



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

**AFTERNOON SESSION: 2.30 p.m. – 7.04 p.m.**

**Gibraltar, Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

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*The House adjourned at 7.04 p.m.* ..... 74

# The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 2.30 p.m.*

[MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Judge K Ramagge GMH *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P A Borge McCarthy Esq *in attendance*]

## BILLS

### FIRST AND SECOND READING

#### Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Bill 2025 – First Reading approved

**Clerk:** A Bill for an act to repeal the Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Act 1998.  
The Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

5

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):**  
Good afternoon Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that a Bill for an Act  
10 to repeal the traffic, the Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Act 1998 be read a first  
time.

**Madam Speaker:** I now put the question, which is that a Bill for an Act to repeal the  
Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Act 1998 be read a first time. Those in favour?  
15 **(Members: Aye.)** Those against? Carried.

**Clerk:** The Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Act 2025.

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#### Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Bill 2025 – Second Reading approved

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):**  
Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that the Bill be now read a second time.  
Madam Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to repeal the Road Traffic (Windscreen  
25 Transparency) Act 1998. The decision to repeal the act in question has been made after  
consultation with the DVLD and the RGP's Road Policing Unit.

This legislation is a product of its time and no longer serves a purpose with car  
manufacture and sales as we know them today. More specifically, when this legislation  
was first introduced, rear tinted windows were a customisation that needed to be added  
30 to a factory standard vehicle with a certificate being required to prove that this was

installed at factory level when the vehicle was presented for its MOT test. With the passage of time, this style of rear window has become factory standard due to the increased demand for privacy by the purchaser and other factors like advancement in UV protection.

35 The above has resulted in the regime that was housed in this Act becoming, in addition to outdated, no longer workable for the DVLD with this stemming from complications relating to expense, certification and enforcement. Windscreens and windows from passenger seats forward will continue to have the restriction in place in line with European standards. Madam Speaker, I commend this Bill to the House.

40 **Madam Speaker:** Before I put the question does any other Member wish to speak on the merits and general principles of the Bill. Yes, the Hon. G Origo.

45 **Hon. G Origo:** Just to note by my usual constructive spirit, I met twice with the Hon. Minister for the Environment to discuss the purpose and merits of this Bill.

I accept that this is a Bill to do away with some old piece of legislation which is no longer workable in today's current day and age for the reasons he has already expressed.

50 I did have but one concern that we did discuss, albeit in brief, and that being whether or to what extent the consultation with the RGP was held insofar as how does this Bill in any way make it more difficult for them to identify persons who are driving a vehicle who may be committing offence but I can see from what he's already stated that the windscreen reduction of visibility will be covered by another piece of legislation and therefore I have no hesitation to commend this Bill to the House.

55 **Madam Speaker:** Any other members wish to speak? I call on the mover to reply.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I'm grateful to the Hon. Mr. Origo. We had in fact discussed this earlier and we were happy on both sides for this to go forward so I acknowledge that and thank him for that.

60 **Madam Speaker:** I now put the question which is that a Bill for an Act to repeal the Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Act 1998 be read a second time. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

65 **Clerk:** The Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Act 2025.

**Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Bill 2025 –  
Committee Stage and Third Reading to be taken at this sitting**

70 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the Bill be taken today if hon. Members agree.

75 **Madam Speaker:** Do all hon. Members agree that the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the Bill should be taken today? (**Members:** Aye.)

**The Cemeteries (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
First Reading approved**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Cemeteries Act 2018. The Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

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**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Cemeteries Act 2018 be read a first time.

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**Madam Speaker:** And I put the question which is that a Bill for an Act to amend the Cemeteries Act 2018 be read a first time. Those in favour? **(Members: Aye.)** Those against? Carried.

**Clerk:** The Cemeteries (Amendment) Act 2025.

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**The Cemeteries (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
Second Reading approved**

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that the Bill be now read a second time. Madam Speaker, this is a short but important Bill. Its purpose is to amend the existing Cemeteries Act 2018 to reflect changes in administrative responsibility and improve the operational clarity of the legislation.

95

Specifically, this Bill amends Section 8 of the Act. The current wording refers to a Cemetery Keeper in paragraphs B and C. These references will now be replaced with the Cemetery Authority, which is the appropriate and broader administrative body responsible for cemetery management.

100

Madam Speaker, the change is intended to align the language of the Act with the actual administrative structure and working practises currently in place. Referring to the Cemetery Authority rather than an individual Cemetery Keeper provides clarity and better reflects the way decisions and authorisations are made in practise. Madam Speaker, it's a straightforward amendment that enhances the practical operation of the law and brings the terminology up to date and therefore, Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

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**Madam Speaker:** Does any other hon. Member wish to speak on the Bill? Yes, the Hon. Mr. G Origo.

110

**Hon. G Origo:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I can confirm the statements made by the Hon. Minister that this is a very simple Bill and it merely serves to amend just two sections, Section 8, B and C of the Cemeteries Act. The purposes from having read the amendments to the Bill is for the replacement of the Cemetery Keeper with the Cemetery Authority to bringing to the Cemetery Board notices, which in their opinion affect the management of the cemetery.

115

120 From our position, the Cemetery Keeper will still maintain its functions and it is also  
subject to directions given by the Cemetery Authority in respect of custody, charge,  
superintendence and management. And for those reasons, we have no issues with this  
Bill and I'll be asking my hon. Colleagues to support this Bill and we commend this Bill to  
the House.

125 **Madam Speaker:** Any other hon. Member wishes to speak? Would the mover like to  
reply?

130 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, once again I'd like to acknowledge the support  
and that we had discussed it previously, so I have nothing further to add.

**Madam Speaker:** I now put the question, which is that a Bill for an Act to amend the  
Cemeteries Act 2018 be read a second time. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those  
against? Carried.

135 **Clerk:** The Cemeteries (Amendment) Act 2025.

**The Cemeteries (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
Committee Stage and Third Reading to be taken at this sitting**

140 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):**  
Madam Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the  
Bill be taken today, if all our hon. Members agree.

145 **Madam Speaker:** Do all hon. Members agree that the Committee Stage and Third  
Reading of the Bill be taken today? (**Members:** Aye.)

**The Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
First Reading approved**

150 **Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Keeping of Wild Animals Act 2002. The Hon.  
Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

155 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):**  
Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Keeping of  
Wild Animals Act 2002 be read a first time.

160 **Madam Speaker:** I now put the question, which is that a Bill for an Act to amend the  
Keeping of Wild Animals Act 2002 be read a first time. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.)  
Those against? Carried.

**Clerk:** The Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Act 2025.

**The Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
Second Reading approved**

165       **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):**  
Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that the Bill be now read a second time.  
Madam Speaker, the Keeping of Wild Animals Act 2002 was enacted in order to transpose  
170 the relevant EU Directive relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos. Following our  
departure from the Union, it is incumbent on us to continue to monitor legislation relating  
to standards of animal welfare to ensure we do not fall behind the rest of Europe or the  
United Kingdom.

175       The Act is now over 20 years old and required updating in line with equivalent  
legislation in the UK on the regulation of zoos. This amendment does not substantially  
vary existing rights on the keeping of wild animals but elaborates on existing rights and  
responsibilities in this area in order to produce modern legislation which upholds high  
standards of animal welfare. The legislation focusses on conservation measures which all  
zoos must uphold, and which are contained in the schedule.

180       No new measures have been included but the Bill elaborates on the existing measures  
to make clearer the standards that are to be upheld. For example, zoos must keep records  
on the animals kept and the Bill now describes that records should include the number of  
different animals, acquisitions, births, deaths, disposals and escapes of animals and details  
on the cause of death and general health of all animals kept. Similarly, zoos were required  
to keep animals in an enclosure which provide species specific enrichment.

185       The Bill now elaborates on this to explain that the requirement is that an animal is  
provided with an environment well adapted to meet the physical, psychological and social  
needs of the species. It clarifies a zoo is a place where wild animals are kept for exhibition  
to the public with wild animals now defined as animals which are not normally  
domesticated in Gibraltar. Whilst pet shops were already exempt from requiring a zoo  
190 licence, there are now definitions of what constitutes a pet shop.

195       The animals as we know, Madam Speaker, the Animals in Travelling Circuses Act 2018  
already prohibits the use of animals in circuses in Gibraltar. The Bill now clarifies certain  
matters relating to applying for a licence for a zoo, including whilst the Minister was  
entitled to exempt a particular zoo from the requirements to hold a licence, the Bill  
clarifies that this is only permissible where this would not be prejudicial to the protection  
of wild animals and the conservation of biodiversity. Additional provisions relating to the  
manner and content of the application for a licence are included in the Bill.

200       The Bill now provides for any application for a zoo licence to be publicly available and  
for interested parties to make representations relating to it, including the applicants  
themselves, the Royal Gibraltar Police and the Fire and Rescue Service. The Bill now  
outlines grounds for the refusal of the licence, so the discretion of the competent  
authority is limited, increasing transparency in the process. The application can be refused  
if the standards of accommodation and staffing proposed will be inadequate for the  
welfare of the animals kept and also provides for licences to be altered by the competent  
205 authority.

210       There will be a fee charge to make an application under the Act. The Bill introduces a  
new requirement for the Minister with responsibility for the environment to keep a list of  
persons, including veterinary practitioners and people competent to inspect zoos and  
advise on animal welfare generally. It provides for the licence holder to be heard before  
any directions are made in relation to a licence.

Whilst the Act already provided for the closure of a zoo, this Bill now makes provision for details on how a zoo should be closed and the reasons for this, including failure to comply with the provisions of the licence, but also cases where the public don't have access to a zoo for more than a week per year, as two examples. The Bill provides for arrangements for animals when a zoo closes to safeguard their well-being and how they are eventually to be disposed of. It creates new offences which are consequential to the amendments described, such as failing to comply with a direction to close a zoo or part of a zoo.

The Bill elaborates on arrangements for the inspection of zoos, including to introduce notice to be given to zookeepers prior to inspections and requirements for the keeping of records relating to the inspection. Madam Speaker, Gibraltar must continue to strive to be ahead of the curve when it comes to standards of animal welfare, so that the safety and well-being of any wild animal kept in captivity in Gibraltar are safeguarded. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

**Madam Speaker:** Does any hon. Member wish to speak? Yes, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can confirm, having read the explanatory memorandum and control through the Bill, that it actually does what it says on the tin. From my point of view, it introduces higher standards for zoos, increases enhancement powers by the competent authority, and very importantly, it codifies an appeal process for the revocation of a licence.

In terms of enhancement powers, it provides a more extensive process for powers of entry and explains the rationales in doing so. It gives the competent authority a statutory process in revoking a licence, and with respect to the lists that the Minister mentioned earlier, such persons are to be consulted in the process for revoking a licence, and that is also very much welcomed. The Bill does indeed enhance already existing legislation, and for these reasons, I have no problem in commending the Bill to the House.

**Madam Speaker:** Any other hon. Member wish to speak? Would the mover like to reply?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, once again I acknowledge that the hon. Member and I had discussed this earlier, and I welcome the Opposition's support.

**Madam Speaker:** I now put the question which is that a Bill for an Act to amend the Keeping of Wild Animals Act 2002 be read a second time. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

**The Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
Committee Stage and Third Reading to be taken at this sitting**

**Clerk:** The Keeping of Wild Animals Amendment Act 2025.



255 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Committee Stage and third reading of the Bill be taken today, if all hon. Members agree.

260 **Madam Speaker:** If all hon. Members agree that the Committee Stage and third reading of the Bill be taken today.

**Clerk:** Committee Stage and third reading. The Hon. Chief Minister.

265  
**COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING**

270 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that the House should resolve itself into Committee to consider the following Bills, clause by clause. Namely, the Bill to Appropriate Sums of Money to the Service of the Year, ended 31 March 2023, the Communications (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Supplementary Appropriation 2022-2023 Bill 2024, the Civil Status (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2025, the Civil Contingencies (Amendment) Bill 2024, the Crimes (Assaults on Emergency Workers) (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) repeal Bill 2025, the Cemeteries (Amendment) Bill 2025 and the Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Bill 2025.

*In Committee of the whole House*

**The Appropriation Bill 2025 –  
Clauses considered and approved**

280 **Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to Appropriate Sums of Money to the Service of the Year, ending on 31 March 2026. Clause 1.

285 **Madam Speaker:** Clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clause 2. Head 1 Treasury, Subhead 1 Payroll, Subhead 2 Other Charges.

290 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair...Let me find the right page which is Treasury. Page 19. Yes in Other Charges which Head 1 Treasury, Subhead 2 Other Charges. Sorry?  
(Interjections)

No, but he did Other charges as well.

295 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Sub-Head 2, line 16, Government Officers, Office Rent and Service Charges. I note that the Chief Minister said in his Budget Address to Treasury we received £3.4 million, which includes provision for the payment of rental of school buildings. How much of the increase from 12.6 to 15.3 is in respect of rental of school buildings? And can we begin an analysis by school building? And as an observation, since this is for school buildings, should not this be under the Department of Education Head rather than Treasury under a heading of Office Rents for Government Offices?

300 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Chair, the answer is £2.5 million. We don't think it should be under the Department of Education. We think it should be here, that's why we put it here. But, of course, when the hon. Gentleman makes a point, we always consider it and I doubt we'll consider it and if it's more appropriate next year to go under Department of Education, it will. But our decision this year has been to put it here. We  
305 don't have a breakdown of how the calculation has been reached between schools - remember, this is an amount paid to GEP. It's one amount paid to GEP.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 1? Head 1 stands part of the Bill.

310 **Clerk:** Head 2, No 6 Convent Place. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask, Madam Chair, under Other Charges, item 14, the estimate for 2024/2025 was £728,000 for Other Grants and Donations and the outturn was close to, well, it's £2.1 million, just over. Can I have an indication of a breakdown of  
315 how that expenditure was incurred?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I think this is going to be answered in the way that it's usually answered, saying that absolutely, I'm happy to share with the hon. Gentleman the breakdown, but I can't share it across the floor of the House. I'm happy to  
320 share it with him either behind your Chair today or at another time, but I cannot share it across the floor of the House.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I'm grateful for that. Perhaps the Chief Minister, given that there are Treasury officials here, can make a note and perhaps it can be sent to me in writing. It would be helpful.  
325

**Hon. Chief Minister:** I don't in principle have a problem with that. I don't know whether I can send it to the hon. Gentleman in writing, but I certainly share it with the hon. Gentleman one way or the other. I have no difficulty with that.  
330

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 2? Head 2 stands part of the Bill.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair.

335 **Madam Speaker:** On Head 2? Yes.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** That's a notional provision every year, but there has been an Ex-gratia payment or payments. Is that a single payment or several payments and can we be told the purpose of that?  
340

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, it is 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26 payments.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And the nature of those payments is diverse?  
345

**Hon. Chief Minister:** It varies from what I've seen and I can identify from the ones that I have dealt with. There are some PI issues. There are some settlement issues. There are some employment issues.

350 There are some settlements in respect to payments made by third parties, which we've then agreed should be funded. So it's funding a payment that they've made and we are then providing for.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 2? Head 2 stands part of the Bill.

355 **Clerk:** Head 3, Office of the Chief Technical Officer. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 3 stands part of the Bill.

360 **Clerk:** Head 4, Customs. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, yes. If I can just take the Hon. Chief Minister to Establishments. If we go down 2025/2026, we go from 95 Customs Offices in 2024/2025 to 91, 2025/2026.

365 Can I just have clarification as to whether those pertain to retirements or have they been transferred out?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** I think, Madam Speaker, that the issue that we had here was that we were over-providing in some years because of a school. So there were additional individuals in the complement because we knew that we had an overlap of people who were retiring in a particular period. We were going to recruit because we had a training period and we were going to go over for a particular period and then come back down and I think that accounts for most of that.

375 **Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 4? Head 4 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 5, Parliament. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

380 **Madam Speaker:** Head 5 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 6, Personnel and Development. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

385 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So, Madam Chair, on Other Charges, which is 2, brackets 11, Ex-gratia payments, the expense of £960,000 incurred under the Personnel and Development budget, similar question to what I asked before, how many payments is that in respect of and in relation to what?

390 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I understand it's 24 claims, Madam Speaker. Usually on this Head, the hon. Gentleman will know, we don't just add 1,000 because we sometimes have a view of what is coming in the year, so we provide for what is coming in the year, but other things can come in the year. And these were 24 other claims.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** But because it's under Personnel and Development, these would be in the nature of employment or compensation or redundancy payments, is that right?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** In the nature of those types of payments, yes.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Sorry, Madam Chair, if I can ask on Other Charges, line 13, final salary commutation costs. I'd be grateful for some information as to what this entails. I always understood the commutation costs being the pension payments in lieu of commutation would go through the consolidated charges.

I was wondering what final salary commutation costs would be in addition to what would go through pensions.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, this is in relation to those who have taken the commutation, it's been paid through Credit Finance, and these are the people who have passed away before the 12-year actuarial period which sees the repayment of the Credit Finance advance. So this is the cost. This is what, when we used to have the debates in this House, this is the cost that the other Mr Feetham used to call the potential gamble that could undo the whole thing.

