



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.00 p.m. – 4.21 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 26th February 2026

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.00 p.m.

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

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

Questions for Oral Answer

CHIEF MINISTER

Q102/2026

Government vehicles – Leased from private companies

Clerk: Answers to Oral Questions continued. Questions to the Hon. Chief Minister.
Question 102, the Hon. G Origo.

5

Hon. G Origo: How many Government vehicles are leased from private companies, setting out the number of vehicles leased from each provider and the relevant department the vehicles are being leased for?

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

15 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, there are 26 Government vehicles leased from private companies. A breakdown of the number of vehicles leased from each provider and the relevant department the vehicles are being leased for is in the schedule that I now hand over, if I can find it.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 102

Department Name	Name of Provider	Number of vehicles
Department of the Environment	A. Bassadone Motors Ltd	7
Gibraltar Tourist Board	A. Bassadone Motors Ltd	1
No.6 Convent Place	A. Bassadone Motors Ltd	1
Royal Gibraltar Post Office	A. Bassadone Motors Ltd	13
No.6 Convent Place	AMC Credit Ltd	3
No.6 Convent Place	A.M Capurro & Sons Limited	1

Madam Speaker: All right, we will move on to the next question and come back to the schedule in a little while.

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Q103-6/2026
Occupational health –
Training; Costs; Re-tender

Clerk: Question 103, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

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Hon. J Ladislaus: What training and to who has Maritime Medical Services Limited provided in accordance with the occupational health contract awarded to it for occupational health services for 2023 to 2025?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 104 to 106.

35

Clerk: Question 104, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Can the Government provide a monthly breakdown of occupational healthcare costs for the period between January 2022 to date for all Government entities, authorities and agencies which were provided/are being provided with occupational health services by Maritime Medical Services Limited?

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Clerk: Question 105, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Please provide a monthly breakdown of occupational healthcare costs for the period between January 2022 to date for all Government entities, authorities and agencies which are being provided with occupational health services by Maritime Medical Services Limited and all other such companies which have provided/are providing the Government with occupational healthcare services?

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Clerk: Question 106, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

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Hon. J Ladislaus: As outlined in the Principal Auditor's Report for 2018/2019, why did the Government not re-tender for the occupational health service contract, in accordance with the Procurement (Public Sector Contracts) Regulations 2016, and instead entered into a contract with a value of £1,190,000 directly with Maritime Medical Services Limited?

55

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, a total of 10 training sessions have been delivered by Maritime Medical Services Limited in accordance with the Occupational Health Contract to Heads of Departments and Line Managers of the Public Service. Seven sessions have been delivered to multiple employees of different departments.

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One session has been specifically delivered to employees of the Department of Education and two sessions have been delivered to the Department of Personnel and Development upon their request. Madam Speaker, in relation to Questions 104 and 105, the information requested is in

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the schedule I now hand over. Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 106, at the time the Government faced a serious and escalating risk.

70 Pre-employment medical assessments were taking many months, in some cases up to a year, with individuals entering public service roles without having met mandatory medical requirements. This exposed the Government to significant risk. In addition, levels of sickness absence had become unsustainable.

75 Immediate occupational health intervention was required to support employees whether to facilitate their return to work, ensure timely medical boarding or conclude their employment where necessary. Maritime Medical Services Limited is the only dedicated occupational health provider in Gibraltar and was already delivering these services to Government and the Gibraltar Health Authority on an *ad hoc* basis. Further, Maritime Medical Services Limited was the sole respondent to the 2023 tender.

80 There was no reasonable alternative provider capable of delivering the required service locally and within the necessary timeframe. The contract therefore formalised an existing arrangement in order to stabilise the critical service and manage risk. It was awarded for a defined three-year period, includes clear performance measures and is subject to ongoing review.

[SCHEDULE WEB LINK](#)

85 **Madam Speaker:** I will take supplementaries on 103 and 106 and I will give the hon. Member time to consider the schedule in respect of 104 and 105.

90 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I am going to move on in fact to 106. We have heard that the Government did not re-tender because the company had already been undertaking some services for the company and that in fact there was no other provider that could do the same job. But Madam Speaker, we are being handed, as we speak, a schedule of different providers who have provided such services to the Government.

95 So on what basis was it not re-tendered? Simply saying there was only one does not mean that you can circumvent the regulations.

Hon. Chief Minister: For the reasons I have just read out, Madam Speaker.

100 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, no matter how pressing the need was, the Government surely, as the need grew, that did not happen overnight. I mean, all these people who were on sick leave and could not return to work, that accumulated surely over a period of time and not overnight. So, the Government would have had notice of that as time wore on and so they had plenty of time within which to re-tender for this, but they did not. What reasons?

105 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave a few moments ago.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, it is clear that the Government does not really want to deal with this. Why does not the Government want to deal with this? What is the problem with answering the question as asked? The answer given does not answer what I have just asked.

110 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, the answer given might not be the answer that she wants, but it deals with the question as posed and it explains in detail the answers to the questions that she is putting repeatedly. She does not accept, the hon. Lady does not accept the answer, and I accept that she does not accept the answer, but she has to accept that this is the answer that I have been provided with and is the answer that we are giving to explain why it was
115 dealt with in that way.

Madam Speaker: Are there other supplementaries?

Hon. J Ladislaus: Yes, so can I ask then, why therefore did the Government allow this to accumulate in such a manner?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, we did not allow it to accumulate in such a manner. We were dealing with the issue with which we were presented, and we were presented with a solution to a problem that had arisen.

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Madam Speaker: All right. Can we return to Question 102? Any supplementaries on that?

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Hon. G Origo: Yes, Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Chief Minister, he has provided a schedule with a breakdown of the number of cars, departments and relevant providers, but I can see there is a concentration of two main providers from the schedule. From my research, I can see that only in the instance of the Chief Minister's G1 car and the 13 vehicles to the Royal Gibraltar Post Office, those were made by public tenders. Can you confirm whether the other vehicles in the other departments were also awarded by way of public tenders, or were these privately negotiated?

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Hon. Chief Minister: I would need notice of the question, Madam Speaker.

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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, with respect to the number of vehicles that we currently have leased, does the Hon. Chief Minister have any information on the contract lengths of these leasing arrangements? Do we know whether there is a minimum period which we need to lease for, or is it a case that these kind of leasing arrangements roll over every couple of years?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Surprisingly, Madam Speaker, it is not something that I am involved in, so if the hon. Gentleman wants the answers to those questions, he needs to ask me specifically about them.

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Hon. G Origo: Does the Hon. Chief Minister have, by way of supplementary information, at least the total costs of the 26 vehicles currently being leased by the Government?

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Hon. Chief Minister: No, because he did not ask me about anything to do with costs.

160

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, I would have thought it would have been a natural supplementary to follow, but in any case, may I ask then, does he have any information on what the use of the 7 vehicles are for the Department of the Environment? Does he have that information with him?

