



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 9.30 a.m. – 1.25 p.m.

Gibraltar, Tuesday, 9th July 2024

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 9.30 a.m.

[**MADAM SPEAKER:** Hon. Judge K Ramagge GMH *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: J B Reyes Esq *in attendance*]

BILLS

FIRST AND SECOND READING

**A Bill for an Act to amend the Limitation Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 and for connected purposes —
First Reading**

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Tuesday, 9th July 2024.

(ix) Bills — First and Second Reading.

5 A Bill for an Act to amend the Limitation Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 and for connected purposes. The Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

10 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** I have the honour to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Limitation Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 and for connected purposes be read a first time.

Madam Speaker: I now put the question which is that a Bill for an Act to amend the Limitation Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 and for connected purposes be read a first time. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

**Limitation Periods (Amendment) Act 2023 —
Second Reading approved**

15

Clerk: Limitation Periods (Amendment) Act 2023.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that the Bill for the Limitation Periods (Amendment) Act 2023 be read a second time.

20 Madam Speaker, the Bill inserts a new section 27A and B to the Limitation Act to set a limitation period of 20 years, within which proceedings for a recovery order under chapter 2 of part 5 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 or an action for the recovery of property for the purposes of an external order under chapter 2 or part 3 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 (External Request and Orders) Order 2019 must be brought.

25 Clause 4 makes transitional provision to make it clear that the increased limitation period applies to causes of action which accrue before and after the commencement of that section and

that it will not apply to causes of action barred by section 4 of the Limitation Act before the commencement of the amending Act.

30 Clause 5 makes a minor amendment to section 70B of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 to correct a typographical error, which refers to proceedings under chapter 1 of part 5 when the proceedings are in fact under chapter 2; chapter 1 containing the introductory provisions.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

35 **Madam Speaker:** Before I put the question, does any hon. Member wish to speak on the general principles and merits of the Bill? The Hon. Ms Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, good morning.

40 Whereas, yes, we are completely supportive of the principle and the fact that it has been brought, of course after 20 years we all know that evidence degrades accordingly, and therefore it is a safe amendment to make. It is in line with the UK legislation, but on that specific point, the fact that it is in line with the UK legislation perhaps the Hon. Minister would consider making wider amendments to the legislation.

45 I simply flag this because the UK legislation, as I understand it, which dates back to the 80s, has in fact been criticised for the manner in which it was drafted and therefore I would simply flag that point for the Hon. Minister to have in mind.

Hon. N. Feetham: Duly noted, Madam Speaker. This is the advice which the Government has received in discussions with — apologies.

50 **Madam Speaker:** Sorry. Yes. (*Interjection*) Sorry, you are absolutely right.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I was not sure if the hon. Member had asked my colleague to give way. But on a substantive point, may I raise this, which is 27B of the Bill extends the period — the limitation period, as the Hon. Minister has indicated, in relation to the making of recovery of property for the purpose of an external order, which I assume means orders obtained outside Gibraltar and therefore giving some kind of route to recover property here.

60 Has there been consideration given, because it was not obvious on looking at the Bill, to see the interlinkage between — there may be a situation where here we are extending the limitation period by 20 years in Gibraltar, but in the particular place where the original order was granted, it is not possible to pursue someone after 20 years. Has consideration been given to that?

Madam Speaker: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak on the general merits and principles of the Bill? No? In which case I call on the mover to reply.

65 **Hon. N. Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the comments of the hon. Members opposite. The Government has acted on the advice received. I have not practised criminal law, so therefore the point which is being made by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is not one that I can immediately comment on.

70 However, having said that, we are confident that on the advice that we have received, based on the discussions that we have had with MONEYVAL and related third parties involved in the FATF evaluation process, we are satisfied that the amendments that we are bringing to this House are amendments which are and remain relevant towards the type of cases which the relevant law enforcement agencies in Gibraltar are looking into and indeed prosecuting.

75 **Madam Speaker:** I now put the question, which is that a Bill for an Act to amend the Limitation Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 and for connected purposes be read a second time. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

**Limitation Periods (Amendment) Act 2023 —
Committee Stage and Third Reading to be taken at this sitting**

Clerk: Limitation Periods (Amendment) Act 2023.

80

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): I beg to give notice that the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the Bill to be taken today, if all hon. Members agree.

85

Madam Speaker: Do all hon. Members agree that the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the Bill be taken today? (**Members:** Aye.)

**A Bill for an Act to amend the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) Act 2005 —
First reading approved**

Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) Act 2005. The Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

90

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): I have the honour to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) Act 2005 be read a first time.

95

Madam Speaker: I now put the question, which is that a Bill for an Act to amend the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) Act 2005 be read a first time. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

**Mutual Legal Assistance (International) (Amendment) Act 2023 —
Second Reading approved**

Clerk: Mutual Legal Assistance (International) (Amendment) Act 2023.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that the Bill for the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) (Amendment) Act 2023 be read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is as follows. Gibraltar has extension of various conventions, mostly to do with crime that borrows parts of the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) Act 2005, ('the Act') where there are provisions in those conventions that relate to mutual assistance and which Gibraltar needs to comply with.

Following Gibraltar's departure from the EU, there has been more reliance on this Act for mutual assistance provisions. However, each international agreement, convention or arrangement varies in terms of the mutual assistance it seeks to provide. Some of these will only require standard or basic provision, whilst others require more detailed and sophisticated frameworks with more extensive powers.

There are agreements on the horizon that will need to be implemented in legislation if Gibraltar wants to seek extension. One of these is the Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the UK and the Kingdom of Morocco. It is therefore intended that all these different agreements, where possible, are implemented through secondary legislation, using a regulation-making power in the Act. The current regulation-making power is not wide enough for the purpose, and therefore the Bill seeks to enhance that power, as has been done with other

Acts. The Bill will also assist Gibraltar in complying with any further or future international standards arising from the MONEVYAL assessment process. The work that has been done so far has borne very good results and this work needs to continue.

120 Clauses 1 and 2 contain provisions in relation to the title and entering into force of the Act. Clause 3 of the Bill replaces the current regulation-making power under section 25 of the Act with a wider power which has a dual role. It gives the Minister the power to make subsidiary legislation in order to implement international agreements and arrangements to do with mutual assistance, and through regulations amend the Act for this purpose also.

125 The regulations may contain consequential, supplementary, incidental and transitional provisions as may be appropriate. In addition, the Government are disapplying section 23B of the Interpretation and General Clauses Act.

130 There are many examples of these type of powers in Gibraltar law and to name but a few: section 129G of the Import and Export Act 1986; section 223A of the Merchant Shipping Act; section 118 of the Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Safety, etc.) Act 1993; section 33 of the Civil Aviation Act 2009, although this has more regulation-making powers than simply for the purposes of international conventions; section 72(10) of the International Criminal Court Act 2007; section 180X of the Public Health Act; section 69(1)(u) of the Transport Act 1998; section 184 and 184ZA, which includes powers to amend the Act by regulation of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015; sections 135 14 and 18 of the Mutual Legal Assistance (Council of Europe) Act 2018; section 18 also includes power to amend the Act; section 30 of the Mutual Legal Assistance (Merida Convention) Act 2023; section 19 of the Trademarks Act; section 14 of the Patents Act; section 16A of the Transitional Organised Crime Act 2006.

140 **Madam Speaker:** Before I put the question, does any hon. Member wish to speak on the general principles and merits of the Bill?

145 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we have no substantive comments except to support the amendment.

145 **Madam Speaker:** In that case, if no other hon. Member wishes to speak I call upon the mover to reply.

150 **Hon. N. Feetham:** I am grateful, Madam Speaker.

150 **Madam Speaker:** I now put the question, which is that a Bill for an Act to amend the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) Act 2005 be read a second time. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

**Mutual Legal Assistance (International) (Amendment) Act 2023 —
Committee Stage and Third Reading to be taken at this sitting**

155 **Clerk:** Mutual Legal Assistance (International) (Amendment) Act 2023.

155 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** I beg to give notice that the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the Bill be taken today, if all hon. Members agree.

160 **Madam Speaker:** Do all hon. Members agree that the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the Bill be taken today?

COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING

Clerk: Committee Stage and Third Reading. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

165 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that the House should resolve itself into committee to consider the following Bills clause by clause, namely the Appropriation Bill, the Limitation Periods (Amendment) Act 2023 and the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) (Amendment) Act 2023.

