport with the aim of improving our environment and how we move around for the benefit of all.

The total cost to date, in the context of the sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan, is £368,219.05.

1360 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the answer, though I have to say it seems that this plan is the subject of great mystery when it is something that would certainly, I am sure, be very welcome in the public domain and certainly not least for the Opposition.

It strikes us, Mr Speaker, that there will have been many findings that subject to any kind of redraft or internal review that is currently ongoing, there should be no great issue with divulging and making available to the Opposition in this House.

1365 What reasons can the Minister give for the delay in providing this House at the very least – if not publication of the Plan itself... providing details to this House of those issues rather more specifically than generally trying to encourage alternative forms of transport and all those matters that we have covered here in the past for not doing that?

1370 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I encourage the eagerness of the hon. Member and the Opposition to see what important findings come as part of the Traffic Plan. We must remember that this is a draft; hence it is work in progress.

1375 Those Members who have read the draft can see already there are going to be very many positive suggestions and it will definitely be something which will be very, very positive for Gibraltar. But until that draft has been read through and it becomes a *final* document, then that is when the Opposition will be able to have a look, as will the whole of Gibraltar when it is published.

1380 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, is the Minister saying that the Government has not made any decisions whatsoever in respect of any measures whatsoever that they will be taking following the recommendations and findings of the Plan? If they have taken such decisions because certain issues certainly are very clear to them and the stakeholders, why is it that he cannot tell this House what it is that they are already planning on doing?

1385 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I think it is important that we understand the parameters that we are talking about.

1390 The Plan is being worked on at the moment by the local technical people, who have received the draft from those who have been helping us prepare it. It has not yet been shared with other Ministers. It will have to be shared with other Ministers for other Ministries to have input also. Once we have done that, then we will produce a final document, which he will be happy to know, I reiterate, will be shared with them and with all of the public in Gibraltar.

1395 Now, he would be right, Mr Speaker, to take us to task for not publishing the final report. He would be absolutely right to say if we did not publish the final report, we would not be complying with our obligations of accountability and transparency. He would be absolutely right to say that with the final report, on which we have spent taxpayers' money, we should not be *acting* without sharing that information with the public and of course with Members of this Parliament. But, of course, if he did that, Mr Speaker, he would run the risk of being a critic of the previous Administration (**Hon. D A Feetham:** Oh...) which had many reports which they did not publish. I hear the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition groaning. I am not surprised, Mr Speaker, because the strain of the record of the previous Administration that he has to pull along with him, which does not enable them to rise up like the phoenix that they wish to rise like, is there, and it is a history that is always going to burden them.

1400 I remind them, for example, Mr Speaker, of the report into the future of GBC prepared by Mr Allan King, something which I was asking the previous Administration to disclose for many years. We entered into a commitment that we would publish the minute that we were elected and we published it two weeks after we were elected. There was nothing there in our view that could not be shared with the public. We made a small redaction which identified an individual, but otherwise it was a report paid for by the taxpayer and shared with the public.

1405 Of course there is also the report into the future of the Customs Department, which was prepared by the previous Administration and *not* shared publically, although paid for by the taxpayer, which we also shared with the public and with the people at Customs who were concerned.

1410 So, Mr Speaker, absolutely right to press us on publishing the report; but absolutely no chance of us publishing a draft.

1415 **Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** Mr Speaker, I promise I am not rising like a phoenix (*Laughter*) but I would like to just, sort of, slip in a supplementary here.

The word 'draft' has been used by both hon. Members in their response. Would the hon. Members confirm whether they have received a report from the consultants and they are now considering it locally to produce from it the report of what they want to do? In other words, their action plan.

1420 Does the adjective 'draft' apply to the report or to their action plan of what parts of the report they wish to accept and not accept, which would be normal? Consultants come in, they make a million recommendations. And then the Government would consider them and extricate the ones that they like and implement them. Have they received a report which is not in draft or a list of ideas or recommendations from the consultants?

1425 **Hon. Chief Minister:** As I understand the position, what has been received is a draft, still for consultation with the technical people here, who are working with the technical people in the UK, and that is why it has not been shared with the Cabinet as a whole yet.

