



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

**MORNING SESSION: 10.01 a.m. – 12.20 p.m.**

**Gibraltar, Wednesday, 25th February 2026**

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# The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 10.01 a.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

### EQUALITY, EMPLOYMENT, CULTURE AND TOURISM

**Q27-8/2026**

**Cruise liners –**

**Arrivals from non-EU port; Departures from Gibraltar to non-EU destinations**

**Clerk:** Meeting of Parliament, Wednesday 25th February 2026. Answers to Oral Questions continued.

5 Question 27, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** How many cruise liners arriving in Gibraltar during the years 2021-2025 arrived from a non-EU port as their previous destination broken down by calendar year?

10 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 28.

**Clerk:** Question 28, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

15 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** How many cruise liners departing from Gibraltar during the years 2021-2025 departed to a non-EU port as their next destination broken down by calendar year?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

20 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, the following number of cruise liners arrived in Gibraltar from a non-EU port as a previous destination: 2021, 3; 2022, 24; 2023, 24; 2024, 32; and 2025, 44. The following number of cruise liners departed from Gibraltar to a non-EU port as their next destination: 2021, 6; 2022, 28; 2023, 34; 2024, 43; and 2025, 52.

25

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see. And obviously the numbers on the first question, so on 27, from, seem to be lower than to on a non-EU port. I see from looking at sort of thinking just broadly on

the statistics of cruise arrivals and so on is a certain percentage, but it would be a bigger percentage in some years for cruises that have gone to a non-EU port as their next destination during those calendar years.

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Not an insignificant percentage, so in some of the years, perhaps even 20 or 30% perhaps, but the hon. Member may have his statistics in front of him, but just from the statistics that we were talking about yesterday of about 220 or so in some years, some of it 10%, 20%. Given that, has the Minister discussed with cruise line operators, those people who bring cruise liners to Gibraltar, the ramifications in another field of the possibility of non-EU destinations being arrived from or gone to from Gibraltar as a result of the Treaty?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** The answer would be yes, without giving too much detail. The numbers given include those that are also UK port. So going to a non-EU port has nothing to do with, has no ramifications on Gibraltar pre or post treaty.

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And coming into Gibraltar, the figures I have given, the percentage of those coming to Gibraltar from a non-EU port other than the UK are quite a small percentage, ranging from 4% to 14%.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Does it matter if they come from the UK or not? I mean, it does not really matter, I suppose, because it is a non-EU. So, have those people who bring in cruises to Gibraltar expressed a concern as to the effect of the Treaty on the Business of getting cruises to Gibraltar?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** This is a matter for itinerary planners. So, if there were to be any ramifications with regards to the Treaty, because the text of the Treaty has not been released, my hands are a bit tied as to the detail. But discussions have been had with the industry and non-EU ports and UK ports have different conditions and this is all about itinerary planning. So, what ports come are before and after Gibraltar are part of the itinerary planners. This is when I mentioned yesterday that we go to conferences and we go to meetings and we go to all different parts that we tend to discuss with the cruise industry. Itinerary planning and itinerary planners are the people that we tend to meet as well.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I mean, I get that and, of course, I am not making a sort of point that requires any kind of exploration of the Treaty text which has not been made public yet. Sort of not a granular point anyway, because I think this point has been put in the public domain by the Government in answers not least to the business sector. I mean, the Government has confirmed to the business sector that the Treaty will have an effect on whether cruises can come from non-EU ports. I think that is not a secret. It is something that the Government itself has said.

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All I am saying is that, is it as simple as itinerary planning or have there been some operators who have expressed the view to Government that this actually will impact on the ability of some cruises coming to Gibraltar? Because they will not stop here as a result of that.

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**Hon. C P Santos:** The only issues that we are encountering are the ones that will be affected directly this year in the short term but not something that has affected the future because this is all about itinerary planning and that will not be an issue. We just saw, as I said yesterday, we saw an increase in the past 10 days for bookings in 2028 already from eight that we had to 150.

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But it is not a concern that we are having from cruise liners for long-term planning.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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JUSTICE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Q29-35/2026

New Mole House –

**Presence of asbestos; Technical surveys conducted; Conclusion of technical assessments; Areas cordoned off; Relocation of affected staff/departments; Proposed plans; Relocation of RGP personnel**

80 **Clerk:** Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.  
Question 29, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** For how long have the Government been aware of the asbestos present within the New Mole House Police Station building?

85 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

**Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 30 to 35.

**Clerk:** Question 30, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

90 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Over the course of the past 24 months, how many technical surveys have been carried out of the New Mole House Police Station building? Please provide a detailed breakdown as to the findings of those surveys.

95 **Clerk:** Question 31, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Have the technical assessments which were conducted on the New Mole House Police Station building following closure of parts of the building due to exposure of asbestos as a result of water ingress from the inclement weather that Gibraltar has experienced this winter now concluded? If they have, what were the findings of those assessments?

100 **Clerk:** Question 32, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

105 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** What areas of New Mole House Police Station were cordoned off following the exposure of asbestos as a result of the inclement weather this winter and do those remain cordoned off and inaccessible?

**Clerk:** Question 33, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

110 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Where have staff/departments that have been affected by the closure of parts of New Mole House Police Station been relocated to?

**Clerk:** Question 34, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

115 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Please provide an update as to the proposed plans for New Mole House Police Station, specifically whether the RGP are to continue operating from that building, or whether there are plans to construct a new police station, with estimated timescales for the intended project. If the intention is to construct a new police station, please provide the intended location of the new police station.

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**Clerk:** Question 35, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Regardless of whether the Government plan to refurbish the existing New Mole House Police Station building or construct a new police station, where will RGP personnel be relocated to while the project is ongoing?  
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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

**Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, answer to Question 29. Madam Speaker, we understand that the building that is today referred to as New Mole House Police Headquarters was originally New Mole Barracks and that before World War I the barracks became an ordinance store but later, date unknown, returned to its original purpose as a barracks until around 1964 when it became the headquarters for the MPBW-PSA-DOE, former MOD agencies. The police station at New Mole House has been operational since the 1990s, a period during which the GSD was last in Government for 16 years.

Given the building's age and its former military and industrial use, I understand that the presence of asbestos would not be unusual. I can confirm that an asbestos survey was commissioned in August 2012 and identified the existence of white asbestos in certain areas. These items were assessed as low risk with risk assessment scores of 6 and 7 which fall within the report's lowest band.  
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The report states, quote:

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This is the lowest band possible and would relate to a low-risk material that is in good condition and unlikely to be damaged.

On that basis and accordingly, the report did not identify any immediate serious risk to health and did not recommend urgent access restrictions or immediate removal for those identified materials.  
140

Rather, it set out a clear approach with the relevant areas to be labelled and entered into management and inspection programme. No records from before 2011 have been made available by the RGP regarding whether asbestos was identified during earlier renovations or occupancy changes and such records, even if commissioned, may no longer exist given the passage of time. Since the question asks for how long, a precise historical time frame is therefore not possible but certainly asbestos in the building existed before 2011 and it would be unlikely that previous administrations would have been unaware of the potential asbestos presence.  
145

But to answer the question as far as the current Government is concerned, I am advised by the RGP that the first formally documented survey by the GSLP Liberal Administration which identified asbestos in New Mole House was commissioned in August 2012 as mentioned previously. No serious concerns to health arising from potential asbestos exposure at New Mole House has been reported to me until the recent heavy rains. Upon being made aware by Unite the Union of such concerns on or around 3 February 2026, I immediately visited New Mole House with my team to speak directly to police officers across the station including visiting the affected areas.  
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During that visit, I also discussed the matter with the Commissioner of Police and made the Chief Secretary aware of the situation. I understand that the Chief Secretary has been in contact with the RGP during this time. Needless to say, had these recent concerns existed prior to the recent heavy rains, the actions which have since been taken would have been implemented earlier and both the Government and the unions would have been informed accordingly.  
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I would like to commend the Commissioner of Police for his handling of the situation and his engagement with the Government and to thank the Chief Secretary as both have attempted to address concerns within their respective areas of responsibility. Madam Speaker, the Government continues to support the RGP in matters relating to premises to meet the RGP's wider operational needs not only at New Mole House.  
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170 Answer to Question 30. Madam Speaker, over the past 24 months, I am advised that the RGP have conducted two technical surveys at New Mole House Police Station building. The first was conducted in December 2024. This health and safety site inspection report on New Mole House did not raise any concerns about an immediate asbestos-related risk to health nor did it suggest any deterioration, unsafe disturbance or requirement to restrict access or undertake urgent removal.

175 It noted that an asbestos register is in place and that ceiling tiles have been labelled with asbestos warning tags. The only asbestos-related action identified was to ensure that any asbestos on the site is marked with suitable warning notices and stickers. Taken together with the 2012 survey findings, the December 2024 inspection does not indicate any change in position.

The RGP commissioned a second asbestos survey in February 2026 and are currently awaiting the written report.

180 Answer to Question 31. Madam Speaker, I can confirm that the technical assessments carried out at New Mole House Police Station building following the closure of certain areas due to potential asbestos exposure caused by water ingress from recent inclement weather has now been concluded.

185 As part of this process, a visual and bulk analysis was undertaken. The form of assessment and testing identified the presence, type and concentration of asbestos in sampled materials and enabled the RGP senior management team to determine the appropriate measures for safe management, removal or ongoing monitoring of the affected areas.

190 On the 18th of February 2026, the RGP were verbally informed that the areas currently subject to access restrictions have been assessed and deemed safe for reoccupation. While asbestos remains present within certain materials, I am advised by the RGP that the assessment confirmed that no asbestos fibres have been released. Consequently, I am advised that there is no health risk provided that routine monitoring continues. On that basis, there are no concerns regarding asbestos exposure for staff working within those areas.

195 Answer to Question 32. Madam Speaker, in addition to the file preparation unit, which was previously restricted due to the potential for asbestos exposure, the following areas were also restricted, namely: the Sir Robert Peel Room; the Response Team Computer Room; the Information Management and Vetting Unit; the Records Department; the Record Storage Room and Kitchen; the Female Locker Room; the Crime Division Kitchen; and the stairwell adjacent to the Command and Dispatch Centre.

As of the 18th of February 2026, none of these remain cordoned off and inaccessible due to exposure of asbestos.

200 Answer to Question 33. Madam Speaker, prior to receiving verbal confirmation of the asbestos assessment, the following staff members were reallocated as follows:

205 Criminal Justice Unit, formerly the File Preparation Unit, were reallocated to the vacant offices previously occupied by the Public Protection Unit, which is now operating from New Harbours. The Information Management and Vetting Unit and the Records Department were redistributed throughout the station and operating from available desks in various departments. In respect of the Response Team, the organisation had facilitated the use of alternative work areas within the Police Estate to support administrative duties. Special Branch Personnel had already been temporarily relocated off-site and are no longer operating from New Mole House Police Station.