In Committee of the whole House

**A Bill for an Act to amend the Limitation Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015
and for connected purposes—
Clauses considered and approved**

170

Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Limitation Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 and for connected purposes. Clauses 1 to 5.

Madam Chair: Clauses 1 to 5 stand part of the Bill.

175

Clerk: The long title.

Madam Chair: The long title stands part of the Bill.

**A Bill for an Act to amend the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) Act 2005 —
Clauses considered and approved**

180

Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Mutual Legal Assistance (International) Act 2005. Clauses 1 to 3.

Madam Chair: Clauses 1 to 3 stand part of the Bill.

185

Clerk: The long title.

Madam Chair: The long title stands part of the Bill.

190

**A Bill for an Act to Appropriate Sums of Money to the service of the
year ending on 31st day of March 2025 —
Clauses considered —
Commenced**

Clerk: A Bill for an Act to Appropriate Sums of Money to the service of the year ending on 31st day of March 2025. Clause 1.

195

Madam Chair: Clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Clause 2, Head 1, Treasury.

Hon. R M Clinton: Sorry, Madam Chair, clause 2(1) as it is laid out in the Bill talks about a sum not exceeding £609,930,000, and then we will go through each head individually. But I just want, at this stage, to flag the total there. That obviously relates back to part 1 of the schedule. I am conscious, Madam Chair, that under section 35 of the Constitution I am not allowed to propose an amendment to the Bill. If I were allowed to, it would be entirely dependent on the Chief Minister's Finance Minister. That is in relation to the £10 million settlement, which we have been told is not included in the appropriation.

If it were to be included — I imagine that it would be on the head 26 when we come to it — it would be on Health and Care, which is a combined new head, which includes the Care Agency, it would have to be increased by £10 million and therefore affecting the total.

I just flag that at this stage because that would affect the total as shown on clause 2(1) and perhaps we will come to that when we come to schedule 26, but I thought I would just flag that at this stage.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I know what the hon. Gentleman says — Madam Chair, I know what the hon. Gentleman says, but I have already told him that this is not going to be reflected in these numbers, and if anything it is something for a supplementary Appropriation Bill. In any event, he has caveated all of the points he has made with 'ifs', because they are entirely hypothetical.

Although I recognise that he is flagging it now, we are not going to agree to any changes to be made to the Bill, because it will be a matter for a supplementary Appropriation and perhaps not dealt with even in the way that he has suggested. It does not have to increase the cost in that way. We have had the debate on the subject. This is the Committee Stage. We need to look at the detail now.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, with the greatest respect to the Chief Minister, as he said last week, these estimates are drafts. The expense has been crystallised, which is the word he is fond of. It is a known expense of the Government. If there is to be given legal cover to this payment of £10 million, which has to be presumably authorised by a controlling officer, that controlling officer needs to have the legal cover of Parliament to make an appropriation payment of £10 million.

We are now sitting at the Committee Stage looking at the detail of the various elements of the appropriation and it is entirely appropriate to raise this matter now. Otherwise we have the rather bizarre situation where Government has admitted to making a payment in May of £10 million, which is not reflected in the estimates for 2024-25. Therefore whoever has made that payment the Government is effectively telling them today in this House that there is no legal cover for that payment and we have the opportunity now to give the legal authority for that payment.

That is what we are here to do, Madam Chair, is to give legal authority for appropriations. I really do not understand the Chief Minister suggesting that this is for something to be done by way of supplementary Appropriation, i.e. an expense that will be occurred after this Appropriation Bill, which is not envisaged, which is what the Constitution talks about.

But this payment has been made, entirely envisaged, it is known, there is no uncertainty about it. There is no 'if' about it. It has been made. Therefore I think at this stage in the Committee it is entirely appropriate to consider to include the payment of £10 million, otherwise, I do not understand what we are doing here, Madam Chair

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, the Government does not believe it is entirely appropriate. We do not believe it is necessary. We do not believe that the hon. Gentleman's legal interpretation is correct. We do not believe it is necessary to give cover in that way. We do not believe that what he is proposing is something that we need to do and therefore we are not going to agree to do it

Clerk: Clause 2, head 1, Treasury; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

250

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, Madam Chair, can I just raise – and can I say at the outset something that I should have said at the beginning of my first intervention to the House, that we are down Mr Saccarello, and that is because he is in COVID recovery; unfortunately he tested positive for COVID over the weekend.

255

Can I just ask, on Other Charges and on Insurance Expenses, which is subhead 10, the forecast outturn there is about £120,000 higher. What does insurance expenses under Treasury cover? Can the hon. Member perhaps explain that to us?

260

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, it is not just obviously No. 6, Convent Place. These are all of the insurance premia charged to the Government. For example, the marine fleet, which relates to the GPA, the vehicle fleet and the vehicles across the Government, property across the Government where we are not self-insuring. So all of the premia across the Government. Business travel insurance. We have got the annual business travel policy, the property protector insurance, the motor vehicle fleet, the marine fleet and the marine vessels insurance. These are all the contracts.

265

270

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, I have two questions. On payroll, on personal emoluments, (a) salaries; if I can refer Members down to line — the new subhead 4, Support Payments, which was £101,000, which is effectively part 1 of the pay settlement will Unite. And if you look at the estimate for 2024-25 for payroll salaries, given that £101,000 is effectively the effect of that, settlement is the second part of the settlement reflected in the salaries number for 2024-25.

My second question is in relation to subhead 2, line 16, Government Offices — Rent and Service Charges, which has gone up. (*Interjection*)

275

Madam Chair: Yes, perhaps we could do one point at a time.

280

Hon. Chief Minister: No Madam Chair, the support payment is not reflected in personal emoluments, as the hon. Gentleman knows or should know. The pay settlement, so to call it, the public sector pay increases which are referred to in this House, are not referred to — are not reflected in the figures in any year. There is a provision at the end of the Book for covering the increased cost of salaries based on that. I think it is one of the last heads. So that is not reflected in (1)(a).

285

Hon. R M Clinton: I am grateful to the Chief Minister for that answer.

Madam Chair, if I can then go to the second question, which is in subhead 2, line 16, Government Offices — Office Rent and Service Charges, which has increased by £1.5 million from the outturn last year. Does the Government have any information in respect of the increase?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker. I think that reflects some upwards increases in some of the rents that we pay, which were reflected in the coming year, or will be reflected in the coming year, and cumulatively amount to that.

295

Hon. R M Clinton: Just to confirm, so that is only rent increases, there are no new rents showing there.

300

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, yes, there is the new rent that I referred the hon. Lady to as well in answer to her question at the earlier part of the session in relation to the Care Agency.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, would the Chief Minister have an analysis of those new rents?

Hon. Chief Minister: Not of the new rents, Madam Speaker, not with me. But I answered the question in this session of the House.

Hon. R M Clinton: Yes, Madam Chair, but that was in relation to one Agency.

305

Madam Chair: Anything else on head 1? Head 1 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 2, No. 6 Convent Place; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

310

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Chair, can I ask on subhead 2 – subhead 15, Other Grants and Donations, forecast outturn, the estimate for last year was £500,000, forecast outturn £1.7 million. Does the hon. Member have to hand a list — a breakdown of that subhead, or would he prefer for me to write to him to ask him for that information?

315

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I do have it to hand. It is very, very long. I am very happy, as usual, to say to the hon. Gentleman that I am prepared to give him a copy of the schedule. I am always happy to give it, but I will only give it on the basis of it remaining confidential because if we start to tell one charity what another charity gets, then we will have a charitable competition in terms of how much each gets.

320

But I am very happy for the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to have a copy of the schedule if he writes to me.

325

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I will do so. But can he just confirm then that— because it was not immediately obvious, but I take from his answer that every entity on that list is a charity? Is that right?

330

Hon. Chief Minister: No, Madam Speaker. There are charities here, but there are also other matters which relate to settlements, which are paid through this head, sometimes settlements which relate to other Departments, but they are always booked through here.

335

There are grants which are, in some instances, I cannot say that they are charitable organisations, but they are community organisations that the hon. Gentleman would recognise as what we might call *de facto* charities, even if they are not registered as charities. Because I cannot say they are. I have not got the list of charities in front of me to confirm that they are charities, but they are, if not charities, akin to charities.

340

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. Obviously, if they are charities or akin to charities, organisations that I would recognise to be like charities, then of course that is — I will write to the hon. Member on the basis that he suggests.