I understand that one or two Ministries, whose technical staff is the staff involved in liaison with the technical people in the UK, are the ones who have it, but there is not yet something which is at the concrete level of a recommendation.

1430 **Hon. S M Figueras:** But you see, Mr Speaker, I am not alluding to the publication of the report itself in the supplementaries that I asked. I am alluding to the initiatives or findings, which are generally accepted as positive and workable in Gibraltar, that may still be subject to further internal review on the details of how they will be deployed, but the disclosure of those findings which have wide acceptance which may provide a glimpse into what it is that we can expect in the future as a result of the Plan.

1435

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, there are many things within the report that I have read so far which will be very interesting to proceed with. As we said, the report will be targeting other forms of transport – so other forms of moving people around Gibraltar in a more environmentally friendly way.

1440

So it will be looking at the use of more bicycles and it will be looking at the bus service, but these things we have mentioned already, but until we are not... these are recommendations and we need to look at these in detail before taking a final decision.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q397/2014

Government vehicles – Number powered with non-polluting engines

1445 **Substitute Clerk:** Will the Hon. Selwyn Figueras be putting the Questions 397 and 353 in respect of Mr Netto... Questions 397 and 353? Those are questions posed by the hon. Member Mr Netto. Question 397, the Hon. S M Figueras on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

1450 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 783/2013 and to the answer to Written Question W149/2013, can the Government state how many of the vehicles, since these questions were asked, that have been bought to date are powered by non-polluting engines other than the G1?

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

1455 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, no vehicle powered by an exclusively non-polluting engine has been bought since Question 783/2013 was asked.

Q353/2014

New power station – Report; allocation of tender

Substitute Clerk: Question 353 the Hon. S M Figueras on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

1460 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 240/2014 and to Question 573/2013, can the Minister with responsibility for Utilities please provide Parliament with copies of the full report stated in his answer in relation to the new power station, given that according to the Hon. Minister, the allocation of the tender would be, and I quote ‘towards the end of April’?

1465 **Substitute Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services on behalf of the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, the answer remains the same as that of my answer to Question 240/2014.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GAMING

Q398/2014

**Minister's travelling expenses –
Trips undertaken; costs and allowances**

1470 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 398, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Financial Services provide details of the trips he has undertaken since coming into Office, together with the costs of such attendance, broken down by travel costs, subsistence allowance and who attended with him?

1475 **Substitute Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services and Gaming.

Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola): Yes, Mr Speaker, the information requested is available on the Government website.

1480 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

EDUCATION, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND JUSTICE

Q399/2014

**Bishop Fitzgerald School –
Asbestos concerns**

Substitute Clerk: Question 399. This is a question which has been posed by the Hon. J J Netto and it is in connection with asbestos and the Education Department. Who is going to be...?

1485 Question 399, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Education say if there have been recent reports of asbestos concerns in Bishop Fitzgerald School and if so, provide Parliament with a statement?

1490 **Substitute Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice.

Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, no recent reports in relation to concerns over asbestos in Bishop Fitzgerald have been brought to the attention of the Department of Education.

1495

ENTERPRISE, TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT AND HEALTH & SAFETY

Q400-405/2014

**Future Job Strategy trainees –
Salaries; training; numbers employed privately**

Substitute Clerk: We are now going to proceed to questions which have been put to Minister Bossano. Question 400, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1500

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Employment provide details of how many people are undergoing training at a cost to the Government, together with the industry area in which such training is being carried out outside the FJS scheme?

1505 **Substitute Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety.

Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, I will answer that question with Questions 401 to 405.

1510 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 401.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Employment provide updated details of the expenditure in terms of salaries paid to the trainees in the FJS since his reply to Question 325/2014, broken down on a monthly basis?

1515 **Substitute Clerk:** Question 402.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Employment provide current details as to how many employees each of Construction Training Company Limited, ETCL, Graduate Research and Development Company Limited and SECL have had, broken down by month, since his answer to Question 328/2014 to date?

Substitute Clerk: Question 403.

1525 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Employment provide updated details of the number of private employers which have employed FJS trainees, with details of how many trainees have been employed by each employer, broken down by month since his answer to Question 329/2014 to date?