210 Answer to Question 34. Madam Speaker, the Government is examining the possible relocation of New mole House Police Station to an alternative site.

215 Concept designs for a new location have been developed and discussions with a third party are already in progress. Any decision will of course be guided by professional advice, operational requirements and the need to maintain policing effectiveness. Madam Speaker, it is important to note, however, that the RGP operate from multiple premises across Gibraltar, not solely New Mole House.

The Government continues to provide support for premises to meet the RGP's wider operational needs. For example, the RGP Public Protection Unit has now relocated to dedicated

premises at New Harbours, away from New mole House, providing a more suitable working environment for officers while improving the support offered to vulnerable victims and witnesses. 220 These premises were made available by my Ministry following discussions with the previous Commissioner of Police and at the RGP's request.

Similarly, the Economic Crime Unit has, over the last 18 months, been supported by the Government with increased resources, including civilian appointments, allowing it to operate at its largest staff levels since inception. I am pleased to report to this House that the unit will soon 225 relocate to modern offices near the Director of Public Prosecutions, enhancing coordination on complex investigations and prosecutions. Again, this move follows detailed discussions through my Ministry and reflects acknowledgement of the condition of the premises they currently occupy.

These examples demonstrate the Government's consistent approach, ensuring that RGP 230 officers have facilities, resources and operational support necessary to carry out their duties effectively across premises and not only New Mole building.

Answer to Question 35. Madam Speaker, in the event that a new police station is constructed, there is no need to relocate RGP personnel while the project is ongoing.

In the event that New mole House is expanded and refurbished, a programme of works will be 235 developed by technical experts that will determine the action which needs to be taken.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I will try to unpack each question individually. As per Question number 29, we heard that the last technical survey in respect of asbestos was carried out in August 2012, at which point the Government became aware that there was asbestos at 240 New Mole House. So I ask, why then, 14 years on, have there been no further surveys carried out in between?

I mean, New Mole House has been in a state of disrepair for some time. That is known to all. So why therefore, since 2012, have no further assessments been carried out?

Why have we waited until inclement weather for that to happen?

245 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I can only answer a question in this House during the time that I was a Minister here over the last two years.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, with respect, the Hon. Minister, sits on the Government 250 that has been the Government since 2011 and therefore should have that information, regardless of whether the Hon. Minister, was in this House or not. So, therefore, I ask, why has it taken, again, reactively, for this Government to carry out surveys now that there has been inclement weather and there has been a risk to people and police officers and also staff working at New mole House Police Station? Why now?

255 Why not before now?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, the answer is very simple. The answer is very simple. This is a decision.

In other words, whether or not the survey is carried out is a decision which is taken at the 260 request of the Commissioner of Police. So I have to assume that the Commissioner of Police, the then Commissioners of Police, did not request a survey to be carried out. But Madam Speaker, of course, we need to note, as I have tried to highlight in answer to my question, that during the 16 years that they were in Government, it seems that no survey was carried out.

265 So let me turn the question back at them. Why was not a survey carried out, Madam Speaker, during the time that they were in Government for 16 years? I mean, how can they come to this House and put a question of that nature, Madam Speaker, we are forgetting, of course, the political record in this particular area. The political record is clear; no survey was carried out, apparently, by the then GSD Government in the last 16 years when they were in Government.

I can see that the Hon. Mr Bossino seems to be nervous about standing up and asking a supplementary question, so I will give way.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** The Hon. Minister gets up to say that he can only answer a question during the time that he has been a Minister and now gets up to bravely assert that there has not been a survey done in the 16 years of GSD administration. I mean, he needs to decide what his approach is going to be. I mean, surely he is not making that assertion on the basis of fact, because he added, apparently, in very couched language from time to time.

The reality is that in answer to his first question, to Question 29, he made clear that there was a survey done in 2012 and therefore they knew that there was asbestos there since 2012. So, what my hon. Colleague is asking is the pertinent question, which is why was not a survey done after that? Why have they waited another 14 or 12 years after that?

That is the question. it is not about the red herrings about things that you do not know happened or did not happen in the past.

**Hon. N Feetham:** The Speaker, it is not a red herring. The Leader of the Opposition has stood up. He was in Government.

I cannot remember for how long he was in Government, but certainly he was in Government for eight years, I believe. So, when he was occupying this seat on this side of the House, what did he do about this? He was the Deputy Chief Minister of Gibraltar.

So, how can he ask a question of that nature and chastise the Government in circumstances where he was on this side of the House for eight years as Deputy Chief Minister of Gibraltar and apparently no survey was ever done in New Mole House, Madam Speaker, that is the answer to the question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Is the Minister asserting that there was no survey done? Is he asserting that there was no survey done or is he simply seeking to deflect from the questions that are being asked because all he is saying is, I do not really know what happened in the past, but it is politically convenient for me to stand up and say it might not have happened in the past.

The point is that they knew from 2012 that there was asbestos there. Why did it take another 12 years to do another survey?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, they certainly knew that asbestos was there because everybody in Gibraltar knows that a pre-1945 MOD building contains asbestos. So, he was in Government as Deputy Chief Minister. Clearly, he does not know whether an asbestos report was carried out in New Mole House, Madam Speaker.

So, he seemed to be asking me a question that is premised on what I knew or did not know before I was elected into Government. But he was in Government for eight years and he does not know, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** A different supplementary, we have exhausted this particular question you have had the answer to the same question various times, the same answer.

So, a different question.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that wonderful answer. Now, just before continuing, I just remind the Hon. the Minister, where he was sitting at the time that this party was in Government, on the executive of this party at that exact point in time. But let us move on.

Madam Speaker, if I go on to Question 30. So, I got an answer from the Hon. the Minister, that was specific to asbestos. Now, the question was drafted in a more wide sense.

So, what I was asking was how many technical surveys have been carried out over the past 24 months. But I was asking about the general issues as to New Mole House because I know, and many people know, that New mole House is in disrepair and has been for some time.

Therefore, the question is wider than the answer that the Hon. the Minister, has given. So, I will give the Hon. the Minister, the opportunity to perhaps expand upon the answer. So, the question was, over the course of the past 24 months, how many technical surveys have been carried out on the New Mole House Police Station building.

325 Please provide a detailed breakdown as to the findings of those surveys. it is not specific to asbestos, but the question given was specific to asbestos. Sorry, the answer.

So, I wonder whether the Hon. the Minister, has the wider issues available.

**Hon. N Feetham:** Speaker, I refer the Hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the previous question because the way that the questions have been phrased, if you look at the context of the questions, they are related to asbestos. I gave an answer in relation to asbestos.

The rest of the report, Madam Speaker, the rest of the report relates to things such as whether a first aid equipment is available at the station, whether the corridors are clear of obstacles. it is those sort of findings. I mean, if he wants to table a more specific question, I will provide that.

335 I will provide her with the answer, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, with respect, if the Hon., the Minister, wishes for me to, I can read it again. it is very widely asked. there is no mention of asbestos therein.

340 It is the first time that I have heard in this Parliament that the context of questions is determined by the questions that have been asked previously. Otherwise, all questions that we ask would be premised on the same thing. So, I will ask the question again.

Over the course of the past 24 months, how many technical surveys have been carried out to the New Mole House Police Station building? Please provide a detailed breakdown as to the findings of those surveys. I ask, is it that the Hon. the Minister, does not have the information available or does not want us to know of all the issues that New Mole House Police Station has?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, this is not a question of trying to hide anything, Madam Speaker. The rest of the report, Madam Speaker, relates to things such as, let me see if I can find a summary of it. I have got a summary here, Madam Speaker.

350 The rest of the report relates to things such as housekeeping and storage. The findings are:

The workplace is generally tidy. There are some storage areas where materials and equipment are kept. Some offices are used to store equipment.

355 There are recycling points in the kitchen. Slips, trips and falls.

Access routes were generally clear at all times. Warning signs are used when areas are mopped and could lead to a wet, slippery floor. Some cables can be found along access routes.

Floor in the cells is slippery when wet, causing a hazard to both staff and inmates alike. Welfare facilities and toilets. There are suitable toilet facilities on site.

360 There are numerous hand wash facilities, basins with hot running water and soap dispensers throughout.

First aiders, generally, all officers are trained to a certain degree in first aid. Some do have expired certificates and need retraining.

First aid kits. There are various first aid kits throughout the premises. No burn, nits were identified.

365 That is the sort of findings which is reflected in the report, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, it is twofold. Is that a health and safety report or a technical survey report, which is what I asked for? Because the technical survey report relates to the fabric of the building, which is what I was asking about.

370 The second one is the fact that, is that the only report? Because I asked about all the reports over 24 months. So, if the Hon. Minister has that report here in Parliament today, does that encompass all the issues that have been found by all reports that have been undertaken over the past 24 months?

375 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, when the questions were tabled, we sent the questions to the RGP and we asked them, please provide answers and copies of every report over the last 24 months. I have identified the report and I have identified the information which is made available to me as Minister for Justice, Madam Speaker. So the answer is, these are the only reports that have been available to me.

380 Unless, of course, Madam Speaker, the hon. Member has another report somewhere, then she should just simply say so. If the hon. Member has a report because a report has been available to her, she should tell this House and not go around in circles. But I can confirm that the reports which have been made available to me are those that I refer to in my answers to this House.

385 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I wish I had a report in front of me because I can imagine what it would show. Now, is what the Hon. Minister is saying that there are no other issues identified in other reports? There are no issues in respect of the fabric of the building?

390 There is no other report that actually sets out those issues in respect to the fabric of the building? Because their manifesto commitment was to build a new station on the basis that the station was not adequate. Therefore, there must have been technical assessments carried out to determine that.

So, is it the case, therefore, that there are other reports and the Hon. Minister just simply does not have them here?

395 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I refer to the answer that I provided to the previous question. I have asked the RGP to make available the reports to me and to provide answers to the questions. I have read the answers to the question and I have identified the reports.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member refers to the Government's manifesto commitment. Well, Madam Speaker, their own manifesto commitment in respect of the police station was:

400 Our aspiration [Madam Speaker, they aspire] to relocate the main police station from New Mole House to a purpose-built and more central facility at Rook House.  
This central location will facilitate policing work.

Well, that sounds very good, Madam Speaker, but then he goes on to say:

405 We will action this commitment once the state of public finances improve.

Not only do they say that, Madam Speaker, in other words, we are not giving them a commitment of any sort.

410 We are aspiring to do it, but of course, if we find that the kitty is empty, we are not going to do anything. I mean, a Government that goes to the people of Gibraltar and stands, a Party that stands for election and tells the people of Gibraltar, we have a magnificent manifesto, but by the way, it is only an aspiration because we do not know. We do not know what the state of the public finances are.