345

If there are entities that do not fall within that, if it is a different sum, then of course I think it is a different point, but he will understand that.

350

Hon. Chief Minister: It is a different point, but it would nonetheless be still confidential, Madam Speaker, because in many instances, if it is not a grant to a charity, it is a settlement usually of a legal action and therefore also has to remain confidential. Or, for example, payments made for relocations, which sometimes are booked here if there is a wider arrangement and settlement done.

But I have no difficulty with him having it. It just has to remain confidential.

355

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Perhaps, Madam Speaker, it is impossible to have this conversation without seeing the schedule. I will write to the hon. Member, and then if there is any issue, I will raise the matter with him behind the Speaker's Chair and then we can discuss whether or not a particular item on that list should remain so confidential.

355 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, if I may, on head 2, line 25, a contribution from the Consolidated Funds to Civil Aviation Authority expenses, the outturn was £47,000 last year and the estimate for this year is a quarter of a million pounds. I was wondering why.

360 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, Madam Speaker, this is the establishment of the Gibraltar Civil Aviation Register — the Commercial Aviation Register, and that is booked through there as an additional cost of the Civil Aviation Authority. There will be different options as to how that establishes itself but potentially that is the cost of the establishment of the register – the Aircraft Registry, sorry, this year and its part-year cost.

365 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, and then can I also ask, Madam Chair, on subhead 21 of 2, *Ex-gratia* Payments £235,000, what that payment was in the nature of? Is that a collective head for small payments or is it one payment on a particular issue?

370 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, again, this is all the *ex-gratia* payments that are done in respect of *ex-gratia* payments proper, so to speak, and there is a list of all of those *ex-gratia* payments. Again, Madam Speaker, I cannot share that across the floor of the House because these are *ex-gratia* payments subject to proceedings in some instances, etc., but I have no difficulty with sharing a list confidentially with the hon. Gentleman.

Madam Chair: Head 2 stands part of the Bill.

375 **Clerk:** Head 3, Office of the Chief Technical Officer; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Madam Chair: Anything on Head 3? Head 3 stands part of the Bill.

380 **Clerk:** Head 4, Customs; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

385 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am at head 4, subsection 1. I am at Salaries and I note that there is a difference in £500,000 from the forecast outturn of 2023-24 and the estimate of 2024-25, but there has only been an increment, or an intended increment, of three to the Customs complement. If the Hon. Chief Minister could perhaps give some more information as to the reason for that.

390 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, the clue lies for the hon. Lady in the estimate for 2023-24, where she can see that the number was much higher, it was £6 million, but complement there was not full. Now, Customs have just finished the school, they have completed the complement. I understand they are now at full complement and at full complement that is the cost.

395 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am at subhead 2 now, subheading (11), Training Expenses. I note from the estimate of 2023-24, sorry, where there was a £40,000 estimate for training, it has gone down by 62.5% to £25,000 for 2024-25 and there was a forecast outturn of £25,000 as well in 2023-24. Can the Hon. Chief Minister just give some more information as to the reason for the cuts in training budget, particularly when there are more officers added to the complement?

400 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, for the simple reason that the officers have been added to the complement. That is to say the school has already happened. The training has occurred and it has occurred within that budget. For that reason, we are once again providing the budget that was necessary, although there will be less need to run a school.

405 Madam Speaker, the hon. Lady can see that on an actual of £37,000, we provided £40,000 but
the Department has spent £25,000. That is why we are giving them £25,000 again, because that
is what they have spent in a year where the school has finished. Therefore, what it makes no sense
for this House to do, even if we want to come here and come with headlines like saying it is a 62%
decrease, which I cannot recognise because it is less than a 50% decrease, the suggestion is
somehow we are doing something which is not helpful to Customs when Customs has seen the
410 number of officers increased by, I think, 47 since we were elected. That complement maintained
and added to in other areas, and the training budget increased, even at £25,000, it is considerably
more than they ever had before. I do not think they even have a training budget.

415 **Madam Chair:** Head 4 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 5, Parliament; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Madam Chair: Head 5 stands part of the Bill.

420 **Clerk:** Head 6, Personnel and Development; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, can I just ask for clarification on subhead 1, Personal Emoluments?
Obviously, I understand that that is due to the increase of numbers, which is evident from page
30. The 93 in the Establishment goes up to 113. My question is: are those additional 20 personnel
425 or is it people that have been transferred and relocated and now collected under the Personnel
and Development head, but were somewhere else in the Book last year?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, it is principally supernumerary staff that are now going
to be held directly in the Personnel and Development Department. Before we had supernumerary
430 staff in different parts of the Book. We took the view that if an individual was supernumerary, it
made resourcing sense that they should be held centrally by what we used to call Human
Resources. It will take me a little while to get used to calling it Personnel and Development.

So if somebody is supernumerary, they are now held in the Book under the Personnel and
Development head. They can then, because they are supernumerary, be deployed to other
435 Departments where they may be necessary and where they may not be so supernumerary.

Indeed, they may be transferred as supernumerary here into a place where there is somebody
missing in their grade and, in that way, fill the complement in that particular Department and we
reduce the number of supernumerary individuals held. But this gives us and gives the House a
clearer view of the cost of all of those employed in Personnel and Development and all of those
440 who are supernumerary so we keep that in view rather than having it spread across the 50 Heads.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Thank you. Madam Chair, can I also then turn to 2(11) *Ex-gratia* Payments.
There, having provided a notional sum, it is almost £1.6 million, whereas for next year, they are
not providing a notional sum, it is a very precise sum of £58,000. I am not sure why. Can I ask
445 several questions on that?

First of all, what is the £1.6 million? What falls under this head and what is the difference
between this *ex-gratia* payments and the *ex-gratia* payments I asked about just a few minutes ago
that fell under the Chief Minister's head, I think it was, or Treasury? What type of payments are
paid under here? What is the manner of those payments for last year? Why next year a very
450 precise sum? Is it something envisaged?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, because these are all related to *ex-gratia*
payments made to members of the public service who are covered by the Personnel and
Development Head, that is to say civil servants. All of those, Madam Speaker, relate really to early
455 retirements, principally, which have occurred, and where there has had to be adjustments as a

result of those retirements and other *ex-gratia* amounts which have been paid as a result of that. That totals that amount.

460 The estimate for 2024-25 relates to some payments which are already agreed to be made in respect of the year to come. So instead of providing a £1,000 head, we are able to provide for these payments, which we know will have to be made. They are provided for there, but it may be higher.

465 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see. But in relation to the £1.6 million, he is saying that these are public servants and the nature of those payments are all early retirement. So they are booked there rather than being booked somewhere else in some kind of pension provision?

470 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, from what I can see, these are all civil servants. I think that is why they are booked through here. In some instances, they are done through the GDC, which means that they are paid in a different way. There is a transfer into the GDC and a payment elsewhere in the Book. These are actually civil servants and the payments and settlements made as a result.

Madam Chair: Head 6 stands part of the Bill.

475 **Clerk:** Head 7, Immigration and Civil Status; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

480 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, if I may, on subhead 2, line 17, Security Services, I note the outturn for 2023-24, £64,000 and yet the estimate for 2024-25 is £30,000, obviously more than half. Looking back to 2022-23 it was about 60,000. I am just wondering why Security Services has halved.

485 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, because we are moving CSRO to new offices where they will not need that level of security cover that they have today, where they are much more exposed. They will be much less exposed than their new offices, so there is a saving on security.

490 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, can I ask on 2(16), the Contribution from the Consolidated Fund to the Borders and Coast Guard Agency. The estimate last year was £7.6 million, the forecast out to £8.2 million. I wanted to understand that a bit more, because when I turned to page 198, which is the Borders and Coast Guard Agency, and specifically 197, I thought originally when I saw that figure, it might be because there is more personnel, but the personnel at 197, the Establishment, is the same. Unless of course there were vacant posts.

Perhaps, because the difference is quite sizable there, about £600,000, I did not really understand why the increase. So I am asking the hon. Member for that.

495 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I understand this relates to the computation of allowances and how they are paid in pay.

500 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** That summary answer I am not sure perhaps gives us the information as to why that is the case. I am not sure that I follow the hon. Member, because presumably the allowances were already part and parcel of the original estimates factored in. I am not sure that I understand that.

505 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, if the hon. Gentleman goes to 198 he will see that the pension contribution goes up, the forecast outturn for allowances goes down, Madam Speaker, and the salaries vote goes up because of the computation of the allowances and which ones are included in salary and which ones are not included in salary.