Substitute Clerk: Question 404.

1530 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Employment state where trainees are currently placed in the private sector as relevant to the industry area of the private employers?

Substitute Clerk: Question 405.

1535 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Employment provide details as to where the grad trainees are currently placed?

Substitute Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety.

1540 **Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, there are currently 10 persons in such training in the industry areas of sea transport and related services and in road transport. Salaries paid to trainees since the answer to Question 325 are as follows: February, £400,000; March, £406,000; April, £370,000.

1545 Since the answer to Question 328/2014, the numbers of employees are as follows:
Company 1, January to April: January, 134; February, 145; March, 121; April, 118;
Company 2: January, 155; February, 151; March, 151; April, 115.
Company 3: January, 80; February, 72; March, 70; April, 67.
Company 4: January, 73; February, 72; March, 72; April, 70.

1550 Since the answer to Question 329, the number of trainees and the number of private employers are as follows:

February: 43 employers with one employee each; 15 Employers with 2 trainees each; 10 with 3; 10 with 4; 2 with 5; 2 with 6; 1 with 7; 1 with 12.

1555 March: 49 with 1 each; 25 with 2 each; 10 with 3 each; 5 with 4 each; 2 with 5 each; 1 with 6; 1 with 7; 1 with 11.

April: 53 employers with 1 trainee each; 20 with 2 each; 13 with 3 each; 3 with 4 each; 2 with 5; 2 with 6.

1560 The industry code of the private sector trainee placements as at 31st March 2014 was as follows: other manufacture; construction; wholesale trade; retail trade; repairs of consumer goods; restaurants, bars etc; sea transport and related services; road transport; banking, finance and insurance; Police and Fire Service; Education; and other services.

On 30th April the grad trainees were placed in the following industry areas: public administration and National Defence; and other services.

1565 **Hon. D J Bossino:** A question of detail, I cannot cite the exact question the Hon. Minister was answering, but it is basically the number of trainees, and I have this specific question in relation to that and perhaps he could clarify. It is basically the list he gave of employers who have trainees employed... or have employed trainees rather. I think he gave me the details for January, February and then he went on to April. Has he given me March? He has given March? Okay. It started in February.

1570

Hon. J J Bossano: I think, Mr Speaker, the figure for January was given the last time he asked the question, yes?

1575 **Hon. D J Bossino:** In relation to that question, which I can identify as Question 403, the question specifically relates to the number of private employers who have actually employed trainees. Whilst, with the benefit of time, I read the answer he gave me in the last sitting of the House in March, he provided the statistical information, but based on this... and this is the way he phrases his answer, which is 'the number of private employers with trainee employees between...', and then he sets out the dates, just to be certain that we are both singing from the same hymn sheet and we understand each other, what I am asking is the number of employers who have actually formally employed trainees, as opposed to having trainees placed with them. Can he confirm that he has understood the way that I have put the question?

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1585 **Hon. J J Bossano:** No. Mr Speaker, the answer that I gave to Question 329 and the answer that I have given is the number of trainees still paid by the scheme and placed with the employers. So there are 43 who have got one each as a trainee. The bulk of these will of course be employed and I can give him a list of when their training is finished, but these are the people who are currently in training and this is the distribution of where the trainees are placed.

1590 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I think in fact there has been a misunderstanding. The question was very specifically worded, but then I was able to... again with the benefit of time when I had the chance to review the answer he gave in writing, I noticed that I think he misunderstood the question. Perhaps I am repeating myself, but the answer...this is also interesting information which I will analyse.

1595 What I am interested in is the statistics which show the trainees who have actually been formally employed by the private employers. In other words the trainees are no longer – if I can use the terminology or the way that the Hon. Minister has answered the question right now – no longer in the payroll of the scheme and actually in the payroll of the private employer. That is the information which I sought in March and the updated information that I am seeking now. Obviously it is information which I am sure the hon. Member can provide, but presumably will not be able to provide this morning.

1600 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, I can provide it, but of course it is not very meaningful, in the sense that there are these other people who are currently in the training. He already knows from the figures when he has asked me how many of the trainees have finished up in employment at the end of the training and the answer that I gave him when he asked me the last time, which was quite a long time ago, was that it was 65% at that time. So in effect the percentage, if anything, is higher now than it was then; but the month is of no particular relevance.