415 I mean, that is an absolute joke when it comes to the election. Clearly, that is the reason why, Madam Speaker, we are sitting on this side of the House and they are sitting on the other side of the House. But to make it worse, Madam Speaker, to make it worse, Madam Speaker, the manifesto says, or, in the alternative, in other words, we will wait and see, we will wait and see how much money is in the kitty, or if this can be achieved and built on a cost-neutral basis, in other words, it is not going to cost us anything and paid by any commercial developer on the site, we will do it.

420 The answer and what is stated in the manifesto, Madam Speaker, is precisely the answer that the hon. Member gave in a GBC interview the week before last, where she made it very clear to the interviewer, Ros Astengo, when she was interviewed, that actually they cannot make a commitment with regards to the police station because, I quote:

We do not know what is in the coffers.

430 Madam Speaker, that is the commitment, that is the commitment that the hon. Members are giving in relation to the police station and everything else.

**Madam Speaker:** One more supplementary on 30.

435 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, just to bring it back to 30. I ask, were the questions that were passed on to the RGP premised on the fact, given context by the Hon. Minister or his team, that they related specifically to asbestos? Because if that is the way that the Hon. Minister has approached them, I wonder whether the context that was given to the RGP was that one and therefore that is why we have the very narrow answer that we have.

440 Is that the case? Is that what is happened?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the previous question.

445 **Madam Speaker:** Anything on 31?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we heard that the technical surveys which were conducted following the closure of parts of the building concluded. Can the Hon. Minister say when they concluded?

450 **Hon. N Feetham:** Which survey? The last one?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Yes, is it the 18th of February? Is that the date on which they concluded?

455 **Hon. N Feetham:** Yes, in answer to the question, Madam Speaker, I have said on the 18th of February, 2026, the RGP were verbally informed that the areas currently subject to access restrictions have been assessed and deemed safe for reoccupation. So, I assume, the assumption is that they must have completed the survey and they are in the process of sending the written report to the RGP, which I think is what I have said in answer to the question.

460 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, moving on now to Question 32, yes. As to the areas that were cordoned off, we hear that the file preparation unit was restricted. I do not know whether the Hon. Minister has that information, but I will ask it because I think it is relevant and pertinent. Does it mean that the preparation of files for court have therefore been delayed?

465 **Hon. N Feetham:** I do not have that information, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, moving on to Question 33, we have heard that a number of departments have been relocated to different parts of the station, with some departments themselves actually being split up. Does the Hon. Minister have any information as to the impact that that has had upon the work being carried out? Because if teams have been split up, to my mind perhaps that has impacted the efficiency and the effectiveness, the ability with which these teams have been able to carry out their work.

475 **Hon. N Feetham:** No such report has been made to the Government, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the hon. Member still on 33? Because the Hon. Mr Reyes has a question on 33, if you were about to move on. Yes?

480 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, thank you. In respect of 33, the Minister tried to give an explanation of who had been sent where, but he had mentioned that one of the departments that was affected by the closure was Special Branch, but he's made no mention whether Special Branch has returned to New Mole House or whether it's now permanently housed elsewhere. I will be grateful for clarification.

485 **Hon. N Feetham:** I think in answer to the question, I may have actually said that Special Branch had already moved outside, out of New mole House before the heavy rains. I think that is the position, Madam Speaker. I am happy to verify that, but that is my understanding. They had already moved out before the heavy rains.

490 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is a connection. I mean, members of this House on both sides sometimes may want to seek advice from Special Branch, and therefore it would be helpful if we can at some stage provide us details of their location.

495 **Hon. N Feetham:** I am happy to do that, Madam Speaker. I would rather do that behind the Speaker's chair, because there is sensitivity around the location of Special Branch.

500 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, 34 and 35 are interlinked, so what I am going to do is just take them together. So, we have heard in response to 34 that Government have been assessing, and there are now concept designs for relocation of the station. Madam Speaker, the last time we came to Parliament and I asked this question, we would heard that initially the plans and the designs had been signed off, and that was in the manifesto commitment in 2023 for the Rooke site.

505 Then we came back to Parliament and the answer was, and I believe that was December 2024, if my memory does not fail me, and I believe that at that point the Hon. Minister said that that was no longer going to be the case, that New Mole House was going to be refurbished, despite the manifesto commitment to build on the Rook site, because there were technical issues. Now we come here today and the Hon. Minister says that they are assessing and that they are at the concept design development stage. So, can I ask, first of all, can I ask where it is that this station is supposed to go?

510 What is the site that has been identified? I will have further questions on this now.

515 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Member has referred to the GSLP Liberals manifesto commitment. The commitment was it was envisaged. In answer to the question, Madam Speaker, the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister stood up in this House and explained the planning issues that had arisen, which made the, and the heritage issue in fact, which I understand were fully supported by the hon. Member's opposite, which made it impossible, for the location of the police station to be based where it had originally been identified, Madam Speaker.

Therefore, if she is asking me to restate the answer that we gave to the question that was answered in this House, I would refer her to Hansard in that regard.

520 With respect to recent discussions, Madam Speaker, I can confirm to this House that the Government, as I have actually said in answer to the last question, I believe it is, or the one before that, that the Government is engaged in discussions with a third party with regards to the potential for relocating the police station in that area. There is sensitivity at the moment with regards to the location, because negotiations are taking place and they are being led by the Hon. Chief Minister, Madam Speaker.

525 So I am not in a position to give the hon. Member more information, but I am sure, but I am sure that it will become more apparent as those discussions advance. Let me also say, Madam Speaker, that the Commissioner of Police has been fully briefed, Madam Speaker, so the Commissioner of Police is fully engaged in those conversations. Finally, Madam Speaker, I wish to

530 once again, and I have said it for the benefit of Hansard, we are grateful to the Commissioner of Police for the way in which he handled the recent incident at New Mole House.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the various U-turns are concerning, because first they promise a new station, and it does specifically state in the manifesto that the plans had been signed off. Whether it was envisaged at the Rooke site or not, the plans had been signed off. So that is number one.

535 Then we come back and the Hon. Minister tells this Parliament that now there is going to be refurbishment of the station. That was 14 months on, and there is been no efforts to refurbish the station. So now we are here again, and now the Hon. Minister is talking about the potential for a new station, but almost in the same breath, because at the next question he goes on to qualify it with if there is a need to refurbish the station.

540 So which is it, Madam Speaker? Why the to and fro, the constant to and fro? Can this Government tell the public why it is that it is to and froing on whether we are going to get a new police station or not?

545 Because there is a need for one. So why the to and fro? Is there money or not?  
What is the reason behind this?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, they ask the question, is there money in the kitty? Well, let me say, Madam Speaker, that we were here during the Budget session and we recorded the highest levels of tax revenues in the history of Gibraltar, Madam Speaker, and the Hon. Members opposite congratulated the Government, , but they used the word exceptional, sarcastically by saying this is a one-off and it will never be repeated, Madam Speaker. I stood up here saying, well, we will see. we will see what happens in the next financial year, Madam Speaker.

550 I am happy to report actually that as of yesterday, Madam Speaker, we are very near to actually exceeding the record that we had in the previous Financial Year when it comes to tax revenues. That is the difference, Madam Speaker, between members on this side of the House and members on that side of the House. They go to an election and say, we do not know whether there is going to be money in the kitty.

560 We go to an election and we say we will work, we will work. We have a programme, we have a plan and we will implement it. That is precisely what we have done when it comes to the public finances and tax revenues in Gibraltar because we secured the financial stability of Gibraltar, Madam Speaker, in the last 18 months to two years, notwithstanding the challenges that we will face at the end of this calendar year, potentially as a result of the changes that Her Majesty's Government in the UK are implementing with regards to gambling duty. But then the Hon. Merchandises of the Government by saying, which one is it?

565 Well, Madam Speaker, which one is it? we have got to obviously pursue both lines of enquiry. If our negotiations, but Madam Speaker, all the hon. Member says from a sedentary position, it has been years, it has been years. Madam Speaker, we have engaged in conversations with a third party that has identified a suitable location subject to being able to secure that land that will meet the needs of the police station and the RGP deservedly as it is for the next 30 years, Madam Speaker. Of course, I have got to refer the hon. Member, Madam Speaker, to her GBC interview again, because when pressed by Ros Astengo as to what their own plans would be, Madam Speaker, she says, so obviously we come at this from a different angle.

570 The reason is that simply we are not in Government. We do not know what is in the coffers again, what is in the coffers. They plan, Madam Speaker, they plan to go into an election whenever that election is called, whether it is 18 months or two years, and presumably they will be saying the same thing to the people of Gibraltar, Madam Speaker.

575 Then she says in answer to a different question, she says, and again, we are not in Government right now, so I cannot answer the question. that is, that is what we are getting from the, from the hon. Member's opposite, Madam Speaker. They have no plan, no vision for Gibraltar, whether it is to do with the police station or anything else.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, one final question, and then I will give way, I believe the Leader of the Opposition would like to also ask a question, but one final question. Given that we have heard about this record revenue, is any of that money going to be spent on building a new police station, or is it going to go on vanity projects? That is the question here.

**Hon. N Feetham:** How can I, how does the hon. Member expect me to repeat the answer to the question? If we are looking at relocating the police station to a site that the Government has identified, which the Government is in the process of negotiating with a third party, the release of that property, the answer to the question must be, of course, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, why is the hon. Member so obsessed about our manifesto? I mean, this seems to me, when I was hearing him, another deflection tactic. He has read the manifesto commitment in full.

He has then read my Hon. colleague's answer in some kind of interview. Why is not he more worried about his? I mean, he says, he stands up in this House and says, our commitment, which was to build, by the way, a police station, to provide a police station.

The GSLP Liberal commitment was to provide a police station. He says, it is only envisaged. A vision is the same as an aspiration, presumably, on the one hand, or it is a commitment.

But the reality is that they went to an election with a clear commitment to the police, that there would be a provision of a police station. Now, is it the fact that he is now abandoning that commitment? Is it the fact that the Government are abandoning that commitment?

Is it the fact that all he is doing today is deflecting by reading our manifesto, because, in fact, the Government intends to abandon that commitment?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Absolutely not, Madam Speaker. Absolutely not. And, in fact, of course I have got to refer to the manifesto commitments.

I have to, Madam Speaker, because when we say in our manifesto, we envisage, the envisaging is the location of the police station. We envisage that both will be in the Rooke. In other words, both being the Royal Gibraltar Police Station and the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Services Station.

So the envisaging is not whether we will go ahead with our manifesto commitment. It is the location of the station, whereas theirs, Madam Speaker, theirs, their aspiration for a police station is heavily caveated once the state of public finances improve. So, clearly, Madam Speaker, given that every time the Hon. members stand up, and they undermine the public finances of Gibraltar, you have to assume that if they were ever elected into Government, they will be spending four years of investigations and what not, in order to be able to then turn around to the people of Gibraltar and tell them, actually, what we said in the manifesto is not worth the paper it is written on, because the state of public finances are so bad in Gibraltar.