Madam Chair: Anything else on Head 7? We are on Head 7 at the moment, any other questions?

510

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Well, it is just that given the answer, I suppose I had a follow-up on that page 198 but we are going to get to that page, I think.

Madam Chair: Head 7 stands part of the Bill.

515

Clerk: Head 8, Government Law Officers; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Chair, subheading 2, line 7, I note that the estimate is lower for 2024-25 than the forecast outturn for 2023-24. Now, the estimate for 2023-24 was £15,000. The forecast outturn for 2023-24 was £25,000 yet the estimate for 2024-25 for witnesses is £12,000. Is there a particular reason for that? Can I assume that the caseload is lower?

520

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, this tends to be led by what the Government law officers in consultation with the Office of Criminal Prosecutions tell us they anticipate based on their calendar of trials to come and what they anticipate the witnesses would be. My view frankly is that we should have just a £1,000 line there but if there is expenditure that is envisaged or that on average has been a particular amount then we put in the amount that we are advised should be put in.

525

The hon. Lady will see, and it is the one figure she has not mentioned in her analysis, that in 2022-23 it was £9,000. So this is really swings and roundabouts, you could have one year when it might cost £100,00 and in the following year it might cost £8,000. That is the figure that we are asked by OCPL to consider putting in, it is not anything else.

530

Hon. J Ladislaus: Yes, Madam Chair, I am at line 21, Professional Fees, and the forecast outturn for 2023-24 was £4.9 million, whereas the estimate for 2023-24 was £2.5 million. We are almost at, if my maths serves me correctly – and it is not my strong point – £2.4 million over. Could the Hon. the Chief Minister shed some light as to the reason for that?

535

Hon. Chief Minister: This is the cost of private sector legal fees, all of which go through here, and we have this constant issue of how much we should put in. The year that we have spent less, we spent £2.5 million, I seem to recall, so we try and always put in that figure so that there is not a licence here to spend more than usual. But in some years it is necessary to spend more and in this year once again it has been necessary to spend more.

540

We have no alternative but to incur those fees when we need to incur them. Madam Speaker, we always try and seek to ensure that we are as close to the estimate as possible but we do not want to increase the estimate because if we increase the estimate we do not want people to think that there is a licence to spend more.

545

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Can I just ask on a follow-up on that? If I write to the hon. Member because I assume he may not have a schedule here, would he be willing to provide us a schedule on that item?

550

Hon. Chief Minister: We do not have it here, Madam Speaker, but I think he will find that those fees are very likely the ones reflected on the website, the private sector legal fees, but I am very happy to give him the schedule as we have it so that he can see it. But, again, that would also have to remain confidential because that is Government legal advice, but I can give him the headings of what it is that has been taken advice on, so that he can see.

555

560 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Well, I was not necessarily asking him to tell me what they had taken advice on, I was just asking for a breakdown of the costs. If they are publishing the costs anyway, I am not sure that that part should be confidential. I am not asking him to know what they are doing.

565 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, we are publishing the costs. The hon. Gentleman knows that there is a Government website where he sees all the private sector legal fees which will principally be these. There could be – I do not think there is but there could be – something here that is not yet on the website or that might not be reflected on the website, but I doubt that because even when we use external counsel, which are external to Gibraltar directly instructed by the Government of Gibraltar, we put that on the website. I am not saying that should be
570 confidential for one moment but okay if he writes to me I will give him the breakdown without saying what it is that we have taken advice on.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: That would be helpful because sometimes the figures do not correlate, so that is the reason for my question.

575

Madam Chair: Head 8 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 9, Financial Secretary's Office; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other charges.

580

Madam Chair: Head 9 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 10, Social Security; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

585 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, in relation to subhead 2, I will do one at a time. Line 16, the estimates for 2023-24 was £15.2 million and the outturn was £6 million. Obviously the estimate for 2024-25 is now £7 million. Can the Hon. Chief Minister advise what the reason for the decrease, at least, from 2023-24 and to the outturn?

590 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, Madam Chair, this is to keep the fund solvent. I think I referred to this during the course of – I or the Father of the House referred to this during the course of the speech, either this year or the year before. This is what keeps the fund solvent.

Hon. R M Clinton: Sorry, Madam Chair, I think he may be confusing that with 17, which I have not actually asked yet. I am talking about line 16, which is the Social Assistance Fund.

595

Hon. Chief Minister: No, Madam Speaker, I think you may be confusing the issue. That is also the position in respect of 16.

600 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, I think I have answered my own question. The answer is on page 239, which is the analysis of the Social Assistance Fund. The reason, for the benefit of Members, is that there is obviously £7.5 million less due to non-payment of a contribution to Gibraltar Community Care. I note that there is no provision for next year either.

If I can move on to item 17, which is the Statutory Benefits Fund. Can the Chief Minister advise why there was no contribution in 2023-2024?

605

Hon. Chief Minister: Because none was required, Madam Speaker.

610 **Hon. R M Clinton:** On that basis, the Chief Minister then, I guess, is advising that the Statutory Benefits Fund was solvent at that point, it needed no assistance?

Hon. Chief Minister: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair: Head 10 stands part of the Bill.

615 **Clerk:** Head 11, Digital Services; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Madam Chair: Head 11 stands part of the Bill.

620 **Clerk:** Head 12, Information Technology and Logistics Department; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Madam Chair: Do you have something to say? Does the hon. Member want to speak?

625 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Sorry, yes, indeed. Can I ask on head 12, 2(12) Maintenance Agreements and Licences, there is a significant increase in the estimate for maintenance agreements and licences? I am not sure what that head encapsulates, so first of all can we have information about what is under that head and, secondly, why the increase?

630 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Chair, this is a head that has been growing considerably since we were elected and we moved away from the situation which we found ourselves in, which was that the Government was in effect pirating software and not paying licences. We decided that that, of course, could not continue. We have put ourselves in good stead with all of the providers of software to the Government. There are an increased number of users. There are more licences as a result. There is an increase in the cost of the licences that we pay. But there is also work being done to move to open source licensing in some areas, which may mean that we do not actually
635 have to hit that number if we can repurpose in some areas where it is possible to repurpose.

I can take the hon. Gentleman through it but we will be here until tomorrow. Again if he wants to see this, I am very happy to provide him with a copy of the schedule if he writes to me. This is obviously commercially in confidence but not confidential in the other sense.

640

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, we will. So it is not just software licences, I assume, because it is called Maintenance Agreement so presumably some element of that £6.5 million is in relation to formal agreements with external providers to maintain some of the infrastructure, is that right?

645 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, because the servers, Madam Speaker, are also provided for here and the maintenance of the servers is provided by an external provider.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: That is a contract situation with a particular provider for a specific term presumably?

650

Hon. Chief Minister: They are contracts, plural not just one.

Madam Chair: Head 12 stands part of the Bill

655 **Clerk:** Head 13, Broadcasting; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Madam Chair: Head 13 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 14, Gibraltar Regulatory Authority; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other charges.

660

Madam Chair: Head 14 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 15, Office of the Deputy Chief Ministers; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

665

Hon. D J Bossino: Subhead 2(9), can the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister provide an explanation for the increase from the actual figure of 2022-23 of around about £90,000 to now it seems a pretty stable figure in the region of £300,000 to £200,000.

670

Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia): Yes, Madam Chair, this really depends on the amount of lobbying which is envisaged and which is actually carried out. So it is one of these things which is likely to vary but, as he says, it has stabilised over the last couple of years.

Hon. D J Bossino: Lobbying focused in relation to what?

675

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: It could cover all the different issues I mentioned during my Budget address.

680

Hon. D J Bossino: In relation to subhead 2(13), can you provide a breakdown for that figure of £105,000, which, again, it looks like a stable figure to me?

685

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Yes, that relates to some of the works and contingencies the Government has prepared over the years in relation to our departure from the European Union. Some of those were carried out together, if you recall my Budget address, with the United Kingdom and were co-funded with them, and others were carried out by the Government itself.

Hon. D J Bossino: In the nature of infrastructural works, presumably in the context of the potential no-deal scenario?

690

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: That is right, all this relates to no-deal planning work, making sure we have contingencies in place for different eventualities.

695

Hon. D J Bossino: Subhead 2(18), the Mount Expenses, can you explain what that relates to? It is not a big figure but I am just interested to see that it refers to the Mount and is a separate head and separate expenditure in relation to that particular project.

