



PRESS RELEASE

No: 500/2018

Date: 30th August 2018

Statement on Laguna Estate

The GSD are once again demonstrating their political opportunism and the incoherence and inconsistency of their position, this time using the tenants of Laguna Estate to achieve their political aims.

This administration embarked on an unprecedented investment of refurbishing Gibraltar's major housing estates, Laguna, Glacis and Moorish Castle. Estates that were dilapidated to the extent that they were as a result of the lack of interest and investment demonstrated by the GSD in their 16 years in office, such that they became the forgotten estates.

The Government is absolutely delighted that the refurbishment of the Moorish Castle and Glacis Estates are complete and to a high standard. At Laguna Estate, which is by far the largest of our housing estates, phases 1 and 2 are virtually complete with the exception of the internal common areas and phase 3 is over 80% complete and on target for the completion date of June 2019, overall the works are over 90% complete. To accelerate the process will of course incur further cost, so while the GSD constantly accuse the Government on spending, the constantly also want the Government to spend more!

Unfortunately, while the refurbishment is underway, it is natural that there will be a certain level of inconvenience because of the construction, but these are being managed in a way to keep disruption to an absolute minimum.

One of the things that are often highlighted is the cabling in the common areas. These are services that are provided to tenants by third parties and it is regrettable that a major contributing factor in finalising these is the failure of the cooperation by tenants, unfortunately 40% of tenants have denied access to their flats to enable works to finish, access to every flat is required in order to connect services to the block. The Housing Department has issued instructions to tenants and the service providers that failure to provide access will result in the disconnection of services to the entire block.



The works however are progressing well and on schedule. There is regular communication between the Ministry for Housing and its contractors with tenants through the Laguna Estate Tenants' Association to ensure that everyone is kept informed of progress.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo MP said "The refurbishment of estates was an important manifesto commitment and true to our word, the estates are now almost unrecognisable to what they were when we took office. Not only has the completed refurbishment enhanced the living conditions for our tenants, but the improved aesthetics also positively impact visually overall as you enter Gibraltar, a far cry from the slums left by the GSD. I am extremely proud of what my Government has achieved so far and look forward to final completion of this important estate.

As usual, the GSD will try to make political capital where they can, but this time there is simply nothing that they can criticise as works are in progress, as planned and as scheduled.

I am glad that the GSD have finally found the time to visit Laguna Estate, an estate that they forgot when they were in office and I am sure that when they visit once the works are complete they will thank and congratulate the Government for the remarkable difference made to the estate and making a considerable difference to the quality of life for those who live there.

In my further visit this week to Laguna Estate I was also able to confirm that we will be providing a new Park facility in the current plot of the existing St Martin's School and that we are in preliminary discussions with Gib-Oil to move their facility in that area and create a further open space for Laguna Estate and its residents. We have invested in Laguna Estate and its residents. We are delivering a better Laguna Estate for its residents. We are committed to Laguna Estate and its residents. Many millions of pounds of investment in Laguna Estate and its residents and many millions of miles away from the GSD's neglect of this forgotten estate."

The Minister for Housing, Samantha Sacramento MP said, "What is remarkable is that the GSD should focus only on the less than 10% of the overall unfinished works at Laguna Estate and not the over 90% that is completed.

Major refurbishment works at Laguna Estate are advanced, proceeding according to schedule but not yet complete, it is therefore natural that there will be an element of disruption, however I have no doubt that the benefit of the temporary disruption will be well worth it in the end.

The Senior Management Team of the Ministry for Housing and I are in regular contact with the Laguna Estate Tenants' Association who convey to us the concerns of the tenants of the estate and which my team deal with in a swift and professional manner and I am grateful for the excellent working relationship that we have developed."