Well, clearly, they cannot be that bad, Madam Speaker, when we have actually been able to stabilise the public revenues of Gibraltar the way that we have done it over the last two years, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can I just ask on this?

**Madam Speaker:** Very final because we are spending too long and going round with the same questions, same answers.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I understand, Madam Speaker, but the Hon. Minister, with all due respect, provokes, because does he not understand the process of accountability? We have been elected

635 as the Opposition. We get to hold them to account on the promises they made to the people of Gibraltar.

They do not get to get up to say, oh, by the way, if you were in Government, then you did not have such a clear commitment, because if he wants to swap roles, we can cross floors, you know? If he wants to come here and ask us questions as to our manifesto commitment, then we can be the Government, but we are not the Government today. We hope to be the Government in the future.

640 When he says, in answer to this question, in his original answer, that in the event of a police station being built, he said a number of things, why did he use the words, in the event? Is he qualifying or in any way signalling that they do not intend to provide a police station during this term of office, in other words, that they have abandoned it?

645 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, we absolutely have not abandoned the commitment. How do I say, and in what words do I say it, so that, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, understands that this is a manifesto commitment, that we are in the process of discharging? Of course, when he says, we are not in Government, we are in Opposition, you should not remind the people of Gibraltar what we promised them in the manifesto.

650 Of course, you should remind the people of Gibraltar what they promised the people in the last election, because it is not worth the papers written on, and therefore a judgement call, a judgement call needs to be made, Madam Speaker. A judgement call needs to be made. People need to compare.

655 People need to compare. What we are doing, and what we have done over the last two years, with what they said they would be doing if they had been elected, and they clearly said in the manifesto, they would not be doing anything. They would not be doing anything.

It will all be subject to investigations, and whether or not there is money in the kitty.

660

#### INWARD INVESTMENT AND THE GIBRALTAR SAVINGS BANK

##### Q36/2026

Public debt –

Total gross debt, aggregate debt

##### Q37/2026

General Sinking fund –

Balance

##### Q38/2026

Gibraltar Savings Bank / Government or Gibraltar Development Corporation-owned companies –

Financial guarantees to third parties

665

**Clerk:** Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank. Question 36, the Hon. R M Clinton.

670 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Can the Government please provide the total Gross Debt, Aggregate Debt after application of the sinking fund to Gross Debt, Cash Reserves and Net Debt figures for Public Debt for the following dates?

1 November 2025

1 December 2025

675

1 January 2026

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

**Minister for Inward Investment and the Savings Bank (Hon. Sir J J Bossano):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 37 and 38.

680

**Clerk:** Question 37, the Hon. R M Clinton.

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Can the Government advise the balance on the General Sinking fund on the following dates?

685

1 November 2025

1 December 2025

690

1 January 2026

**Clerk:** Question 38, the Hon. R M Clinton.

695

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Can the Government advise if the Gibraltar Savings Bank or any of its subsidiaries or any Government or Gibraltar Development Corporation Owned Companies have given any financial guarantees to third parties and if so to whom, in what amount and why?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

**Minister for Inward Investment and the Savings Bank (Hon. Sir J J Bossano):** Madam Speaker, the Gross Public Debt for the month requested was the same as previously stated. The figures of the Aggregate Debt, Cash Reserves and Net Debt for November, December and January were as follows. Aggregate debt 845.3 million, 845.1 million and 845. The Cash Reserves were: 144.3; 121.4; and 109.1 and the Net Debt: 701; 723.7; and 735.9. The balance in the general sinking fund as of the following days stood as follows. In November 25.9 million, in December 26.1 and in January 26.2. As regards the question on guarantees, no such guarantees have been given.

700

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

## EDUCATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

705

**Q82/2026**

**St. Martin's School –**

**Investigation in respect of a senior teacher**

**Clerk:** Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change. Question 82, the Hon. A. Sanchez.

710

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Can the Government confirm whether the investigation(s) being carried out by the Department of Education and/or any other relevant authority in respect of a senior teacher

at St Martin's School have concluded; and, if so, whether the investigation report has been finalised and the date on which it was finalised?

715 **Clerk:** Answer the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the Government will not comment on individual cases.

720 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I understand that the Government will not comment on individual cases but I am not exactly asking the hon. Member to comment on the individual case but rather whether the overall investigation has been finalised and whether a report has been concluded and not to go into commenting on individual case or identifying any personal data.

725 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, whether or not the investigation has been concluded, at what stage that might be, could have implications It is a delicate matter concerning a person who could be identified if I went any further. I would be very happy to discuss the matter behind the Speaker's chair and if the hon. Member then feels that she needs to ask this question again at the next session then clearly I will consider what the answer might be.

But I think at this point in time, I cannot comment any further.

730 **Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q83/2026  
Grand Parade –  
Resurfacing**

735 **Clerk:** Question 83, the Hon G Origo

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm when the resurfacing of Grand Parade is going to take place?

740 **Clerk:** Answer the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the northern section of Grand Parade was resurfaced in February last year, 2025, just about a year ago. Resurfacing of the southern half will be carried out on completion of the cable car project.

745 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister whether, in respect to the cable car project, does the Government envisage the construction of this new cable car as impacting the timetabling he's just proposed for the resurfacing works? He is saying that they will construct and resurface the northern side once the project, I think, is concluded, he said. But I also note that there is a demarcated segregation for the development works to take place for the cable car.

Is he saying that none of the resurfacing in the southern part is going to be able to be carried out until we finish the cable car project?

750

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, it wouldn't make sense with the work that is going on in the area to resurface it now and then have to resurface it again later. Clearly, any disruption to the surface in the area that has been boarded off to aid the development would have to be made good by the developer, at the expense of the developer and not at the Government's

755 expense. But it would not make sense with the movement of vehicles and so on, heavy vehicles  
and so on, in the area to resurface now, and it is better to leave that section until that work is  
complete.

760 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask whether the Hon. Minister is happy with the situation  
that he has just described, and I put it in this context. I note that what would be the eastern side  
of the Grand Parade car park appears to be in quite a sorry, dilapidated state. I had to use the  
parking facilities the other day and noted that there are lots of potholes, which provide dangers  
to persons on bicycles, motorbikes and cars.

765 This is, after all, the entrance to the Alameda Gardens, and what sort of impact does that have  
on the tourist experience? It is a very important tourist site, it is even featured in this year's  
cavalcade as the Enchanted Gardens, which the Minister must be very proud of having featured it  
as his own, I think, baby, he has called it in the past. So is he happy that this is a position with  
respect to the Grand Parade and the situation that he says is going to remain in place for the next  
two years until they finish the cable car?

770 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Member, knowing my love for the Botanic  
Gardens, is verging on the point of emotional blackmail. I say that obviously in a humorous  
manner, not by way of criticism in any way. Madam Speaker, there are potholes and these  
potholes will be addressed.

775 What I am talking about is the whole resurfacing. Madam Speaker will be aware, and Hon.  
Members will be aware, that a lot of potholes have worsened or developed during the  
extraordinarily heavy rains. That is all being tackled.

780 It cannot all be done at the same time, but the potholes will be tackled. What we will not do is  
a major resurfacing because there is a lot of activity in the area and it would not make sense  
operationally or financially to then have to resurface it again when those works are over.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

785

**Q84/2026**  
**Electric scooters –**  
**Collection of abandoned units**

**Clerk:** Question 84, the Hon. G. Origo.

790 **Hon. G Origo:** What arrangements have been agreed with and how is the Government ensuring  
that the private entity providing rental electric-scooters to the public is collecting abandoned units  
left around Gibraltar in a timely fashion?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam  
Speaker, the Government confirms that the rental e-scooter service is operated by a private  
entity, Hoppy, and not by the Government. The service forms part, nevertheless, of the  
Government's wider sustainability strategy and has delivered measurable benefits, including  
saving over 10,000 kilogrammes of carbon emissions, enabling more than 100,000 kilometres of  
journeys, and being used by over 12,000 unique local and visiting users. As part of this  
engagement, Hoppy corresponds regularly with the Ministry providing usage and performance  
data.

795 Hoppy's technology requires users to start and end journeys at designated locations. Where  
scooters are not parked correctly, the system identifies the breach and a financial penalty is  
applied to the user via the app. While isolated instances of misuse occur, abandoned units are  
identified through the platform and retrieved by the operator in a timely manner, with liaison  
maintained with the Royal Gibraltar Police as necessary.

800

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Minister, I think in his answers, described that the  
private entity does impose a financial penalty on those users who do not park the scooters in the  
designated bays which are located in public spaces. Is the Hon. Minister satisfied that these  
financial penalties are effective in policing what seems to be a circumstance where persons are  
805 abandoning the scooters in what frequently appears to be public spaces, pavements, and places  
where it affects persons, pedestrians, the elderly, people with prams? Are you happy that these  
financial penalties are doing enough to curtail this issue?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I am not happy that these items are abandoned on  
810 pavements. As I have said before, the company, Hoppy, has a system in which they go around and  
collect them. I believe they do that daily and it is in their interest to do so.

The financial penalty is imposed by the company and it is a contractual arrangement the  
moment you register for the app. It is obviously charged to the card that is registered with the  
app. So really I am straying into what is a matter for a private business.

815 From my point of view, clearly I am not happy that in some cases these scooters are left in  
places where they should not be. Certainly when they are, and I know of no occasion, but I know  
that if a scooter was in the wrong place for a long time, certainly my team would take it up, report  
it and so on. But really the operation is run by Hoppy and I think frankly that on the whole they do  
quite a good job.

820 As I say, we are saving on carbon emissions and obviously it is replacing the alternative which  
would unfortunately not likely be bicycles, likely be motorcycles or cars.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Minister has advised that the company who has  
entered into a contractual obligation, I presume with the Government also, because it is a  
825 Government that provided these public spaces which it has segregated specifically for the parking  
of these scooters, that they are to be collected in a timely manner. But what does he mean by  
timely manner? As I have seen instances where scooters have been left for days in certain  
locations.

If it is the case that this private company has entered into an arrangement with the  
830 Government where it has provided assurances that it will daily collect these abandoned scooters,  
has the Government in any of the months that this company has been operating raised any  
complaints or concerns with the entity because it is not complying with these assurances?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** No, as far as I know, I have not received, and I do not think my team has  
835 received any complaints of this nature. I will ask them, but my last meeting with the directors of  
Hoppy, which was a few months ago, they went through their scheme and they assured us that it  
is in their interest that these vehicles be picked up regularly and that they do. But if the hon.  
Member or anyone else is aware of particular areas or particular instances, then obviously we will  
take it up with them.

840

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q85/2026**  
**Pay and Display machines –**  
**Dysfunctional units**

845

**Clerk:** Question 85, the Hon. G. Origo.

850

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm whether all pay and display machines in Gibraltar are working, and for those which are not working, can they confirm how long they have been inoperable for from 2025 to date?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the information requested is in the schedule that I now hand over.