165

Hon. Chief Minister: No, Madam Speaker, because I am not the Minister for the Environment.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

170

Q107-11/2026

**Treaty in respect of Gibraltar between the UK and EU –
New Customs clearance requirements; Briefing on the new import procedures, compliance
requirements and regulatory obligations; Dedicated task force; Joint Consultative body;
Impact Assessment report**

Clerk: Question 107, the Hon. C Sacarello.

165 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** In light of the compressed timeline to meet the 10th April 2026 target date for the implementation of the Treaty, when will Government provide Business with sample forms to demonstrate the various types of entries for the new Customs clearance requirements?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, we will answer with 108 to 111.

170 **Clerk:** Question 108, the Hon. C Sacarello.

175 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Given the compressed timeline to meet the 10th April 2026 implementation target, and in light of widespread concern that current engagement with industry is falling considerably short of business expectations, when will Customs provide a comprehensive and formal briefing on the new import procedures, compliance requirements and regulatory obligations under the Treaty, and what concrete resources and transitional support will Government put in place to ensure businesses are adequately prepared?

180 **Clerk:** Question 109, the Hon. C Sacarello.

185 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** In light of the compressed timeline to meet the 10th April 2026 target date for the implementation of the Treaty, can the Minister please advise if a dedicated task force has been created, over and above BTAG, to assist businesses in tackling the issues arising for the importation of goods? If so, can the Minister please provide a detailed breakdown of this task force with numbers of people involved and the range of experience and expertise in this area?

Clerk: Question 110, the Hon. C Sacarello.

190 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Can the Government please explain how the Joint Consultative body, arising from the Treaty, envisaged to assess the impact on Businesses on both sides of the border to prevent market distortions can be viewed as a 'positive' in the opinion of Government? Isn't the reality that our Transaction Tax will not be allowed to be lower than the lowest EU VAT level (currently at 17% and in any case no lower than 15% by any member state) meaning that this body's function is to assess whether or not the level of our Transaction Tax should go up?

195 **Clerk:** Question 111, the Hon. C Sacarello.

200 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Now that the Treaty implementation date is drawing closer, will Government release the Impact Assessment report conducted to assist businesses plan for their future?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

205 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, technical teams from the European Commission, the UK, Gibraltar and Spanish Governments are meeting and have been meeting this week to finalise technical practical details with respect to the detailed implementation of the goods and customs arrangements established under the Treaty. These discussions will go into detail on the specifics with respect to implementation, including on matters such as the use of forms and relevant declarations. The Government, in light of the ambition shared between all parties with respect to the Treaty applying provisionally by 10th April, will be sharing these details shortly and continue to brief industry ahead of that date.

215 Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 108, I do not accept that there is widespread concern, as the hon. Member puts it, with respect to the Government withholding information. That criticism, if it does exist, would be unfair. Of all the parties involved in these negotiations, no party has engaged as much with the public, with industry, with stakeholders, with the public sector,

with public authorities, with law enforcement agencies, or indeed even with Opposition parties, as much as my Government has done in relation to all matters concerning this Treaty or its forthcoming implementation.

220 No one has briefed as much as we have, and we have been briefing for a full eight months since political agreement was reached on the main elements of the deal, including in relation to goods and customs on 11th June last year. By way of comparison, let me remind hon. Members that the UK-EU Trade and Corporation Agreement was agreed in principle on 24th December 2020, and it applied provisionally days later, as from 1st January 2021. Now, that is not to say that the Government does not sympathise with industry, or that the Government underestimates the task
225 ahead or the effect that this agreement will have on the goods sector in Gibraltar.

The Government has never not been transparent with the public in terms of laying out clearly the fact that changes would come with this arrangement. Nonetheless, the Government is fully aware that change makes business and the public nervous, that it causes anxiety and that it leads to feelings of uncertainty. For that reason, the Government will continue to support business, will
230 continue to respond to queries, will continue to guide industry ahead of 10th April and after that date to the extent that may be necessary.

The Government will not spare any resource in this respect. It will build on the already detailed briefings it has provided and will continue to publish material as we work together to make a success of this agreement. Madam Speaker, in relation to question 109, the Government will
235 continue to assist business in the way it has been doing so far and will organise itself as it has done to date.

The Government does not envisage the creation of a dedicated task force. We will ensure that our law enforcement agencies, including Customs and the Civil Service, are fully briefed and ready by 10th April to apply the agreement and to assist business and the public as we implement it. We
240 will continue to brief business and issue technical notices as required.

Madam Speaker, on 110, the hon. Member's understanding of the position is not correct, although I have already explained this a number of times publicly. I will do so again for the benefit of the hon. Gentleman. The general standard rate of transaction tax will, upon the Treaty entering into force, be 15%.

245 This is the lowest standard rate of VAT permitted by the VAT Directive. It is currently not the case that any EU Member State applies such a low standard rate of VAT, even though any Member State would legally be able to do so. Over a period of three years, the commitment is for Gibraltar to raise the general standard rate of taxation from 15% to, at a minimum, the lowest standard rate applied by any Member State.

250 This rate is currently 17%. Additionally, it should be noted that the transaction tax will be levied on the declared value on the importation, not on the sale value of the product in question. This is a massive difference.

We are levying a lower rate on a lower price. That sets out the general proposition. With that said, it is important to underline that the independent consultative body may recommend at any
255 time during that period of three years or after that period of three years that a lower standard rate of transaction tax, which would deviate from the general standard rate of transaction tax, should apply to a selection of goods or categories of goods.

That means that the Treaty envisages, subject to the recommendations of this body, that in addition to the exempt, reduced or super-reduced categories of goods, there could be an
260 additional selection of goods or categories of goods to which a lower standard rate of transaction tax could be applied as compared to the general standard rate applied to all other goods. The only restriction in terms of how much lower this lower standard rate of transaction tax could be is that it cannot be lower than two percentage points below the lowest standard rate of VAT applied by any EU Member State. By way of illustration, this could therefore lead to a situation where within
265 the three-year transition period, Gibraltar could continue to apply a lower standard rate of transaction tax of 15%, but not less, to certain categories of products in accordance with

recommendations of the body, and not to have to continue to raise the rate of transaction tax of 17% in respect of those products.

270 It can also lead to a situation where after the three-year transition period, with Gibraltar having reached a general standard rate of 17%, a lower standard rate of 15% could be applied to certain goods. Given the above, it is absolutely not the case that the role of the body is only to assess whether the rate of transaction tax needs to be raised. Within the limits allowed by the Treaty, both upward and downward recommendations can be made.

275 In relation to Question 111, what I think the hon. Member is referring to are the assessments carried out by the Government with respect to the impact of applying a transaction tax in Gibraltar in accordance with the terms of the Treaty. The Government maintains that it is not ever going to be in the public interest to release this information, which remains commercially and politically sensitive.