It is, as the Hon. former Chief Minister predicted, a very small amount, and not a very large amount, given the amounts that we are saving by paying the commutations.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** I'm just trying to understand, Madam Chair, but the agreement with Credit Finance would be to continue making payment over what would be the life of the individual, I guess, for a minimum period. Should this cost not be under pensions, or am I misunderstanding something?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** So he gives away. If the individual is alive, that's where you're paying from, pensions. When the individual dies, you have to make a payment, or have to continue making a payment, at least for 12 years to make Credit Finance whole.

But you can't make that payment from pensions, because it's no longer a pension. So you need to find somewhere to put it. So this is where we're putting it.

On the basis that the arrangement is made by the individual in his capacity as a Civil Servant, on the day that he goes, and we need to book it somewhere. And the Pensions Act can no longer be the place you put it, because the person is dead. This is, in effect, the Government having to put its hand in its pocket to make whole.

But by looking at that number, the hon. Gentleman can see that the amount that we're having to pay is much, I mean, it's not even what I would say 1% of the saving that you're making through making the commutation payments.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 6? Yes.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So, Madam Speaker, on Subhead 15, under 2, Occupational Health Services, there's a Forecast Outturn of £124,000 and going up to £370,000. What is it that they are anticipating this year in respect to that, because of the increase?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** The first column, Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman referred to, which is the Forecast Outturn, represents four months. The column for the estimate of 2025/2026 represents a full year effect.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Sorry, that is a full year effect of some new set of arrangements, is that right?

445 **Hon. Chief Minister:** This is the cost of the contract the Government has entered into  
with Occupational Health Service providers to bring up to date all of the problems that we  
had with the Department not being able to deal with Occupational Health claims and  
those costing us a huge amount of money because they were never resolved, they always  
just stayed unresolved. So this is the cost of resolving all of those, which has a considerable  
450 benefit to the Exchequer.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** For me to understand that, is this about providing support to  
employees or some other resolution?

455 **Hon. Chief Minister:** It also is about providing support for employees, but it's  
principally about resolving claims that employees have in respect of Occupational Health  
matters, which very often prevent them from being able to come to work for extended  
periods, etc. They continue to be paid at home, and we need to resolve those issues. We  
need to say, you are able to come back to work, so come back to work, or you are not able  
460 to come back to work, we must resolve the employment issue now with a Medical  
Boarding, etc.

The failure to deal with that for years has an accumulated cost, which was not being  
resolved with the previous arrangements that we had for Occupational Health, which  
were not booked through here, were booked through general cost. So this has the benefit  
465 of resolving all of those now and on an ongoing basis. But of course, because it's  
Occupational Health Service, it also is a service to the employee at the same time, for  
those who are not in that long-term type of situation.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see. So am I right in thinking this would be a contract with medical  
470 practitioners to provide advice to the Government so that it can then resolve claims one  
way or the other? If that's right, can he tell us who is the contract holder under these  
arrangements?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** That is right, and I can tell you - Maritime Medical Services  
475 Limited, trading as Occupational Health Services.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 6? Head 6 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 7, Department of Immigration and Home Affairs. Subhead 1, Payroll.  
480 Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, Madam Speaker, can I just ask on the Other Charges, 2(7)  
Identity and Residence Cards, a lower figure is provided for this year than the Forecast  
Outturn of last year. So can I drill down on that a bit more in the context of presumably  
485 that's on advice, but in the context of discussions that there are about probably new  
arrangements under a possible Treaty, does that cater for implementation aspects or is it  
an ordinary expense irrespective of new arrangements?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the outturn includes, because of all of those reasons, the purchase of a large amount of stock of cards. The estimate deals more with maintenance than any need to buy additional stock. You'll see that the estimate is higher than the actual and the estimate for last year.

We then made the decision to buy the stock and we now anticipate that we will have sufficient stock and we will simply need to be printing more and therefore there's likely to be a higher cost of maintenance.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see, thank you. And in relation to 11, Asylum Seeker and Refugee Expenses, can we have a bit of information as to what those expenses would be for? Are they expenses for advice, external advice to someone seeking asylum or being a refugee? Or is it accommodation? Is it other costs?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, that does not include advice, etc. This is more payments to individuals who are here going through an asylum process and we may need to pay accommodation expenses, we may need to pay other subsistence expenses, so to speak. And this is the Head from which it's funded and there was a family here for a number of years and they are no longer here and therefore we anticipate the cost will be lower.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 7? Yes?

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, on 2(16) under Security Services, we now estimate zero. Were those Security Services in respect of a physical security guard that was, I think, posted before at the old offices? Is it in that respect?

Because it comes under Digitalisation Expenses, is it something just to guard the actual cards or whatever? I'm not sure whether it was a human resource expense or not.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is wrong. It doesn't come under Digitisation Expenses. It comes at the end of all of the Heads as a disappearing Head.

So if the last Head had been Visas, then Security Services would still appear below Visas because it appears there as a disappearing Head. And it's a disappearing Head because I've just opened this morning the magnificent new facilities for the Department of Immigration and Home Affairs at Leanse Place, which has one security guard downstairs. Therefore, we no longer need to fund the freestanding security guard that run at the cost of CSRO at the old Joshua Hassan Offices that they had.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 7? Head 7 stands apart of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 8, Borders and Coast Guard Agency. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Nothing on Head 8? Head 8 stands apart of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 9, Financial Secretary's Office. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, I can just ask, on the Payroll Emergency Overtime, there always seems to be a number there of about 70-odd thousand and yet next year zero. Is it expected, I mean obviously the emergency by definition is technically not anticipated, but given the history, would it not be an idea to have some number there?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well Madam Speaker, I'm surprised it's taken them until Head 9 to notice. The whole book has been changed. We're only providing a thousand pounds as approved to emergency, unless there is agreed Conditioned Overtime, which is few and far between when you'll find that in the book.

Because overtime should be something that is either approved or emergency. There shouldn't be any manning level maintenance necessary because we've got all the manning level in the Civil Service. There should be no discretionary overtime because we don't want people to have the discretion to approve overtime.

If something is necessary, it will be approved. If it's an emergency, it will have to be approved. And that's where it should be booked, so that we can keep a better eye on overtime throughout the book.

So, we'll see that that change is going to happen throughout the book. I would just also, Madam Speaker, with them here, like to indicate that the Financial Secretary's Office has done a magnificent job. They estimated £703,000 for the year.

They've come in at £702,000 for the year. Because it's not the private sector, one can't say, well done, have the £1,000 go off and have a drink. It's the taxpayer, so all we can do is say thank you - so well done and thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 9? Head 9 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 10, Government Law Offices. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Head 10?

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Yes, Madam Speaker. Subhead 2(21) Professional Fees. Estimate was 2.5, it's come in at 4.7. We're back at 2.5 for 2025/2026. To what extent are these professional fees predictable, I guess?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, I suppose they're not. I mean, what is predictable is about £2.5 million. There are years when it's more, there are years when it's less.

Hon. Members won't be surprised to know that we've had to take a lot of advice in respect of the negotiation at different times. And that there are ongoing litigations, etc., which require payments of fees. So it's very difficult to get this estimate right without doing the thing that the hon. Gentleman recommended to us the other day, which we don't agree with, which is just estimating more.

And our fear is that if you estimate more, people are persuaded that they are free to spend more. So we would rather not underestimate, we would rather estimate what we think should happen, and then if circumstances require us to spend more, we spend more. But at least it does require a supplementary provision to be made.

And that means that people have to tell us they're going to exceed the Head. They have to come through the Financial Secretary with a justification on a Supplementary

585 Appropriation form. And you can keep an eye on expenses which might otherwise be incurred without specific permission being granted for them.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 10? Yes.

590 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am at 2, Subhead 8, and we see Training Expenses for the Office of Criminal Prosecutions and Litigation. There was an estimate last year of £1,000. They've spent nothing.

Can the Chief Minister perhaps comment as to whether any training is ongoing within that Department?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I'm responsible for Government Law Offices, but the Minister for Justice is responsible for anything relating to enforcement, et cetera, through the Police. If there isn't an expense, it's because the Office of Criminal Prosecutions and Litigation haven't pursued it. If they had pursued it, they would have at least £1,000 to spend, and if they needed more, they could seek more if necessary.

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But they haven't even sought that £1,000. Now, that could be related to a number of reasons. I mean, the people who are there now have been there for some time, so they've had their training already.

They may have been very busy with prosecutions and not had the time to be able to come out for training. But this is not a Politically-led control on training. I mean, the provision is there.

605

It's in as £1,000, but not as a token. But if they needed more than £1,000, they would come, make the case, explain what it is, the training they needed, and they would inevitably be approved the training, because we would want to have our Office of Criminal Prosecutions and Litigation obviously enjoying the proper training. But they haven't wanted to pursue that this year.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Just one further question under this Head. I note also that under Subhead 9 Conferences, there's an estimate of £5,000 for the Office of Criminal Prosecutions and Litigation, and then if we move down to Head 22 under Advisory and Parliamentary Council Offices, we see an estimate of £40,000 for conferences in respect of that Department. I'm going to assume that the answer is going to be very similar, but I'll ask it nonetheless.

615

Why such a large discrepancy between both Departments?

620

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, there will be an even larger discrepancy with other Departments. I mean, for example, in Digitisation you probably need to attend more conferences that you need to attend on Parliamentary drafting, and in parliamentary drafting you probably need to attend more conferences that you need to attend on criminal prosecutions. And indeed, Madam Speaker, if the hon. Lady looks at the figure here, they have overspent the amount that was estimated by £5,000.

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So in the same way as the Office of Criminal Prosecutions has underspent the amount that was provided. So OCPL asked for £5,000 but only spent £3,000, and APCL asked for £40,000 and spent £45,000. These are two very different creatures.

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You cannot compare one with the other because you're not comparing apples and pears. You're comparing apples and oysters. They're completely different creatures.



**Madam Speaker:** Anything else? No? Head 10 stands part to the Bill.

635 **Clerk:** Head 11, Social Security. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Yes, Madam Chair. If we could look first at Subhead 2, line 16, Payment Social Assistance - Import Duty, which has a footnote 2, which then goes back to page 229 and 229 has a Social Assistance Fund.

640 Obviously, last year we had an estimate of 7 million. This year it came in at 17.2 million. And looking at page 229, that's really due to a contribution of 10 million to Community Care on the line recurrent on page 229.

For next year, 2025/2026, the number drops down to 7.3 million. And on page 229, the contribution to Community Care is showing on the recurrent as zero. Is that the  
645 Government's intention?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I think that is always the Government's intention. I don't think that we, from memory, I don't think we ever put an estimate of a payment. I think we always expect to pay them if we have the funding available.

650 In other words, if the cash is available, then it is paid. And the hon. Member has to remember that the logic of this is based on the payment coming from Import Duty. And therefore, you want to make sure that you can always reflect that it comes from Import Duty.

So, as usual, Madam Speaker, we will make the payment if we are able to. There have  
655 been some years after COVID when we haven't made the payment. And in fact, we've explained it.

Last year we made the payment. And we expect to be able to make the payment during the course of this year. But we don't commit ourselves to make the payment.

So we don't estimate it. And we never have, I think.  
660

**Hon. R M Clinton:** I think memory serves me right. In the previous years, you've had a 7 million recurrent payment. I'll take you, as you say.

If I can move on to the next line, line 17.

665 **Hon. Chief Minister:** From my memory, Madam Speaker, I've just checked with the Financial Secretary. He seems to think it's the same. The 7 million is at the bottom, not at the top.

No, it's not the Community Care one.

670 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Fine, I understand. If I go to line 17, Contribution Statutory Benefits Fund. Last year, estimate of 4 million for 2024/2025.

Came in at zero. And for 2025/2026, 4 million. I mean, looking at the reports of the Principal Auditor on page 16.

675 He's indicating that the Statutory Benefits Fund certainly was in surplus for the year 2023/2024. A surplus of 7.5 million. And given there's an increase in the cap on Social Security, there's no reason why that balance shouldn't be maintained.

Are we likely to need these 4 million contributions?

680 **Hon. Chief Minister:** At the current rate, the answer is no. But remember that the book is sent to the printers before the cap on Social Security changes in June.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 11? Head 11 stands part of the Bill.

685 **Clerk:** Head 12, Digital Services. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 12 stands part of the Bill.

690 **Clerk:** Head 13, Information Technology and Logistics Department. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, yes, can I just ask? In terms of, under Payroll, 1(b)(i), there's an item there, Manning Level Maintenance. Sorry, there's...

695 Oh, it's Emergency. I thought it was Manning Level Maintenance. It's my eyesight. It says £240,000 Outturn. That's not related in any way to, presumably, maintenance of the IT structure, is it?

700 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, it's under Emergency. Given that we are, unfortunately or fortunately now, both of a certain age, I entirely agree. I mean, I don't do this without Julie's ruler most of the time so that I can show I'm on the right line.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on 13?

705 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Well, just one more, if I may. Under 2(12), you've got Maintenance Agreements and Licences. So, I assume that that is partly some kind of software licences that need to be paid but also external contractual arrangements to deal with maintenance of the IT infrastructure.

710 To what extent is all the maintenance contractor-ed or is it that there is some maintenance that is conducted in-house? Because, again, although it says zero, over the last couple of years, I did notice that there was an item under 1 of Manning Level Maintenance. Is it that it's now all entirely being subsumed under 2(12)?

715 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, there are no payments under Manning Level Maintenance. They're all at zero. So, Maintenance Agreements and Licences are all external.

Of course, there is internal maintenance that goes on. Our people maintain our servers, et cetera. But the concept of the Maintenance Agreement is a concept known in IT as something that happens in respect of the things that you cannot reach, the things that are maintained for you and the licences that you need.

720 And these days, I mean, I can imagine this has changed considerably from the time that the hon. Gentleman was in office. These days, every single officer in the Government has a terminal or two. And they will have a telephone, which is also linked to data.

725 And some, although not all, will have a telephone, which they carry around in their pocket, which also requires a licence if it's going to receive information securely. So, the modern tyranny is the licence to be able to open your email, write in the Word document, amend, save, et cetera. And that is very, very extensive indeed and very, very expensive indeed.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 13 stands apart of the Bill.

730 **Clerk:** Head 14, Broadcasting. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Head 14? No? Head 14 stands apart of the Bill.

735 **Clerk:** Head 15, Gibraltar Regulatory Authority. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 15 stands apart of the Bill.

740 **Clerk:** Head 16, Office of the Deputy Chief Minister. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank you. 2(7), Brussels Office. Is the Deputy Chief Minister able to provide some form of itemisation of that expense, what it relates to?

745 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, that relates to all the running of the Brussels Office, from Office Expenses to the people who work there to all the other expenses incurred in a Financial Year.

750 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Thanks. Is he able to provide an itemisation?

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Yes, So, for example, General Office Expenses, £2,600. Telephone service, £8,500. Protocol and Entertainment, £200 Printing and Stationery, £900. Water, Electricity, Heating, £11,000. Office Rates, Rent, Lease, other, £8,000.

755 So I think that Security System, IT Expenses, Building Insurance, Maintenance, Subscriptions and Memberships of different organisations. Cleaning, £8,200. Office Equipment and IT.

Surveys and works. So this gives me a flavour of all the type of expenses which are covered by that sum.

760 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And in terms of salaries, are they included in there as well?

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Yes, the first item is salary and related expenses. And it's £97,471.

765 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I assume it includes the Director's, yeah?

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Well, there's no breakdown as to what it includes. The total amount which is given here is £97,471.06

770 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Is he not able to confirm whether it includes the Director's salary?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** The salary is in one of my Heads, Madam Speaker, in the law offices. Because he's a Director of the Crown Council.

775 **Hon. D J Bossino:** OK. So we exclude the Director. Can you give me the number of employees covered under the £97,000?

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** So there are two other employees in the office.

780 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I'm grateful. Can he state what the UK Parliamentary Consultancy is about exactly?

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Chair, yes, that is the salary of the Director of Gibraltar House in London.

785 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Exclusively the salary, is that the case?

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Chair, yes.

790 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank you. And a similar question to 11. Self-Determination, Seminar and Promotion.

There's been a bit of movement from zero to a placeholder sum, it seems, of 50. And then £1,000 was spent and now another sum of 50. What is that meant to cover?

795 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** In the past it's covered any item which relates to self-determination. That included a seminar which used to take place every year in the Garrison Library. It's included other items of lobbying which are related to self-determination.

800 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And presumably that may come about or may not. So therefore that's why you have a figure, you allot a figure of 50K.

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Exactly. It's varied over the years.

805 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And moving on to 13. Is the Deputy Chief Minister able to provide some information as to what that figure is meant to cover?

810 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** So it's covered a number of different items. One is the Brexit office expenses were charged to that account. Protocol Entertainment. There was transport and travel related to Brexit and to the EU departure. Accommodation and subsistence. The work of the Gibraltar-Morocco Business Association also comes from there. And hiring of equipment or carrying out works which are related to Brexit. In preparation for, in the event that there was a no-deal Brexit, some of the items of works were charged to this Head.

815 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And from what I gather from the hon. Member's answer, there is a distinction to be made between the Brexit Office expense and the Brussels Office expense. Is that the case?

820 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** So does the Brexit Office employ different people to those which the Brussels Office employs?

