



## HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

### PRESS OFFICE

No.6 Convent Place

Gibraltar

Tel:20051739; Email: [pressoffice@gibraltar.gov.gi](mailto:pressoffice@gibraltar.gov.gi)

## PRESS RELEASE

No: 92/2015

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015

### **Mr Feetham's Podcast is a shameful comedy**

The Leader of the Opposition should hang his head in shame for the most outrageous attempt to sow the seeds of panic seen in Gibraltar for a very long time. To suggest that the Government would engage in any activity that might, even in the most remote of circumstances, 'destroy large parts of the Western side of Gibraltar' is utterly disgraceful and is clearly designed to frighten people.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar takes this opportunity to provide the public with the correct information regarding the new Power Station. External consultants, industry experts and European Union regulations have informed the entire process, with environmental, economic and safety considerations being accounted for as a highest priority. In the interests of transparency, those consulted by the Government will be named below. The Government takes the Opposition's latest attempt to stir a public panic extremely seriously, and strongly urges them to name the 'numerous subject matter experts' they claim to have consulted to support their baseless allegations.

Clearly, the Opposition is again disseminating false information in a deliberate attempt to use fear as an electoral tactic, this time with relation to Selective Catalytic Reductions systems. In fact, the tender acceptance document for the Power Station, attached, clearly shows that Selective Catalytic Reductions systems have already been included for both gas and dual-fired engines to reduce harmful emissions.

Whilst the Opposition are clearly compelled by the economic arguments in favour of liquid natural gas, it is clear that they do not understand them. The market for fossil fuels is, indeed, volatile, and will fluctuate over the years to come. However, although the prices of oil and gas go up and down at the same time, gas is always cheaper. Therefore, no matter how high or low the price of diesel is at any given time, liquid natural gas will always be the cheaper option.

The Opposition have done a severe public disservice in their alarmist forecast for the future of the power station, which belongs more to a science-fiction blockbuster than a reasoned criticism of a credible opposition. Whilst the Opposition have been busy

dreaming up the most unlikely future scenarios, the Government have been working with all the relevant stakeholders to ensure safe and sustainable energy security for the future. Before a decision was taken to use liquid natural gas as the primary source of electricity the Government, together with the Gibraltar Electricity Authority, the Environmental Agency and the Port Authority, sought the expert advice of external consultants, including the Health and Safety Laboratory, which forms part of the UK Health and Safety Executive. From the beginning all the advice we received confirmed that the proposed Power Station and the storage of liquid natural gas were viable and safe options for Gibraltar.

In addition, the rigorous risk assessment process for the power station is now underway, and includes both the Power Station Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Aeronautical Studies to ensure that it will be designed to meet the Best Available Technology principles and reduce any possible risks to an absolute minimum. The EIA is being conducted by the specialist consultants Engain, which is the same UK-based company that carried out the same assessments for the Lathbury project. The Aeronautical study will be undertaken by NACO, a Dutch specialist company that was consulted by the previous administration with regards to the Gibraltar International Airport. Both Engain and NACO are world-recognised specialists in their fields. Their findings will be released to the general public upon completion as part of the EIA public consultation process.

Whilst no process can be entirely free of risk the Liquid Natural Gas industry has one of the highest of safety records.

The Government hopes that this information will allay the public's concerns. We consider it utterly unacceptable for the Opposition to attempt to create unnecessary public panic for their own political gains.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "The Leader of the Opposition needs to stop exaggerating: I am neither going to bankrupt Gibraltar in the management of our finances nor am I going to blow it up with our proposed new power station! The professionals that advise us are not so careless to allow us to do either and he might show a little more regard for their professionalism. Everything my Government and I are doing is designed to improve Gibraltar in every way, especially in relation to public finance and power generation for the benefit of future generations of Gibraltarians. The fact is that Mr Feetham's exaggerated claims in relation to the power station are so ridiculous that I can see why even the GSD itself categorised his podcast as a comedy although they now appear to have re-categorised it."

#### **Note to Editors:**

Image 1: Extract from the Tender acceptance document showing details of the Selective Catalytic Reductions systems for the new Power Station

Image 2: Screenshot of Mr Feetham's 'comedy' Podcast