1605 In the case where there is only one person with 43 employers, people start in different periods and finish in different periods. There is no correlation between the month in which they spent in training and the month in which they finish in training, but I can tell him that it is of the order of 65% to 70% of the numbers that I have got here who finish up employed.

1610 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, but, Mr Speaker, the question that he has asked is a very specific question. He said, 'details of the number of private employers which have employed Future Job Strategy trainees'. Now, we all know that the employment contracts of the trainees are not with the private companies. They are with ETCL and the other companies. They are the ones that employ these individuals. They are the ones that pay them.

1615 It is asking for how many private employers have employed Future Job Strategy trainees. The question is specific, he has given another answer. He is asking now for us to extrapolate the figures from the percentage that he is giving us. If he does not have the statistics, I accept that, even though the question is very specific and it is very clear.

1620 But, in answer, will he provide to my hon. Friend, by way of a letter, the monthly statistics, because that is what he is asking: how many people have actually been employed by employers following their training in January, in February, in March and in April?

1625 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well Mr Speaker, I am answering it the same way as I answered Question 329, because the question said, 'since the answer to Question 329/2014'. So I am giving an answer which follows the same as the one that he asked previously, which was in fact understood to mean what was the distribution of trainee employees.

1630 When they have completed their training they are no longer trainees of course, they are then employees of the placement provider. I have already told him that the last time I answered that question it was 65% and that the percentage is higher; of course I can go and get the Department to work out the figures. If he

asks me the question the next time I will give it to him for both Question 329/2014 and this one, if he wants it, for 329/2014 as well.

1635 **Mr Speaker:** Could I suggest that the hon. Questioner follows the matter up in writing and makes it clear in his letter to the Minister exactly what is the information that he wants?

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, Mr Speaker, the question is in fact in very clear terms and it is exactly the same terms as I have posed it here, but clearly understood from reading the answer that the Hon. Minister had misunderstood it. That is fair enough. We are all human. We all make mistakes.
1640 But just for the record, the question is and was in very, very clear terms.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

1645 **Substitute Clerk:** Question –

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, there were five or six questions bunched together and I have some supplementaries.
I did not make an accurate note of the answer that the hon. Member gave in relation to Question 400, which was posed in terms of the assistance which the Government is giving *outside* the FJS scheme. The reason why I asked that question is that I think the hon. Member, if he recalls, at the last sitting of the House said that assistance was being given to those individuals, who, for example, wanted to undergo heavy goods vehicle training. I think he also cited the example – again from memory – of hairdressing, but they were not formally part of the FJS scheme. In other words, they do not necessarily have to subject themselves to a contract and his Department with a private employer does not follow that scheme. I was interested to know what the cost of that was. I am not sure if I got the answer, because I have not taken a full note of the answer he would have given to that particular question. The question is Question 400.
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1655

Hon. J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, Question 400 says, ‘how many people are undergoing training at a cost to the Government’, but it did not say at what cost to the Government. So what I have given him is the number, which is what he asked. The number is 10.
1660

Hon. D J Bossino: [*Inaudible*]

1665 **Hon. J J Bossano:** There are 10 people. Of those, six were doing bus driving, but they do not get paid. What the Government pays is the cost to the company that is training them.

Hon. D J Bossino: Does he have the information as to the cost to the Government?

1670 **Hon. J J Bossano:** It works out at about £1,200 per person for a period of three months or something like that – that is the order of cost.

To train somebody who has already got a driving licence and get him up to what is required by the public service or the Transport Commission, or whoever it is that gives them a licence to be able to drive a public service vehicle, takes three months and costs about £400 a month per driver.

1675 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I think the Hon. Minister said that there were about six of the 10 who were benefitting from this, and the others are in which area of activity?

1680 **Hon. J J Bossano:** The others are involved in maritime activities and are not paid from the vote of the ETB. They are paid from a fund that has been there for some time, which is created from a levy from the port users, but the money comes out of that fund and there are four people in that area.