825 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Chair, there used to be a Brexit Office where the expenses used to be charged to. This was at the office opposite the John Mackintosh Hall. But that Office doesn't exist anymore.

830 **Hon. D J Bossino:** My mind went to Brussels when I was asking about the Brexit Office as opposed to the opposite, the John Mackintosh Hall Office. In 2(18), amount expenses, they seem to be quite tiny in number. What is that meant to be relating to?

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** So, 2(18) relates to the maintenance and upkeep of the amount. So, my understanding is that is unrelated to the works which are in the I&D.

835 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I'm grateful. And 19, we still see an item there for the Hong Kong office. I mean, it's a placeholder number, the infamous £1,000.

What are the intentions in relation to that? Because the Government seems to be quite insistent, stubbornly, to make a provision for that.

840 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** So, the plan has been for some time to close down the office in Hong Kong. There are some residue expenses left procedurally as that happens. The office, you'll remember, never came under my media directly.

It was run through the Ministry of Financial Services. But the decision was taken to close it, and that is a residue of that closure taking place.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, eventually it will taper off, one would imagine. And in relation finally to 20 General Expenses, what does that relate to?

850 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Chair, that relates to all the expenses of the Archives.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, fair enough, it is under bold as archives. But is he able to repeat slightly more without using it in a critical way? Transparent in relation to the question I've posed.

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**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** So, Madam Chair, that relates to Printing and Stationery, Cleaning, Telephone and Internet, Archival Storage, Digital Preservation Vault, Website Domain and Hosting, Binding, Library and Publications, Travel and Exhibitions.

860 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Travel, I'm a bit surprised to find that item in the context of an archive activity.

865 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Chair, it's perfectly normal. The Archives travels abroad for conferences to do with Archives and with Digital Preservation and that kind of thing.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 16 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 17, Civil Aviation, Subhead 1 Payroll, Subhead 2 Other Charges.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, 2 Regulatory Supports may have information as to what that amount is meant to be covering exactly for the upcoming year.

875 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Chair, yes, that relates to any support required by the Director of Civil Aviation in relation, for example, to taking advice on the production of specialist legislation. You'll recall there's been some very detailed specialist legislation passed by this House over the last couple of years. And that is the kind of support that this refers to.

880 The Director also brings in support relating to security matters and security inspections. So, I imagine all that will be covered by that Subhead.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank you. And in relation to 4, Pedestrian Access Airport Runway, it seems quite a high figure. Is that, well, I ask the question, what does it relate to?

885 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Chair, yes, that is the share paid by the Government in order to allow to maintain security posts at either end of the crossing points of the runway to allow that crossing point to remain open.

890 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And he may remind me, I think he's provided this information in the past, but the recipients of that share payment, as he puts it.

895 **Hon. Chief Minister:** The Ministry of Defence? It's the Ministry of Defence. Who else could it be? It's operated by the Ministry of Defence, as the hon. Gentleman knows or should know. And it was something which we found was more or less, if not agreed, it was something that was in discussion when we reached No. 6.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 17? Head 17 stands apart at the moment.

900 **Clerk:** Head 18, Equality. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Head 18? Yes, well, I'm not going to wait for the conversation to finish.

905 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** No, no, it's... Madam Speaker, I had my microphone on. It was switched off.

**Madam Speaker:** It's switched off when mine goes on, I'm afraid. But, yes, anything on Head 18?

910 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** It was on. Yes, Madam Speaker. On 2(9) Equality.

So, obviously, this is under Head 18, Equality, but it's called Equality, which doesn't give too much of a sense of what that is about. So, can I just have an idea of... It seems quite a relatively static cost, so perhaps the Minister can explain.

915 **Hon. C P Santos:** Under this heading, we make arrangements for any of the conferences, any of the training that we do, if we need to attend any conferences abroad on equality issues, and that all falls under this header.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So, it's all conferences or all training?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** It's any expenses directly to do with the actual Department of Equality, because over and above the Ministry of Equality, we have the Department within the Ministry. So, any expenses that come from that office in particular.

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**Madam Speaker:** Head 18 stands apart of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 19, Employment. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Head 19? No. Head 19 stands apart of the Bill.

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**Clerk:** Head 20, Culture. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Head 20? Yes or no? No. Head 20 stands apart of the Bill.

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**Clerk:** Head 21, Tourism. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, on Other Charges, Section 2, Subsection 13, Marketing. Can the Minister provide any details to what the half a million pounds is incurred on? What marketing and where are we marketing Gibraltar, I presume?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** This marketing Head is the campaigns that we do over in the UK, any adverts we do on any magazine. It's marketing throughout the year, mostly abroad where we need to market the destination. Any investment in hosting any conference ourselves or it's for all events that we partake in and any media or publication.

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**Hon. G Origo:** And does this expense form part of a fixed long-term contract? Because we can see that the estimate out and an estimate for the following year are consistently half a million pounds. Do you have any details on that?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** No, we don't have anything contracted for a long period of time. What we do is we spend the money, well at least we've spent the money one year. We've seen what works, what doesn't work and then we've tried to change maybe where we invest and to see what the best results we get. But we have a budget and we invest it according to how we feel is best.

955

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else?

**Hon. G Origo:** And in respect of subsection 15 Consultancy Service, can he please explain what consultancy services these are which are expended?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** This Consultancy Service is for the Gibraltar Office, the Tourist Board representative in Gibraltar Office.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Is that the Gibraltar Office in London?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, we have someone working for the Tourist Board in the Gibraltar Office in London.

970 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Oh I see, it's remuneration for one person, is that what we're talking about?

**Hon. C P Santos:** For one person and her team, yes.

975 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Sorry Madam Chair, can I ask then why is this not in Payroll if this person works for Tourism Department?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Because she works on a consultancy basis, she's not in our Payroll.

980 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And it was described as this person and her team, how many people would be within the cost of £68,000?

**Hon. C P Santos:** I should have been clear before, this is for one person, she has a consultancy agency and we use her as consultancy services. I don't know how she uses if she's got a company and her team but really this is her directly working for us as a consultant.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And this is consultancy in relation to what services?

990 **Hon. C P Santos:** Tourism and Marketing in the UK.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Mr Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** In relation to, with some trepidation, I'm asking a question on tourism, hope it doesn't cause too much angst on the benches opposite. But in relation to 26 Cruise Line Inaugural Visits, what's that meant to cover? I can't think for other than buying a prezzie or a plaque for the Inaugural Cruise Line, is that what it's meant to be covering?

1000 **Hon. C P Santos:** It actually covers more than just a prezzie, it covers having a band welcoming the cruise passengers on board, that's why we have to give any gifts or something to make it a little bit more special.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I was just slightly thrown by the way that the hon. Member answered the question, did he say a band, a musical band?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, a musical band to welcome the guests as they come, not an elastic band or anything like that, a musical band.

1010 **Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 21? Head 21 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 22, Youth, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, the first Subhead Payroll, 1, Subscription D, Temporary Assistance, can I ask the Hon. Minister what Temporary Assistance this is in relation to?



**Hon. C P Santos:** The Temporary Assistance is an amount which is variable as this is for the part-time Youth Workers.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 22? No, Head 22 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 23, Drug and Alcohol Awareness and Rehabilitation Services, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, can I ask about 2(20) Secondment, estimate £550,000, forecast out to £625,000 last year, what does that cover? It's a fairly broad term, so what does that cover?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Secondment is the actual complement of staff, because this is staffed via the Care Agency, so they are seconded into Bruce's Farm.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So these are Care Agency employees, is that right? And put into Bruce's Farm, but booked as a seconded, but not under Payroll. That's the understanding?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, that would be correct.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 23? Head 23 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 24, Economic Development, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Sorry, under 11, Economic Research, there was an estimate of £300,000 and a forecast out of £520,000. Can we have a bit more details of a breakdown of the kind of cost and nature of payments made under Economic Research and the purpose of them?

**Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** We have a number of refunds that are being provided with a service that I fund from this Head, which is people from a company in Estonia that is involved in E-Government. And they have been involved in producing a programme for the Savings Bank, which until now has had manually the debenture holders reminder that people have got to be sent reminders when their debentures are coming up to maturity, to decide what they have to do. All this is now going to be done with artificial intelligence and reducing the workload on the number of paper operations that are taking place.

They've got another programme that they're carrying out for the records of the Employment Service, which go back sort of to the beginning of the service where everybody's employment terminations and changes. It's a whole room and all of this is now being digitised and the effect of it will be that what took, for example, three people one week is now going to take one person one day. So we've got something being done in the employment, something being done in the Savings Bank, and in addition we're looking at the actual current opening of contracts to see if we can adopt what they've got in Estonia, which is that employers can directly open the vacancies, change the terms and notify terminations without having to use staff that have to process all manually and then input it electronically. So those are really the three programmes.

In addition, in the outcome for the last year, the CTO conference, which involved telecommunications and artificial intelligence, which was hosted by us in Gibraltar, accounted for the additional cost in the last month of the Financial Year.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see, that's helpful. So the entire cost of 520, apart from the explanation the father of the House has given on the CTO conference, the rest of it is seemed to, when he was describing it, seemed to be rather than... Because when I saw the description economic research, I thought it might have been research projects into the Gibraltar economy in relation to perhaps the moving pieces of the economy or the Brexit discussions, etc.

But it sounded to me how he described it as these being select E-Government projects, in which case, I suppose, in listening to it, we were surprised that it was under Economic Development and not under ITLD. But perhaps the Minister wants to comment.

**Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** The projects intended to assist to deliver what I said in my budget speech is the thrust of the Department in terms of what we are targeting. We are targeting improving efficiency rather than increasing the GDP in order to increase productivity per employee. So independent and in addition to what is being done in terms of e-Government collectively, we analyse specific areas where we think, you know, we've chosen Estonia because it happens to be the place in Europe that always comes first in terms of how advanced they are and they are 10 years ahead of us.

So that's really why we're going to source from them the things that... The important thing also is that whenever they put in programmes, they are open source and there are no fees attached.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 24 stands as part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 25, Statistics Office. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Head 25? Head 25 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 26, Health and Care. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, if I can go to 2 and I'm on... Sorry, 2 and secondment. It's the estimate for 2024/2025, £86,000, the Forecast Outturn, £87,000 in 2024/2025 and now we see zero.

Is it the case that no secondments are expected this year?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, this was an officer who was in Health and Care has now moved to a separate Department.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** So just to be clear, this was for one person, so this is remuneration for just one position?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** That's correct, Madam Chair.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Could we have any further information as to which officer that is, so the title of the person?

1110 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** This relates to the Facilities Manager in the Hospital, Madam Chair.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, if I can move down now to 2, Subhead 5, Additional Contribution. We see that there's an estimate in 2024/2025 of £70,583,000. We then see  
1115 a Forecast Outturn of £88,412,000, which is we can see over 17 million more.

Could the Hon. Minister account for the reason for such a high overspend?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, this is to account for the overspend in the GHA. I  
1120 refer the hon. Lady to the speech that I gave a couple of days ago.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I'm grateful for that. We can now see that the estimate still under  
that Subhead is 92 million for the coming year, which is in fact only 4 million above what  
the Forecast Outturn was for this year. Is it, I ask, perhaps somewhat conservative, an  
estimate?

1125 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we don't think so. We think that the costs can  
be controlled for all the reasons I set out in my speech.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, moving down to Subhead 7, Additional  
1130 Contribution. We see the Forecast Outturn 2024/2025 is £25,811,000. The estimate for  
this past year was £24,328,000.

But we now see the estimate 2025/2026 has almost halved. So there's over 12 million  
less at £12,236,000. Can the Hon. Minister account for that?

1135 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Speaker. As I'll take the hon. Lady through in the  
relevant pages, the Payroll for ERS has now moved to GHA. That accounts for that drop.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 26, stands part of the Bill.

1140 **Clerk:** Head 27, Utilities. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, on Other Charges and Contribution from Revenues  
received on Commercial Corks. So there was a notional sum provided last year. The out  
turn is 2.8 million on commercial works. Can we have a sense of what that's about?

1145 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, this is driven purely by the number of commercial  
works that there are in Gibraltar in that year.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, I mean, I see that. But in the sense of what commercial works,  
1150 meaning what in particular? That's already in the title. So I was wondering whether the  
Minister had a more specific understanding of what this item has been used for over the  
last 12 months.

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Speaker. This relates directly to any developments  
1155 that have, sorry, Madam Chair. This relates to any developments that happen in Gibraltar  
in any given year.

So that heading is what developers would spend and it is accounted for in the previous year. So therefore, the heading there is the amounts that are paid for by the developers the previous year. But it's purely the amount of developments in Gibraltar.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** New property developments. That's what the hon. Lady means?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** That's right.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Does the budget reflect any change in or possible change in policy with regards to ensuring the training as per the GEA's manual of staff to achieve their engineer status top six?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in this section that is completely irrelevant. It's not here. We can go into that in the GEA section.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 27 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 28, Port. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I think the Hon. Minister has answered the question that I had in relation to turning it. Given that there is a, in effect, a very important correlation with the Gibraltar Port Authority, which is where the figures are. So presumably one asks the questions at that stage.

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, it would probably be more convenient if we asked when we got to that part of the book.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 28? Head 28 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 29, Maritime Services. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 29 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 30, Business. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, yes, one question really on Payroll. So I see from the Establishment figures and the summary that the Establishment of Head 30, Business, is going to be higher next year than this year. And yet the estimate under General Office is lower, and so is the bottom line under Payroll, lower than last year's Forecast Outturn, and so I am struggling to understand that, but perhaps the Minister can explain.

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, this relates to my Ministry in particular. The hon. Gentleman will see that the Senior Officer role has been removed, and there are two EOs in the complement. The two EOs are far more cost effective than the SO, and that accounts for the differences in the Payroll, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 30, stands part of the Bill.

1205 **Clerk:** Head 31, Town Planning and Building Control. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the hon. Lady able to provide further information to what, sorry 2(14), is about - Fast Track Services?

1210 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, this relates to a service that we were looking to implement. So we received recommendations from the Town Planning Department, and we're looking at different ways in which we may be able to fast track services for planning applications.

1215 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And presumably that would require an element of contracting out those services privately, I take it from the hon. Lady's answer.

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we are looking, Madam Chair, we are looking at different ways to do this. Either we would increase the complement, or we would contract out the services. But we'd be looking to do that from revenues received within their Department, which is why it's a separate Head.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 31, stands part of the Bill.

1225 **Clerk:** Head 32, Procurement Office. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 32, stands part of the Bill.

1230 **Clerk:** Head 33, Justice. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am just on the Establishment. If we move down to 4 at Gibraltar Development Corporation staff, we can see 2024/2025, there were 14 within that complement, and 2025/2026 estimate is 21. And I looked at last year's book and it was 7.

1235 So it's steadily increasing. Can the Minister account for these increases?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Yes, Madam Chair, I'm informed by the Financial Secretary that the figure, the increased figure for GDC staff members covers members that are working in various Ministries for which I'm responsible, and it comes under, so happens that it comes under for the purposes of this book, under the Justice Ministry.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** So could the Hon. Minister perhaps provides a breakdown as to which ones pertain to the Justice Ministry in particular?

1245 **Hon. N Feetham:** I don't have that information here, but I'm quite happy to share that information with the hon. Member. Outside, behind the Speaker's Chair.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I'm at Subhead 1 now, and I am at Probation, which has e-salaries. So the estimate was £115,000 for 2024/2025, 2024/2025 out to £92,000, and it's gone up to £117,000 as an estimate for this year. I cannot see any changes in the complement.

1250 Why is it that there was £23,000 less this year than there will be next year?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, these relate to pay increases.

1255 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I'm now at, under Gibraltar Financial Intelligence Unit, and moving down to Head I, Employers, Pension Contributions. We see an estimate 2024/2025 of £23,000. The Forecast Outturn was zero. What is the reason for that?

1260 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, there was a pension provision for Officers that wish to take up the offer. It was not taken up, and therefore there is a reduced amount to reflect that.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Now I am at Subhead 2. I am at Line 3, Telephone Service under General Office. There was an estimate last year of £12,000.

1265 It is coming at Forecast Outturn £60,000. But we then see that the estimate for this year is again £12,000. Can the Hon. Minister account for the £48,000 discrepancy between the estimate and the Forecast Outturn, and the reason why it has been estimated again at £48,000 less for this year?

1270 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, I am informed that the £60,000 covered all the Justice-related Ministries, and now the amount has been split between Subheads.

1275 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Moving to the next page at Subhead 2, moving down to lines, I mean, it's going to be the same point being made. So 14, 15, sorry, 14, 16, 17 and 18. So there's Strategic Reviews, Youth Offender, Strategic Review, Domestic Abuse, Regulation, Safeguarding, Regulation, Data Protection and Children.

We see that there is a provision on the estimates book of 1,000 on each of those Heads. In Domestic Abuse, we see that there was a Forecast Outturn of £26,000. But why is there a Forecast Outturn of zero on all those?

1280 Is it simply that no Strategic Review has been looked into in respect of those other areas?

1285 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, the reason for that is that there has been work and therefore a corresponding expense in the Housing and Domestic Abuse. There has not been for any of the other Subheads.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Sorry, I can move back to Subhead, sorry, Line 10 under General Office Contribution to Gibraltar Development Corporation Staff Services. Forecast Outturn £229,000 with the estimate of £195,000 last year. It is £35,000 more than the estimate.

