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Little or no attention paid by previous Government to maintenance issues at Mid Harbour Estate

The Government has been presented with a report which draws attention to water penetration and other issues at the Mid Harbour Estate and which points to the remedial action which is necessary in order to address these defects.

It is clear that the lack of provision for maintenance inherited from the previous administration has caused problems in many parts of the estate.

The Government has been warned that the suspended drainage system is close to collapse, that it does not support the weight and that the lack of maintenance is not allowing it to work properly as per the design. There has been no cleaning and maintenance of the Aco Drain, the walkway gargoyles are full of muck and sludge and they get blocked with standing water. The roof gutters, the Government has been told, have not been cleaned since handover in March last year and the presence of seagull nests due to lack of maintenance, has resulted in rain water overflowing into the roof and creating water penetration issues to the apartment below.

This is not the first of the previous administration's projects where a clear lack of planning has meant little or no attention has been paid to maintenance issues.

Up to November 2011, before the last General Election, a number of leaks had been identified which have been categorised into four types of water penetration. These are water coming in through joints, ceiling leaks, podium interface and gullies.

It will be recalled that the previous administration awarded the contract for the construction of this estate to the Spanish firm Bruesa. This led to concern in some quarters given that the same company had also been involved in Waterport Terraces where a number of issues had been identified. It fell on to the Government-owned contractor GJBS to pick up the pieces and complete the estate when Bruesa collapsed.

In the period December 2011 to March 2012, a number of repairs have been carried out by GJBS. This included ensuring that the joint system was installed strictly in accordance with the supplier's recommendations and method statements to tackle the issue of water through joints. The ceiling leaks were found to be related mainly to tower crane bases and play equipment installation. The installation of the podium interface detail was found to have been omitted and consequently the area where the system was leaking was to be remediated. The fail on the gully detail was found to be caused by a lack of workmanship during the pavement works.

In that initial period, repairs were carried out at Mid Harbours where leaks had been identified.

In May 2012, further leaks were established following the rainfall on Sunday 29th April and an assessment was made of the success of the remedial works which had been undertaken. This showed that although the amount of water ingress was much reduced, there was still water penetration occurring in the vicinity of the play equipment area. It was concluded that "after rain water has penetrated the membrane at play ground equipment fixing points, the screed below this area is allowing the water to pond." In heavy rainfall, the pond overflowed and caused water to travel across the slab surface to other points of discharge in the structure. This means that the playground fittings damaged the waterproof lining when they were installed, presumably in the rush to finish the estate in time for the General Elections later that year.

The Government has been advised that by October of this year, the earthquake joint and other joints had been repaired. This eliminated water penetration in those areas. A waterproof membrane has been installed on top of the slab in the play area. The repairs to the exercise area remain outstanding.

However, after completing the identified remedial works to the Mid Harbours Estate, the Government has been advised that around 30% of water penetration issues remain unresolved. This is now being taken up directly with the waterproofing system supplier on the site. The play and exercise areas will be repaired shortly and this is also expected to alleviate problems elsewhere.