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 85**

The following areas currently have no machine in operation but are covered with payments via the QR code or telephone:

1. Line Wall Road
2. Bishop Canilla
3. South Pavillion

The following areas have generated cash income each month but suffered some downtime throughout the year in the months detailed below:

- Ragged Staff                      Jan & Feb 25
- Airport                              Dec 25
- Small Boats Marina              May & Jun 25
- Watergardens                      Dec 25
- Waterport                          Sep 25
- Rosia Road                         Jan, Feb & Sep 25
- Atlantic Suites                     Apr & Jul 25
- Harbour Views Road              Apr 25

The ongoing plan is as these machines come to the end of life they will not be replaced and payment QR code.

855

**Madam Speaker:** All right, shall we move on to the next question and then come back to the schedule?

**Q86/2026**  
**Public Highway–**  
**Number of vehicles removed in 2025**

860 **Clerk:** Question 86, the Hon. G. Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm the number of vehicles removed from the public highway for having remained in place for 28 days or more in 2025 to date, broken down by month?

865 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, once again, I provide the information in the schedule.

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 86**

Month Commencing	Number of Vehicles Towed
January 2025	3
February 2025	9
March 2025	12
April 2025	10
May 2025	13
June 2025	12
July 2025	6
August 2025	3
September 2025	4
October 2025	7
November 2025	10
December 2025	36
January 2026	43
February 2026	2

870 **Madam Speaker:** All right, we will come back to this question later as well.

**Q87/2026**  
**Schools–**  
**Suspensions**

**Clerk:** Question 87, the Hon. E J Reyes.

875

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details in respect of the number of pupils, together with generic reasons, who have been suspended from school since September 2025, indicating the school sector where the pupil is/was enrolled and duration of suspension?

880 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, yes, no schedule this time. Twenty-six pupils have been suspended since September 2025. All are from the secondary sector.

Durations range from one full day to two weeks. 16 pupils, one full day; 4 pupils, two days; 2 pupils, four days; 4 pupils, one day.

885 The majority of exclusions were for: Fighting or aggression between pupils; disrespectful behaviour towards members of staff; Swearing; lying; being non-compliant; being disruptive; and bringing vapes into school or vaping in school.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am trying to make a comparison. The last time the Minister answered, he identified there were 21 pupils all from the secondary sector, but 21  
890 pupils were involved in 30 cases.

This time the Minister said there are 26 pupils, but it could be that some pupils are repeat offenders, shall we call it that. Does he have a statistic of the number of cases or were there 26 completely different pupils?

895 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I cannot confirm that, but I think we are talking about 26 different cases on this occasion, but I will confirm that.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. He has given us an indication of the length of time of suspension and so on. Have any of these resulted in a permanent expulsion of the people  
900 concerned from education?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** No, Madam Speaker. I think I would know if it had happened. I have no knowledge of that.

905 As the answer says, it is from one full day to two weeks. I would have said, subject to confirmation, that I am virtually certain there has been no expulsion.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question. Sorry, the Hon. Mrs Ladislaus.

910 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I do not think it has been asked, but can I just ask whether any of those pupils were suspended in respect of bullying behaviour?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, we would have to subdivide fighting aggression between pupils as bullying. I suspect that bullying could feature under those definitions. I cannot confirm it because I have not had a further breakdown.

915 I was asked for generic reasons and therefore I have given a generic answer. If the hon. Member is interested in the specific details as to whether bullying has been a cause, I will look into it and I will give the hon. Member a reply.

920 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q88/2026**  
**Vocational courses –**  
**Details**

925 **Clerk:** Question 88, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details in respect of all Vocational Courses currently being undertaken by pupils, with details of location where these courses are delivered, indicating

estimated costs, completion dates of said courses and qualifications expected to be obtained upon completion?

930

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, I hand over a schedule with the information.

[SCHEDULE WEB LINK](#)

935

**Madam Speaker:** This is a lengthy schedule so we will come back to that. We will move on to the next question.

**89/2026**  
**BTEC Courses –**  
**Breakdown of number of enrolled students**

940

**Clerk:** Question 89, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide a breakdown with details of the number of pupils enrolled in respect of all BTEC Courses currently being undertaken by pupils as provided in answer to Question Number 760 of 2025?

945

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the young member of your staff is certainly going to get her steps in today because I have the information requested in another schedule which I will now hand over.

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 89**

BTEC Course	Number of Yr 10 pupils enrolled on this course at Bayside School	Number of Yr 11 pupils enrolled on this course at Bayside School	Total number of pupils enrolled on this course at Bayside School	Number of Yr 10 pupils enrolled on this course at Westside School	Number of Yr 11 pupils enrolled on this course at Westside School	Total number of pupils enrolled on this course at Westside School	Total number of pupils enrolled on this course
BTEC Tech Award in Digital Information Technology	9	12	21	10	30	40	61

BTEC Course	Number of Level 2 pupils enrolled on this course at The Gibraltar College
BTEC Certificate in ESports	2
BTEC Tech Award in Travel & Tourism	23

BTEC Course	Number of Yr 12 pupils enrolled on this course at The Gibraltar College	Number of Yr 13 pupils enrolled on this course at The Gibraltar College	Total number of pupils enrolled on this course at The Gibraltar College
BTEC International Level 3 Travel and Tourism	36	30	66
BTEC National Extended Certificate in Performance (Acting)	5	1	6
BTEC National Extended Certificate in Music Performance	9	5	14

950

**Madam Speaker:** All right, so we will carry on and then come back to this other schedule.

955

**90-2/2026  
Scholarships –  
Number given up; Debt**

**Clerk:** Question 90, the Hon. E J Reyes.

960 **Hon. E J Reyes:** What is the total number of students who have given up their scholarship awarded for the academic year 2025/2026?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, yes, I will answer this question together with Questions 91 and 92.

965 **Clerk:** Question 91, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** How many students who were beneficiaries of Scholarships are still debtors to date, or must plan and commit to pay back Government the Educational grants given to them due to not successfully completing the course for which they were funded?

970

**Clerk:** Question 92, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** What is the current total debt owed to Government by students, and/or their guarantors, due to not successfully completing the courses for which they were funded?

975

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 90, there are 12 students who have given up their scholarship awards this academic year. Question 91, as at 31st of January this year, there are 295 debtors. In answer to Question 92, as at 31st January this year, the total is £2,357,897.30.

980

**Hon E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, if I can take the 92 first, that figure seems to be increasing rather than decreasing from previous answers. I know the Minister has just said he has got to add another 12 students that have left from this year. But does he have some sort of explanation of why the figures of debts are increasing rather than decreasing?

985

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Well, Madam Speaker, you have to look at each case individually. This is the sum total of all the individual cases. No two cases will be the same.

990

In general, students or their guarantors enter into a repayment scheme and pay a certain amount per month. So it really depends on all the individual cases. Obviously it also depends on how many students give up every year. If more students give up one year, that will be quite a big chunk of additional debt, which may or may not be caught up by all the individual repayment plans. So it is very difficult to compare without looking case by case into each individual set of circumstances.

995

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, as the Minister has explained now, they have to enter into like a repayment agreement and so on. I wonder if the Minister has any details, are those commitments of repayment being successfully met or are alternatives, perhaps even court action being taken in order to recoup? Because in the past the Minister said that one or two cases were failing to fulfil their commitment of repayments. I wonder even if prosecution has had to take place.

1000

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, there is recourse for other action. Sometimes other things are not provided to students or guarantors while there is a debt ongoing if they are not being met. But I would need notice of that question and then I could provide a whole list, obviously without names, of how many may be going into different processes as a result of nonpayment.

But I would need notice of that question and I would be very happy to answer it.

1005

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I understand that in order to give a correct answer, I will pose it as a question in the future. I say it now so that the Minister can make all his staff aware that I will be asking without identification of name, but case number 1, 2, 3 and so on. So that we have the correct statistics and see exactly, you know, how big individual debts are.

1010

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I take note of that.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q93-4/2026

Schools

**Outdoor shading; Air conditioning/ventilation**

1015

**Clerk:** Question 93, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Is Government still on target to meet its commitment to provide outdoor shading in all schools by June 2026?

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 94.

**Clerk:** Question 94, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1025

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Given the new Academic Calendars, how will schools without adequate air conditioning or ventilation safely operate full-day schedules during periods of high temperatures?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

1030

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 93 on the shading, the answer is yes, Ma'am.

As a preamble almost to Question 94's answer, I will say that the air conditioning is happening and would have happened regardless of any change in the school calendar. It is relevant, but it does not depend on that.

So, air conditioning will be provided in all schools currently without, with the exception of the College where attendance is greatly reduced in the examination term and alternative provision will be made as necessary with the use of rooms in the adjacent John Mackintosh Hall. Again, just to add that because the college will be moving by, we predict by next summer, that we only have to deal with it this year and we have made alternative provision so that we do not have to spend money unnecessarily. I am almost pre-empting a supplementary with apologies to you, Madam Speaker.

1035

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, thank you Madam Speaker. I am also conscious I do not want to pre-empt what is coming up in two or three questions time, but other than the College, there are schools that the Minister has announced in the past are due to undergo major refurbishments, both St. Joseph's, lower and upper primary. My understanding is they do not have air conditioning at the moment, and it might not be financially wise to put those into place now.

1040

So, what will happen in respect of a school like that one?

1045

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** No, Madam Speaker, the schools without air conditioning in the whole of the buildings other than the College, as I just referred to earlier, are St. Paul's and that is ongoing, St. Bernard's and that is ongoing, St. Joseph's, we provided air conditioning, I believe, to all of the older part of the building and obviously the new build, about which there is a question shortly, will have its own air conditioning. So, I think we are covered.

1050

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

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the Hon. the Minister, in one of his responses to my hon.

1055

Friend, mentioned that the new college is expected to be completed by summer 2027, in effect. Is he committing himself to that timeline?

1060 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I do not know whether that is a logical, I am not going to say acceptable otherwise, because that is for you, Madam Speaker, but a consequential supplementary when we are talking about air conditioning. I am very happy to answer it, but I do not think it is a question that he should have asked.

**Madam Speaker:** For the avoidance of doubt, I am allowing the question because the Hon. Minister referred to the college specifically, so it flows from that.

1065 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I will very gladly answer it. Madam Speaker, sorry, I keep on doing that. We all know what construction is and we all know that they suffer delays.

I think I have quite a good record of delivering schools within a fortnight of when we intend to. So, given my past record in delivering, I think, ten schools for now, you know, I think I can commit to that, yes, Madam Speaker.

1070

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q95-6 & 101/2026**  
**Academic calendar Year –**  
**Formal consultations; Publication; Terms and conditions of teachers**

1075

**Clerk:** Question 95, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** With whom or what bodies were formal consultations made before the publication of the new Academic Calendars for 2025/26 and 2026/27?

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 96 and 101.