1290 What is the reason for that?

**Hon. N Feetham:** The increase of Staff Members relating to the GDC.

1295 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** And then moving down, Head under Line 20, beneath that we see the disappearing Heads of Strategic Review on Drugs and Adoption. Is it the case therefore that it's not envisaged that any work will be undertaken in those areas in the next year?

**Hon. N Feetham:** That would appear to be the case, yes.

1300 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, moving down to Probation, we see under Electricity and Water that there was an estimate of £1,000 last year and then there was a zero. What's the reason for that? Surely they've used some utilities this past year.

1305 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, Shared Offices, so therefore it's caught through another expense Subhead.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** And moving down to Line 26, Drug Testing Programme Equipment, much the same, £1,000 estimate, zero. Is it that drug testing has not been undertaken?

1310 **Hon. N Feetham:** No, there's a notional amount there and it may change.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Okay, moving on to Line 40 on Rents and Service Charges. We see the Forecast Outturn at £77,000. The estimate for last year was also £77,000 and the actual 2023/2024 was still in the £70,000s.

1315 But we see an estimate in 2025/2026 of £39,000 more at £116,000. Can the Hon. Minister account for that?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Bigger offices, Madam Chair, and therefore the cost increases.

1320 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** We see at Line 42, Security Vetting. Can the Hon. Minister perhaps give some more detail as to what that line refers to? And why there's a Forecast Outturn of zero and then the estimates at £1,000 this year?

1325 **Hon. N Feetham:** No expense has been incurred and therefore there is provision just in case.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 33 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 34, Gibraltar Law Courts. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, at Subhead 2, at Line 7, Jurors and Witnesses Expenses, there's a very specific estimate of £17,000 last year. The actual impact was close to that at £16,328 but the Forecast Outturn for this year is £65,000. And then again, the estimate goes down to £17,000.

1335 What is the reason for that sharp increase this year? And why is it going down again next year in the estimate?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, this is demand led, so therefore to the extent that there is an increased demand, there is an increased cost.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I do appreciate that, but it's just such a specific figure, £17,000. Why, for what, what is that reason?

1345 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, this hasn't changed for a number of years. That's the number that has been used in the past.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** At Line 10, Repairs and Maintenance, we see that there was an estimate of £30,000 Forecast Outturn, £50,000. Can the Hon. Minister account for the extra £20,000 spent? What was it spent on?

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**Hon. N Feetham:** Additional works that were required in the Courts, Madam Chair.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Down to Line 13, Independent Expert Fees, the estimate again, I imagine that the answer is going to be much the same as the previous answer, but the estimate was £20,000, I imagine it's demand led, so it went up to £45,000. Can the Hon. Minister confirm that that understanding is correct?

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**Hon. N Feetham:** Correct.

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**Madam Speaker:** Head 34, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 35, Policing, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, Subhead 1, I'm at Line 1, Roman numeral 3, Manning Level Maintenance. The estimate for 2024/2025 was here at £350,000, but the Forecast Outturn for this year, £895,000, and then we go down again on the estimate for this year at £350,000. Is it the case that there was not enough Manning Level, so the complement wasn't what it should be, and it was therefore necessary to spend that amount?

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**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, we were chastised by the hon. Member's opposite, precisely because of the overtime expense incurred by the RGP, but we are very happy to support the RGP when the RGP requires support from the Government in terms of Manning Level. So this relates, I am told, to the support that we've provided because of the demands by the Police for overtime because of the resourcing issues which we have addressed, and the Hon. Chief Minister in his Budget speech very clearly spelled out, in fact in his reply two days ago, he set out how we had supported the RGP with increased resources and increased Manning Levels. So to that extent, the estimate has gone down to reflect that.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I'm grateful for that answer, but if we go down to the Establishment and we go down to the summary, 2024/2025, 290, 2025/2026, 288. So if the total in the Establishment goes down, and this year we've seen an increase to £895,000, which is demand-led, but it's because of resourcing issues. And now we look here and we see that there's two less within that complement.

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How is it that this figure is therefore expected to go down so significantly this year?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, the Command and Dispatch Officers, the 15 Officers that we've recruited, are not reflected in the book. So that is a significant part explanation for this.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, we go down again to Payroll C, at Allowances, and we see estimate £700,000. The forecast outcome for this year is coming up to £1.595 million. And again, we're going down toward the estimate of £700,000.



1395 Can the Hon. Minister account for that? Madam Chair, if I may, I believe I've made a mistake, because it's the total. My hon. Colleague is correct, it's the total.

I wasn't using my ruler. If we go down to Subhead 2, and we go to line 4. Again, the estimate for Printing and Stationery £60,000, forecast outturn £90,000.

1400 But again, we see that we're coming down again this year in the estimate to £65,000. I'm going to have a guess that the answer is going to be demand led. But why then go down again to £65,000?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, it's to make provision for the additional cost of toners. As innocuous and innocent as that.

1405 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Down to line 7, Transport Expenses. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps explain what that includes? Because the figure is £35,000 above estimate this year. I'm just curious to see what that figure includes.

1410 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, it consists of the cost of maintaining the entire fleet of 47 vehicles. Also, the cleaning materials, licencing and GPS tracking system.

1415 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Just moving on to the next page at Subhead 2, under line 24, Compensation and Legal Costs. We see a forecast out turn this year of £18,000. Could the Hon. Minister comment as to what that relates to?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, I don't have the exact details of what sits behind that. But I'm assured that it's a settlement relating to Police matter.

1420 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** If I can just ask on the last of those disappearing Heads, Losses of Public Funds. There's an £185 Forecast Outturn. But what does that Head relate to?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, it related to, I understand, to a loss of an exhibit. And the value of that exhibit was £185.

1425 **Madam Speaker:** Head 35, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 36, Prison. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

1430 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, again, looking at Subhead 1 (c) Allowances. Estimate 2024/2025, £700,000. But the Forecast Outturn £975,000.

And now we see that this year we're going to dip again by £125,000. Can the Hon. Minister account for those changes?

1435 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, this relates to the increase of allowances, which were backdated to a certain period of time.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Moving on to Subhead 2. And I am at Telephone Service. Madam Chair, we see the forecast out turn for this year is £10,000.

1440 Yet the estimate for this year is three times as much at £30,000. What is the reason behind that?

**Hon. N Feetham:** This relates to the continued investment in the Prison's new telephone system.

1445 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Then moving down to line 11. And we see that the expenditure on Workshop and Rehabilitation of Prisoners stays much the same at £22,000 over the past couple of years versus £30,000 for the telephone system. It seems a very small amount to spend on rehabilitation of prisoners.

1450 What is the reason for such a small amount? Can the Hon. Minister perhaps give some detail?

1455 **Hon. Chief Minister:** That Head represents the cost of wood, for example, that is bought for the woodwork, for the carpentry, for the workshop. It's the materials for that sort of expense. Anything else which may be booked there might include some books, courses that prisoners take, exam fees I think we pay for those if they wish to be examined, etc.

There's no request for an increase in that Head, which is denied. The Prison submits that because that's what they feel comfortable is the amount that's relevant. The number of prisoners fluctuates as well.

1460 Not all of them want to become involved in this work, unfortunately, although most eventually do.

1465 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, at Subhead 3, Support Payments, the disappearing Head, what does that Head relate to? Because we see the actual 2023/2024 was £90,900 and then it's been zero throughout at the estimate for last year, the forecast out from this year and then the estimate again for this coming year. What does that relate to?

1470 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, that's throughout the book. I commend her for being, as I always say, the diligent one that's noticed it. The support payment is the payment that we made in 2023/2024, which was the £1,200 per individual, which was, the hon. Lady will remember, tax-free and non-consolidated.

And because of that, it was referred to as the Support Payment.

1475 **Madam Speaker:** Head 36, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 37, Income Tax, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

1480 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chairman, if I may ask about the Establishment numbers and staff, and then I'll ask about the detail. 66 in 2024/2025 and 58 for the forthcoming year. I wonder if the Minister is satisfied giving what sounds like an increasing workload, that the number of staff in the Income Tax Office seems to be decreasing.

1485 **Hon. N Feetham:** The reduction of personnel, Madam Chair, relates to persons that have retired, effectively retired from the Tax Office, but the number doesn't include the contract officers that we've employed in the Tax Office.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, I appreciate the Minister's answer. But then, if they're not GDC Staff, where would I see those Contract Officers, their payments to them? It doesn't seem to appear under Other Charges, Contracted Services.

1490 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, first of all, the Contract Officers are GDC Officers, that's the first point to make. And the last two additional recruitments that we made are not reflected in the book, because we recruited them before the book went through. After, sorry, apologies, after the book went through.

1495 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Thank you, Madam Chair, I'm grateful for that answer. I'd like us to go into Other Charges, Subhead 10, and there's a Loss of Public Funds of £2,000. I'm just curious as how the income Tax Office could lose £2,000.

1500 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, we don't have the details with us right now.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, if the Minister wants to let me know, I'll be grateful.

**Hon. N Feetham:** Yes, Madam Chair.

1505 **Madam Speaker:** Head 37, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 38, Financial Services, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

1510 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, can I ask about 2(15) Company Registration, Companies House Gibraltar, I assume is the contractual cost of those arrangements, but I note that the estimate for last year was £1.6 million, went up to £1.95 million, is going to be £1.9 million. What accounts for the increase in cost? Is that some kind of contractual review, or is it accountable to something else?

1515 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the answer, perhaps counter-intuitively, is that revenue is up from Companies House. It's a revenue share agreement that we have with Companies House, so the more we're paying there, the more we're receiving.

1520 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see, and the revenue sharing agreement is related to what? Because for me to understand that answer, because the Chief Minister indicates its revenue is up, but the number of company incorporation did not seem to be radically up this year, I may be wrong, but is it related to other things?

1525 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, there's increases in fees, there's increases in entities which are not company incorporations, there are partnerships, there are trusts, there are business names, there are other things which garner revenue and which are producing the greater revenue under the agreement.

1530 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And just to confirm, is the revenue sharing agreement of some form of 50-50 nature, or a different type of percentage?

1535 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I cannot remember, Madam Speaker, but it's an agreement that from memory predates my time in Office. I think it comes from the original agreement negotiated by the Hon. Father of the House at the time that it was first established. I think we tweaked it slightly, slightly literally a couple of thousand pounds, a few thousand pounds, to ensure that there was a contribution to the pension schemes of the people who work at the Companies House.

1540 So we agreed that once the split was done, a small portion of our share was contributed towards the Pension Schemes of the people who work at the Companies House and who do such excellent work. But I don't think the percentage split has changed at all and would have been the same as when he was Minister for Financial Services.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 38, stands part of the Bill.

1545 **Clerk:** Head 39, Gambling Division, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Head 39? No? Head 39 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 40, Postal Services, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

1550 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, can I just ask on 13, Outgoing Mail and Bulk Mailing, so the estimate and outturn last year was about £150,000 and it's the same, but the estimate for next year is rather precisely £288,000. Can we understand what that increase is about?

1555 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, this relates to the payment of arrears that were due to be paid and there's provision for it.

1560 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Sorry, I didn't quite hear. Payment of arrears, he said? Is that what he said? So I am not sure I'm following, because if it's payment of arrears, by whom? Because it is in expenditure.

1565 **Hon. Chief Minister:** So, yes, Madam Speaker, the way that this works is that we get from the Financial Secretary, if I'm correct, the International Mail Union, we get told, it's like a reconciliation that they do in different years, so they'll tell you, this year you have to pay this much, this year you have to pay that much, and then one year they'll come and say, right, we've done a further reconciliation for previous years and the bulk has come out in a different quantity, so you owe, for three years ago, an additional amount.

1570 And that's the way it works, and the hon. Gentleman will see, as I've learnt through now, as I'd like to remind the Hon. Mr Bossino, 14 years of Budgeting, that the International Postal Union catches up with reconciliations and it doesn't often tell you that it's paying you more, but very often turns up and says that you owe them more, and when they tell you, we need to provide for it.

1575 **Madam Speaker:** Head 40, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 41, Environment, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

1580 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, under Subhead 1, Payroll, for Cleansing Section, I see that the complement hasn't changed in any respect, yet the Forecast Outturn last year was £124,000 but the forecast estimate is £84,000. We've heard that pay salaries has increased in respect to other different sections, but in this instance it appears to be going down. Is there any reason for this?

1585 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** There could be a number of reasons here. I'm just checking whether the contribution to the GDC may have gone up. There may have been a shift between employees. Yes, the Financial Secretary has advised me that it is in relation to vacant posts for which provision has not been made.

1590 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask on Other Charges, 2(8) Contribution to Gibraltar Development Corporation, that increase in the Forecast Outturn this year is due to what in particular?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** That's been the deploying of more GDC staff to the Department.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** How many people are we talking about? It's around £250,000, and it's not in next year's estimates. For what purpose would it have been a temporary deployment?

1600 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** There is also an element of overtime involved, which accounts for a lot of that.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And it's not foreseen that those individuals will remain?

1605 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** It isn't, which is why we have got our estimates down more or less to the amount estimated for last year.

**Hon. G Origo:** May I go to Other Charges? Head 14, Upper Rock Maintenance. It seems to have gone from £150,000 this year to an estimate of £190,000.

1610 Can the Hon. Minister explain the nature of the maintenance and why is it increasing by £40,000?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I can spend whatever we decide to vote in this House on the Upper Rock, Madam Chair. The maintenance, we are increasing the amount of  
1615 maintenance, as I have said here before. This includes the clearing of paths, the painting of the sides of the roads, the removal of overhanging branches, it's a wide range of things. The increase isn't that spectacular, but there's a whole range of items covered there.

**Hon. G Origo:** And if I may go to Head number 15, Cleaning of Streets and Public Places.  
1620 We spent £8.2 million in 2023/2024, it's gone down to £7.5 million this year and it's going down again to £7 million. Can the Hon. Minister explain how we're making these savings?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Chair, we're trying to control the spending there. It does vary from year to year depending, for example, funnily enough, on the amount of rainfall,  
1625 which may mean that less is needed. So we're trying to control the spending in that area.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 41? Head 41 stands as part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 42, Collection and Disposal of Refuse. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other  
1630 Charges.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, in Subhead 2, Other Charges, I can see at number 3, Allowances, we go from a Forecast Outturn of £50,000 to an estimate of £490,000 for next year. Can the Hon. Minister explain what these increase in allowances are for and to how many people are we talking about for these allowances?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Chair, it's most of the staff of GIC and this is something that we announced back in April, the agreement with Unite in relation to the running of GIC, which has seen the overtime, which the hon. Member can see above, with a Forecast Outturn of £1.27 million, converted to an allowance-type system, which is hoped will actually reduce the expenditure there. And that is why there's an increase in allowances, but if you compare to the overtime, we are expecting to make a saving there.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 42, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 43, Upper Rock, Tourist Sites and Beaches. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I may take us to Other Charges, heading number 16, Site Management Systems. We spent £2.5 million in 2023/2024, £3.7 million outturn for this year and it's increasing to £6 million as an estimate for next year. Can I ask the Hon. Minister what contract this may be pertaining to and what's the nature of the Site Management System that we're talking about, which has increased by £2.3 million?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Chair, this in fact is more than made up by the revenue, which we expect to be considerably higher this year than it has ever been due to the changes in the increase in tourism and the increase in the entrance fee. So this will cover, and I've mentioned this before in reply to some questions, this will cover the different arrangements that we have with the ticketing, St Michael's Cave, World War II tunnels, and the other site which we are improving, which I have mentioned will take a proportion of the ticket sales, but in return the income will more than compensate this increase.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Sorry to understand then, this is made up of a number of contractual arrangements, in respect of which, and they're all ticketing arrangements, in respect of which there are revenue sharing arrangements, so the reason for the higher estimate is basically the contribution under the fee sharing arrangements which would be paid to those contractors. Is that correct?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, if I can summarise it for hon. Members opposite, it's a little like Companies House. That is to say, the number that we are expecting to pay, the amount that we're expecting to pay, goes up because we're expecting the revenue to be much higher.

And this is some of what the Hon. Professor Cortes and I said in our contributions. If the number is going to be £6 million, then the revenue number is going to be much higher. And I'll remind the hon. Gentleman, without looking at it, but the Financial Secretary will pounce on me and tell me if I'm wrong, I believe that the blue page tells us that that line goes up to £15 million.

£15 million, which demonstrates why we think we're right. This number goes up to 6, but the other one goes up to 15.

1680 **Hon. D J Bossino:** It's not exclusively in relation to the... The glare hit me from the mace. It's not exclusively...

You're making it worse. It's not exclusively in relation to the... As I understood it, it's not the ticketing system to access the Upper Rock.

1685 It's in respect of all the other sites. And the Hon. Minister will be answering questions, I think, once... I think it's indicated he will be providing me with specific answers once all the expressions of interest processes have been completed.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, this is a little, I think, again from memory, a little like the Brussels process.

1690 An S has been added to systems. I think in previous years, the hon. Gentleman would have seen sites, plural, management system. Now, this is sites, management systems, because there's going to be more than one, if I'm right.

