



PRESS RELEASE

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Feetham's Amateurish Approach Embarrasses Him AGAIN

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar notes that the GSD and Mr Feetham have once again failed to commit themselves to respecting the manning levels of the Civil Service in their latest vituperative attack on the Government.

Their statement also refers to the Chief Minister's assurances to the GGCA Union, which the latter recently communicated to their members saying that the Hon Mr Picardo's assurances in this respect "raised questions".

In fact, the GSLP-LIBERALS "Strongest Foundations" Manifesto for the 2015 General Election specifically provided as follows:

"THE PUBLIC SECTOR - NO TO WASTE & NO TO GSD AUSTERITY

THE CIVIL SERVICE & GDC

The Civil Service is the backbone of the Public Sector. Together with the GDC and the Government Agencies, Authorities and Companies, they provide the environment for the private sector to prosper.

We will maintain the commitment we have to preserve the size of the civil service and to ensure that it is properly resourced so that it delivers the results that are required in order to fulfil our manifesto commitments.

MANNING LEVELS

There will be no cuts in the Civil Service. Manning levels will be respected and new manning levels agreed where appropriate."

This demonstrates that what Mr Picardo has told the GGCA, and which they have rightly reflected in their own Bulletin, is exactly the mandate that the Government has after the huge endorsement by voters in the last General Election held under a year ago.



If Mr Feetham thinks that the fact that the Chief Minister has repeated to the GGCA the mandate he has raises questions, he should have raised those questions at election time. Mr Feetham did not do so.

Mr Picardo said: "Daniel Feetham and the new GSD do not fail to let the public down. Apart from not having prepared their own manifesto for the last election, it now appears that they did not even read ours. Mr Feetham now says our commitment to the manning level of the Civil Service, which I happily repeated to the GGCA, somehow raises questions when that is what we sought a mandate for. This amateurish approach is really disappointing. And to make matters even worse, we inherited 156 vacancies in a Civil Service of 2,282 people in 2011 and now we have 177 in a Civil Service of 2,444. We have proportionally less vacancies than we inherited from the GSD. Those facts put Mr Feetham's arguments in context and add a lawyer of palpable political hypocrisy to what he is saying. There is nothing for Mr Feetham to reasonably complain of. Similarly, we are committed to not imposing austerity and to improving the office environment of those who work in the Public Sector. When we spend money on offices Mr Feetham criticises us, even though we have a massive mandate for it. When we press Mr Feetham to tell us where he would save £50m in recurrent expenditure, he refers only to the cost of refurbishing Convent Place which is not a recurrent cost and which added huge capital value and offices space and other facilities. His arguments don't make any sense because they are not thought through. He doesn't think things through and that exposes him and his party to political ridicule. Maybe that's why Mr Feetham says he wants to be paid more to do the job of Leader of the Opposition as a full time job. He is not doing enough as a part timer to get his arguments right. The Civil Service and the wider Public Sector know that Mr Feetham says what he thinks he has to say to please any audience and that he is not reliable. The Chamber of Commerce will also know the same thing from his constant attempts to be all things to all men. His patent lack of preparation is now also palpable and renders him a political laughing stock."

The GSLP-LIBERALS manifesto commitments in respect of office accommodation and in respect of challenging Mr Feetham on saving £50m are below for ease of reference. They appear more fully after page 12 of the Manifesto.

"FEETHAM/GSD: PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS? AUSTERITY BY THE BACK DOOR!

Daniel Feetham, the Leader of the GSD, has committed his party to cutting recurrent expenditure in the public sector. That can only be achieved with job losses and cutbacks in public services. It is not true that there is a budgetary overspend of £50m a year in the Civil Service. Controlling Officers in the Civil Service do an excellent job of bringing expenditure in almost exactly on target and Mr Feetham should know this as he has the Accounts of the Government which reflect this.

Although we will continue to seek to deliver better value for money in all public sector spending, we do not agree with unnecessarily imposing austerity. Gibraltar's economy is performing strongly, amongst the best in the world. Public finances are stronger now than under the GSD. We say YES to controlling unnecessary expenditure and waste. But we say



NO to unnecessary austerity which will usher in unnecessary hardship for many."

"PUBLIC SECTOR OFFICES

We will maintain and improve the stock of Government Offices to a modern standard in order to ensure compliance with modern Health and Safety guidelines. We will also seek to consolidate civil service offices which are presently held by the public sector in prime sites and sensitively redevelop them."