**Clerk:** Question 96, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1085

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Why was NASUWT Gibraltar not consulted before its publication in respect of the new Academic Calendars for 2025/26 and 2026/27?

**Clerk:** Question 101, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1090

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** What specifically and in detail are the issues that Government raised with NASUWT earlier this month affecting the terms and conditions of teachers and which are the subject of negotiations?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

1095

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the revised academic calendars for 2025-26 and 2026-27 have not been published and therefore the Questions 95 and 96 are non-sequitur. With regards to Question 101, the discussions have solely been on the replacement of the school summer hours.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, I know that a calendar does exist. If it has not been published, maybe what the Minister is alluding to is that it is at the moment sort of like a draft stage or

1100 whatever. But that does not answer Question 26, which is why was NASUWT Gibraltar not consulted?

My understanding is that this calendar has sort of been presented and so this is what it is. It affects the tail end of this year and the one starting in September 2026. So, can the Minister enlighten us a bit more on what stage are we at in this calendar?

1105 Because there is a lot of talk certainly coming out from teachers saying, you know, the end of term dates may now be different to what was published in September and certainly people need to plan ahead for September 2026.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I do not know what the hon. Member's source of information is, but the question very clearly said why, we are talking about Question 95 as well, with whom were formal consultations made before publication of the calendars and why was the Teachers' Union not consulted before its publication? There has been no publication. There are documents that are being discussed.

1110 They are being consulted. When you start a negotiation or a discussion, you present your proposal and then you discuss it and that is what happened. The proposal has been presented both through the school heads and to the three Unions and we are in the process of discussion.

So, there is no question of no consultation before publication. It has not been formally published. It is a document that is under discussion and people will have copies of it because we are discussing it.

1115 So, as I say, the answers do not, the questions cannot be answered because they do not follow.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, I understand Madam Speaker. So what the Minister said is, he is correcting me, it has not been published. He has, I think, asserted that it is like in a consultation stage and he's mentioned that headteachers and the teachers' representative body are involved.

1120 Is there any consultation process also happening with parents or parents' representative bodies?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the consultation has been through the department and the headteachers on the same day as or within 24 hours of NASUWT, Unite and GGCA because they do not have teachers or SNLSAs but they have staff in the schools. There are different ways in which this would affect them. So then there has been consultation, yes, with parents.

1130 There was a public consultation last year where we put out to the public and we received responses. I do not know whether that has been asked here. There was an overwhelming support from members of the community for a change but clearly that is just from one sector.

1135 We are now engaged with the sectors that represent the staff and I have had some discussions with students but I will also be more formally discussing it with the head students of the secondary schools just to get their own feedback. So that is where we are. As I said, there has been no publication there is been talk and people will have shared it and so on and it is clear because we have made it clear that the proposal is that the term would end on or about the 30th of June as full winter hours, so to speak, rather than summer hours and we are in that process now.

1140 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, to end off, I am grateful for the Minister shedding light on the proper things that happens. I obviously do not think he has it with him. If he does have, then I would be grateful.

1145 But the results from the public consultation and so on, if he does not have it with him, would the Minister be able to, if I wrote to him, be able to give me the feedback so that one can see the level of support? Like everything else that happens in any area, not only education, different circumstances affecting different families will provide different feedbacks. It would help this side of the House to know how the parental sides happen because they are a key factor in this.

1150 At the end of the day, teachers, and I have been a member of staff so has my colleague on that side, you are employed to do a job and you are paid for it, whereas parents could even have huge

financial implications on them. So would the Minister behind the Speaker's Chair be able to share that information with me, unless he has it now and then it even goes on the record?

1155 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** The hon. Member knows the answer to this question. Of course I will share the information with him, as I always do. It would be helpful if he wrote to me as a reminder, but of course I will share that information.

1160 It may be in the public domain, but if it is not, I will share and I have no problem with that. I think I should reassure the hon. Member that additionally we are in discussions both with the GSLA and with PossAbilities, who provide support for families and look after children over the summer period to see whether they could support us if the school holiday period is extended by a couple of weeks and the response so far has been very positive. Obviously it all has to come together.

1165 **Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Leader of the Opposition had a question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, on 101, if I may. The Hon. Minister says that the only thing that was being discussed is the replacement of school summer hours and there has been an overlap with some of the supplementaries he has just answered to my hon. Colleague. Can I ask him two things, if I may?

1170 Just roll them up quickly so that he has them. First of all, what are the options that are being canvassed? Secondly, is it going to affect all schools?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, Madam Speaker. I am not saying that there are no other discussions going on within ASUWT. I am referring to terms and conditions.

1175 There are regular discussions on all sorts of things, developing policies, issues in relation to their individual members where they come and they present the cases, as obviously is their responsibility to do with certainly our full support. There is a social partnership forum which is a forum which was created some years ago which involves industrial relations, Department of Education, the DPD, the Unions. I am sure I am forgetting somebody.

1180 So there are issues being discussed but I specifically have replied to the question on terms and conditions which is why I say it is the summer hours. This would affect all schools. There has been a lot of working out done and comparison by the team in the Department of Education with other countries, other hot countries around the Mediterranean, Australia and so on, some of which have longer breaks, some of which have shorter breaks.

1185 In the end, what has happened is that the recommendations presented have no impact on teaching or learning hours. In other words, the number of hours in teaching and learning remain practically the same. There is also the same number of days for CPD and I think the total number of days is reduced from about 192 to 177 and I am working from memory, Madam Speaker.

1190 So I can offer the Hon. Leader of the Opposition the details behind the Speaker's Chair and I am happy to write to him with more details. So it has been worked out so that there is the same number of hours in teaching and learning. One argument that has been placed and has been considered is that during the school summer hours the amount of learning actually reduces.

1195 Attendance clearly does drop and certain activities take the place of proper teaching and learning. This is an allegation. I am not saying that that is my view but it is a consideration and that there would be more effective and real learning in a shorter term than in lengthening the term with fewer hours per day.

1200 Private schools in Gibraltar have that formula and it seems to work very well with them and the other consideration is that the Summer and Easter break would be longer so that would have more days of rest and recuperation for Students and for Teachers and Learning Support Assistants and other staff that directly works to an academic calendar. There are points that have been raised against this. There is one view, for example, that the summer hours in September should be kept

and we are looking at this because that allows an easier transition back into the term after the long summer break so that is one consideration.

1205 There have been other requests from the Teachers' Union in response to our initial presentation guaranteeing certain days would be that we would stop the winter term on a particular date so we are looking at the detail in response to the Teachers' Union and obviously there are considerations from families who may feel that this would add more pressure but on the other hand there are other considerations that other families that feel that this would actually make a lot of sense for them like in everything else when you are taking a decision you have to  
1210 balance all these things although when I work in education I usually ask myself what is better for the children and the learning opportunities and that is what I usually go with but we will see what the outcome of the negotiations is. I think I have provided quite an extensive answer because this is something I am totally transparent on.

1215 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker of course I understand that the hon. Member may be speaking to teachers about other things but I wanted to get to grips of what was the issue that had caused the exchange of press releases because NASUWT issued a rather cryptic press release without really explaining what it was. The hon. Member has made clear that this was about the replacement of summer hours and I get the explanation he has given would I be right in saying  
1220 because he's given quite a long explanation about the process that really this is about the summer terms finishing earlier perhaps the September date starting later loosely speaking it would affect, as I understand from his explanation all schools but am I also right to say that these are just at the moment recommendations where there is an open mind and that no firm decisions have been taken and if all of that is right so far presumably there must be some kind of deadline by which a  
1225 decision needs to be taken because of the knock-on effects it has on families, on organisational things, on logistics and other support issues that may arise he has given the example of possibilities and so on and so forth so presumably there needs to be quite a lot of people who need to know at a certain time when the terms will end or start so that things can happen not  
1230 least families because if they know they are on holiday with their children longer maybe they want to take holiday later so things like that which are real logistical issues. So, is there a deadline by which they would be working so that to take a concluded decision for the September 26 entry and it may be that they want to keep it alive for next year but presumably there is a cut-off by which if you have not reached some kind of agreement by X date it will not be happening in September.

1235 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, there is another consideration the Easter break would be two full weeks that is the other proposal. Madam Speaker, at the moment there is no intention to start the term 1 the September term any later and because that is been calculated into the number of days and so at the moment the draft unpublished calendars for next academic year 26/27 have a 1st September start date on full days or winter hours it is not winter but I think  
1240 the Hon. member knows exactly what I mean. So, I would say yes, absolutely people need clarity the only envisaged change this academic year would be school ending on the 30th of June if the consultation says that that is what should happen and I would think that we would need to know to be fair by the time of the Easter break, so in a few weeks' time. The Unions need to have time to get back to us the staff through their own mechanisms also need time to get back to us and  
1245 then we will collate it all and hopefully come to a decision if there is no change, there is no change if it is a change there is always going to be a period of settling down and remember that until a few years ago we did not have a February midterm and we do now and people will get into the rhythm of it but we will see. I think realistically by the time that this term ends and certainly by the time that the next term starts we should have an answer one way or the other and it is only  
1250 fair to families and to staff as well as to the students.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q97/2026**  
**Requisitions –**  
**Breakdown of requisition in schools**

1255 **Clerk:** Question 97 the Hon E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** In respect of works requisitions raised for all Government Schools (inclusive of College of Further Education and St Martin's School) between 1st April 2025 to date, can Government provide a breakdown by school showing:

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(a) The number of requisitions raised and the date which each requisition was submitted;

(b) Number of works requested already completed;

1265

(c) Number of still outstanding/pending requests for works;

(d) Completion dates for all those works now finalised.

1270

**Q98/2026**  
**Tender St Joesphs school –**  
**target completion date**

**Clerk:** Question 98, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1275 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide updated details of the Tender awarded and time scale for completion of the works it intends to carry out at St Joseph's Lower and Upper Primary Schools?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the tender process for works at St Joseph's, Lower and Upper Primary Schools, at the time of drafting this question, Madam Speaker, was still ongoing, and the answer said that it is expected to be completed shortly. In fact, tenders were in on the 23rd, which I think was Monday, and they are now being assessed. it is therefore not currently possible to provide further details. The target completion date remains August 2027.

1280

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I did throw in this question because in previous answers a few months ago, the Minister had explained how preparatory works were being undertaken and tenders were being issued. So, you know, he says construction is construction, I tend to agree, but it is normally correct within a fortnight or whatever, so hopefully within a fortnight.

1285

Can I ask, Madam Speaker, because I will probably break the six-month rule if I try to ask this in the next session, can I ask the Minister, would there be a public announcement of the tender when it is awarded and so on?

1290

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the fact that it is taken a couple more weeks to finish the tender process was because the contractors who were submitting the tenders requested more time in order to have more realistic estimates, and it was considered in the interest of the project as a whole to allow those extra couple of weeks. Yes, Madam Speaker, I think it is normal practise

1295 for us, well, maybe not in every case, but I cannot commit now to issuing a particular press release, but I am sure this will be announced, people will see the work going. If the hon. Member wants to ask a question in a different kind of way, which would be admissible, I would be very happy to provide that, and if he wants to ask me directly at any time, he knows where to find me.

