



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
PRESS OFFICE
No.6 Convent Place
Gibraltar
Tel:20070071; Fax: 20043057

PRESS RELEASE

No: 228/2014

Date: 19th May 2014

Feetham Would Stop Top Government Projects!

It is worth examining the Opposition's criticism of projects recently announced by the Government.

Mr Feetham was openly disparaging of the cost of the refurbishment of Laguna, Glacis and Moorish Castle estates. To be fair to the GSD and to Mr Feetham, this is entirely consistent with their policy of ignoring these estates when they were in Government. They have also been critical of spending on the Small Boats Marina and of the Government's decision to build Affordable Housing estates such as those at Mons Calpe Mews and Beach View terraces.

The recent criticism of Government projects by the Leader of the Opposition Daniel Feetham suggests therefore that the GSD would not have proceeded with them if they were elected into office.

However, the GSLP/Lib Government is committed to these projects being completed on time and on budget. The Government will ensure that the residents of Laguna, Glacis and Moorish Castle estates live in an improved environment resulting from the on-going refurbishment works. The Government intends to see these works through and considers it is about time that these estates, all of which are highly visible on the entrance to Gibraltar, should see real investment in refurbishment.

The Opposition also fail to understand that the present Government inherited a situation where there were hundreds of people waiting for berths for their boats. Many others people were waiting for a berth before they could buy a boat. Some boat owners had their boats hauled out on land for years. It needed a huge project such as the Small Boats Marina to tackle the problem of lack of berths that was inherited from the GSD Government

The Government is also delighted to see the numbers of people keen to purchase properties in Mons Calpe Mews and Beach View Terraces, thus disproving the GSD's policy that 'more government rental properties' are the solution to Gibraltar's housing needs. They held the mistaken view that most people would prefer to rent flats rather than to own their own property. Moreover, building flats for government rental is obviously more

expensive to in capital and recurrent maintenance cost, which Mr Feetham preaches he is concerned about despite this being the direct consequence of his policies and his party's legacy after 16 years in office.

It is therefore the height of political hypocrisy for Mr Feetham to complain about the costs of these various projects, which will benefit ordinary people, when his party in Government earmarked and partly spent over A QUARTER OF A BILLION POUNDS just in its last term on a power station in the wrong location (which would have led to a huge increase in the cost of electricity of well over 100%) and an over-sized air terminal designed to connect to a Spanish terminal that has never been built, together with the millions and millions of pounds that the previous Government threw down the bottomless pit that became the Theatre Royal vanity vision project. It should be remembered that the GSD spent more on capital projects in its last three years than in its first thirteen put together!

The Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo, said: "It is clear that Mr Feetham - as the GSD's current "nightwatchman" - and his party need to be honest with the public. He and his party must tell citizens clearly that they would not have refurbished Laguna, Glacis and Moorish Castle estates, they would not be developing the small boats marina, they would not have built the affordable homes we are building and would cancel the Mega-Concert and the National Week celebrations. That must be the natural consequence of his complaint that - in his flawed judgement - we cannot afford those things; although we could afford to spend a similar amount of money on the projects his party preferred; but which would not have delivered for ordinary people as our projects do. What the public will not be fooled by is seeing Mr Feetham criticise every penny we spend, and then have him suggest he would nonetheless also embark on them.

Mr Picardo added: "The fact that in making his speeches he also chooses to excuse all of Spain's illegal and bullying actions by seeking to blame me and the Government for Spain's attitude is also unforgiveable and entirely demonstrably untrue. In fact, when the GSD were in power under Sir Peter Caruana, the PP were saying they would end the trilateral process and treat Gibraltar harshly. In fact, when Alejandro Sanchez was Mayor of La Linea (despite there being a PSOE Government in Madrid) there were already 5 or 6 hour queues when he set up his "bordillo". Everyone in Gibraltar - including Mr Feetham - knows that the problem is not that of the Gibraltar Government but the PP Government in Spain. It is not in Gibraltar's national interest for Mr Feetham to try to blame me for these problems just because he thinks it might garner him a few votes but I can see, as can everyone else, that Mr Feetham doesn't care about Gibraltar, he only cares about himself and his ambitions. I have no doubt, however, that Mr Feetham is seeing that he is gaining support with this approach - but only within the senior ranks of the Partido Popular in Madrid and Algeciras! He should know better."