In my understanding, from the public finance point of view, that's what we've been told.

1695 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may take us to Head 23, Bathing Pavilion Expenses. Can the Hon. Minister explain what the nature of these expenses are?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Sorry, can the hon. Member repeat the question? I didn't catch the last point. We're talking about 23, yes?

Maintenance, replacement of tables and Chairs, that sort of thing.

**Hon. G Origo:** If I may, with respect to the bathing season attendance, my understanding from reading this table is that they used to be paid out from a contribution to the GDC, but this next year it seems to have a Head of its own of £731,000. Is that the case, that the Department is going to pay them directly as opposed to through the GDC?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, it's not going to be GDC.

1710 **Hon. D J Bossino:** May I ask the Minister the distinction between item 8 and 14, why they set out differently? You have Cleaning Expenses and Cleaning Services.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I believe that the Cleaning Expenses are for the premises belonging to the Department, whereas Cleaning Services are contracted for the different areas which are not immediately run by the Department.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank you. In relation to therefore 14, does he have the details of the companies to which these services are contracted?

1720 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I don't have the information of the companies involved, but as I said earlier, it is in relation to the actual sites, the Windsor Bridge and Skywalk, which are quite complex in cleaning, and the 100-ton gun and that sort of thing. I will look for the information and I'm happy to share that with the hon. Member outside the Chamber.

1725 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, or indeed I can always file a question, but in respect of Beach Services, which is 25, if I can assist the Minister, what's that expected to cover exactly?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** In respect of?

1730 **Hon. D J Bossino:** 25.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, it's the expenses in relation to the management of the lifeguard service.

1735 **Madam Speaker:** Head 43, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 44, Education, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

1740 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Chair, on Subhead 1, Payroll, 1(d), I take together Roman numerals (i) and (ii), because I didn't get a reply in the second reading of the Bill. The cover for maternity and paternity, the same as Temporary Cover, if you look at the actual expenditures in 2023/2024 and the focus outturn of 2024/2025, those figures are very, very much higher than the provisions made last year and repeated again this year of only £1,000. I will pre-empt you my question.

1745 I know the Minister is catered for in the Establishment an increase in the number of members of staff, but even taking into account the salary we pay to those extra members of staff, it doesn't quite square the books or tally the books when it comes to the expenditure. Can we have some reasoning why the expenses were so high?

1750 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I think the Hon. Chief Minister made reference to something similar earlier on. We're trying to, we cannot predict this in any way because we cannot tell how much cover we will need and the maternity and paternity that will be necessary. We try to control it as much as possible.

1755 So it has been the practise through the years to provide this token sum and then clearly every time that we're going to increase we need clearance and so on. As the Hon. Chief Minister explained, I can't remember exactly in what Head, but earlier on in this afternoon's proceedings.

1760 **Hon. Chief Minister:** But what I said to the hon. Member in the Second Reading, he says he didn't get an answer. I do not think that he was doing his Rumpelstiltskin impression when I was replying, especially to him, but it was late in the day. What I told him, Madam Speaker, was that he'll see that 1(d) has seen the specialist and Specialist Needs Learning Support Assistance removed.

1765 It's now a disappearing Subhead. And we've added them under ad hoc cover rather than temporary cover because it's not temporary cover strictly. And there we'll be able to better monitor how that number develops, especially now that we've got the even larger complement.

1770 So we put in £1,000 so that we can monitor every penny of it throughout the year. And then perhaps in the future we'll be able to give a number which is not just a token as we finally see it settle in a place which is reasonable rather than all over the place.

1775 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Grateful for that. It therefore means that there's no need for me to ask what was meant by the ad hoc cover. But I think the Chief Minister, if I've understood him correctly, we're making a token provision for £1,000. Obviously with hindsight next year we'll be able then to see whether that sum covered it, which I doubt it will, but we will



make as far as possible provisions for the future – Am I correct in that that's the principle of why just £1,000?

1780 **Hon. Chief Minister:** It's just £1,000 because it's a new Head, as a Head which is under ad hoc rather than under temporary assistance. But if the hon. Gentleman looks at the actual for 2023/2024 and the actual or the Forecast Outturn for 2024/2025, he'll see the discrepancy is a million pounds.

1785 So a lot depends on the intake and what help we are advised is necessary. Now, we can spend a lot of time arguing about this and no doubt we could have different views. From an educational point of view, what I'm saying to the hon. Gentleman is the Government is making the provision it is told is necessary.

1790 In other words, we start the year. Let's assume the year is £1,000 on the 1st of September rather than the 31st of March. We start the year with one pound available and we will give whatever is necessary based on the advice of the educators to the children in the schools in terms of Specialist Learning Support Assistance.

1795 We haven't yet been told we ever need less in any year. But next year, if we were to provision £2.7 million, we might be told we only need £1.5 million. It's more likely we make provision for £2.7million and we're told we need £3 million. But there is a reason, despite the Politics, for this community to be very, very, very proud indeed of what we're doing there. You go into the schools, Madam Speaker, and you see the children in the Upper Primary who you were told started in St. Martin's and because of the Special Needs Learning Support Assistance are now in what we might call the mainstream Upper Primary. If you see the children that are in the Comprehensives that started their lives in St. Martin's, were in Upper Primary with Special Needs Learning Support Assistance and are in the Comprehensive sitting examinations with perhaps one Special Needs Learning Support Assistance, then all of these arguments that we have about money really fall into the wayside compared to the effect that you've had on that individual's lives.

1800 That's what we're doing with that money. It still has to be controlled. It still has to be the right amount, but that's what that money achieves.

1805 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm grateful for that explanation. Can I move down to Other Charges?

1810 I have asked, I think two years ago, but I'm still intrigued. Under 2(7), we have a £30,000 provision of which they seem in the last two years to have used it right up to almost the last pound, and a very general heading called Gibraltar College. I thought all schools and College expenses were catered for in some shape or form that showed whether it was for the purchase of books and equipment or whatever.

So why this Gibraltar College heading still continuing of £30,000?

1815 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I think this probably comes from the fact that the Gibraltar College came into the Department of Education many years ago from outside and has always kept that. This is running expenses, essentially, for the College. But I think it appears here because of the history.

1820 It could be removed and absorbed elsewhere, but I don't think there's a need for that. So I think it's a historical thing.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, I respectfully disagree with the Minister because that answer is very similar to what I've heard in the past, that it could be removed and placed elsewhere.

And I've always highly recommended that we'll use the presence in the Chamber of the Financial Secretary. I don't like a heading like that, Gibraltar College.

If I were a Controlling Officer, you know, in conscience, anything that the College asks for there, is it at one stage a couple of years ago we thought it might have something to do with adult education. But no, adult education has been, in fact, it's even been adjusted a bit this year. I think that's a good reflection of what adult education is.

I don't think it covers, once upon a time we enforced hypothetically, could it be in connection with examination expenses to do with adult education that we do not want to put with examination expenses as of, in respect, similar to the students up to Year 13. So, you know, can we give a whole year's worth of homework to the Financial Secretary? And let's see if we can at one stage shed some light on what really is the Gibraltar College £30,000 for, and break it down if need be, if it's only, you know, a provision that can only be used by the College and cannot be used by any other school in the consortium. In this day and age we talk about the consortium of the three Secondary Educators.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I always arm myself with the Estimates book, the much thinner, gruel Estimates book of 2011/2012, and I believe the hon. Gentleman was sitting over here as Minister for Education. Wasn't he?

**Hon. E J Reyes:** The Chief Minister is right, I was sat over there, but I did not carry a portfolio Minister for Education.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** But with collective responsibility, Madam Speaker, for the book. And the book that he voted for, and that I voted for, because we've always taken the salutary approach when we were sitting on that side of voting for this book, had at Education, Head 2 Other Charges, 3 Gibraltar College. So, that is exactly as the hon. Member has said, the Hon. Minister has said, it's something that we inherited with that provision.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** If I may add, we're probably spending the money much better now than we were then.

And it really is on things like Equipment, Maintenance, IT licences, Copying, and so on. So, they are legitimate expenses for the College, and I have every confidence, both in the Principal and in the Director as Controlling Officer, to make sure that it's properly managed.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Madam Chair, just as a record, I also lack no confidence at all in the Principal or the College that the money is being used wisely, and that he'll be able to answer right down to the last penny of expenditure. It was just a suggestion going back to not only in the days when I sat on that side of this House, but a suggestion I've always brought forward, and therefore, at the personal level, I wish to bring forward. Shall we move on?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I'll make sure that this Head remains next year, so I can pre-empt the question, and we can have the same discussion once again.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you. Moving on to, Other Charges, coming down to the question, Compulsory Professional Supervision on 29. Is that anything to do with examinations?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** That is to do with the supervision of the Counselling Service, I believe. Is that correct? The Counsellors have to have professional supervision in order to be able to continue to practise, and that's why we have to...

1875       **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, the School Counsellors and the Education Psychologists have to have supervision in order to be able to continue to practise, and that is the provision for that.

1880       **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you. If I'm not mistaken, I think even the Counsellors, after a certain number of hours of session, have to undergo a Counselling Session themselves, but that's probably accounted for somewhere. Moving down slightly to 32, the Hebrew School had a Forecast Outturn an expense of a million pounds, and now we have a forecast for £1.5 million. What exactly does that money cover for?

1885       **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** The difference is because the change in the arrangement for financing the Hebrew School happened in the Financial Year, so it didn't have a complete Financial Year. We do have a complete Financial Year now. The Hebrew School now is funded with a grant, so that includes their salaries and wages and so on, and it's just been extracted from the rest of the estimates.

1890       **Hon. E J Reyes:** Am I right? If I understand the Minister correctly, it covers not only salaries like human resources, but even contribution towards books and equipment and so on. It encompasses a variety of things.

1895       **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, it encompasses the running of the school.

1900       **Hon. E J Reyes:** And that figure has probably arrived at working from the number of pupils there who would otherwise be in another Government School, and I think once upon a time, maybe Minister Orfila may remember, I think we used to call it capitation or something, sort of the Director of Education came up with figures and said if you have X pupils, then you automatically, the Financial Secretary would not argue with you, you're automatically entitled to so much money, we used to call it capitation. Are we talking of something similar on those lines?

1905       **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** The way it's calculated will take into account the amount of staff, the proportion of, as the hon. Member says, the equivalent of capitation, the number of pupils and so on, but the bulk of this will be paid.

1910       **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Going further down the line, on 41 Facilities Management, I think the Chief Minister explained last year this was to do with contracts that we had referring to the maintenance of schools and so on. I see that we have a high Forecast Outturn of £418,000 yet for the following year we're only catering again £285,000 like we had done before, £285,000. This discrepancy arises from what?

1915       **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Well, we try to keep it within the contractual sum, but the contractual sum will not cover absolutely everything and there will be things that happen which require new equipment, replacement of air conditioning, it could be a variety of things and this year obviously we've had to spend rather more than we hoped for in order to keep the schools in the condition that we need them to be. But we are factoring in the standard contractual fees rather than the ad hoc in the hope that we can stick to that. But

1920 obviously, as the Chief Minister said, in the context of support to the children, we have to provide support to the estate as well and we have to have that flexibility, but we will try and keep it contained.

1925 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just coming back to the point my hon. Colleague made about the Hebrew School, I noticed what the Minister said about a grant, but could you enlighten the House in terms of a grant to whom? Is this a Charitable Organisation or a new body?

1930 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** To the... I think it's a Board, a Trust.  
I believe it's a Trust. I believe it's now a Trust.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** A Charitable Trust or Educational Trust? Does the Financial Secretary have any information?

1935 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I can't tell him the purpose of the trust, but it will likely be an educational purpose and it is the Establishment of the school and the provision of the school, just like the other Hebrew Schools are. This is the one that we have traditionally provided for.

1940 We're now going to provide for it in this different way and the trust has been established for that purpose.

**Hon. R M Clinton:**  
Yes, Madam Chair, I fully understand that, but I assume that the Financial Secretary must have the name of the Trust.

1945 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, what's the name of the Trust?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** It's paid to the subsidiary of the Trust, Hebrew Primary School Limited.

1950 **Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Head 44? Yes.

1955 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at the Establishment, where it's broken down to the Head Office in Education and in schools, there are no details of an Establishment per se for Bleak House, which comes as from Subhead 2(43) onwards. I believe, if I'm not mistaken, I believe the employees who work at Bleak House are at GDC and so on, so probably catered for elsewhere.

1960 But if that is the case, then there was an ex gratia payment made in 2023/2024 and then support payments, if I take on from what the Chief Minister has said, was that fund made before and so on. Where else could I find sort of Human Resources expenses in respect of Bleak House? It must be here somewhere and I haven't found it.

1965 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** The staff in Bleak House will be included within the administrative and clerical grades on page 125 or within the GDC. They're not going to be identified separately, so they will be within the Head Office. Some of those grades will actually be deployed in Bleak House. Or the GDC, they don't appear itemised.

1970 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, okay, I can understand that, Minister. Can I just ask, for the sake of my clarity, under 2(47), the Computer and Office Equipment, that probably relates to Computer and Office Equipment used by the clerical or administrative staff there, are there any provisions, because I know there's lecture rooms or whatever in Bleak House that may or may not require that sort of computer equipment. If that's not catered for under the section of Bleak House, where would that sort of learning material or learning aids appear as an expense in Bleak House?

1975

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Within the main provisions for the Department as a whole, which are in virtually the rest of the Subheads.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** So, for example, it would come under...

1980

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** For example, Madam Chair, Examination Expenses as a Head for Examination Expenses, Electronic Data Communication, Security Services. It's all within there. The needs for Bleak House would not be excessive.

1985 So those that haven't been identified separately will be absorbed within the general running expenses of the Department, including the staff.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** I'm asking in respect of the lecture rooms. You see, under 2(22), we've got School Books and Equipment. So you're referring to a school.

1990 Under School Books and Equipment, you have all those teaching aids, which one could even have computer-related equipment. But those are for schools. Bleak House is not a school.

1995 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Chair, you don't have to have the same kind of replacement of equipment and so on in Bleak House, which is not a school, as the hon. Member has said. It's not run as a school. We don't have the wear and tear that you would have with children.

2000 It's mainly for external examination purposes, where there are bookings and so on, and therefore there isn't a turnover of equipment that the hon. Member should be concerned about. There is a token £1,000 for Computer and Office Equipment Expenses, where that would very clearly fall. And that has not had to be used, because I suspect that the equipment is in good enough condition not to have to be replaced.

Unlike schools, where there's going to be a lot more wear and tear than in Bleak House, which really is a small subsection of the Education Department.

2005 **Madam Speaker:** Head 44, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 45, Heritage. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

2010 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I salivate at the prospect of asking about Knightsfield Holdings. But I will give it one go.

2015 In relation to the expected... I can relax. I think we're all a bit jaded and tired. But is he able to provide a detailed breakdown of the expenditure under Head 2(13), Heritage, with a very lovely footnote which indicates there's an expenditure in respect of Knightsfield Holdings Limited?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Sorry, all I heard the hon. Member say is Knightsfield Holdings Limited. I didn't hear the rest of it. Would he mind repeating?

2020 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Is he able to provide some form of breakdown as far as he can in respect of that expenditure?

2025 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** No, Madam Chair. I don't think I need to. It's a Contracted Service. I contract them, or the Government contracts them, in order to deliver a service. And provided they deliver the service to the Government's satisfaction, how they spend the money is something that they will need to determine. If it comes to a point where we're not satisfied that they're delivering on their contractual responsibilities, then we will challenge them. But it's a Contractual Service, and therefore it's not something that I need to itemise here.

2030 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I don't agree with a lot of that. But moving on, I will try again in another respect. Is he able to say why there was an increase between 1.372 to 1.412 in the expenditure under that Head between the estimated amount and the Forecast Outturn?

2035 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** No, Madam Chair, I don't have that information, but I would be very happy to obtain it and share it.

2040 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And presumably, equally, the Hon. Minister won't have information as to why he expects it's going to be decreasing from 1.412 to 1.392. Would that be possible?

2045 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, the amount that we've included is a contractual amount when you take into account the increase which is contractual as well, which is the index of retail price index. So that is a contractual amount. When it goes over the contractual amount, there will be some exceptional expenditure.

I can't think what may have happened in the past year to account for that particular exceptional expenditure. It could be some damage. I know that there was water ingress, which meant part of the ceiling of the museum had to be repaired.

2050 So it may be related to that. So whenever we go over and above the contractual amount, it is because of some exceptional circumstances. And that is the information that I'd be happy to share when I get it.

2055 **Hon. D J Bossino:** So just to understand this specific point, is it what the Minister is saying is that the contractual amount is expected to be 1.392, which has increased from the former contracted amount of 1.372, and that there was in between an exceptional expenditure in respect to which he's willing to provide the information, if I ask that?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, Madam Chair, that's exactly what I mean.

2060 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And the less controversial point, I hope, the Head just above that, which is 12, Upkeep of Planted Areas, which is a very small amount of £4,000. But I'm interested to know, understand what that relates to in the context of heritage.

2065 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yeah, Madam Chair, that is in relation to the upkeep of planted areas in the area of where the Heritage Office is, which is in the area of the 100 – Ton Gun.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 45, stands apart of the Bill.