280 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Thank you Madam Speaker. First, I would like to thank the Chief Minister for his constructive and useful information in his answers, and I will tackle them one by one.

285 With regards to Question 107, and with regards to business with sample forms *et cetera*, since submitting the questions, a number of trade organisations have submitted a joint letter to the Government. It is an open letter, so most people will be aware of it. It is a letter that raises some serious concerns about the complex changes involved, citing a dearth of information and certainly giving businesses next to no time to adjust.

Does the Government not see the harm that could be caused to businesses through a lack of action or proactivity and forethought in this regard?

290 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, there has been no lack of action or proactivity in this regard.

Hon. C A Sacarello: A lot of businesses disagree Madam Speaker. There are five main points to this letter. If I could address three with this question.

295 The first is financial assistance. They talk about the risk of continued viability for some of our members, saying that it has increased materially. They say that it is essential for those businesses, later on in the text, most severely affected to have access to direct financial support from Government.

300 This is advice that this side of the House has been offering the Government for many years now. Would it not be true that this advice would have been much better taken in good spirits?

305 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I do not know whether he has got the same letter. The bit that the hon. Gentleman has read in trying to justify a suggestion that this correspondence is alleging a lack of proactivity from the Government is not the bit that deals with the approach of these representative organisations to what the Government has done. I will tell you what bit does address that point.

It is this:

The business community overwhelmingly supports the introduction of the forthcoming UK-EU Treaty in respect of Gibraltar. In both formal and informal surveys of our respective memberships, the clear majority have expressed positive views. The coming into force of the Treaty will create a climate of certainty regarding Gibraltar's future position in Europe, and for the first time in 10 years, provides clarity as to the path Gibraltar will follow. The business community strongly prefers a negotiated Treaty outcome to a non-negotiated alternative.

310 That is the first paragraph, Madam Speaker. I am surprised the hon. Gentleman did not think it was relevant to set it in context.

I have been dealing with the Federation of Small Businesses and the Chamber of Commerce since the morning after the Referendum. I established a committee where the Attorney-General,

the Deputy Chief Minister and I spent time ensuring that we had from these organisations the criteria that they wanted us to go off to negotiate. We called it TLAC.

315 We went off to negotiate those terms, and we have come back with substantially what they wished. We all agreed that we wanted a 12-18 month implementation period, but for reasons which have nothing to do with proactivity on the part of the Government, and which could lead to the EES applying at the Frontier, and the Schengen Border Code, which is what they do not want, we are now faced with having to do this by the 10th of April. Where is the lack of proactivity, Madam Speaker?

320 But for somebody who was Vice-Chair of one of these organisations, and was sitting there with us, Madam Speaker, planning these things, I would have thought he would take a more generous approach. Now, I will tell him now for nothing, Madam Speaker, so that I can help him save his breath. If the hon. Gentleman thinks that I am going to reply to this letter across the floor of this House, by him taking me through the paragraphs, and asking me what I think, he would be very wrong to think that is the case.

325 I am not going to be so rude as to reply to a letter that has been addressed to the Minister for Business and for me, across the floor of this House, in questions from him but he can ask as many times as he likes.

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Hon. C A Sacarello: Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to address the comment from the Chief Minister about not having read out the paragraph. You know that the rules are quite tight on questions, so we cannot actually read everything out to place it fully in context.

335 With regards to his remark on proactivity, my criticism there was directed at the lack of consultation and planning and preparation for the Treaty outcome, as everything seems to be a bit of a mad dash at the moment.

340 So, my next question is moving on to the third element of this letter, which is something which we have brought up in this House before, and so not necessarily directly from this letter, which is enforcement of companies coming across the border and practising their business here unlicensed, unregulated, and in some cases uninsured. Will the Government be using the increased tax revenue from the transaction tax and increased levels of importation tax, effectively, to help provide businesses with a level playing field?

345 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I made a statement this morning, I have made other statements in relation to this matter, but that is one of the issues raised in this letter. I will be replying to this letter directly and not across the floor of the House in answers to the hon. Gentleman.

350 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, a final supplementary on this question, if I may. There is another topic on here, and if the Chief Minister does not wish to respond, that is fine, but for the point of Hansard it is important to note this. The fifth point refers to the protection of the British commercial identity.

355 My question is, how will governments go about working with the business community to preserve and protect this? What are their plans? At the moment, the answers have been very wishy-washy, and we would like something concrete to reassert the House that this will be addressed as this is a key part of our national identity.

360 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, on the aspect of what the hon. Gentleman has said, which relates to this letter, I refer him to the answer I gave a few moments ago. On the substance of the aspect of what he said, I refer him to the answer I gave him in the last meeting of the House.

Madam Speaker: Anything on 108?

365 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Yes, Madam Speaker. On 108, I refer to... Actually, this is a question which I placed before the letter was written, so perhaps it would be interesting to see whether he answers it or not, despite this point is actually included in the letter.

There is clear and practical guidance, is the header, and I read it out. It said, It is neither realistic nor reasonable to expect businesses or associations to analyse... it is a lengthy, *et cetera*, document.

370 It says, to cut it short, that is properly the role of Government, as we have been saying in this House. Does the Chief Minister not regret his statement when asked at Grand Battery House by members of the business community whether the Government would receive advice, and the reply was, consult your lawyers? Does the Chief Minister regret that statement now?

375 **Hon. Chief Minister:** *Je ne regrette rien madame!*

Madam Speaker: Anything on 109?

380 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, the Question 109 related to the suggestion that it would be useful to create a taskforce specifically for the implementation, and to which the answer was, no, I am sure that the business community will be disappointed on this, but on a specific question, if it is possible for the Chief Minister to address, will economic operators registration and identification numbers, EORI numbers, be required for local businesses, and if so, how will they apply for them?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I do not think businesses will be disappointed by the answer that I gave, because I do not think businesses want a taskforce. A taskforce is what you assemble when you have got to take back the Falkland Islands. It is not what you do when you have got to have a different form to fill in on the 11th of April to the one that you had on the 9th of April.

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But the hon. Gentleman does not appear to have been here this morning when I told the Leader of the Opposition that we are going to compile a business guide which will include all of the forms, which is what businesses would rather have, rather than a taskforce turning up in every shop in Gibraltar. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman thinks that he can wing it with that sort of phrase and ignore everything else that has been said in the context of the substance of the statement from the Government this morning and the answers to the questions from the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, which, if I may say so, with respect to the Leader of the Opposition, were carefully designed to elicit further information which would be useful to him, to members of the community and to members of the business community, not like the questions we are having to field now.

