



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR  
PRESS OFFICE  
No.6 Convent Place  
Gibraltar  
Tel: 20070071; Fax: 20074524**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 8.30 PM**

**“GSLP continues to invent and distort facts to criticise the Government. Their latest statement about Waterport Terraces Services Charges is untrue.”**

Last week the GSLP said that purchasers at Waterport Terraces had been billed by the Government for service charges in respect of homes of which they have not yet taken possession. This is untrue.

The GSLP’s statement further implied that these supposed charges were being levied by the Government, for the Government. This is untrue.

The GSLP Statement further said that the supposedly premature service charges are ‘comparatively high’. This is untrue.

Having invented the facts for the purposes of criticising the Government, the GSLP then wonders whether the facts invented by them represent “Mr Caruana’s latest spiteful punishment” for purchasers having dared to demonstrate outside Parliament.

These statements are typical of the GSLP’s disregard for the truth in public statements that they make to the people of Gibraltar.

The true facts are these:

1. No purchaser has been billed for service charges which are payable before taking possession of their homes.

2. As happens in all estates, as part of the completion pack sent to purchasers' lawyers whose homes are ready for legal completion there is a statement of the first service charge in respect of the period upto 31 December 2008. This is a requirement of the agreed underlease and not something that the Government chooses to do, or can choose not to do. This first service charge is payable on completion and not before purchasers have taken possession of their homes. No-one has been sent an invoice for service charges payable before they take possession of their homes.
3. The service charge, once paid, is not for the Government, but for the Management Company of the Estate. This Management Company will be owned and controlled by the purchasers themselves. The Government has no financial interest in the service charge whatsoever.
4. Once completions take place the purchasers themselves will decide on the level of service charges depending on the level of services that they themselves decide they wish to enjoy.
5. The Government has not estimated the level of the first service charge. This has been done by Brian Francis & Associates, experts in the field, who do this for many other home ownership estates in Gibraltar. Nor is the first service charge excessive as claimed by the GSLP. They work out at £10.25 per square metre. This compares, for example, with £9.45 per square meter in Montagu Gardens (where the Management Company are apparently seeking an increase).

A spokesman for the Government said: - "Last week's statement by the GSLP was issued by Mr Fabian Picardo in the name of Mr Charles Bruzon. Mr Picardo is a lawyer and the statement cannot therefore be explained by ignorance of such matters.

The matter of service charges in Waterport Terraces is exactly the same, and is being handled in the same way, as happened under the GSLP in all the home ownership estates that completed in their term of office. Their statement can only be explained by reference to their systematic desire to tarnish the Government regardless of the extent to which they resort to falsehoods and distortions to do so."