2070 **Clerk:** Head 46, Driver and Vehicle Licencing. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

2075 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, at Other Charges, Head 17, could the Hon. Minister give some details on what incentive scheme represents and why this has gone from a Forecast Outturn of £190,000 to an estimate of £50,000 for next year?

2080 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, this is the scheme in relation to the cashback in relation to electric vehicles. And obviously there was a higher amount given out in response to the increase in sales of electric vehicles. We have had a conservative estimate, but I must say that for reasons that would be clear to all, I do hope that it is too conservative and that we will end up giving out more because it will mean that there are more electric vehicles on our roads.

2085 **Hon. G Origo:** Thank you to the Hon. Minister. Madam Chair, if I may take us to Subhead 22, Tow Truck Services. We have a Forecast Outturn of £88,000, but an estimate of £150,000 for next year.

But I can see that we've lost two tow truck drivers in the first Head on the Establishment. So does this increase relate to a contractual arrangement of some kind?

2090 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I'm quite impressed, Madam Chair, that I actually know the answers without having to ask the experts too much. Yes, Madam Chair, this is in relation to the contracting of a different arrangement for tow trucks, which was carried out last year during the course of the Financial Year. Therefore, the £88,000 do not represent a full-year effect and the £150,000 are the full-year effect of the Contracted Service.

2095 **Madam Speaker:** Head 46, stands as part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 47, Technical Services, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

2100 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I can take us to Payroll for Engineering and Design, at page 137, we had a Forecast Outturn this year of £715,000, but a conservative estimate of £559,000 next year. But I can see that in the Establishment, there's no change whatsoever to the Staff Complement. So can the Minister explain the difference for the £156,000 if we have no changes to staff?

2105 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** This is in relation to vacancies which are not provided for.

**Hon. G Origo:** Does this consist one or multiple vacancies?

2110 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** There are several vacancies and we are in the process of discussing the release with Unite, because we're doing a restructure, so that will be regularised very soon.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 47, stands as part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 48, Housing, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** 2(9), Staircase Lighting, is that done in-house or is it contracted out? Sorry, I can't see the Minister.

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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Chair, apparently it's a third party, but I'll be happy to provide more information once I get it.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Okay, thank you. And is the Hon. Minister kindly able to provide me with information as to the increase between the estimated and the Forecast Outturn in respect of 15, which is the Workers' Hostels Running Expenses?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** This shows what we had before prior to the cut down that we're trying to do at the moment. We're trying to cut back, which is why you have a number which is half of what it was before. That's what you're referring to, the Hostels?

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** If I can assist the Hon. Minister, so it kind of jumps from 288 to 505 and then it goes back down to, expected to go back down to 288, so it seems a bit of a blip. I just want to understand. I'm sure there must have been an extraordinary expense and I would like the Minister to account for that if she can.

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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Those were additional expenses that we needed to use to make the place, you know, clean, etc. And now we're going back to the norm.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** In that sense, it was a one-off for that year, yeah.

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**Madam Speaker:** Head 48, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 49, University of Gibraltar, Subhead one, Payroll, Subhead two, Other Charges.

2145

**Madam Speaker:** Head 49, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 50, Fire and Rescue Service, Subhead 1, Payroll, Subhead 2, Other Charges.

2150

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am at Subhead 1(b), on overtime at Manning Level Maintenance, which is at Roman numeral(iii). And we see that there was an estimate last year of £400,000 for that and the Forecast Outturn for this year is £875,000. And in fairness, the estimate for this coming year is £800,000.

Is it the case that it indicates a need for more within the Establishment?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, that is not the case. In the context of the GFRS, you will never be able to get this figure exactly right. It depends who is going to get ill, who is going to travel, who is going to change shift, etc., etc. So it really is a moving feast. It's impossible to be able to guess what that number is going to be with any level of certainty. So we are sticking with 800 for this year to try and make sure that we get closer to what it might be.

2160



But it depends on firefighter illness, etc., because this is a service where you have to have a particular number available each night, each day. If three are down ill, then you need to bring three in, because in this one you have to have the manning level. And so it is really how long is a piece of string and how many firefighters are going to get the flu next month, how many firefighters are going to be down for whatever other reason.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I appreciate all that, but it does seem from the figures that it's quite a high level being spent on manning level maintenance. So perhaps is it the case that further firefighters are needed or further crews are needed in order to maintain those minimum levels?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** But that, with respect to you, hon. Lady, would probably give the wrong answer, because if you're maintaining a manning level, it doesn't make much sense to employ more people to maintain it if the reason that you're failing that manning level is sporadic. Otherwise what you'll do is you'll have more people employed than you need for the manning level. Neither do I think is that there is great support in the firefighter complement for us to do that.

So, maintaining the manning level with the number of people that you have employed, even though you need to pay them overtime, or manning level overtime, a particular rate, to come in, is still more affordable for us and more advantageous for them than adding a crew. If we added a crew, we'd have to maintain the manning level of that crew too. And that's what the hon. Lady is saying, is employ people who might end up staying at home when no firefighter has the flu.

So that's the difficulty. This is the balancing act that we have to do, and that's how that figure fluctuates.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I move down now to Payroll, and I'm under Subhead 1(d), which is the Employer's Pension Contributions. Again, we're £69,000 over the estimate this year, from £198,000 to £267,000. What's the reason behind that because it appears that the complement has remained fairly steady.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, the complement remains steady, but it's the nature of the people in the complement that changes. So the hon. Lady should remember what I told her during the course of my initial contribution, that we're now at the stage where people employed under the Pensions Act are diminishing, but people employed under the new contract are increasing. So as the complement stays the same, but one person retires under the Pensions Act and a new person is employed under the Contributory Scheme, that figure goes up.

And that figure is likely to continue to go up, although the amounts paid under the Pensions Act are also likely to go up as the people under the Pensions Act contract retire. So this is the number I told her. She would see going up in all of the Departments at the same time as the amount goes up under the Contributions under the Consolidated Fund Charges goes up for people retiring.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** But then on that basis, why is the estimate for this coming year £239,000, which falls below the £267,000 that we've seen this year?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** As she was asking, I knew that that's where she would go. There was a backdated payment in respect of amounts that had not been paid, I think as a result of a claim in respect of the amounts that had been paid in respect of Officers who started, that the lower percentage had been paid into their fund. And that was made up this year.

And so next year what you're seeing is the amount going forward in respect of those officers who are on the new scheme. Should an Officer retire this year under the Pensions Act and a new Fire Officer come in who is employed under the new Act, so the new provisions for pensions, then that number may go up.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Moving now to Subhead 2 and I am at line 5, which is repairs and maintenance. The estimate 2024/2025 was £25,000. The Forecast Outturn is £60,000.

Can the Hon. Minister account for the difference?

**Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, we've just made a higher provision for possible repairs and maintenance costs. The outturn has been additional repairs to the fire trucks.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** In respect of, I'm still at Subhead 2 and I'm going down to line 15, the 999 Emergency Hotline, we see that of course on 2023/2024, it was zero. The estimate for 2024/2025 and the Forecast Outturn have remained at £12,000. Why has it gone down to £11,000 in the estimate this year? It seems like a rounded figure that stays the same. What's the reason?

**Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, it's a figure that's split between three different Departments and it's just a rounding on the number.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 50, stands as part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 51, Airport Fire and Rescue Service. Subhead one, Payroll. Subhead two, Other Charges.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am at Subhead 2. We go down to the total. £3,610,000 was the Forecast Outturn this year.

The estimate for last year was £3.2 million. It's £410,000 over this year. For what reason have we gone back down to estimate at £3.2 million?

**Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, the outturn includes the ex-gratia payments for people retiring.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 51, stands as part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Head 52, Civil Contingency. Subhead one, Payroll. Subhead two, Other Charges.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am looking at the summary for the Establishment. And we can see that 2024/2025 had 5 and now we're going down to 2. What is the reason for the drop in the Establishment?

**Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, one vacant post has been removed and they just need fewer people right now to run the Establishment, the Office.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, moving on to Subhead 1 under Payroll. I am at salaries. Sorry, the estimate for 2024/2025 was £53,000.

The Forecast Outturn was £98,000, which is £45,000 above budget. Can the Hon. Minister account for the reason behind that?

2260

**Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, it was the Civil Contingency's Press Officer.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Am I right then in my understanding that obviously the Press Officer will no longer be? Yes, yes, I am. Ignore, I've just seen it from the Establishment.

2265

So just moving down now to Other Charges, General Expenses. Can the Hon. Minister just detail what that is in respect of?

**Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, just the general running of the Office.

2270

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** They are small amounts, but there was an estimate of £3,000 in 2024/2025. It's coming at double this year in the outturn at £6,000. For what reason do we go back to the estimate of £3,000? Would stay presumably more or less the same.

2275

**Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, as pointed out, it's a very small amount, so whenever they might need any minor thing, it's just purchased for them from there.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 52, stands part of the Bill.

2280

**Clerk:** Head 53, Sport and Leisure. Subhead 1, Payroll. Subhead 2, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 53, stands part of the Bill.

2285

**Clerk:** Head 54, Gibraltar Audit Office. Subhead one, Payroll. Subhead two, Other Charges.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 54, stands part of the Bill. And clause two stands part of the Bill.

2290

**Clerk:** Clause 3, Head 56, Contribution to Government-Owned Companies.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Sorry, Madam Chair. If I may ask, the estimate last year, 2024/2025, was for £1,000 Notional Payments, and the outturn for 2024/2025 is zero. And again for 2025/2026 is a notional £1,000.

2295

If I ask, how is it there is no contribution to Government-Owned Companies as you're showing?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, for the same reasons we said last year.

2300

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Speaker, last year you had an advance to Government-owned companies of 27 odd million. Is the Chief Minister saying that they've given an advance to Government-owned companies, but it's not appearing at the front of the book?

2305 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, we've given an advance. He would have seen it from the front of the book. As he says, we told him last year that we would give the Contribution to the Government-Owned Companies in the year where we felt it was necessary and possible to do so.

We think it is neither necessary nor possible to do so this year.

2310 **Hon. R M Clinton:** In which case, if I understand correctly, I may be stating the obvious, there was actually no contribution to Government-Owned Companies from the consolidated fund or by way of advance or by some other means?

2315 **Hon. Chief Minister:** There was no contribution to the Government-Owned Companies that is reflected in Head 56, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So, can I ask, was there a contribution to Government-Owned Companies in any other way?

2320 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the book would reflect it if there had been.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So, was there a contribution to Government-owned companies outside of the provisions of this book?

2325 **Hon. Chief Minister:** If there were, Madam Speaker, it wouldn't form part of this debate.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 56, stands as part of the Bill.

2330 **Clerk:** Head 57, Transfer from Government Surplus. Subhead 1, Payment to Social Assistance Fund, Import Duty, Transfer from Government Surplus.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 57 stands as part of the Bill.

2335 **Clerk:** Head 58, Contribution to the Improvement and Development Fund. Subhead 1, Contribution to the Improvement and Development Fund.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The estimate last year, 2024/2025, was a notion of £1,000. The outturn is, for 2024/2025, £10 million.

2340 And I was just wondering if the Chief Minister could advise why the contribution was made, given that the forecast balance at 31 March 2025 is in fact £15 million. It would not appear to be necessary to make that contribution.

2345 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman damns us if we do, and he damns us if we don't. I mean, if we don't contribute money to the Improvement and Development Fund, we can't do projects through the Improvement and Development Fund. And we do projects outside of the Improvement and Development Fund, and he condemns us because the projects are done out of the book.

2350 When we prepare to do a project through the book and we contribute £10 million to the Improvement and Development Fund, he complains that we're contributing £10 million to the Improvement and Development Fund. I mean, I know that part of the game of Politics is for them to ensure that I can't win, but I can't win, Madam Speaker.

2355 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Speaker, I really wasn't making any Political point. I was just perhaps making the obvious point that you've transferred £10 million when the Improvement and Development Fund had sufficient funds, and you could have made that contribution if needed in next year's Budget. But, I mean, there's no other explanation. I will just have to accept what the Chief Minister said there.

2360 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the Improvement and Development Fund is not like the white pages. It's not a recurrent page. In other words, it's not one of the pages that goes to zero at the end of the year.

If I put £10 million in the Improvement and Development Fund, it stays there for the next year when we are going to spend the money.

2365 **Hon. R M Clinton:** But that's precisely my point. Why didn't you just put it in next year? It's a simple question. I mean, maybe I'm just overthinking it.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** I think the hon. Gentleman is just overthinking it, Madam Speaker.

2370 **Madam Speaker:** Head 58, stands part of the Bill. Clause 3 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clause 4, Head 59, Exceptional Expenditure, Subhead 1, Ex-Commissioner, Special Enquiry.

2375 **Madam Speaker:** Head 59, stands part of the Bill. Clause 4 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clause 5, Head 55, Supplementary Provision, Subhead 1, Supplementary Funding.

2380 **Madam Speaker:** Head 55, stands part of the Bill. Clause 5 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clause 6, Improvement and Development Fund. Head 101, Works and Equipment, Subhead 1, Works and Equipment.

2385 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask on contribution to the Housing Works Agency, which was estimated to be £2.9 million last year, forecast up to £6.2 million next year. Could we have an idea of the reason for the increase in outturn this year?

2390 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, Madam Speaker, and I alluded to this, I think, in the course of my main address. When we saw that the revenue was increasing, we agreed with the request from the Ministry of Housing to fund additional works, which could produce additional availability of rental flats. And for that reason, we agreed to spend the additional amount.

2395 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And can I also ask... Oh, we're in Works and Equipment, aren't we? We're not yet on Roads and Parking. All right.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, can I ask with respect to Subsection N, Roman numeral (i), Environment Projects, and what the £50,000 estimate relates to?

2400 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, Madam Chair. This includes things like recycling bins, new litter bins, conversion of automated toilets. And some contribution to rewilding and nature conservation.

2405 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** In respect of Subhead 1, can I ask as to (b)the prison? We can see that the actual for 2023/2024 was at £1362. Then it goes up to £10,000 Estimate. Forecast Outturn for this year is £20,000. And then there's an estimate of £42,000. Can the Hon. Minister account for the almost doubling every year in that figure?

2410 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, this relates to the expenditure in respect of the bike and motor vehicle, the upgrading of the CCTV and distress alarm systems, the Gibtel pinphone installation, the new ventilation system, and the new X-ray machine.

2415 **Hon. D J Bossino:** If I may, Madam Speaker, I've got a question on K, which is contribution to the Gibraltar Port Authority. And I'd be grateful if the Minister could explain why we move from an estimated figure of £400K and then Forecast Outturn for the year in £195K, and then we seem to go back to the estimated figures of last year for this coming year.

2420 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, that was the Port Authority was going to replace its radar last year. The radar was not replaced, and it's going to be given the same amount this year.

2425 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Thanks. And in relation to R, Upper Rock and Beaches, so we have a split between beaches and other sites. So what does the two of the other sites cover?

2430 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, Madam Chair, they will include a number of other sites, including St. Michael's Cave, O'Hara's, where we're looking at providing new toilets, maintenance of mannequins, and replacement of some of the balustrades along the roads.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, if I may go to P, Essential Services Equipment. I am at Roman numeral (i), Royal Gibraltar Police, goes up from £330,000 Forecast Outturn to £500,000. Can the Hon. Minister perhaps outline what that money is earmarked for?

2435 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Chair, this includes requests for expenditure in relation to Transport, IT Equipment, Building Works, Office Furniture Equipment, Special Equipment, Firearms, and Marine.

2440 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** And as to Roman numeral (v), Airport Fire and Rescue Service, we see a Forecast Outturn this year of £40,000, and the estimate for this year is up £110,000 to £150,000. Can the Hon. Minister detail what that extra expenditure will be for?

2445 **Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, it's the works of the building, the creation of a new decontamination area, the shower and toilet facilities, construction of a temporary vehicle garage, and expenses of the fire behaviour training simulator.

**Madam Speaker:** Head 101 stands as part of the Bill.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I'm just conscious that we have all been here now since 2.30. This might be a convenient moment, especially given it's quarter to the hour, to take a recess of 15 minutes and return at 6.

**Madam Speaker:** All right, we'll take a recess of 15 minutes, come back at 6 again. Thank you.

*The House recessed at 5.45 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 6.00 p.m.*

**Clerk:** Head 102, Projects. Subhead 1, Roads and Parking Projects.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can I ask about, under Road and Parking Projects Roman numeral (ii), the highways resurfacing programme, the estimates next year's half of last year and less and again going down from the previous year, can I have some commentary on why the resurfacing programme will have less invested in it this year?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Chair, we did quite a lot of resurfacing last year and we dealt with most of the most urgent. We expect that there won't be such a need and the team at Technical Services is quite confident that all the more pressing areas will be covered with the amount that we're requesting this year.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see, and then moving down to Reclamation Projects, under 3, so can I have an understanding of what that specific sum would be for? Is it for a specific project or is it a...

**Madam Speaker:** I'm sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member, but I don't think we've called that yet. We're on Subhead 1 at the moment.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Oh, I see, we're calling each Subhead 1. All right, sorry, I apologise.