1685 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister tell me how do individuals access this facility? If somebody pops round to the ETB offices and asks for assistance, what criterion for selection of a candidate is there in place? Is there any formality in relation to that, in terms of selection, in terms of how much money they get paid?

1690 As I said, I do specifically recall him referring to various areas of activity and I do not think he was specific. He was just almost suggestive that anybody who approached the Government with an idea, whether it be an employer or somebody who wants to benefit from training, can approach the Government and obtain assistance in this regard. Can he shed some light in relation to that?

Hon. J J Bossano: The maritime thing is not run by the Employment Service and has been there for some time. I think it is advertised and people apply. There are four currently.

1695 The bus drivers and, for example, heavy goods, plant operators and stuff like that is something that is offered to people who are unemployed in order to improve... I mean if we find, for example, that there are bus driver vacancies and we have difficulty in filling them or there are requirements for lorry drivers or
1700 plant operators and we have difficulty in filling them because people who are registered as unemployed do not have the necessary skill or may have the skill but do not have the necessary licences, then what the Employment Officers do when they are looking at the jobs that can be offered to the people that are being assisted in finding employment, they are told that training in these areas is available; but this is not part of the normal scheme because they continue to be registered as unemployed and they do not get paid while they are being trained.

1705 The only cost is the cost of the provision of the training. So that is the only area. I have assumed that outside the scheme meant that they are not with a contract of employment with one of the four companies. **(Hon. D J Bossino:** Exactly.) Right, but at the moment it is the bus drivers.

Hon. D J Bossino: Again, this is something in respect of which his Department has a complete control and handle. They are the ones who decide and identify that there is a deficiency of skills in one area and as he has explained, they offer, basically, a way out, but is it something which is there, available and transparent and available to all?

1710 Is it an extra service which is available to the public in general which can be accessed by the public in general by popping round to the Minister's office and trying to find out whether any assistance... because, again, I have said this is the third occasion, but I specifically recall that the hon. Member mentioned hairdressing, for example, which does not fall into the categories he has been referring us to this morning. So I just thought is there something that is available to the public in general and that they could benefit from?

Hon. J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, it is something that is done by the Department in order to get people who are not with a job into a job. So the answer is, this is not, somebody cannot just walk in and say, 'Well, I like the idea of being able to drive a bus'. It does not happen like that. Clearly, you have got to be unemployed. You have got to be looking for work. You have got to be in a position to be willing to work as a bus driver. You have got to be in a position to pass whatever vetting is required of bus drivers, because they have the responsibility for driving passenger vehicles.

1720 If you meet the criteria where obtaining the licence makes the difference between being able to apply for the job or not being able to apply for the job, then in effect what we are doing is in addition to the training, where we take people on a payroll, we are providing training where the unemployed person clearly cannot afford to pay for the training because he is unemployed. **(Hon. D J Bossino:** Okay.) So it is as simple as that. It is simply a mechanism for adding something more to the range of mechanisms that the Department has in order to bring unemployment down.

1730 Independent of that, the question of something like hairdressing, which I mentioned before, is different from the normal thing because there what we have got is somebody who approached the Government with a proposal for training hairdressers. But those hairdressers are being paid 20 hours a week, because unlike the bus driving thing, which is something that people can still carry on being unemployed and also get training two or three days a week, in the case of hairdressers where they are 20 hours in a hairdressing salon getting trained, we are paying them 20 hours, but the trainer is not required to undertake to employ the people who are doing the hairdressing. So that is one thing that makes it different from the normal system, which is the vacancy is identified and the person who is supplied as a trainee is being trained for a job that already exists. In this case the people who are doing the hairdressing will, on completion of the hairdressing, not have a guaranteed job.

1740 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, if I might after that exposition of the excellent work being done at the Employment Ministry, may I move that the House now adjourn until 3.00 p.m. this afternoon?. Sorry, not adjourn, but recess until 3.00 p.m. this afternoon.

1745 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, just simply to point out that obviously I am still in the midst of posing supplementaries to the five questions which were bunched up together by the Hon. Minister.

1750

Mr Speaker: Some Members have to attend an investiture at midday. (*Interjections*)
So the House will now recess until 3.00 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed at 11.40 a.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.10 p.m.