



PRESS RELEASE

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Rooke site will include public gain says Government

The Opposition is wrong and undemocratic in its desire to impose on the Government and on everybody else its vision for the Rooke site. It is quite incredible that Mr Feetham and Mr Hammond think that, just by expressing their view on what should happen on a site, they can stop the Government from pursuing negotiations for a better use for that land.

It is also hypocritical, bearing in mind that the GSD itself, when in Government, signed contracts and committed itself to public spending, even after a general election had been called in 2011. While this was not expressly ruled out by the Gibraltar Constitution before 2006, it is certainly prohibited by the 2006 Constitution which was in force when the then Government took these actions.

The situation now is completely different in that the Government is free to discuss and agree such matters with developers or with anyone else until a general election has been called. The proximity or otherwise of an election is irrelevant.

In any case, the Government has already indicated that it would look to a number of areas of public gain in the Rooke site which could include a school, a police station and a fire station among other facilities. All that has happened now is that the Government has announced who it is going to negotiate with in detail for the best use of that plot. This means that the argument that the GSD continues to use is self-serving and flawed precisely because there will be a public gain dimension as the Government has already explained.

It is a bit rich for a party that dished out contracts and pay deals AFTER the last election had been called to now pretend to take the moral high ground on this matter by misleading the electorate. What they should explain is what their elected members, who continue to be paid by the taxpayer, are doing with all their spare time!

The Chief Minister, Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "I can't imagine why Trevor Hammond and Daniel Feetham don't want us to explore these negotiations. We are looking to make the best use of this site for our Community. The GSD are the ones who gave the sites out for the developments that lines the pockets of the rich developers. We are the Government that has ensured better use of sites they gave out cheaply, such as the MidTown and the Eastside plots. Our actions were in the best interest of the taxpayers and our Community generally. We will do the same in the negotiations on Rooke. What anyone can tell you is that the worst possible use of the site would



be to use it as a mega school for over two thousand pupils. Educators and anyone who knows anything about property could work that out, except, apparently, Messrs Hammond and Feetham. By insisting on their flawed plans and even trying to prevent the Government from negotiating on the best use of the plot, they are demonstrating that they are pursuing the wrong policies for our community's future. Having London and Regional Properties interested in developing in Gibraltar sends out a hugely positive vote of confidence in our nation's economy and the direction in which we are taking it. I guess that's what Danny and Trevor don't like. They don't like that we are being so successful in the administration of our nation's affairs."