**Madam Speaker:** All right, so finished on Subhead 1?

**Clerk:** Subhead 2, Relocation Costs.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Subhead 2? No.

**Clerk:** Subhead 3, Reclamation Projects.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes. On that, so I'll just repeat, on the £250,000, is that a notional amount or is it for a specific project that is planned?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** That's a provision, Madam Speaker, for two options that we have to reclaim in different areas.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I mean, is this, for example, does it include a provision for the reclamation in the harbour for that Housing Westview Park Project?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, there is a provision in that respect.

**Clerk:** Subhead 4, Other Projects.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, the Minister of Education mentioned in his House this week about the refurbishment programme for St Joseph's School and I think the Hebrew School, but I can't seem to find a line for any of those in the Improvement Development Expenditure.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, when I answered his questions on GEP and the additional amount taken there, I told him that it was in respect of works that were going to be done.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Sorry, Madam Chair. Chief Minister just said GDP? I mean, I...

**Hon. Chief Minister:** GEP. GEP, remember? Gibraltar Educational Projects.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Oh, right, so these works will be done under that corporate entity.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** On 4(a), Heritage Building Refurbishments, what is expected to be covered? I mean, it's not a particularly large amount. It's £5,000.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** These are ad hoc refurbishments in relation to any Heritage Building that may come to our attention that needs some work done to it.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** And in respect of (g) Heritage Projects, again, it's a relatively small amount.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Similarly, this will largely be in relation to continuing the interpretation panels that have been going around parts of Gibraltar, which I mentioned in my speech last week.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** And on Z, which is Soft Loans and Repairs to Housing Estates, in what respect are there going to be soft loans? Soft loans to whom and which entity?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** So, Madam Speaker, this is a line that we opened some years ago where different housing estates, which are affordable housing estates, can satisfy us that they have the service charge role to be able to fund loans. The Government will agree to pay a part of the interest that they may incur in taking a loan. So they take a loan from a third party, not from the Government.

And the Government makes up the difference in respect of the interest so that the cost of the loan is lower. But we always insist that the estate should be doing some element of repair, which includes improvements under the environmental net zero sustainability criteria. So, for example, if they're adding cladding or if they're adding solar panels or if they're adding something like that, then they can benefit from assistance from the Government.



2545 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank you. And in relation to (zb) Relocation of AquaGib of Facilities, is this in relation to the Bob Peliza development, phase two, which still requires to be attended to?

2550 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, yes, Madam Speaker, exactly as I told him yesterday, I think it was in the morning, when I addressed his remarks about Bob Peliza phase two, which he said we hadn't dealt with and was also in the Hon. Minister for the Utilities Budget speech because we've already announced those works and when they will commence and therefore we have to deal with this in order to ensure that we continue to meet our timetable.

2555 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And (zc) Maintenance of Works Programmes for the Commonwealth, is that the continuation of the facade? I think one part of the southern part of the facade has been done. Is that the other bits?

2560 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, Madam Speaker, and ongoing other work as well because what we don't want is the convent to fall into disrepair with leaks, etc. The fantastic work that's been done by the men and women of GJBS has dealt with a part of the facade and also with over the past 10 years, also water ingress. hon. Members need to remember that the convent belongs to Gibraltar and the people of Gibraltar.

2565 A part of the Convent is rented by the FCDO, but that building is our asset.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Mr Reyes.

2570 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Subsection Zulu Zulu Bravo (zzb), the upgrade of playground, the expenditures Forecast Outturn of £100,000 and we're providing another £100,000 for the coming year. Can the Minister inform us where the £100,000 was spent on and what the next £100,000, which particular location or locations are we aiming at?

2575 **Hon. L Bruzon:** Yes, Madam Chair. The cost is spread out between all the different playgrounds and maintenance throughout the year.

2580 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, there's no specific big chunk going to a particular area. They may have identified we need to refurbish Westview Park as an example. There's not one main particular area that the Minister has in mind.

**Hon. L Bruzon:** No, Madam Chair.

2585 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I'm moving slightly down to Zulu Zulu Delta (zzd), the Europa Sports Hall wooden sprung flooring. The Minister has said in his house before that he had purchased the wooden sprung flooring to be fitted at Europa Sports Hall. I think it's been used, if I'm not mistaken, for the forthcoming Youth Netball Games.

But am I correct in assuming that the £100,000 for this year is in connection with the eventual transfer of that wooden flooring to another location?

2590 **Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, the floor has been purchased and it will be laid at the Europa Sports Complex for the duration of the Netball World Cup. As soon as the Netball

World Cup ends, it will be transferred down to the Bayside Sports Complex and it will become the new flooring for the multi-sports room there.

2595 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, which made me think. If we're able to purchase that wooden sprung flooring for £200,000, doesn't the £100,000 sound a very hefty sum just for the transfer of something we have already purchased?

2600 **Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, it's the entire cost from transport to Gibraltar to laying it at the Europa Sports Complex and then moving it and transporting it down to the new location and everything. So it covers all the costs.

2605 **Hon. E J Reyes:** The £100,000 is to cater for the balance or whatever we may still have to incur.

**Hon. L Bruzon:** That's correct.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. G Origo.

2610 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I may go back to Subheading P, Urban Wastewater Treatment Plant. There's a quarter of a million pounds in the estimate and we spent £235,000 last year.

2615 Can I ask if this is in relation to the new Wastewater Treatment Plant, which has only just recently been tended to? And if so, what do these costs relate to?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** That's initial works and studies that are required. It's still ongoing.

2620 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I may go to (zs) Sustainable Traffic Transport Parking Plan. There's a quarter of a million pounds.

2625 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, can I ask, because it's related to the question that my hon. Colleague has just asked. What is the difference between the provision and costs under (p) Urban Wastewater Treatment Plant and the one under (u) Waste Treatment Facility? What is the difference there?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** One is sewage. The other one is refuse.

2630 **Hon. G Origo:** If I may take to (zs) STTP, there's a quarter of a million pounds we spent just under half a million pounds last year. Can I ask what these expenses are in relation to?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, this is a continuation of the STTPP. I made reference to it in my speech. It will include wayfinding.

2635 It will include conversion or provision of some joint spaces for cycling. But the bulk of the cycling work will be done in conjunction with private developments as part of their planning condition, for example, Europort. So we will get the cycle lane in Europort, but it will be paid for by the developer.

But this is in order to continue the work. And I summarised this in my speech last week.

2640 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I may move to (zze) and (zzh). The two questions will be similar in nature. The first is a hockey pitch resurfacing.

Had an estimate of £5,000, but the Forecast Outturn was four. This year we have a notional £1,000, or is it the case that we may see this project actually be developed? Because I know that there was a delay.

2645 And similarly in (zzh), there was an estimate of £100,000. It appears we haven't done the refurbishment to the Cruise Liner Terminal. Is the £1,000 also notional, or is it an intention that these refurbishments will take place?

**Hon. C P Santos:** On (zzh) the heading is not for cruise liner terminal. It's the Cruise Liner Terminal Ancillary Facilities Refurbishment. So it's not for the actual Cruise Liner Terminal, but the facilities around.

So we had 100, and as you can see, there wasn't that much work that we're doing because there were other infrastructure works happening at the time, and we can see that these are going to continue for the foreseeable future.

2655 **Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, with regards to the hockey pitch, we've already answered questions this month on it in Parliament. We went out to tender. We've identified the successful tender, and now we're just waiting for the right opportunity to go ahead with it, hence why there's some there.

2660 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I may, if he's said now in confirmation that it's gone out to tender, the intention is to do it. The estimation last year was half a million pounds for the entirety of the works, and why do we have a notion of £1,000 if the intention is to do it next year?

2665 **Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, because a tender hasn't been awarded yet.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, if I may, down to (zn) and (zo) and they're pretty much the same questions, the RGP Headquarters and the GFRS relocation, and I ask this question because, and I'm going to quote now, I heard the Hon. Chief Minister say, and I can't remember which speech it was, but he did say, that's how projects, when you allocate 1,000 pounds, that's how projects take off. Now, I'm glad to see that finally they've got the estimate of 1,000 because it's been zero throughout for the past few years, but these projects, they're not just about to take off, surely. One of them is, so the RGP Headquarters was first promised in the 2015 manifesto, and we're now 10 years down the line, and we know now that it's not going to be a new station, it's going to be a relocation, or rather, sorry, it's going to be a refurbishment, so I'd ask, is this the year that refurbishment happens finally?

2670 And in the same question, respect to the GFRS relocation, that one is a promise dating back to 2011, so these are not projects that are about to take off, they're projects that should already have taken off and should be close to completion. So I ask the question, is it the year? Is it the year for these projects to happen?

2685 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, these approaches have taken off in a number of different directions under a number of different leaderships of those organisations. There are many different iterations of the plans, which have cost a lot of money. We would like to see these things delivered during this year.

The hon. Lady will know that these things are not things that are delivered in one year. They're just not deliverable in one year. Even if this is the year in which they start, it's very unlikely that they can be delivered in a few months, as the hon. Lady will find out as she told us that she enjoys her job there so much.

In the many years that I hope that she is there, she will see how long these projects take, even from the year that you break ground. Believe me, I am as enthusiastic as she is, if not more, to see these projects completed. But unfortunately, they take a lot of time.

There is this thing that is called reality that one hits, because if she will allow me, I don't think that she has a greater desire to see the RGP re-Headquartered or refurbished than I do, because I made the promise in 2015, and I made the promise in 2011, and we've done everything we can to deliver it. And if she had been here, with what I always refer to with genuine respect and affection as her diligence and her ability, she might find that despite her diligence and her ability, she still would be sitting here trying to deliver it and not delivering it. And so I would say to her, as I expect that she would say to me, I hope that this is the year in which we will deliver them, it won't be for want of trying, it won't be for political desire to deliver it, and it won't be because there is any desire not to deliver it, but sometimes in an old, very sexist way, politicians will refer to the phrase, *events, dear boy, events*.

So I would say to your hon. Lady, look, as long as events, dear member, don't get in the way, this is the year in which we hope these projects will at least start.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, I can move to (zzf) Digital Transformation. There's an estimate in 2024/2025, £800,000, and it's come in about £1.7 million, and then for the coming year, it's £100,000. I mean, can we get a sense of why the huge increase in costs and why the decrease for next year?

Is this a self-contained project that's not expected to continue?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, Madam Speaker, by spending this additional amount in this Financial Year, we have obtained new licences, new equipment, etc, which will completely reduce the costs going forward. This is now in a more freestanding, managed-by-us way, subject to the maintenance costs that the hon. Gentleman has seen in the recurrent page, and therefore the capital costs of the investment in that infrastructure is now coming to an end.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I'd be grateful for more details in respect of, if I may, (o) and (q). Infrastructure provision for Housing Projects and infrastructure provision for New Developments.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, that is the work that is done for the purposes of facilitating the connection to utilities of new Housing Projects, and that work is ongoing in different parts of the geography, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** The Hon. Chief Minister refers to housing projects, but then there's a separate item in respect of new developments, I assume, if he can answer why that's the case.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Housing projects, Madam Speaker. Some of it is in respect of projects which are developments which are not affordable housing projects, and some

which are not even housing projects of any style or description. So developers fund that, but we have to do it. I thought he was going to ask me about (s), which I was going to say has nothing to do with the hon. Gentleman sitting next to him.

We're not sending him anywhere at that cost.

2740

**Madam Speaker:** We move on to Subhead 5.

**Clerk:** Subhead 5, Equity Funding, Stroke Funding. Subhead 6, Brexit measures.

2745

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Subhead 6? Head 102 stands part of the Bill. Clause 6 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clauses 7 and 8, Appendix B, Gibraltar Development Corporation.

2750

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Appendix B?

**Clerk:** Appendix C, Borders and Coast Guard Agency.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Appendix C?

2755

**Clerk:** Appendix D, Gibraltar Health Authority.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Appendix D?

2760

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, if I may go to page 204. I'm on Recurrent Payments, and I am on Subhead 2 Overtime. Moving down to...

Sorry, money level maintenance, yes. So the estimate was £550,000 for last year, and it's come in at £1,035,000 Forecast Outturn, which is £485,000 over budget. And before they say anything, I do understand that this is demand-led service.

2765

But we're down again to £550,000 estimate this year. For what reason, when, yes, exactly, when the actual in 2023/2024 was also £1.049 million.

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, indeed, as the hon. Lady has pointed out, it is demand-driven, but we are also optimistic that we will keep to the costs and to the budget with the complement as established.

2770

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Again, Madam Speaker, I imagine that the answer will be the same to this question. But moving down to Gibraltar Health Authority at Industrial Wages, and we have the same money level maintenance. We've got 100, again, actual 2023/2024 was £331,000.

2775

Then the estimate for last year went down again to £165,000. We see again the Forecast Outturn for this year at £463,000. And again, the estimate goes down to £165,000.

2780

And I applaud the optimism, but it doesn't seem that it's going to be, yes, again, realistic for this year to have that estimate. So I will let the Hon. Minister answer that.

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, we're actually looking at different ways to control this particular Head. And one of the ways is that we are actually sitting down and discussing with the industrials how to come to a resolution of their claim.

And we're looking at that particular Head and at different mechanisms to control the manning level maintenance so that it indeed comes in on budget.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, if I may, on line 65, Hospital Rental, we're seeing a number of £5.2 million consistently since 2024/2025, the outturn and the estimate for next year. But my understanding was that the Government exercised the option to effectively terminate the arrangement to RBS and therefore the Government owns the building. Therefore, to whom is this rent paid?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** So, Madam Speaker, if the hon. Gentleman looks at what I said, I think he's just given a high-level summary of what he remembers that I said. But if he looks at what I said, I explained that we had migrated the facility when we could from NatWest to GIB. I explained that the interest was low, and I explained that it ended in April 2026. I explained that it ended in April 2026.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on Appendix D?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Yes, plenty more. Madam Chair, moving down to (23), which is the Bank Cover, and again, we're going to have the same argument, but we had the estimate coming in at £1.3 million last year. The Forecast Outturn £3.25 million and again, that's gone almost £2 million over budget for this year. But again, they've estimated it at 45% less for this year. What's the reason for that?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, as I explained in my Budget speech, what we've done is we've looked at bank cover. Bank cover last year was 60% made up of the nursing complement, as I explained in my budget speech.

What we've looked at is the rest of that complement and as indeed was argued by the hon. Lady previously, what we've done is that we've turned that complement into some of the recurrent salaries. So we've given some of those people... We've opened some vacancies in the complement and we've indeed turned some of those bank staff into permanent complement.

So that's the reason that we're looking to keep that under control. We're also looking to control both the bank cover and the other cover in the book by controlling the one-to-one ratios that we have in some of the wards. I explained this also in my budget speech the other day.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** That was going to be my next question. The other cover, which we note has gone over by £5.5 million above the estimate of last year. Again, I just put it again, and I know what the answer is going to be, but does this mean that we are under complement?

Because it's very clear there that we've just gone over by £5.5 million on the estimate of last year, and we had much the same the year before. The actual was £4.5 million, and again the estimate came in at £2.2 million. And in spite of, it seems, best efforts, we're again with £5.5 million over this year.

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I'm happy to redo my Budget speech. What...  
[Laughter] What I said in my Budget speech was that what we were looking at were different ways to reduce that other cover.

2835 That other cover relates mainly to Agency Staff in the hospital. It remains to the Nursing Assistants and the one-to-one cover in particular that is present in some wards in the hospital. What we're looking at, once again, Madam Speaker, is to look at a way to deal with medically discharged patients who stay longer term in the wards, and we're also looking to other mechanisms to reduce that one-to-one.

2840 I think it's fair to say that there are very few hospitals in the world that have one-to-one cover beside your bed, so we are looking at that and other ways to reduce it. So we don't think it's under complement, as I said in my Budget speech the other day. We have 544 nurses, 32 supernumerary nurses, and that's up by 193 nurses from the complement in 2011/2012.

2845 So if you look at every single line in the complement, Madam Speaker, every single line in the complement is significantly up from 2011/2012. So we do not think that the wards are under complement. We are doing an exercise to go around the wards to look at it.

2850 We've now got the acuity review. We're looking at different things to look at the skill mix within the wards. But given the fact that there are 544 nurses, and again, as I explained to the hon. Lady, yes, that does include nursing assistants, but the number in 2011/2012 also included nursing assistants.

And it's broken down line by line in the complement of the GHA, Madam Chair.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, if I move down to line (33) GPMS prescriptions, the estimate, 2024/2025, was to £12 million, and it's coming at £14,695,000, so that's £2.7  
2855 million more. We do see that there's an estimate for this coming year of 13 and a half million. Is it the case, therefore, that we're looking at cuts in respect of prescriptions?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker. If you look at the previous year, the budget came in at £12 million. So we're looking at a balancing out of those budgets, and the  
2860 estimate is £13.5million because the pharmacy within the hospital estimates that that's a cost for this year.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** In respect, Madam Speaker, of line (45), Compensation and Legal Costs, we're looking at a Forecast Outturn this year of £1,036,000. Does the Hon. Minister  
2865 have a breakdown as to perhaps how many claims or cases that pertains to?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, I don't have the number. I don't have it with me, and I'm happy to give it to the hon. Lady. I'm happy to give the hon. Lady the number  
2870 across the floor of the House or behind the Speaker's Chair. But for insurance purposes, I can't give the hon. Lady a breakdown of the claims.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister, though, comment as to the proportion of that which is compensation and the proportion of that figure, which are legal costs?