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Hon. C A Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I would ask him if he could answer the EORI question, which was the second limb of that supplementary but just as a point of note, the reason behind the generic term taskforce obviously was not a whole load of soldiers charging down Main Street. I mean, that is clear and comical if he thought that we, or anyone, would think that would be useful but it was actually in relation to their lack of planning and lack of action. This has come, of course, from the business community requesting a lot more information and specialist knowledge other than just a few people putting their heads together within cabinets and the closest circles. They were looking for experts.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, there has been no lack of planning. There has been no lack of action. Nobody thought he was talking about soldiers, Madam Speaker.

Really, given the seriousness of what we are facing and given the help that business does need, which is a million miles from what the hon. Gentleman is referring to, frankly, I think we just need to get real and get on with the business of trying to implement this treaty in a timely and proper

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fashion and not listen to the hon. Gentleman putting questions which are of no assistance to the people he purports to represent, who, in fact, we feel we represent more effectively than they do.

420 **Madam Speaker:** 110?

Hon. C A Sacarello: Thank you, Madam Speaker, 110. Anyway, it is all in the open letter if people want to read it. With regards to the Joint Independent Consultative Body monitoring the market distortions over the period, where would the Chief Minister indicate that the balance of power lies within this body? Because, as I understand, the split will be 50-50.

425 So, who decides and how much influence will the local governments have over it?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I trust that my exasperation will not show in my voice. This is an independent body and so, therefore, neither the Gibraltar Government, the British Government, the European Commission, nor the Spanish Government, nor anybody else should have any power to balance over it because the whole purpose of the Body is that it should be independent. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman has realised the contradictions in the manner in which he is posing the question.

435 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Okay, Madam Speaker, I will rephrase the question. Who will comprise the, not who personally, but where will the, from what part of the public will the members of this consultative body be gathered from and will there be a balance between Spanish nationals and Gibraltarian nationals, *et cetera*. and how will the balance of power decide upon the final results?

440 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I do not think the hon. Gentleman gets it. This is not a body of three Spaniards and two Gibraltarians or two Gibraltarians and three Spaniards. That is not what we are dealing with.

We are dealing with the appointment of an independent professional body. So, for example, a top four accountancy firm but it is Zurich office perhaps, so it is neither its Gibraltar office nor its Spanish office nor its London office nor its Belgian office. That is the sort of body that we are dealing with. There is no balance of power to refer to here.

445 **Hon. C A Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, just as a point, I just wanted to mention that we have next to no information, and the Chief Minister has been dealing with this since at least 2021. So, I would just ask for comprehension and patience in that respect.

Madam Speaker: Anything on 111?

455 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am sorry, I have a lot of comprehension and patience for Hon. Members, especially because this is a big document and I have been dealing with it, as he says, since 2001 and they've just had it last week. But one thing is to ask me what is the independent body going to be? The other thing is to come here with the assumption that there is going to be a balance of power to be done in something which is referred to as an independent body that is why I have an element of exasperation in the approach that I take.

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Madam Speaker: Anything on 111?

Hon. C A Sacarello: Regarding the impacts assessment, Madam Speaker, thank you for your patience. I will just simply ask why not. The Chief Minister mentioned that there was sensitive information but many, many countries release their impacts assessments before, during and after and countries like the United Kingdom do it regularly.

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470 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, we are not the United Kingdom or the United States or Spain. The hon. Gentleman might like to reflect on what I said in my address this morning. I am perfectly happy, by the way, to share these impact assessments with a number of them if they will confirm that they will keep the information entirely confidential.

When they see the information, they will understand why it would never be in the interest of the community that we should publish them, at least not for another 50 or 60 years.

475 **Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

Clerk: Question 112, the Hon. R M Clinton.

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Q112/2026
Government affordable housing projects –
Funding/developing by Ciconia Group of Companies

485 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Further to Question W157/2025, can the Government advise which Government affordable housing projects is the Ciconia Group of Companies funding or developing?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

490 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, the Ciconia Group of Companies is funding and developing the affordable housing projects currently ongoing, namely both Bob Peliza Mews and Chatham Views.

Madam Speaker: Any supplementaries?

495 **Hon. R M Clinton:** I know, Madam Speaker, in answer to my previous questions, the Government is reluctant to actually give me the level of loan notes issued in respect to the funding, describing it as all commercially sensitive and confidential, although I really do not know why. But can the Chief Minister at least confirm to the House that he does not envisage any further borrowing that would be required in respect of the completion of Bob Peliza and Chatham Views?

500 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, certainly in respect of Chatham Views, I think that is probably the case. In relation to Bob Peliza, I cannot confirm it on my feet, but if the hon. Gentleman asks me next time, I will be able to confirm it or give him an indication otherwise.

505 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q113-118/2026
Sovereign Wealth Fund –
Detailed statement; Name of the UK institution working with the Government to create the
Fund structure; Use of Savings Bank money; Long-term UK property investments being
considered for investment; Advice sought and associated fees; Day-to-day operation details

510 **Clerk:** Question 113, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government provide a detailed statement in respect of the Sovereign Wealth Fund as announced in the Chief Minister's 2026 New Year's message including information on its legal structure?

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

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I will answer with 114 to 118.

520 **Clerk:** Question 114, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government advise the name of the UK institution that the Government is working with to create the Sovereign Wealth Fund structure?

525 **Clerk:** Question 115, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government confirm that no money from the Gibraltar Savings Bank will be used to fund the proposed Sovereign Wealth Fund?

530 **Clerk:** Question 116, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government advise what long term UK property investments are being considered for investment by the proposed Sovereign Wealth Fund and how these will generate returns?

535 **Clerk:** Question 117, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Who is advising the Government on the proposed Sovereign Wealth Fund and what fees have been paid to date and to whom?

540 **Clerk:** Question 118, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Who will be in charge of the day to day operation of the Sovereign Wealth Fund?

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

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, as I said in my New Year's Statement, I will provide much more detail on the Sovereign Wealth Fund in a detailed statement in this House in coming months so that everyone in our community can understand all aspects of it. I look forward to doing so.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, given that in his New Year's Message he indicated that, and I quote:

One of the things I have been working very hard on in the background is the establishment of a Sovereign Wealth Fund to secure our nation's public finances.

555 Then he went on to extol the virtues of this proposed fund, how it will generate wealth, and I quote:

Making literally hundreds of millions of pounds for future generations of Gibraltarians.

Madam Speaker, he made that statement in January. We are now where we are in February. I have filed what I think are perfectly legitimate questions in the House, eliciting more information in respect of his New Year's Message, and yet all the Chief Minister does is refer back to his New Year's Message.

Madam Speaker, does the Chief Minister have no information about this? Or is it just a figment of his imagination?

Hon. Chief Minister: I have a lot more information about this, Madam Speaker. I referred back to my statement, because my statement said I will be making a detailed statement in Parliament in coming months. Plural.

