



PRESS RELEASE

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Infrastructure is an Important Ministerial Portfolio

The Opposition's latest invective regarding the zebra crossing at MidTown car park demonstrates that they have more interest in scoring political points than in the welfare of the community.

When last in power, the GSD largely neglected this key area of government infrastructure in favour of pharaonic projects with much higher visibility.

The GSLP/Liberal Government has from the outset acknowledged the importance of public utilities and infrastructure and the constant need for their upkeep and maintenance. It is for this reason that a Minister has taken specialist responsibility for this vital, if often overlooked, portfolio. In fact, it was the Minister's diligent attention to detail that brought the need for a zebra crossing in this case to light, and a works order was issued.

That the Opposition now choose to state that thanks to them bringing this to the Government's attention they have managed to get the crossing accessibility compliant is quite simply a poor effort to score political points. It is absolutely preposterous that anyone would believe that the action being undertaken by the Government is a result of any comment made by Mr Llamas. He must be deluded if he believes so and it shows both immaturity and lack of understanding of processes on his part. No one will be fooled by his attempt as everyone will remember that while the GSD was in office they saw fit to waste sixteen years without regard to accessibility issues.

Furthermore, the Opposition do not care about the many positive aspects of a car-park in town, which works extremely well with regards the use of the ID Cards which require vast technology, nor the excellent coach park facilities. They instead choose to focus on a detail, which had been identified by the Minister and works to remedy it already in progress. Neither could they ever recognise the excellent work done by this Government with regards to accessibility throughout Gibraltar.

This Government has done incredible, ground-breaking work on accessibility in recent months, working together with the private sectors to break down barriers.

On the question of Opposition MP Lawrence Llamas' reference to the Accessibility Awareness Training, his childish statement is remiss, this training was funded by the Government as part of the Government's advancement of the Disability Bill, the legislation



that will give effect the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and which the GSD did not do anything to enact while they were in office. The training is an initiative to enhance the knowledge of those people in positions where they will be tasked with taking all aspects of accessibility, when carrying out their technical work and providing services, into account. The training was in high demand and a success and attendance had to be limited to relevant people.

In fostering a more inclusive, equal society that it can be proud of, Gibraltar could do without such childish, pointless and sarcastic press releases from the Opposition. They clearly have nothing positive to say on any subject.

Minister Balban said: "The Member of the Opposition might consider that before taking on the responsibilities in his portfolio he might think about how much he knows of any particular subject and how he can procure knowledge by his own means and not wait and depend on HM Government of Gibraltar to try to train him. I believe that members of the Opposition have plenty of free time that can be used to learn.

"The only surviving part of the old GSD is the nasty and malicious part. It seems that the £2,000 on average that Mr Feetham earns per parliamentary appearance is just being applied to coming up with nasty, name-calling press releases insulting hard working ministers. Not great value for money for the tax-payer. And by the way, "Infrastructure" and "Planning" are two portfolios, not one. The least the Leader of the Opposition could do is add one and one and for once get the right answer!"