1300 **Madam Speaker:** You have one supplementary? Yes, the Hon. Mrs. Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I rise as the parent of kids in both schools, in both the Upper St. Joseph's and the Lower St. Joseph's. Given that the tender process is still ongoing, for what reason have children been moved out of certain areas of the school already? They have been, for example, moved out of the lunch halls, and alternative arrangements had to be made very quickly.  
1305 So, what is the reason for that, if the tender process is still ongoing?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I gave quite a long answer explaining that, and reflecting what the hon. Member has said. As I said, the tender process was expected to be shorter. The contractors asked for the extension, which was quite unfortunate.

1310 Nevertheless, Madam Speaker, as I have said, there have been preparatory works going on, and the preparatory works needed to have some areas boarded off, there is also preparatory works having been going on in the car park nearby, in order to use it as a play area. So, the delay is clearly regretted, and the inconvenience to the staff and the children there is clearly regretted.

1315 In the end, we will end up with a much better couple of schools. But the process has been delayed, as I said before, because of the contractors requesting more time.

**Madam Speaker:** Right, before we move on, I think, to Mr Bossino, we are going to take any supplementaries to Question 85. The Hon. Mr Origo.

1320

### Q85/2026 Supplementary Questions

**Hon. G Origo:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Question 85 related to the pay and display machines being operable or not in Gibraltar. From the schedule provided, can I ask the Hon. Minister for some clarification with respect to some parts of the schedule?  
1325

In the first part, he said that the following areas have no machine in operation but are covered by the QR codes. Is that to say that the machines in those areas listed were not taking cash and card, and therefore the only ways of paying for spaces in those areas was through the QR and the online website?  
1330

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Yes, that is correct, Madam Speaker. The footnote to the schedule does say that the intention is to replace all machines so that the payment will be online.

1335 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, on that point on the replacement of machines, I also see from the schedule provided that eight different pay and display machines actually generated cash income each month, the schedule says. The Hon. Minister now says that they are going to move to what appears to be a cashless system. Will there be provisions for card payments, or is he just saying that they are going to be QR code online only?  
1340

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** The intention is to work exclusively on QR code. That is the plan at the moment, and really is the way that many operations are going.

1345 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, whilst I take the Minister's point that that is the direction that  
we are headed, as I stated in my earlier question, it does appear that there are eight different  
stations which are generating cash, so people are still using cash, and therefore by going to a  
purely electronic and online system, we are excluding certain persons who may have as an only  
option to use cash. For instance, tourists may come and not have roaming on their mobile phones,  
so they cannot pay for these parking spots, and then they would be in contravention. But with  
1350 respect to those which are not operable, what impact has this had on enforcement and fines?

Is it the case that in these areas which are listed, which have not been operable, that there is  
been concessions for persons who go and have cash only, but do not have data on my phone, and  
are not paid for a parking display? Will I be fined as a result of the machine not being operating?

1355 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I just want to clarify one point, that it would be possible  
to pay by card if somebody does not have a mobile device, by phone, and phoning in, and that is  
currently an option now. There would be a phone number that then you could provide your details  
verbally, so that would be an option that I have not covered. There should be no enforcement if  
there is no opportunity to pay, but I do not have the details. I would need notice of that.

1360

**Madam Speaker:** We will move on. Yes, Hon. Mr Clinton.

1365 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have heard of interest of what the Minister  
just said about the move towards QR codes. The Minister will also be aware that certainly in the  
UK, for example, with big car parking zones, that there has been instances of fraudulent QR codes  
being stuck up, and people being defrauded in that process. I was wondering if the Minister has  
taken that into account, and whether there is any safeguards that the Minister will put into place  
to ensure that, you know, these things, as much as possible, can be mitigated against.

1370 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, as I said, from a sedentary position, *no le des ideas a la  
gente*. Okay, Madam Speaker, I do not know. I mean, I am sure that the technology will find a way,  
if it has not already, of dealing with that, but I just honestly do not know.

Clearly, we would have to safeguard against that, but the detail, I do not know.

1375

#### Q86/2026 Supplementary Questions

**Madam Speaker:** All right, let us move on to any supplementaries on Question 86.

1380 **Hon. G Origo:** Yes, Madam Speaker, thank you. 86 concerned the removal of vehicles from the  
public highway. I have been given a schedule, which on one of the columns provides the numbers  
of vehicles towed.

By way of clarification, can I ask you, Hon. Minister, whether these include only vehicles towed  
because they have been *in situ* for 28 days, or do the figures provided also include those who have  
1385 been removed because they appear to be derelict, and they may or may not have MOT?

1390 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam  
Speaker, the answer I have been given is in answer to the question. If the people providing the  
information have not ensured that that is, then obviously I would need to double-check that, but  
I am assuming that this is an answer to the question of the 28 days. I think that there is clearly a  
peak in November, December, January, but that follows a public campaign where we said we  
would be clearing cars that have been without MOT and so on, which would assist in providing  
parking and so on.

1395 But that is why there is that increase there. I have to assume that it is a direct answer to the question. If it is not, I will check and I will let the hon. Member know.

1400 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may, just as the observation the Hon. Minister has made, there is a peak in December and January, which aligns with what was the Government's derelict vehicle campaign. So because, by his own admission, that there is a peak, and part of this campaign included removing cars which had no MOT or appeared to be derelicts, I take it that, therefore, the numbers of those towed also include those who have no MOT and appear to be derelict, because it coincides with the campaign which is all-inclusive. But can I ask, given the severity and seriousness of the issue, and the stated urgency which was stipulated in the PR campaign for the removal of cars, whether he is satisfied with the numbers provided?

1405 Because since the campaign was initiated, we have had 81 removals of vehicles from our public roads. But if I may quickly take him to the press release, which I want to quote from, Press Release number 948 of 2025, we have, and I quote,

To address these issues, the Ministry of Transport, DVLD, Gibraltar Car Parks, the Gibraltar RGP and Britannia are all working together to identify, tag, remove derelict vehicles from all parking spots. A vehicle may now be removed if it has no MOT, appears derelict or appears to be in the same spot for more than 28 days.

1410 At the end of the press release, we find that the Government currently has 45,000 registered vehicles, but only 14,000 parking spaces. The enforcement have identified that over 9,500 vehicles have no MOT. Is the Hon. Minister satisfied with the progress being made under this campaign, given the severity of the issue and the urgency which was stipulated in the Government press release?

1415 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, this is wider than just vehicles towed away, because people are also encouraged to book for new MOTs, to check and to have the MOTs done. So we are not just talking about this. This is the hard end of the process.

1420 The softer end is get your MOT done, book a date, and then we will not have to resort to this. I would need to check the statistics. That is something that, again, I would need notice to but this is just one end of that campaign.

1425 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I take the Hon. Minister's point that there was a suspension, I think, by the Government in January, where they issued a press release where they said, for one week, we will suspend the projects to allow people to book their MOT vehicles and have the valid MOT in place. But that was, I think, for the purposes at hand, just a momentarily suspension. But is the Hon. Minister, therefore, satisfied that the five different departments and agencies have enough resources between them to tackle the issue, given the low numbers that we have seen of vehicles being removed?

1430 On the process itself, we are talking about vehicles that have remained *in situ* for 28 days. How is that process actually being carried out? Is it the case that these departments are going every single day to tally and tick box that this car has remained in situ or how do they go about confirming that it has not moved?

1435 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** To answer the last part of the question, there is a notice placed on the vehicle, and that is checked on a regular basis. that is the way. As far as resources goes, will there ever be enough resources for all the things that we have to do in Gibraltar?

1440 I think that we have sufficient resources to carry out the campaign we have carried out. I think we are showing good results. The people involved in this obviously have other duties to attend to as well.

But during campaigns, we tend to concentrate the resources on that particular campaign. So it would be wonderful to have more, but I think realistically this cannot be open-ended. So I think my answer must be a qualified yes.

1445 **Hon. G Origo:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for indulging in one more. The Minister says that we are producing good results, but I think 81 vehicles from the possible 9,500 represents a 1%. I would not by any measure say that is a good result.

1450 But with respect to the campaign itself, there is also provisions to remove cars which appear to be derelict. Can I ask what the interpretation or definition of cars appearing to be derelict are, and whether this interpretation is being standardised by the four or five different agencies responsible for removing these vehicles?

1455 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Well, some cars which are derelict are clearly derelict, and you know just by looking at it. But the 28-day rule will actually assist in that. If they are there for more than 28 days, then they are likely abandoned.

But derelict is a vehicle that is clearly damaged, that cannot move, may have flat tyres. (*interjection*) Well, not everybody washes their cars regularly. But finally, if I may just comment, in judging success, I think it has been successful.

1460 Clearly, there is a lot more work and it is ongoing, but no action is much less successful. So, you know, I will not be criticised for trying.

**Madam Speaker:** All right. Question 99.

1465

**Q99/2026**  
**Charles V Wall –**  
**Repairs in the area**

**Clerk:** Question 99, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1470 **Hon. D J Bossino:** When will the significant crack which has appeared in Charles V Wall by the Trafalgar Cemetery be fixed?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, there is harass fencing placed along part of Charles V Wall as a precautionary measure, as some defects to the wall have been identified. The crack in question has been there for decades and does not pose a structural risk. A survey was undertaken last year and a meeting is scheduled for next week to assess repairs and works, not only to the wall, but also how to improve the cemetery, including the rebuilding of pathways, tombstones and providing of interpretation.

1475 **Hon. D J Bossino:** So, the Hon. the Minister says that that particular fissure has been there for about 10 years. I was not aware of that and I am grateful for the answer that he has provided. But from my own personal observations, not from an expert's point of view, I see others and I ask him to confirm if he can, whether there is any risk to the structural integrity of the wall, which has been there, I think, since the 16th Century.

1480

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** My information is there is not. There have been occasions when stones have fallen, but that has often coincided with when the monkeys decide to come down the wall

to the St Jago's area, rather than structural. I am informed that there is no risk to the structural integrity of the wall.

1485 The repairs that are going to be carried out are more quasi-cosmetic, in the sense that repairs here and there. But my information is that that fissure is not threatening the structural integrity.

1490 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Is there going to be, as I understand it from my own visual analysis, and indeed I have been informed, I am not suggesting that I have been expertly informed, but it has been suggested to me that the reason for the cracks appearing is more than likely to be as a result of tree roots and shrubbery and that kind of thing. So, and this goes to a point that I think my learned hon. Friend, you asked in the past about de-weeding and exposure of our walls. So in that sense, it is a wider point, but I think it also impacts in respect of this particular wall.