Therefore, without denying that the hon. Gentleman is asking a legitimate question, what I am telling him is that he is going to have all of that detail in more in coming months, not today.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, can I ask the Chief Minister, what is it that is preventing him from sharing this information with the House? I mean, is it that he is waiting for the signature of contracts? Is it some confidentiality agreement?

I mean, what is it that is preventing or tying his hands, if I put it that way, that prevents him from sharing the information with his House?

Hon. Chief Minister: A completion of arrangements, Madam Speaker. He was the one who told me, Madam Speaker, before your time here, that we should not say anything until the ink was dry on the paper. That is a quote, Madam Speaker. So, I am waiting for the ink to be dry on the paper to come to this House to say the thing in detail. Madam Speaker, with respect to the hon. Gentleman, on the one occasion that I am following his advice, he should at least respect me for it.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, and Madam Speaker, will grant me some indulgence as I did ask at least five questions to allow me some further supplementaries. I mean, as my hon. Colleague has actually pointed out, he has actually not followed my advice. He has made a statement before he is even got the ink dry on the contract.

But if I may ask him this, Madam Speaker, he talks about having an agreement. Can I ask him who will be signing this agreement? Is it the Government signing the agreement?

Who is signing this agreement?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I beg to differ. I have followed his advice. I have not said anything about the Sovereign Wealth Fund in this House.

I have said that I will say something about the Sovereign Wealth Fund in this House when I am ready to do so, Madam Speaker. I know that Mr Bossino has laughing Tourette's and has spent most of the last year and a half, the hon. Gentleman has spent most of the past year and a half since the last election with an inability to control his laughter in this place. I am delighted that at least he is able to enjoy himself whilst the rest of us are doing the serious business of governing, Madam Speaker.

But I am very clear I am going to talk about the Sovereign Wealth Fund in this place when I am ready to do so. The hon. Gentleman is going to have the answers that he is seeking when the Government is able and ready to make the statement. Now, I think I have made that relatively clear from the first moment that I uttered the word Sovereign Wealth Fund and I said I was going to make the statement in coming months.

I will continue to make it clear to Hon. Members opposite that I intend to come to this place to make a detailed statement in coming months which will deal with all of the issues that have been raised and more, no doubt, that will be raised and additional material that will be set out in that statement when I am ready to make it, Madam Speaker.

The Treaty has been something they have had to wait for. We have published it today.

610 The Sovereign Wealth Fund is something they may have to wait for. We will publish it soon too.

Madam Speaker: One more.

615 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Speaker, Sovereign Wealth Fund that the Chief Minister refers to, can the Chief Minister at least, I mean, confirm to the House when he says Sovereign Wealth that he is talking about and he has also in his public statement talked about public finances. So, when he says Sovereign Wealth is he referring to the monies in the consolidated fund?

620 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave a few moments ago.

Madam Speaker: Alright. Before I move on to the next question, I am going to take any supplementaries in relation to 104 and 105.

625

Q104-105/2026

Supplementary

630 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful, Madam Speaker. I have here the schedule in front of me and I note that the contract that was awarded was for close to £1.2 million and it was over the course of three years 2023 to 2026. Sorry, 2022 to no, 2023 to I had it written out, sorry.

I just want to get the contract correct. Yes, 2022 to 2025. So, I am looking at the last but one page of the schedule that has been handed to me.

635 I am at the very bottom. Sort of two thirds of the way down. It says Department of Personnel and Development and there is a number of payments there dating from December 2024 to February 2026 and they go from £31,103 to £30,858 and £30,858 is consistent from January 2025 to February 2026.

There will be two questions. I will ask the first one and then, if possible, I could ask the second.

640 So, the first question is if there is a contract for £1.2 million is that part and parcel of that contract? Does the contract say that it is a maximum of £1.2 million payable over those three years or is it the case that those are extra payments that are being made and if so what are those payments being made in respect of? Because those payments are to Maritime Medical Services.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): I would need notice of that question Madam Speaker.

645 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker the next question is if the contract lapsed in 2025 was it once again awarded to the same company because here again the payments suggest that it may be the case given that they are the same throughout. So, if it ends in 2025 and in January 2026 and February 2026 the company still received £30,858.33 is it the case that again it has not been retendered?

650

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I would need notice of that question.

655 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I now go to the same level, but I am on the last column, the column pertaining to "other", and there is a payment there of £30,000. Does the Hon. Chief Minister have any information as to what that relates to because we do have others outlined, Cordell Healthcare and Central Clinic, but "other" is unclear. I am not sure what "other" relates to? If the Hon. Chief Minister has any information, because that is quite a sizeable amount when there is a £1.2 million contract already in place supposedly.

660 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker. Other than that it is not any of those listed in the headings. It must be a third or fourth provider. It could be more than one.

665 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, grateful. Although I note that there are eight providers outlined. Given that there are no providers in Gibraltar on the Maritime Medical Limited, there seems to be a lot, but anyway there are eight providers, and then I have "other". Does the Hon. Chief Minister have any information as to why the distinction exists when others have clearly been outlined within the documents?

670 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, because it could be other costs which are not related to providers. Given the remark about the others that are listed there which amount to eight, I am advised that many of those are not actually based in Gibraltar.

675 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, if they were not based in Gibraltar, I go back again. The College Clinic is based in Gibraltar. The Specialist Medical Group is based in Gibraltar. The Midtown Clinic is based in Gibraltar. So, there are a number of those clinics that are in fact based in Gibraltar. Would the Hon. Chief Minister wish to review the comment he has just made?

680 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, some of those clinics are based in Gibraltar. Some of the doctors who provide the services are not based in Gibraltar. The "other" may not be based in Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q119/2026
Ministers' interests –
Publication of statement

685 **Clerk:** Question 119, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

690 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** When will the Government publish a statement of Ministers' interests as provided in paragraph 7.5 of the Ministerial Code?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

695 **Chief Minister (Hon F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, Ministers are also Members of Parliament and, as such, their interests are recorded in the Declaration of Members' Interests, which is available for inspection in this House. As no changes of interests have been notified, no additional publication has yet been actioned.

700 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** I see. So is the Chief Minister saying that the Government take the view that compliance with the Ministerial Code does not require a separate statement? 7.5 of the Ministerial Code, which was approved by this House in 2023, reads that a statement covering relevant Ministers' interests will be published twice yearly. Making a note in the Parliamentary Register of Interests is something that people do as parliamentarians. When I read this I thought it was a separate statement because there is not publication, for example, on a twice yearly basis of the Parliamentary Register of Interests so this to me implied that was an intention for a separate publication twice yearly in respect of Ministerial Interest because this Code does not affect Parliamentarians rather than Ministers. So, can the Chief Minister confirm that the view that the Government take is that it does not require a statement a separate statement being published?