700

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: That is right. This has been there for a long time. Part of the reason is because this vote originally came under Culture who looked after the Mount and this was then passed on to us because of the ongoing works of the Mount. It is to do mainly with maintenance works that may arise.

705

Hon. D J Bossino: In relation to subhead 2 (19), the Hong Kong Office, I think we had a question and answer session in relation to this about two or three years ago. I am not aware, I certainly do not recall that we have one, so can he provide an explanation? Again, it is not big amount.

710

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Yes, Madam Chair, the Hong Kong office has always been put under my head for reasons of neatness, but it is not an office I was involved in directly, because this relates mainly to commercial work and not to political work like the other two.

But my understanding is that this is there because there were some loose ends that remained to be tied up and that sum reflects those loose ends.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can you provide any further information as to what those loose ends are? The figure for the forecast outturn for 2023-24 is, again, a very tiny figure of £3,000, but I am just interested to see what the Government's intentions are in relation to that. He has set down a

715 placeholder figure of £1,000, but I would be interested to know what loose ends commercially, as
he puts it, the Government is considering in this context.

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Yes. Madam Chair, I am told that the amount there refers to the
720 annual fees of the company in Hong Kong that now needs to be wound up. It is basically an
administrative fee for the company that still exists, but it is not active in any way.

Hon. D J Bossino: So this is a historical situation – the Government is, just to summarise, now
winding things down as far as that particular company is concerned. Presumably there is no
intention of reigniting that into the future.

725 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Chair, that is correct.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, the Deputy Chief has piqued my interest. Can you tell us
anything about this company, where it is incorporated and what is its name?

730 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, it is incorporated in Hong Kong, which is where the office
was, and the fees are payable to a trust and company management services provider in Hong
Kong.

735 **Hon. R M Clinton:** I am grateful for that, but do we have a name?

Hon. Chief Minister: Surprisingly, Madam Speaker, I think it is Gibraltar (Hong Kong) Office Ltd.

Madam Chair: Head 15 stands part of the Bill.

740 **Clerk:** Head 16, Civil aviation; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. D J Bossino: Subhead 2(3), Contribution towards Aerodrome Running Expenses. I just
745 wanted to know why the envisaged increase for the forecast outturn figure to the estimated
figure.

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Madam Chair, my understanding is twofold. Firstly, that this is the
now historic agreement between the Government of Gibraltar and the Ministry of Defence, which
relates precisely to those issues, that there is an increase as time goes on, and also dependent on
750 the usage, if I am not mistaken.

Hon. D J Bossino: When the hon. Member refers to an increase ‘as time goes on’, are these
contractual increases which are interwoven into the terms of the agreement, so that therefore
that is the commercial arrangement which the Gibraltar Government has with the Ministry of
755 Defence, or is it something else?

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Madam Chair, yes, it is interwoven into the agreement.

Madam Chair: Head 16 stands part of the Bill.

760 **Clerk:** Head 17, Environment; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, just looking at payroll, General Office has gone up from an
outturn of £28,000 to £245,000. I do notice that, of course, complements has gone up from 54 to
765 64, but is that increase entirely due to that headcount increase? Why such a lot? If it is just general
office, what are 10 people doing in general office?

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Chair, most of this is taken into account in the establishment where you can see the ministerial office. These were officers that were in other Departments prior to the change in ministerial responsibilities. Most of those were in fact under the Transport head in previous years because transport, traffic and environment have now consolidated under my ministry. They have been shifted into here and that is what accounts for the majority of that.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Chair, I am at head 1, Cleansing Section – subsection (m), Salaries. I noticed that the estimate was £163,000, the outturn £129,000, but there has been no movement on the number of employees in the cleansing section. Can the hon. Member please clarify why there has been an increase in that amount?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Can the hon. Member repeat the section he is referring to? I did not catch that. And the question was?

Hon. G Origo: It has gone from £163,000 down to £129,000, yet the number of employees in the Cleansing Section has stayed the same. Is there a reason for the savings in this area?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Madam Chair. I think this will happen in other parts as well. This is taking account of vacancies that would have been full provision in the past. The complement is the same, but there are vacancies and that has not been included there.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Chair, can I ask on 2, subhead (15), Cleaning of Streets and Public Places? There is an increase there. The estimate was £6.4 million, the forecast outturn £8.32 million – £2 million more. Is that a contractual increase? Because the estimate is lower this year, so it does not look like a contractual increase, and perhaps the Minister can give us some information about why that happened that way.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: There is an element that is contractual, but clearly the amount that is actually spent will depend on a number of things. We tend to increase cleaning above the contractual, particularly in the summer months and particularly if we have an extended period without rain into the autumn. So, that is what covers that. It is usually to do with an increase in flushing – more regular flushing – when the streets need it.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. So, you have what you would call the regular cleaning, which costs X, and then, if I have understood the hon. Member's explanation, built into the contracts there is a provision that the Government can, on request, ask for specific flushing or cleaning and that is an add-on cost. Is that right? So the additional would be covered by that, principally, is that right? Does he have a breakdown or not?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: The breakdown can be provided, but that is correct. We can request additional cleaning over and above the contractual frequency, which obviously comes at a cost. Again, that information can be supplied if the Hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to raise it with me separately.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Chair. At head 4, Support payments, can the Hon. Minister please explain the incurred expense of £62,000 and what these relate to? Because they have not appeared before in previous or future estimates.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I believe, Madam Chair, that there was a similar question to one of the previous heads. I think the Hon. Chief Minister replied. This is the support payment that was agreed last year. I think it appears in quite a few of the heads; in all of them.

820 **Hon. D J Bossino:** On (23) and the running of Alameda Gardens and Wildlife Ltd, is this Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd which has been the subject of exchanges in this House before?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Clearly so, Madam Chair.

825 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The figure of £1.25 million, is that the totality of the moneys which the Government gives to this particular company?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: As far as I know, yes, Madam Chair. That is what is provided for under the contract, and that is provided for in the estimates.

830 **Hon. D J Bossino:** This is from memory, but I think this company does other things other than the Alameda Gardens. This is why I ask, because it says 'Running of Alameda Gardens'. So, is this expenditure only in relation to that aspect of the works that this company does for the Government, or is it the totality of the commercial arrangements with the Gibraltar Government?

835 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** If it appears as 'Running of the Alameda Gardens', I believe that it is to do with the running of the Alameda Gardens.

840 **Hon. D J Bossino:** In relation to the cemeteries, we have 6 and we have 32, and they are distinguished between 'Cemetery Expenses' and 'Upkeep of Cemeteries' – in the plural – 'Greenarc'. What therefore, in that context, by way of background, does cemeteries expenses relate to?

845 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** 6 is in relation to general expenses in the cemetery, whereas 32 is specifically the maintenance of the vegetation, strimming, and so on. It is a contract with that company.

850 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, on subhead (6), I note that the hon. Member stated that it relates to general maintenance of the cemetery. We can see that in the previous year it was £22,000, the forecast was £23,000; we have forecasted £24,000 the following year. So why is it that this year we have an outturn of £75,000, which is three times more than the usual expense?

855 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** There was quite a lot of work required. I believe this may include the refurbishment of toilets and there was quite a lot of work being done this year in the cemetery, more than usual.

860 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And (13), Morocco Relations. Can I ask for what the thinking and rationale is behind the expenditure, which in this case has not been given a notional £1,000 figure, but there is a specific figure of £15,000, and this is why I ask. Can you give a breakdown in relation to that and what is envisaged?

865 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Yes. Madam Chair, the proposal is that this would cover assistance to different Departments in developing relations with Moroccan entities during the course of the year. It may include assistance to trade missions, a bit of travel perhaps, and general development of relations. It is a new inclusion here. It is a new ministerial responsibility. So it is a modest sum which will be available to develop contacts with our southern neighbours.

870 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I drill down further on the first limb of his answer, when he talks about assistance to different Departments. Presumably he is referring to Gibraltar Government Departments, and in that context, why does it result in an expenditure to the Government purse?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, it is not necessarily in that way. It may be that there is a cultural exchange with Morocco, or there may be a business delegation, and it is in order to promote, encourage, and assist development of relations.

875 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Would the Hon. Minister agree with me if I were to say that the vast majority of these expenses would therefore be related to travel and things like that?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I am not able to say. I think there will be an element of that, but not necessarily.