1495 Does the Minister have any plans in relation to the de-weeding and the exposing of this particular wall?

1500 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, as I said, there is a meeting scheduled, I said next week, but this answer was prepared last week, so it may be happening this week, to assess repairs and works of the wall, which will include dealing with vegetation. There is a difference between trees, and when we repaired the archway just to the west of that, we found that there was an olive tree that had set its roots through, and as the roots grow, it tends to crack. Weeds as such, which are annual plants, do not normally damage the integrity of the wall in that way, because the roots are not permanent, and they are quite fibrous. But yes, there is an intention to have a look at that, and to de-weed, for want of a better word.

1505 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I accept that it does not necessarily arise from the question that is posed, but I think it does arise from the supplementary answer that the Minister has provided. He talks about a wider refurbishment of Trafalgar Cemetery. I think he is absolutely right to make a comment, I think, in that context, that the graveyard stones need quite a bit of TLC, and I think it does what I have seen myself.

I think there are certain heritage aspects of that which are compromised, and I think I would encourage the Minister to take that forward with due haste. But is he able to say when those works are likely to commence and be completed?

1515 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Well, Speaker, we are often criticised on this side of the House for not providing enough information. I do not say it is valid criticism. I say it is not.

But we are criticised for that, and now when I voluntarily provide more information, I am taken advantage of and ask supplementaries that would otherwise not be acceptable. But anyway, I take it because it is a subject that I love to talk about.

1520 Madam Speaker, there is an agreement, a longstanding agreement, decades old, at least as old as that fissure, with the Heritage Trust who manage the Cemetery. We have discussed with them recently how we are going to take that forward, and it is as a result of that that this meeting is on site, is being held. I expect works to start quite soon, probably within the next few months.

1525 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The Hon. Minister answers questions, and he ought to be transparent and full. It is not because he wants to talk about the subjects he loves.

**Madam Speaker:** Let us get to the question please.

1530 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I think he, whoever ought to be answering the questions transparently and fully. I am not sure whether the Hon. Minister answered this point, because, again, from my own observations, I think there is a structure set up around the crack or cracks, I would suggest in the plural, in order to ensure the safety of visitors. Can I ask him whether that is in fact correct, that those structures, I think there is a scaffolding in place, and it is an area which has been, shall we

1535 say, recently cordoned off as a result of, I am not too sure, I would assumed, from an unexpert point of view, now I have heard his response, that it was as a result of the widening of the crack. But can he confirm whether my understanding is correct, that that is there for safety reasons, and can he make a comment in respect of safety more widely and more generally?

1540 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, as I said earlier, there is no structural risk to the fissure itself. There is some heras fencing, I said that, just as an additional precaution, because some stones, small stones, had fallen off. I suspect it was as a result of the monkeys moving by, but just in case this was put up there, I do not believe there is been any more stones falling.

1545 I stand to be corrected since then. But as we were going to survey the area anyway, the fencing was left in place.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q100/2026**  
**Taxi fares –**  
**Taxi City service**

1550 **Clerk:** Question 100, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Does the Minister intend to prescribe new authorised rates/fares for passengers on the Taxi city service?

1555 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon., the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, not at this point in time.

1560 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, is this something that the Government is contemplating doing in future? In the way that the Hon. Minister has answered seems to suggest that it might be a possibility. I ask because there is lack of clarity, I suppose, on how fees are done and I have been approached by a number of people who are sometimes unclear about that and anecdotally been given examples of charges that have been given on single journeys that have seemed quite high to the person who has spoken to me. Is this something that the Government are aware of?

1565 Obviously, if there was greater clarity, then this thing would not happen if it were published in some form.

1570 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I added the words at this point of time, not because we are expecting to do anything to review the fares yet, but so that if ever we do, I am not then told, but you said you were not going to, so I had to leave it open. At the moment, we are not looking at it, we are having lots of discussions with the Taxi Association on a range of things - we are not looking at this at this point in time.

1575 I do not know whether the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, whether his example might be in relation to taxis charging more than the fare that they should be charging. If that is happening, then that should be reported and the Transport Commission is taking a very serious view of that.

But at the moment, the fares are what they are. I mean, the vast majority of taxi drivers would stick to that. If some do not, then it is an issue that should be taken up.

1580 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Part of it is that, I suppose, but part of it is that when you try to find the regulations that provide for fares to be set and so on, but I confess, and hence the question, that

I was not able to locate an up-to-date set of fares and regulations. So, I do not know if the hon. Member does have that, then I think it would be of assistance to us because I really have tried to look for them and hence why I thought that what had happened was that there had been, at some point, a specific regulation on these things, but it had been somehow removed and that this might  
1585 be a process that the Government was looking at.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** No, Madam Speaker, they have not been removed. I do not have it to hand, but I will certainly look for it and I would be very happy to share it with the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and I will also review it and see whether we do need to make some changes or  
1590 make those fares clearer. I undertake to do that, Madam Speaker.

**Q88/2026**  
**Supplementary Questions**

1595 **Madam Speaker:** Any supplementaries on Question 88? The Hon. Mr Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In Question 88, in the schedule, the first page gives a list of the vocational courses and then a bit more detail is provided on page 2, under Section A, where it says what is been delivered at Bayside and Westside. If I take the third one down, City and Guilds Level 2 Technical Award in Hair and Beauty Studies, can I ask the Minister, is that totally  
1600 different to the one in Section B at the very end of the page, City and guilds Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy, because that one comes under the heading of the College - are those two different type of syllabuses?

1605 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, they are different courses.

**Hon E.J. Reyes:** Fine, Madam Speaker. Then, I know in the past when he has answered some questions in respect of the hair and beauty qualifications, the Minister has indicated that the practical part, because they are vocational courses, the practical parts have to take place off-site,  
1610 outside of the actual College. So the one about Hair and Beauty Studies at Bayside and Westside, do we have like a mock beauty salon in there, or are those being delivered in a location outside the school?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, indeed, Madam Speaker. When we designed our new secondary schools, we provided hair salon facilities for the students.  
1615

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thanks for clarification. Then, Madam Speaker, directly under that, the City and Guilds Entry Level 1 Certificate in Construction Schools, can the Minister confirm that that takes place within Bayside or Westside, or is there an agreement and the pupils use the facilities  
1620 at the Gibraltar Training Centre, where they offer similar Level 1 type of qualifications to apprentices?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Yes, I had a slight doubt for a moment, but I have consulted my hon. friend, who is responsible for the Training Centre. That is not done in the Training Centre, it is  
1625 done in the secondaries.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** We are making good progress, Madam Speaker. Towards the end of B, on the top of page 3, the City and Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Women's Hairdressing with Evolve. Can I have some clarification?  
1630

Is Evolve something to do with revolution, or is it just something on a nomenclature?

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I will have to seek clarification on what exactly it is. It rings a bell, but I cannot quite hit on what it was. I do not know whether it is an organisation, but I would need to check clarification first.

1635 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, none of us are any wiser. But that comes under the courses being delivered at the College. Again, is there a facility set up within the College to deliver the practical side of it, or does that take place off-site, as, for example, he indicates, for the courses on C and D?

1640 In the past, I know he has mentioned a particular establishment where they have taken over the practical skills. I cannot find it here in respect to which of the vocational courses is that happening.

**Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the College students have their practical sessions in an external provider's premises.

1645 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Okay, so I have got all that there. Is the Minister then aware of any, other than those listed in C and D, where it is clearly indicated where some courses in the acting or music performance range, some have to use GAMPA premises, at Hospital Hill and the Magazine Studios, that seems to be clear. But in the past, in our list of courses, we have had indications that they have used an actual establishment of a hair salon.

1650 Has that ceased to happen? I am trying to find where exactly it happened in the last time we got this answer, and it was Hair and Beauty level 2 and so on, and those were taking place after arrangements made with the local establishment. I do not see it in this year's sort of schedule.

Perhaps the Minister can enlighten me.

1655 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I know that there is the arrangement with the external provider is still in place, and therefore I am just assuming that they continue to use their premises for those courses.

1660 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. So can the Minister please ask whatever staff he used to compile this, can they double-check, because we have a breakdown of what takes place at Bayside and Westside, we have got a breakdown of what takes place at the College, we have got the information where the College has to liaise, and it seems to be successful with GAMPA because of the facilities available there, but they seem to have omitted, or perhaps it is been a clerical error in there, you know, what other establishments, especially I think those belong to the private sector, they are not indicated here, and therefore the schedule might be incomplete.

1665 I want to give the Minister the benefit of the doubt of asking whoever fed in this information to try and locate that and see where it should fit in. Should it come under the one for Bayside and Westside, or should it come under the College, but there is no indication for which course and where exactly that is taken place.

1670 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** I will double-check that. The information should not be much different to what we have discussed here before. I do confirm that certainly the secondary schools have their own hairdressing facilities.

1675 The college does not, but I will just double-check so that the Hon. member is satisfied that he knows exactly where these students are doing someone's hair.

**Q89/2026  
Supplementary Questions**

1680 **Madam Speaker:** Anything for 89?

1685 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, and 89, which refers more specifically to the BTEC courses, on the halfway on the page we have BTEC certificates in esports and the BTEC award in travel and tourism. Unlike what follows later on, which says BTEC International level 3, and then the BTEC Extended Certificates, those two in the middle, the Certificate in Esports and the technical awards in Travel and Tourism, at what level are they? Are they level 2, level 3?

Because BTEC is the awarding body, but the qualification attained, one should know the level. If it is level 2 or level 3, which is an extended certificate, it does have implications for a student's potential, even application to university and so on.

1690 **Hon. Prof J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the information is actually given in the schedule. If the hon. member looks at that middle table to the right of BTEC course, it says number of level 2 pupils enrolled in this course.

Madam Speaker, the hon. member is referring to the middle table of the three, which says Esports and Travel and Tourism.

1695 If he looks at the header of the second column, it says number of level 2 pupils enrolled, which means that both those courses are level 2 courses, which is what I thought, but I have just had it confirmed in reading the schedule.

1700 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I do apologise. So therefore, those two are actually level 2, because below that it was on the left-hand column. It has not followed the same procedure. I do apologise for not having spot that.

Madam Speaker, the rest of the information, especially on 88 we referred to before, is rather lengthy, so I am not going to waste this House time. If there is any follow-ups, I will either correspond with the Minister or speak at a future session if I require any further information, which I can be so pedantic that he probably will not have it with him at the moment, even if I tried.

1705

**Madam Speaker:** All right, thank you.

### Recess

1710 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Chief Minister, who, as we know, is engaged in giving evidence to the UK Parliament, can I now ask if the House could recess to 3 p.m. to continue with Questions to my hon. friend, the Minister for Health and Care.

1715 **Madam Speaker:** (*interjections*) No, we could not. Not for a recess. I am directing that the House recess.

We can have a chat about that later. I am recessing until 3 p.m. I am going to recess without asking for a vote. (*laughter*)

1720 **Madam Speaker:** we will recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed at 12.20 p.m.*