705

710 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I will be very honest with the hon. Gentleman. I do not disagree with him. I think that this has been inadvertence, to tell you the truth, because there has been no change notified in Ministerial Interests. There has been no publication, and I think this is very easily solved by publishing the Register of Members' Interests, in so far as it relates to Ministers, twice a year. It is available for inspection, it is there, and should there be any changes, people would then be able to notice the changes. It really is something that, because it has been open to inspection, I think has not been registered as a new way of dealing with things after the Ministerial Code. I will ask those listening in the Chief Secretary's Office to cause the Register of Members' Interests, in so far as it relates to Ministers, to be published twice a year starting next week.

720 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q120/2026

Incursion into local waters and shots fired by Spanish Officers in February 2023 – Investigation and results/recommendations

725 **Clerk:** Question 120, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr. K Azopardi: Does the Government know whether the investigation into the landing and alleged shots fired by Spanish officers at Eastern Beach in February 2023 has now concluded and whether concluded or not is the Government aware of the state of play of the investigation and its results or recommendations if any?

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

735 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Further to previous answers provided in response to parliamentary questions on the same matter dating back to 2024, no individuals have been identified, arrested or charged in connection with this incident. I am advised by the RGP that this investigation is now closed until such time as any new evidence or information that comes to light is assessed, at which point any relevant new lines of enquiry will be pursued.

740 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** The last time I asked questions in this House the investigation was open, so the Chief Minister at least confirms now that the investigation has been closed. Can I ask him whether he means that the investigation has been closed in Gibraltar, or whether he has information, or is he saying that the investigations have been closed in both jurisdictions? Because the last time I asked in this House, the investigation was ongoing here, but there were processes going on in Spain, at least in respect of not the officers but in respect of other individuals.

745 **Hon. Chief Minister:** The information I have is only in relation to Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

750

Q121/2026 Residency criteria – Publication

Clerk: Question 121, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

755 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** Will the residency criteria which the Government has been working on be published before 10th April 2026?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

760 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, yes ma'am.

765 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, is the Chief Minister in a position to indicate to the House a sort of sharper timescale? Does he intend to do so not just before the 10th of April but rather on well before that? I mean, does he have, is it ready? Does he have a date in mind because like everything in the same way as people need to adjust to new systems clearly this has now been the subject of a decision taken by Government, I think it was on the 6th of October last year where almost overnight the, part of the legislation was suspended pending this committee which Government had set up to draw up a residency criteria it did lead to you know, quite a lot of public speculation and anxiety in some quarters about it so does he have a clearer timescale other than the 10th of April, a specific date in mind?

770

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Well Madam Speaker, one Minister has been asked to produce the final draft of the discussion of the Cabinet and that Minister has committed to let me have a draft by the end of this week which is tomorrow so that the Cabinet can consider it again on Monday. I very much look forward to being able to do so and thereafter we should be in a better position to be able to advise when publication is anticipated for consultation.

775

Madam Speaker: Next Question.

780

Q122/2026

Security improvement in connection with the implementation of the draft treaty with the EU – Recommendations from the Commissioner of Police

Clerk: Question 122, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

785 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** Have the Government received any recommendations from the Commissioner of Police as to the technical, administrative and human resources needed to improve security with a view to the implementation of the draft Treaty with the EU?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

790 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am. The Commissioner of Police has met on several occasions over recent months with the Gibraltar Police Authority, the Attorney-General, the Chief Secretary and myself to discuss the various implications of the EU-UK treaty's implementation in relation to national security, policing and crime prevention. The discussions have centred around outlining the RGP's resourcing requirements linked to the enhanced policing posture and facilities needed within Gibraltar Airport and the current land border crossing, as well as the area of maritime policing and enhanced equipment requirements.

795

800 The RGP has also provided His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar with extensive technical recommendations on enhancing Gibraltar's physical and protective security infrastructure. This particular piece of work forms part of various work streams that are being managed by His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar through a dedicated multi-agency treaty implementation working group that meets weekly. The Commissioner of Police has additionally appointed a senior RGP officer to lead on various aspects of Treaty implementation, and the work is advancing rapidly

through regular planning meetings with His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar's departments, agencies and contractors.

805 The discussions on RGP specific operational, human and technical requirements, as well as the specialist technical recommendations provided to His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar regarding enhancements to Gibraltar's protective security infrastructure, are subject to publication restrictions with the exception of approved in person or closed confidential briefings.

810 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** Can I clarify that the Hon. Chief Minister is answering this question on its own and not with the next question? That is correct. I assumed that because the question has not been called with the other one. As they are linked, I do not want to overextend myself into the next question, if I may.

815 The Chief Minister has indicated that they are having discussions with the Commissioner of Police on these matters and, without treading into operationally sensitive material, can he give the House some idea as to the kind of resources that have been discussed? Has a view been formed by Government about this? For example, are we talking about the recruitment of "x" amount of officers?

820 Additionally, is there to be an investment in technology or digital infrastructure to deal with entry points or other things, or the building of physical infrastructure near the Frontier? Or is it vehicles, vessels or other matters? Can he give us a better sense of the recommendations regarding resources that the Commissioner of Police believes are important to improve security with a view to the implementation of the Treaty?

825 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, those things do not involve only the Commissioner of Police. They also involve the Collector of Customs, the Chief Executive of the Borders and Coastguard Agency and the Head of Civil Contingencies. That is the group that meets every two weeks with relevant ministerial oversight.

830 I have already said on a number of occasions that there will be a tri-service operating base north of the runway in the area in front of the airport where the *Bureau de Change* currently is. I have already indicated today that there will be joint maritime patrols that will require a vessel from Gibraltar to be provided. I have already indicated that there will be a flotilla of vehicles north of the runway to prevent any attempt to enter Gibraltar in a way that is contrary to our interests. So, there will be human and equipment resourcing issues that we are already providing for and referring to, although we need to be careful not to say too much about that.

835 I have also spoken about live facial recognition cameras which will be north of the runway and extending into our city. All of these things will make Gibraltar, as I said this morning during my statement, safer even than it is now. The removal of physical barriers will not lead to Gibraltar being less safe. It will lead to us being safer even than we are now.

840 That is the process, Madam Speaker, although I am saying a lot, perhaps more than I should be saying, but people need to understand that security will be improved.

845 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** Well, I do not think that the hon. Member, with respect, is saying more than he should because he has said this before and he has said it in this House, I think also, that Gibraltar would be safer than it would ever be before. I think one of the things that people legitimately have a concern about when contemplating the balancing of the benefits of fluidity at the border, as well as the removal of the Frontier or the checks there, is the issue of security. He has been keen before to assure people. With that in mind, and with these observations also, he might be prepared to say a bit more, because I have asked about the recommendations received
850 from the Commissioner of Police and he has answered in some ways, but he refers, for example, to the joint maritime patrols, although presumably that is not a recommendation that comes from the Commissioner of Police because that is in the Treaty or in the administrative arrangements underpinning it. A vessel will obviously be required for that, but that is presumably not something that comes from the Commissioner.