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Madam Chair: Was there anything else? (*Interjection*) Head 17 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 18, Collection and Disposal of Refuse; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

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Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Chair, can I ask on subhead 2(9), Disposal of Other Items. The estimate £3.6 million, the forecast outturn £6.2 million. So, more than £2 million above. Can I ask what that Head of Expenditure is used for, and why the increase there?

890

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: This is related to the disposal of items other than the normal rubbish – municipal waste – so it would be including the larger items and so on. This does fluctuate in the amount that we produce and there is a certain element that is outside our control in relation to fees across the border.

895 But we are hopeful – we have just published an expressions of interest to try and deal with waste in a different way – that we will not need to spend the amount that we spend this year. This is why we have included a more modest sum. Something that we are trying to control.

900 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** This disposal of the items happens in Spain, does it? Or does it get transhipped somewhere else? And when he says, ‘these are items other than municipal waste’, meaning what? If he can give us a range, we understand it. Perhaps also, at the tail end of his answer when he says that whether their thinking is to deal with it in a different way; in what way?

905 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** This is largely bulky items and recyclates. The expressions of interest is calling for waste separation and possibly dealing it in a different way – perhaps not going to where these items go now. But obviously we have to wait and see what proposals come in.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: These items are – did he say non-recyclable or recyclables?

910 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** This will include the bulky items like mattresses and large things like that, and recyclates; the recycle element of the refuse, which is collected separately.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: When we see around Gibraltar everything being collected in different ways for recycling, and I think the hon. Member has indicated – I do not know if the hon. Member wants me to pause while he has the aside, so he can listen to the question.

915 Everything is collected separately for recycling and the hon. Member, I think, has indicated in this House before that the recycling then gets transported across to Spain. Is that cost within this item, or is it somewhere else in the Heads of Expenditure?

920 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** That cost is included there. Again, if the Hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to have a breakdown, I can make this available to him. It includes the cost to ‘*Mancomunidad*’. It includes pallets and bulky items, it includes asbestos, etc. So there is a whole breakdown that I can provide.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, just looking under 'Other Charges to Wages' and the emergency overtime. The overtime is £1.2 million. In relation to wages, it is about 70% of the wage bill. If you look in the outturn on 2022-23, it is about 62% of the wage bill. Can the Minister explain how this arises? Is there a set formula?

It is remarkable that it is always emergency overtime. There is no other form of overtime worked. Is there something that – just seems odd, Madam Chair, that there is consistently a high level of overtime equivalent to certainly more than 50% of the wage bill. Does the Minister have any visibility as to why there is so much emergency overtime? I can understand some overtime, but £1.2 million of emergency overtime?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Chair, this is something that I am sure that, if you were to check the Estimates Book over two or three decades, you will see there is a large element of overtime. It is almost the nature of the industry that a lot of this work is done in unsociable hours and that is why there is a large element of overtime in this head. We are looking at ways in which we can tackle this, but at the moment, that is the way the industry works. They are working unsociable hours.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, I appreciate that and I appreciate his point if you go back a number of years. But can he explain then why he has put in a notional £1,000 for 2024-25 if historically there has been – it would appear to be at least £1 million in that line.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, this is one of the things that might change. We are looking at a change in the way we deal with this, so putting in any figure would not be accurate – no matter what figure we put – because we are looking at changing this and reducing this.

Madam Chair: Head 18 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 19, Upper Rock Tourist Sites and Beaches; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Chair, can I ask on 2(16), Sites Management Systems. The estimate last year was £1.8 million, the forecast outturn £2.5 million, the estimate for next year £3.8 million – so, about £700,000 more spent than last year on what they estimate. Different questions there. First of all, why the increase of £700,000 there? What does this head cover; sites management systems? Then, what is the reason for another £1.3 million in spend in this subhead?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Chair, I think that we had a similar question at this stage last year. The answer is the same. This is the ticketing system which controls access to all the sites on the Upper Rock and elsewhere. The fact that it has gone up is a good sign, because there is a formula that this increases in relation to the number of visitors and the increase in the number of visitors. So, in fact, there is more now coming in; more than the 700,000 or so is expected to come in than will actually go out. This is a reflection of an increase in visitor numbers.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, if it will assist the hon. Gentleman, he may want to look at line 17 on page 7, which is the revenue page, and there you can see the co-relation between the increases in the cost versus the increases in the receipts that are coming in to the Government.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I think I mentioned in my Budget speech that there had been an increase in a couple of million in income because of the increase.

975 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see. These are two sides of the same coin, I think. The Chief Minister points me to the revenue page, but this is the expenditure page. Let me just set out my understanding; the Minister perhaps can confirm whether that is so.

This part, which is the expenditure, is reflective of higher numbers, but this particular sum, whatever it is in this column, is paid under contractual arrangements to those administering the system, is that right?

980 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Yes, it is a contractual fee.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: So that is the contractual fee, and this is a contractual fee payable to one particular operator who has been the subject of recent questions in the House, is that correct?

985 **Hon. Chief Minister:** This is three different payments. Three different contractual payments for three different operators.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Sorry, it is three different contractors? I see. All right. Well, perhaps I can seek that information on another occasion.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, just to follow up on a point from the Leader of the Opposition. We have been referred to the increase in revenue and the increase in cost as a sort of linkage between the two. But if it is a ticketing system, I can understand the linkage to, for example, volume of visitors in terms of numbers of tickets issued. Therefore that would affect, I presume, the maintenance of machinery or whatever equipment. But of course the Government can increase the cost of tickets unilaterally. My question is: is the formula linked to the price of the ticket, i.e. the revenue, or is it linked to the volume of visitors?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes I believe it is linked to the volume of visitors, yes. If I am wrong, I will be corrected and I will rectify it, but my understanding is volume of visitors.

1000

Hon. R M Clinton: Sorry, Madam Chair. I guess the point I am making is it should be on numbers of tickets issued, but not as a percentage of the revenue of the Government.

1005

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes I believe that that is the way it works. That is what I just answered.

Madam Chair: Head 19 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 20, Education; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1010

Madam Chair: Anything on Head 20?

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Chair, may I ask – this is 2 and 12, under the Discretionary scholarships. The forecast outturn £1.5 million, the provision on discretionary £700,000. Is that because they are envisaging providing less? Or is it that this is a provision and it may be more depending on the applications?

1015

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes To a large extent, this is demand-led and it is also subject to the independent scholarships panel to see which discretionary scholarship they deem should be supported. So, it could be more and then it could be less. It is a figure that we never quite know until the full process, which is ongoing at the moment, is finalised.

1020

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Chair, this is section 1, Payroll and it is Special Needs Learning Support Assistance and Temporary Cover. Given that every year they insert a nominal value, but it is

1025 significant sums that we are seeing every year for temporary cover and SNLSAs. Can the Hon. Minister clarify why they do not reflect more accurate estimates, given that they could? It would be reasonable to argue that, from the previous figures that they are seeing every year, they could estimate a more accurate estimate than a nominal figure of £1,000.

1030 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** Madam Chair, this is a similar point to the one raised earlier in relation to the overtime in refuse. As we have increased the numbers, we are aiming to reduce this as much as possible. In many ways, because of the nature of what these members of staff do, it is demanded, so any figure that we were to place there would not be accurate. The convention has been over the years – and continues to be – that we represent it in this way.

1035 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Chair, on subhead 2(7) and the Gibraltar College, there is a provision for £30,000. It does not specify what exactly does the College use those £30,000 for.

1040 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** These are specific costs. I think, again, the question was asked last year. They are running costs in relation to the College that have, by convention again, been singled out. But there is nothing there that is unusual. It is just running costs and so on.

1045 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, but what draws my attention is I know that through Question Time we have established that vocational courses and so on are being administered by the College, and that is covered under 2(15), which is Vocational Courses. So, if no other school gets a £30,000 bonus, what does the College need those £30,000 for?

1050 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** The other schools do get a capitation, which is not specifically broken down. It is just that, almost by tradition, the College expenses have been included separately. It is not anything other than that.

1055 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask on 2(31), which is St Mary's School, the description of the head is Rent and Building Insurance Fees. Does the Minister have a breakdown of what is rent and what is the building insurance under the forecast outturn of £852,000 and then the estimate for next year £1.2 million?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes I am sure I speak for all of us on this side when I thank the staff of the Financial Secretary for being on hand.