2875 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, we don't have that information, but I'm happy to look into that and give the hon. Lady percentages.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, moving down to... I'm looking at line (69) Maintenance of the Ambulance Fleet. We have an estimate, 2024/2025, of £107,000.

2880 Then the Forecast Outturn for this year is zero, and then the estimate for this coming year is £127,000. Am I understanding correctly that we've spent nothing on ambulance maintenance this year, or is it the case that there's a contract in place?

2885 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, there is a new contract in place. It was meant to be entered into last year for 10 months, hence the lower figure, and this year it's now confirmed that we have a maintenance contract in place, so that is the reason why the figure's there.

2890 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** But there would still surely be, in that case, as we've seen with other Heads that we've looked into now, there would be some figure for parts of that year, surely. Has there been any maintenance of any of the vehicles? Because surely there would have been some expenditures, and it would be somewhere within the book.

2895 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, the costs were previously contained in Head 43 Transport Expenses. That Head has gone down significantly, and when we enter the new contract there's going to be a fixed cost for the maintenance of the ambulance fleet.

2900 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, moving down to the disappearing Heads, the losses of public funds, again we see that there's a Forecast Outturn of £12,000, but that figure seems to remain consistent from the estimate in 2024 to the outturn this year to the estimate in 2025/2026. No, sorry, I'm looking at the wrong one again. No, sorry, the losses of Public Funds.

2905 So we've had a Forecast Outturn this year of £12,000. Can the Hon. Minister outline what that relates to?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, this was an overpayment that was made to some of the doctors.

2910 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I'm failing to understand, why would it be under the losses of public funds Head?

2915 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, because the doctors are no longer in the jurisdiction and they can't be recovered.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on D? We move on.

**Clerk:** Appendix E, Gibraltar Health Authority, Elderly Residential Services Section.

2920 **Madam Speaker:** Anything on E? Anybody?

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, so Elderly Residential, yes. Rooke Residential Facility, there's a placeholder there of £1,000. What is expected, what's that making provision for?

2925 What is it expected to cover?



**Hon. Chief Minister:** The cost of Rooke.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes. The Chief Minister could be slightly more helpful. In what way? Well, I'll simply ask the question, in what way?

2930

What further information can you provide beyond simply the cost of Rooke?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** The cost of renting the beds at Rooke for Elderly Residential Services?

2935

**Hon. R M Clinton:** So if I may, Madam Chair, so the Government has an intention of renting an element of Rooke to be used for Elderly Residential Services, as obviously in this section. Can the Chief Minister advise, I mean, how much of the facility is he looking to rent? Is it all of it or a proportion of it?

2940

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, I can't, Madam Speaker, because if I did, I wouldn't have put in £1,000, I would have put in the actual cost. So I can't help him at this stage, but I would have thought by this time next year we'd have more clarity on what percentage we'd be renting and at what rate.

2945

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on E? Yes, the Hon. Mrs Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** If I could just go down to, I'm on Other Recurrent Expenditure and I'm looking at Subhead 3, Residents' Pocket Money, which before anybody says anything I fully agree with. But we've noticed that it's gone from £85,000 estimate to £92,000 and that's going to jump to £175,000. Is it the case that there's simply more residents this year?

2950

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, the amount given to each resident has increased.

2955

**Madam Speaker:** One from E or anything else? Next one, please.

**Clerk:** Appendix F, Care Agency.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, the line 42, Repayments of Settlement, Forecast Outturn 24/25 is £6 million. I make a quick reference to a comment from the Principal Auditor about the Care Agency having to borrow £10 million from Credit Finance in order to pay a court order issued by the Supreme Court of Gibraltar, I think it was last year. Can the Government advise, is this in relation to the same £10 million and is this in effect a partial repayment of £10 million and in effect there's still £4 million outstanding?

2960

2965

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Speaker, that's exactly what it is, as I said in my speech the other day.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I'm looking at line 27, Professional Fees. We have an estimate of £30,000 for 24/25, the Forecast Outturn however is £360,000 and then the estimate again is £30,000 for this year. What does the sharp increase pertain to, the £330,000 extra there?

2970

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, there have been numerous large cases this year which reflect that larger sum, in fact it is the legal fees of the case related to the £6 million settlement.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on F?

**Clerk:** Appendix G, Gibraltar Electricity Authority.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, can I ask the Hon. Minister in relation to other recurring expenditure, Head 20 Commercial Works, what do these Commercial Works relate to because it appears to be varying from year to year. We had an estimate expenditure of £1 million in 24/25 but we spent close to £3 million yet we're having an estimate of another million, can the Hon. Minister please expand?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, Madam Chair, sorry we'll get it right by the end of the session. As I explained previously in answers to questions I think to the Hon. Mr Bossino, or to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, that line relates to development projects. So commercial works relates directly and is directly relative to the number of projects and developments that are done in Gibraltar that year, private projects.

So indeed the increase is a demonstration of how dynamic we believe the economy is going to be.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I may go to Head 29, Professional Fees, what do these professional fees respect, what do they represent?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, the Professional Fees relate to any legal fees or other fees that the GEA incurs.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, the Hon. Mr Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you Madam Chair. Just returning to line 12, under Training Expenses, there's a consistent amount of £50,000 in the last couple of years showing slightly more spent last year, £70,000. Does any of this include the training of Senior Staff to get them to achieve Chartered Engineer status and deliver the six staff that the policy handbook requires?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, that training expense relates to any training expense that the GEA determines is necessary for that year. So I believe that if the GEA determines that that training is necessary, as indeed I believe it does for one of its employees, it will of course be taken out of that budget.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on G?

**Hon. G Origo:** If I may, Madam Chair, can I go to Sub-Head 31, Security Services. Can I ask where these security services are being carried out with respect to what plans, I would assume?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, if you drive down to the North Mole Power Station, at the North Mole Power Station there is security on North Mole Road itself, and

then as you would expect in a Power Station, there is security at the entrance to the Power Station itself.

3025 **Clerk:** Appendix H, Gibraltar Port Authority.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank you. (12). Are those, the Port Installations and Equipment, are those provided, is that in-house or is it paid towards a third party?

3030 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, that's a contract to a third party in relation to the vendors at the port.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** And I see that the expected reduction is of about 100 savings, it is £111,000. Can you explain why that is the case?

3035 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Because, Madam Speaker, because of efficiencies having entered into the contract, there are savings of £111,000.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Similar question to (20), with the vessel tracking system, presumably that's also a third party contractor.

3040 **Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, this relates to the maintenance of the VTS system, so yes it is.

3045 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Would you have the name of the party?

**Hon. G Arias Vasquez:** Madam Chair, it's a company called Kongsberg Maintenance.

3050 **Clerk:** Appendix I, Housing Works Agency. Appendix J, Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Chair. On subsection (22) Upkeep of Facilities, I know the GSLA has lots of facilities, but can the Minister confirm whether this includes any upkeep of the Europa Sports Ground Facilities, or the Europa Sports Complex, or that, because there's an arrangement already, like a sort of running contract for that, that figure does not include any necessary upkeep of those facilities at Europa.

3060 **Hon. L Bruzon:** Madam Chair, it includes all facilities run by the GSLA. As explained in my budget speech, the GSLA run the interior areas of the Europa Sports Complex.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** I apologise, I haven't explained myself as clearly as I wanted to. So the external areas, let's call it the main pitch or whatever, which is not under the GSLA management, any upkeep of that will be met from someone else, not from the funds allocated for this.

3065 **Hon. L Bruzon:** The outdoor areas are funded by the GFA.

**Madam Speaker:** Appendices B to J stand part of the Bill. Clauses 7 to 8 stand part of the Bill.

3070

**Clerk:** The Schedule.

**Madam Speaker:** The Schedule stands part of the Bill.

3075 **Clerk:** The Long Title.

**Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

3080 **Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Communications Act 2006 and Education and Training Act and for connected purposes. Clause 1.

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

3085 **Clerk:** Clause 2.

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 2 stands part of the Bill. All right. I have a correction to make. Clause 2 as amended stands part of the Bill.

3090 **Clerk:** Clauses 3 to 12.

**Madam Speaker:** Clauses 3 to 12 as amended stand part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clause 13.

3095 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Chair, just to mention once again, as I did during the Second Reading and referred to my letter of the 7th of July, which proposes amendments to this clause.

3100 **Madam Speaker:** Clause 13.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I believe so. Clause 13.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes. Clause 13 as amended stands part of the Bill. Yes.

3105 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Sorry. In taking note of the Minister's amendments, which I have no problems with, unfortunately there's a small section I don't understand. Because after his subparagraph F, where he amends or proposes an amendment to section 72A5B, then he says under G, after section 72A, insert, and it's just a heading, Immunity from Suit, I don't quite know where that fits.

3110 Because if you follow chronologically, there's an amendment to section 72A1, then 72A2, then 72A3, then 72A4, then 72A5, and then in the Subheading of the Minister's, he said in section 72A, insert. Now 72A only has a 1, 2 or whatever section. It could be a printer's devil, but it just says immunity from suit.

3115 I don't know if he has the same paper as I have.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Could you give me a copy of the letter? I can't find it among my papers that I have. Thank you.

3120 If the hon. Member could take me through that again, because I was looking for my copy. Is that in relation to 72A1? Yes, that should read, after section 72A, yes, insert 72B, which is immunity from suit, which comes later.

Which continues on the next page. Insert the following. It should say insert 72B. That would be clearer if it says insert 72B.

3125 **Hon. E J Reyes:** It's over the page. Sorry, perhaps the Clerk can rescue me, my colleague. I don't have the following page.

That's why I was asking. I just saw heading immunity from suit, and I said, well, well enough, do I fit this in? So if Madam Speaker would just spare me one quick second, 72B, and then those sections there.

3130 I don't think I have any comment on that. Now that I have this, I can see why there's a need for a Subheading. Thank you, Madam Speaker, Madam Chair, for your patience.

**Madam Speaker:** So lause 13, as amended, stands part of the Bill.

3135 **Clerk:** The Long Title.

**Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

3140 **Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to appropriate sums of money to the service of the year ended 31st day of March 2023. Clauses 1 to 5.

**Madam Speaker:** Clauses 1 to 5 stand part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** The Schedule.

3145 **Madam Speaker:** The Schedule stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** The Long Title.

3150 **Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

**The Civil Status (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2025 –  
Clauses considered and approved**

3155 **Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Extradition Act 2018, Referendum Act 2015, Legal  
Aid and Assistance Act, Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Act, Temporary Protection Act  
2005, Legitimacy Act, Swiss Confederation (Services Mobility Temporary Agreement)  
Regulations 2021, Asylum (Procedures) Regulations 2012, Asylum Regulations 2008,  
Electronic Identity Card Regulations 2015, Licence (Fees) Rules 1991 and International  
3160 Recovery of Maintenance 2007 (Hague Convention) Rules 2018 and for connected  
purposes. Clause 1.

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

3165 **Clerk:** Clauses 2 to 15.

**Madam Speaker:** Clauses 2 to 15 stand part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** The Long Title.

3170 **Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Civil Contingencies Act 2007 and for related  
purposes. Clause 1.

3175 **Madam Speaker:** Clause 1 stands part of the Bill. Sorry, the amendments are behind  
this. Clause 1 as amended stands part of the Bill.

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, apologies, the clause as amended includes the  
amendments that we give a notice in our letter or do I have to specifically call that out?  
3180

**Clerk:** Clause 2.

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 2 as amended stands part of the Bill.

3185 **Clerk:** Clause 3.

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 3 as amended stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** The Long Title.  
3190

**Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

**The Crimes (Assaults on Emergency Workers) (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
Clauses considered and approved**

3195 **Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Crimes Act 2011. Clause 1 and Clause 2.

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill.

3200 **Clerk:** Clause 3.

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 3 as amended stands part of the Bill.

3205 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, sorry, does that include... Sorry, I wrote in today at lunchtime. Does that include...

I did propose an amendment which I discussed with the Hon. Minister for Justice and also the Hon. Minister for Health.

3210 **Madam Speaker:** Yes, I'm looking at the letter now.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** This was a proposed amendment to Clause 3.2 to 3.3. It should read 2.3.3.

3215 **Madam Speaker:** The letter says 3.2, it should read 3.3, yes.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I made a mistake on that, sorry.

3220 **Madam Speaker:** Do we have anything on that amendment? Does the Hon. Minister have a copy of Ms Ladislaus's letter?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Yes, we agreed it verbally before the letter was sent. We agreed it verbally before the letter was sent with my hon. Colleague.

3225 **Madam Speaker:** Alright, in that case, Clause 3 with all its amendments stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** The Long Title.

3230 **Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

**The Incomes Tax (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
Clauses considered and approved**

3235 **Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Income Tax Act 2010. Clauses 1 and 2.

**Madam Speaker:** Clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clause 3.

3240 **Madam Speaker:** Clause 3, as amended, stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** The Long Title.

**Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

**The Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Bill 2025 –  
Clauses considered and approved**

3245

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to repeal the Road Traffic Windscreen Transparency Act 1998. Clauses 1 and 2.

**Madam Speaker:** Clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill.

3250

**Clerk:** The Long Title.

**Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

3255

**The Cemeteries (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
Clauses considered and approved**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Cemeteries Act 2018. Clauses 1 to 3.

3260

**Madam Speaker:** Clauses 1 to 3 stand part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** The Long Title.

**Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill.

3265

**The Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Bill 2025 –  
Clauses considered and approved**

3270

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act to amend the Keeping of Wild Animals Act 2002. Clauses 1 and 2.

**Madam Speaker:** Clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clause 3.

3275

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 3 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** Clause 4.

3280

**Madam Speaker:** Clause 4 stands part of the Bill.

**Clerk:** The Long Title.

**Madam Speaker:** The Long Title stands part of the Bill. The Long Title.

3285

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** I have the honour to report that the Appropriations Bill 2025, the Communications (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Supplementary



3290 Appropriations 2022-2023 Bill 2024, the Civil Status (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill 2025, the Civil Contingency (Amendment) Bill 2024, the Crimes (Assaults and Emergency Workers) (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Bill 2025, the Cemeteries (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Bill 2025, have been considered in committee and agreed to one of them with, or two of them with a number of amendments, and I now move that they be read a third time and passed.

3295

**Madam Speaker:** I now put the question, which is that the Appropriations Bill 2025, the Communications (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Supplementary Appropriations 2022-2023 Bill 2024, the Civil Status (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill 2025, the Civil Contingency (Amendment) Bill 2024, the Crimes (Assaults and Emergency Workers) (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Bill 2025, the Cemeteries (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Bill 2025, with amendments be read a third time and passed.

3305 Those in favour of the Appropriation Bill 2025. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

Those in favour of the Communications (Amendment) Bill 2025. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

3310 Those in favour of the Supplementary Appropriation (2022/2023) Bill 2024. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

Those in favour of the Civil Status Miscellaneous (Amendment) Bill 2025. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

3315

Those against. Carried. Those in favour of the Civil Contingencies (Amendment) Bill 2024. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

3320 Those, those against. Those in favour of the Crimes (Assaults and Emergency Workers) (Amendment) Bill 2025. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

Those in favour of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2025. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

3325 Those against. Carried. Those in favour of the Road Traffic (Windscreen Transparency) Repeal Bill 2025. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

Those against. Carried. Those in favour of the Cemeteries (Amendment) Bill 2025. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

3330

Those against. Carried. Those in favour of the Keeping of Wild Animals (Amendment) Bill 2025. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Carried.

**Adjournment**

3335

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Well, Madam Speaker, 14 Appropriations presented, 14 appropriations passed. It is a pleasure to rise to move that the House should now adjourn. And I do so, Madam Speaker, I'm no doubt believing that it is true that there is a sweltering heat outside, although it has felt like the inside of a freezer in this place at certain times.

3340

And not, Madam Speaker, because of the relationship between us and Members opposite, but because of the operation of the air conditioning in this place. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to move that the House should now adjourn. Finally, before the summer, to wish all Members a good long vacation, as it used to be called in the good old days.

3345

To hope that by the time we return in the autumn, we will be joined by Mrs. Atrish Sanchez, who we all wish all the very best to over this period. And to wish all hon. Members of this House all the very best at a personal level between now and our next meeting. I move the House should now adjourn Sine Die.

3350

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. Before I propose the adjournment, may I just say there was a reference during the course of the Budget Debate to, I think, a thank you to me for the work on Hansard, but I really did want to say that under the leadership of the Clerk, Mr. Balban and Mr. Garcia have been working almost round the clock, as has the Clerk, to make sure that Hansard is produced as quickly and efficiently as possible. And I just want to say how very proud I am of the work they're doing and give them my own personal thanks for such a quick turnaround, which ultimately assists all hon. Members.

3355

So...*[banging on desks]* Thank you. I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn *sine die*. I now put the question, which is that this House to now adjourn Sine Die. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

3360

This House will now adjourn. Sine die.

*The House adjourned at 7.04 p.m.*