855 He talks about the flotilla of vehicles, for which I am grateful, and his other clarifications. He
says this also refers to the Collector of Customs and the Head of the Borders and Coastguard
Agency, and I accept his widening of the point on security and he is right. Therefore, in relation to
resources for the BCA, Customs and Police in terms of human resources, is the Government
860 looking at an expansion in terms of personnel of the Police, the BCA and Customs, or the
redeployment of people to enhance security not just there but also throughout Gibraltar?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I said that I may be saying too much by repeating the
things that I have already said here, which may have gone too far in setting out what the security
infrastructure will be, but I agree that it is very important that people should feel reassured. That
865 is why I am giving the information, even though I am not descending to particulars as to what
infrastructure will be where, because we do not want to provide a map of areas to avoid to those
who might be seeking to perpetrate actions against our common security. I am not going to get
into potential redeployments, although I will say that none are envisaged. We are not talking
about moving people from doing what they are doing to doing something else. We are talking
870 about enhancing what people are doing with technology.

Hon. Dr. K Azopardi: Finally on this issue, having received the recommendations, and the
answer to that is yes, has the Government formed a view about the recommendations not only of
the Police but perhaps also of the other agencies that he has widened his explanation to include?
875 Are we going to see the roll out of implementation not only on the issues that he has mentioned
on vehicles and so on but also in personnel, without providing operational details? Is Gibraltar
going to see the roll out of the implementation of changes stemming from those
recommendations in respect of personnel before 10th April?

880 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Not in respect of personnel, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

885

Q123/2026

**Implementation of the draft treaty with the EU –
Cost of greater resources for the Royal Gibraltar Police**

Clerk: Question 123, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

890 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** Does the Government have a view on the cost of greater resources that
would be required by the Royal Gibraltar Police in terms of the proposed implementation of the
draft EU Treaty?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, yes, Ma'am. The Government recognises
that implementing the draft EU Treaty, particularly the move to an open and fluid border, will
895 require an increase in Royal Gibraltar Police resources. The RGP has assessed that the cost of
providing 24-hour armed and unarmed policing at the land border and airport will require 20
additional officers, along with further civilian staff to free officers for front line duties.

In addition, treaty related preparations are projected to incur new costs linked to essential
training, equipment, infrastructure and operational capability. These include mandatory firearms
and border security training, digital forensics, public protection and major incident readiness
900 requirements that are necessary to meet expected obligations under the Treaty. Further capital
investments will also be needed to ensure operational resilience, including upgrades to fleet
vehicles, maritime assets, IT systems and key premises.

905 The Government will continue to work closely with the Commissioner of Police to ensure the RGP is fully prepared, resourced, equipped and staffed to meet these expanded responsibilities.

910 **Hon. Dr. K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Chief Minister, in terms of those recommendations of the RGP, do I take it from his answer that they have been accepted by the Government? If so, can he give us more information about the timelines of implementation and what this represents in terms of overall costs and assessment?

915 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, we are working with the Commissioner on all of those issues, including whether 20 additional officers mean more officers or it means freeing up officers who may be doing things which can be done by civilians. We have already undertaken an exercise of this nature in relation to some in the RGP. The numbers are not yet set in stone. I am not going to give the estimates of costs that we have in relation to some of the equipment that we are talking about because some of that equipment will need to be procured by tender. If I give the estimated costs now, that would make it harder for us to get the best quotes at tender.

920

Q971/2025 – Discrepancy

925 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I am conscious that during the course of the last meeting of the House, the Hon. Mr Clinton, or the Leader of the Opposition, raised with me a potential discrepancy in relation to an answer in Question 971 of 2025, which I said I would go back and look at. In supplementary, as the Hon. Mr Clinton asked me to check some of the numbers in the schedule which, in his view, did not tally, I agreed with him and committed to asking my parliamentary team at No 6 to review it. The following is the explanation I have received, which I now share with the House for the purposes of Hansard.

930 Prior to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, British citizens were considered EU nationals for immigration purposes and were therefore issued blue Civilian Registration Cards, identical to those issued to all other EU nationals.

935 Following the withdrawal agreement from January 2020 onwards, the Civilian Registration Card colour scheme changed as follows: Newly arriving British citizens taking up residence in Gibraltar were to be issued magenta Civilian Registration Cards; newly arriving EU nationals were to be issued green Civilian Registration Cards. Only British citizens and EU nationals who had established residence in Gibraltar prior to Brexit were eligible to retain their blue Civilian Registration Cards, as they fell within the category of beneficiaries who preserved their EU rights.

940 Due to the updates required in the Mühlbauer ID card system in our residence databases to implement these changes, there was a short transitional period during which newly arriving British citizens and newly arriving EU nationals were all issued blue Civilian Registration Cards instead of the newly assigned magenta or green cards. This temporary measure ensured that residents could still be registered while the technical changes to the system were being implemented.

945 These changes all came at short notice. During this same period, and immediately following the Christmas holiday closure, the immigration team was required to process all applications submitted prior to 24th December 2020 which were still pending. Additionally, the senior management team at the CSRO at the time issued instructions that British citizens and EU nationals applying during the first three months of 2021 who could demonstrate residence in Gibraltar through rental agreements or electricity and water bills dated prior to 31st December 950 2020 were to be issued blue Civilian Registration Cards. Applicants whose residence documentation was dated on or after 1st January 2021 were to receive the correct new colour, namely magenta for British citizens and green for EU nationals.

This explains the apparent inconsistency in the Civilian Registration Card colours issued to individuals applying after 31st December 2020.

955 The following Civilian Registration Cards were issued to British citizens taking up residence in Gibraltar during 2020:

Magenta	9
Blue, British citizens alone	104
Blue, British citizens issued as EU nationals	480
	593

960 This gives the total number of British citizens issued with such cards as 593, which was the figure that we were discussing at the last meeting and could not get to tally on either side of the House.

965 It is also noted that children born after Brexit to British blue Civilian Registration Card holders retained the entitlement to a blue Civilian Registration Card. A formal review was later undertaken to identify and correct any Civilian Registration Cards issued in an incorrect colour during this transitional period. Any affected cards were subsequently replaced with the correct colour in accordance with the post Brexit Civilian Registration Card colour designation rules.

Madam Speaker I hope that clarifies the position.

970 **Madam Speaker:** This is a little bit new, off-piste exactly, but given that a full answer has now been given to 971 of 2025, I am going to allow any supplementaries that may arise from that should any member wish, any hon. Member wish to ask any. No? Alright.

Next question then.

975

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Q39/2026

**Government vehicles –
Leased from private companies**

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister.
Question 39, the Hon. D J Bossino.