1060 Yes, the rent is approximately £1.135 million, building insurance £13,000 and rates £84,000. That brings it to £1.23 million. The reason for the difference is that last year the school opened in September, therefore there is not a full-year effect – it is about three-quarters of the year – whereas this year it will have been in use for the whole of the financial year and therefore that is that is a difference between the two figures.

1065 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Subhead 2(9), Special Education Abroad. What is that about?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes That is children who, for some reason or other, need to be in schools outside Gibraltar for – could be supported needs, could be other related matters where it is felt that they need special schools outside Gibraltar.

1070 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Is he able to say how many?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes I believe we have one at this moment in time.

1075 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The estimated figure, would that be for that one child or is the Government estimating and making provision for potentially more than one?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes I believe this is for one. These are very special and expensive details, a lot of high intensity care and supervision and so on.

1080 **Madam Chair:** Head 20 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 21, Heritage; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1085 **Hon. D J Bossino:** So 2(13), which refers to Heritage and 1.372 – I think this question has been raised in the past, but I will raise it again if I have. Is that the Knightsfield Holdings Ltd contract? Is it the totality of that, or am I mistaken?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes That is correct, Madam Chair.

1090 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I am correct that I am mistaken, or I am correct that it relates to the Knightsfield Holdings Ltd contract?

Madam Chair: The danger of asking two questions in one go.

1095 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** Madam Chair, it is correct that it is the Knightsfield museum contract.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. Minister able to say why it is envisaged that the contract sum has increased? Well, it has increased and it is envisaged that it will maintain itself at that level.

1100 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** Yes. I am advised that this is the IRP increase in the contract.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, if you look at head 17, Environment, wherever there is a contract for running something, the name of the entity is listed and yet here in Heritage it is not. I wonder if the Minister would consider actually listing whoever it is that is running the contract.

1105

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes The fact that it is not listed here? This is the way that it has been done. I do not have any say in the actual wording. For some, the company is mentionable, some it is not. I do not know the particular reason; that has been like that since before I was a Minister.

1110 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, could I encourage the Minister just to add it for sake of completeness?

1115 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** The thing is, if anything, it should be removed because otherwise we would have to list every single contract, which I think would be a little bit too much. I do not know. I agree that there should be consistency, but in which direction?

1120 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I have no difficulty in somehow reflecting the Knightsfield element there. I think they provide excellent value for money. They have got us on the front page of *The New York Times*; they have got us into the *National Geographic*; they have got us a television series on Netflix. Highlighting them there, as the hon. Mr Clinton suggests, I think is no bad thing.

Although I do understand that this is how it was booked in their time, and so therefore must have been the right way to do it then. But I have absolutely no difficulty in either in brackets or some other way, perhaps in a footnote, reflecting it to payment to Knightsfield.

1125

Madam Chair: Head 21 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 22, Driver and Vehicle Licensing; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1130 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can I ask on 2(17), the Incentive Scheme on the Importation of Hybrid Vehicles, which had an estimate of £50,000 and a forecast outturn of £270,000. Is that increase because there has been additional take-up under the incentive scheme? Can someone perhaps explain that to us?

1135 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** There has been an increase in hybrid vehicles. I think I mentioned in my speech last week, and in answer to a Question before that, that the main type of vehicle being registered now is in fact hybrid. That reflects that. It is difficult to tell whether that will continue. Clearly we prefer that to go in the direction of electric vehicles. So we are not quite sure what this year is going to bring, but the fact is that hybrid vehicles are now about 70% of vehicles sold.

1140 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So the sum provided is, while not notional, it may be exceeded if there is a trend on take-up of this particular vehicle next year? Which of course we all want to encourage anyway.

1145 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** I think that is a realistic representation of what might happen.

Hon. D J Bossino: I will try and take this in some order. 2(11), professional fees of £2,000, which seems to be a fixed amount. Can he say what that relates to?

1150 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** Madam Chair, this is in relation to Blue Badge requests and medical advice in relation to licences and so on. So, from here it is largely medical fees.

1155 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And 2(13), the Blue Badge scheme, which does not seem to be moving; we have no shown sums and then zero expense, so there is no burdening of the public purse. But I just wanted to understand why it is that there is not any movement under the Blue Badge scheme.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes That is not really something that costs much. It is administratively done and in future it will be done by the ministry of my colleague the Minister for Equality. I am told that that is the cost that would normally go into printing of the badges.

1160 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The cost which has amounted to nought at this stage?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes They must have printed quite a few in the previous year, so they had plenty of stock.

1165 **Hon. D J Bossino:** In relation to 15, Training Expenses, can you explain why there is a significant jump from £2,000 to £57,000?

1170 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** Yes, indeed. We want to upskill the team at the DVLD. We think it is important in ensuring proper management of drivers and for safety purposes. So we are intending to increase the amount of training of the transport inspectors, of the senior inspectors, and so on. There is a whole list – it includes training in the UK – and I am happy to provide the breakdown separately to the hon. Member.

1175 **Madam Chair:** Head 22 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 23, Technical Services; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, just out of interest, in subhead 2, line 13 and 14, we have two different cleaning services. I was wondering why Technical Services has, in fact, any line for

1180 cleaning when we have contracts for cleaning with Britannia. I was wondering what the difference
is.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes Sorry, I did not catch the last bit. I am not wearing my hearing aid.
Seriously.

1185

Hon. R M Clinton: I did not know you needed one. But I was just wondering why Technical
Services has lines for cleaning where we have contracts with Britannia?

1190 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** I think the cleaning of street gullies is more specialised. It includes raising
the drains and cleaning inside and so on, so I think that is separate. Cleaning services is in relation
to office cleaning of all the various different Departments that Technical Services has in various
parts of Gibraltar.

1195 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Sorry, Madam Chair. I am not quite sure I understand the last point, that the
cleaning is of various suboffices of Technical Services? Because I think each Department has their
own cleaning expense.

1200 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** Yes, that is correct. It is cleaning of the premises. It is the cleaning of the
whole of Joshua Hassan House, Duke of Kent House – that area – as well as the other outposts, if
I can call them that, that they have. The garage, the sewer section – Technical Services has
Departments in different parts of Gibraltar and this is what covers the cleaning of all those
facilities. It is quite a lot of real estate.

1205 **Hon. R M Clinton:** So coming back to the cleaning of street gullies. By street gullies, am I to
understand he means the sewers?

1210 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** No. I mean the gullies, that if they are not cleaned properly – particularly
just before the onset of the autumn rains – and they are not cleared out of any accretions and
accumulations that have happened, particularly through the summer, we get flooding. So, it is
quite specialist work and that is what is provided there, as has been provided for many years.

Hon. R M Clinton: I understand. Then, just for the sake of completeness, sewers work would
appear where? Or does that come under Environment and I may have missed it? If so, I apologise.

1215 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I gave that analysis in the context of my responses to
Mr Sacarello – who I wish well; I understand he is not well from what we have been told by the
Leader of the Opposition. The hon. Gentleman would have seen from the Excel sheet that was
circulated that that is in the I&D.

1220 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes** Just to repeat what the Chief Minister said, it looks like the hon. Mr Clinton
has not picked it up. The sewer work is included in the provision provided in the capital under the
I&D.

1225 **Madam Chair:** Head 23 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 24, Economic Development; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1230 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, I think we may have discussed this last year on subhead 2,
line 13, Economic Research. I think I remember vaguely last year the Hon. Father of the House
referred to some work he was doing on returning students, etc.

It has come in at £160,000; he has got it down at £300,000 for 2024-25. Could he shed some light on what is envisaged to be done under Economic Research?

1235 **Minister for Inward Investment and the Savings Bank (Hon. Sir J J Bossano):** Madam Chair, the figure that we put is increased because we are expecting that there will be more activity in this financial year than there was last year, and that the research is undertaken in estimating and evaluating whether something is worth proceeding with or not. So it is based on an assumption that we will be doing much more this year than we did last year.

1240 It is evaluating potential areas that we will support or not support as part of the National Economic Plan in capital works in the private sector. There is a cost and sometimes it is a cost that cannot be recovered if the decision is not to proceed. So, if we evaluate a particular proposal that we get to support something and we find that we do not think that is a viable proposition, the money cannot be recovered. If it is something that actually goes ahead, then we recover the cost that we engaged in – the support that is given – and therefore it is not charged to that head.

