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PRESS RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT TO ERADICATE THE SALE OF TOBACCO IN HOUSING ESTATES

- *Public Interest directions to Trade Licensing Authority*
- *Anti-social behaviour to be curbed*
- *No more retail tobacco sales in residential estates*

The Government is set to eradicate completely the sale of tobacco in Glacis and Laguna Estates through the termination of existing retail tobacco licences. The Government will support, in the public interest, applications to transfer the existing retail tobacco licences to areas that are primarily non-residential.

The Government's action means that it will not be possible for the existing retail outlets in Laguna or Glacis Estates to sell tobacco at all other than in vending machines. A short period of time will be allowed so that alternative premises in suitable locations can be identified for this purpose.

The social problems that have been created by allowing the sale of tobacco in housing estates developed over the last ten years under the previous administration.

Although measures have already been taken by the present GSLP/Liberal Government to curtail the activity in housing estates, by the Chief Minister's declaration of these residential areas as special zones, the Government is not satisfied that the measures sufficiently redressed the anti-social behaviour and the unacceptable nuisance factor to residents of these estates. This unacceptable behaviour includes vehicles parking illegally, cars and motorbikes speeding through residential areas and large numbers of people loitering in the area.

The Government has already spoken to tobacco wholesalers and will now start the process of also talking to retailers and to notify them in advance of the measures that will be taken and to discuss future options for the relocation of their licences.

There have also been discussions with the Royal Gibraltar Police and HM Customs to ensure that Government's decisions are understood by the relevant law enforcement agencies.

A further public interest direction will also be given to the Trade Licensing Authority to prevent any further retail licences being granted in residential estates other than for tobacco vending machines. The direction will also support the transfer of tobacco licences out of Glacis and Laguna estates into other areas which are not primarily residential.

Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo, said, 'The Government has listened very carefully to the residents of Glacis and Laguna estate on the many occasions I have visited the estates since our election. We are convinced that the best solution is to relocate the licences for the sale of tobacco out of the housing estates in question. This will preserve the licensees' right to trade alongside the overwhelmingly important right of the residents of these estates to peaceful enjoyment of their residential areas. This situation should never have been allowed to develop. Our action now is designed to finally put an end to the problem that they have created once and for all. Further action will soon also follow to curb the unsightly activity in the area of the airport and the frontier, as well as in the vicinity of our beaches.'