980 **Hon. D J Bossino:** What specific safeguards, if any, are to be put in place to protect the Mount's historical, architectural and environmental aspects?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister.

985 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr. J J Garcia):** Madam Speaker, a planning proposal for the Mount will be made publicly available online and will be submitted to the Development and Planning Commission. This document sets out the Government's strategic vision for the area and incorporates safeguards aimed at protecting its historical, architectural and environmental value. In addition to the planning process, the Government, as landlord, may also introduce controls
990 towards the same objective.

Hon. D J Bossino: I did not quite catch the initial preamble to the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister's answer, is he saying that this is a planning proposal which will be submitted by the Gibraltar Government in the future? If he could confirm that.

995 **Hon. Dr. J J Garcia:** Madam Speaker, yes, that is correct.

Hon. D J Bossino: Madam Speaker, if I may, there was a reference in the press release issued on 12th February, and I quote, that refers to the historical, environmental and architectural aspects. If I may ask the Deputy Chief Minister to focus on the historical aspects, it says:

Due to the significant historical interest of the site, which is absolutely correct, interested parties will need to consult with Heritage and the Ministry of the Environment to catalogue significant items of historical, architectural and environmental interest.

1000

In respect particularly of the historical aspect, what I can see is that there is an obligation on the relevant successful party to consult in relation to cataloguing these items. I think the reason why I asked for more specific information is that I think we will need more than simply a consultation process with a view to cataloguing certain things. I think the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister has understood, so I would like him, if he could, to expand on the answer he gave earlier.

1005

Hon. Dr. J J Garcia: Yes, Madam Speaker. What is planned will go further than that. There is a planning proposal which is ready and will go to the DPC. That already includes the Heritage Trust, the Ministry for Heritage and the Minister who sits on the Commission.

1010

The DPC will have the power to set planning conditions as to what can and cannot happen. In addition to that, the Government, through its control of leases or licences, also has the power to control what happens there. It is a dual process. We will be on top of that through the planning process and through the landlord process.

1015

Hon. D J Bossino: I appreciate all of that. If I may, can I push the Deputy Chief Minister slightly further? He says in his last answer that the process will include these things. Can I push him further and ask what will be included in order to protect the heritage aspects of the site, which are so important to Gibraltar? It is a very important Gibraltar heritage asset. I understand that it is not listed as a scheduled building under the Heritage and Antiquities Act. Therefore, the actions taken by the Gibraltar Government in ensuring that these things are kept intact are even more important.

1020

Hon. Dr. J J Garcia: Yes, Madam Speaker. The two sets of actions by which the Government can control this are the planning process and the landlord process. The Government is very conscious and very aware of the important historical nature of the site, its environmental value and its heritage value. We will certainly be on top of that to ensure that none of it is put in jeopardy.

1025

Normally, we tend to wait for the DPC to issue a view when the planning proposal comes before them. On the basis of that view, the Government, as landlord, is able to act and to restrict what can and cannot happen there.

1030

Hon. D J Bossino: If I may, the expressions of interest have a deadline of 27 March. Once the EOIs are submitted and received by the Gibraltar Government, it will need to consider them and then enter into some process of negotiation once the preferred bidder is identified. Can I press him on this aspect? Is he able to give a broad timeline as to when he expects the planning aspects to be submitted to the DPC so that we see further progress in relation to the site?

1035

Hon. Dr. J J Garcia: I will explain the process that opened on 12th February, in case that is helpful. The Government has already tabled a master plan for the Mount with the DPC in 2022. That has already happened. It has set out a series of works and uses for the Porter's Lodge, the events hall, the tennis courts and the gardens. That work has started and is ongoing.

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What happened on 12th February is that the Government put out an expression of interest for the residence, meaning one building in that complex. That will close on 27th March, as the hon. Member said. The Government will then assess the different proposals that come in, if any, and

1045 then take a view. That is the process opened on 12th February for the residence only. The rest of
the master plan agreed in 2022 still stands, and work on that is ongoing.

Hon. D J Bossino: In respect of the broader aspects, the wider aspects of the plan, is he able to
confirm, which I understand is the Government's policy position, that this site will be openly
1050 available to members of the public? In that context, can he also, and I put it using this language,
because I think the Government, and indeed the Deputy Chief Minister himself, in answers to
questions that I pose in relation specifically to the tennis courts, also confirm that the tennis courts
at some point will also be made available for public use? And I think in answers to questions, the
questions I referred to earlier, he said that at some point the management of the tennis courts
1055 will be handed over to the GSLA precisely to make them publicly available.

Hon. Dr. J J Garcia: Yes, Madam Speaker, that is correct. The Government will insist on
maintaining public access to the site. There is an events hall, there may be a boutique hotel, and
there will be tennis courts and gardens. The Government is very insistent, and will remain insistent
1060 in the coming process, that public access is maintained.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q40/2026
Rosia Bay –
Expressions of interest

1065 **Clerk:** Question 40, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr. K Azopardi: To 24th February 2026 (or to such later date if this question is answered
subsequently) how many responses have there been to the invitation to express interest in the
development of Rosia Bay?
1070

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister.

Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr. J J Garcia): Madam Speaker, the number of responses will not
be known until the process has closed, and it closes tomorrow, 27th February.
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Hon. Dr. K Azopardi: Yes, I understood it closes tomorrow. I saw it from the advert, but I
thought the hon. Member would at least know how many sealed envelopes have arrived. That is
really the question.

1080 **Hon. Dr. J J Garcia:** I am told, Madam Speaker, that these are put inside a box, and that until
the box is opened and the number of envelopes counted, we will not know how many there are.

Hon. Dr. K Azopardi: The box is presumably held at LPS or somewhere. When the person
arrives to put the sealed envelope in the box, does an official not make a note, or is the box outside
1085 where officials are?

Hon. Dr. J J Garcia: My understanding, although I stand to be corrected, is that there is a box
in reception, and people go in and serve the envelope. I confess it is not something I have explored
in great detail, but that is my understanding of how the process works.
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Hon. Dr. K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, with your leave, and if the hon. Member does not object, I may have to file a question of a different nature, clearly after the opening of the box. I may ask the question of how many they found in the box afterwards. (*Interjection*)

1095 **Madam Speaker:** Well, if the Leader of the Opposition poses the question in the right way, he will not need my leave because it will be post 27th February, so no rules will be infringed. All right, I think that is the end of questions.

Clerk: Answers to Written Questions.

1100

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table the answers to Written Questions number W1 to W14 of 2026 inclusive.

Clerk: The Order of the Day.

1105

Adjournment

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that the House should now adjourn to Tuesday 3rd March at 10 a.m.

1110 **Madam Speaker:** I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Tuesday 3rd March at 10 am. I now put the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Tuesday 3rd March at 10 am. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye) Those against? Passed.
This House will now adjourn to Tuesday 3rd March at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 4.21 p.m.

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