1245

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, I am grateful to the Minister's explanation. Can he advise, for 2024-25, whether any element of that is outsourced to professionals such as accountants, etc.

1250 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** This is the costs that are incurred in the company that employs a number of people; a declining number of people, in fact. It is funded from the Department, but the expenditure takes place in the company, and it deals with the work that they are doing.

The principal work nowadays is the people that are in the reclamation area on the Eastside, which were in charge of ensuring where the rubble used to be deposited and so on. We had a number of workers there. The company, Gibraltar General Services Ltd, is 100% funded from this head, but it is a declining cost because in fact the company will not replace people who retire.

1255

But the activity is linked to us giving support in areas and, until very recently, much of it was related to the area of refuse and the area of rubble from building sites where we deployed workers and it was paid from this head.

1260 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, I am grateful to the Minister. If I understand it correctly, Gibraltar General Services Ltd would effectively then contract for any services that may be required – specialist services – to evaluate National Economic Plan projects, and that the Minister is effectively repurposing the company.

1265 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, is the hon. Gentleman asking about line 13 or line 25?

Hon. R M Clinton: I was asking about line 13, Madam Chair.

1270 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I thought so. Madam Speaker, when the hon. Gentleman said 2024-25, I think the Minister's attention was turned to line 25. The answer he has been giving about the reclamation and the company there, which is declining, is about line whilst, from the second question, I think that the hon. Gentleman expected his question about professionals to be answered about line 13, not about line 25, but in respect of the year 2024-25. I think that is the confusion that has arisen.

1275 Just to assist the House, the question that the hon. Gentleman put, which is in relation to line 13, Economic Research, and whether any of that £300,000 includes fees for professionals, the answer is it does include fees for professionals. The other answer, which is about the individuals who were being repurposed because they were — the reclamation on the Eastside, which is no longer in our control, related to line 25.

1280 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask, Madam Chair, on (15), which is the Additional Contribution. There is a forecasted contribution – an increase of about £1.1 million for next year. Am I reading this right, that that is representative of additional staff costs across the Government?

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: I think it reflects the increase in the minimum wage.

1285 **Madam Chair:** Any other questions on Head 24? Head 24 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 25, Statistics office; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Madam Chair: Head 25 stands part of the Bill.

1290

Clerk: Head 26, Health and Care; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1295 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, at the risk of being a broken record, subhead 2, line 10, which is the Additional Contribution to the Care Agency. I again bring to the attention of the House, the question of this £10 million settlement payment and where this should be properly reflected, given that it has already been incurred.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave a few moments ago.

1300

Madam Chair: Head 26 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 27, Utilities; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1305 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, can I ask – under 2(3), Additional Contribution, the forecast outturn £31.5 million. Is that related to the fuel issue that the Hon. Chief Minister was talking about in his principal speech?

1310 **(Minister for Health, Care and Business) Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Chair, it is to match the costs incurred by the GEA.

1315 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, can I ask in respect of subhead 2, specifically in respect to water, lines 5 to 7. In the utility bills there is a little box that says, 'The Government is subsidising the bill by X amount', but looking at this, it would appear that the bulk of the expense seems to be in respect to the saltwater system. Is that correct? In which case, in terms of potable fresh water, it is only envisaged to be £90,000. Am I reading this correctly or is there something I am missing?

1320 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the subsidy is across the board. These are the contracts which AquaGib enters into, but the subsidy is measured across the board. So it is not reflected here.

1325 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, that would make sense. May I encourage the Minister to consider perhaps amending the description?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Chair, we believe it accurately describes the situation.

1330 **Hon. R M Clinton:** I am sorry, Madam Chair, the Minister just said it is across the board and you are saying 'saltwater system contract' accurately describes the situation. It seems to be contradictory.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Gentleman missed the first part of the Minister's contribution where she said that the subsidy is not paid here, it is paid across the board, it is paid in the company. These amounts are the amounts which are properly provided for with those descriptions.

1335 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, in which case, where is the amount paid to the company reflected?

Hon. Chief Minister: It is within the company, Madam Speaker.

1340 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, where does the company receive the money from? It has got to come from the Government from some area, the Consolidated Fund.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, the Government takes a lower dividend.

1345 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Sorry, Madam Chair, the taking of a dividend from the company is not the same as a subsidy. So, is the Government saying that what they tell people is a subsidy is in fact a lower dividend? Is that what we are being told?

1350 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker. It is a subsidy because the Government's share of the dividend is not taken by the Government. It is provided to be kept in as a subsidy to the cost of water to the individual. So instead of taking it as a dividend and then paying it back as a subsidy, we simply forego that amount of dividend which is kept by the company to subsidise the production of fuel, but not in the element of the other shareholder. The other shareholder does not subsidise water in Gibraltar, only the Government subsidises water in Gibraltar.

1355 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, at the risk of — I am not going to labour the point, but obviously, from a corporate profitability point of view, you cannot declare a dividend for a profit you do not have. It would appear that there is some split structure for accounting within the company, which I will not labour, but is there any way of — just to get my understanding right, there is no actual payment coming out of the Consolidated Fund to AquaGib other than as reflected here?

1365 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, in some years, there has had to be a payment from the Consolidated Fund. I remember that was the case many years ago. In other years, there is not a payment because in the amount that the company collects, the Government gives its share back into the company for the purposes of subsidising the production of water.

Madam Chair: Head 27 stands part of the Bill.

1370 **Clerk:** Head 28, Port; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Madam Chair: Head 28 stands part of the Bill.

1375 **Clerk:** Head 29, Maritime Services; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. D J Bossino: May I take the Minister to 2(15) which is Contributions to GDC Staff Services and there is a significant increase there? Can she explain what the reason is?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Chair, the £7,000 increase?

1380 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, sorry, there was an actual expenditure of £76,000, then it became an estimated £146,000 and then forecast out and it stayed at that level. I just wanted to understand why the increase?

1385 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The number of staff went up, Madam Chair. It is a GDC contribution.

Madam Chair: Head 29 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 30, Business; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

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Hon. Dr K Azopardi: On the Establishment on Business, do I take it that these are repositioned staff because we have gone from eight to 19? Is it people who were somewhere else and now they have been located under here?

1395

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Yes, Madam Speaker, they are relocations.

Madam Chair: Head 30 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 31, Town Planning and Building Control; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1400

Madam Chair: Head 31 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 32, Procurement Office; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1405

Madam Chair: Head 32 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 33, Justice; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1410

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Chair, I am at subsection (1)(e) Probation Salaries. The forecast outturn for 2023-24 is £85,000, but the estimate for 2024-25 is £115,000. The complement for Probation has not changed, as far as I can see from the numbers given. What is the reason for that additional?

1415

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): It is recruitment, Madam Speaker. Vacancies filled.

Hon. J Ladislaus: At subhead 2, and I am at line 1, General Expenses, the estimate for 2023-24 was £6,000, yet the forecast outturn for 2023-24 is £23,000, which is almost four times as much. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps give some information as to the reason for that?

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Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I am advised by the Financial Secretary that it is to do with reorganisation of expenses within ministries.

1425

Hon. J Ladislaus: At subhead 2, I am at line 9, Rent and Service Charges. So, from 2022-23 to the forecast outturn at 2023-24, we have noughts in the Book. The estimate for 2024-25 is £183,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain the reason for that?

Hon. N Feetham: This is because of the new officers for the Probation Services.

1430

Madam Chair: Head 33 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 34, Gibraltar Law Courts; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1435

Madam Chair: Head 34 stands—sorry, did you have—did the hon. Member have a question? I do not know whether you are nodding for me to move on or to ask a question.

Hon. J Ladislaus: No, apologies, it is to ask a question.

1440 I am at subhead 2 and line 17 at Duty Legal Representative Scheme. We had an estimate 2023-24 of £20,000 and yet the forecast outturn for 2023-24 is £5,000. Am I correct in assuming whether that is due to the number of cases that were seen to or is it that perhaps less lawyers are signing up to the scheme?

1445 **Hon. N Feetham:** This is demand-led, Madam Speaker.

Madam Chair: Head 34 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 35, Policing; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1450 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** At subhead 1, I am at line (1)(b)(ii). So I am at Emergency. The estimate for 2023-24 is £50,000. The forecast outturn was £390,000. Could the Hon. Minister please provide a breakdown or some more information as to the reason for the £390,000?

1455 **Hon. N Feetham:** That is investigation-led, Madam Chair.

Hon. J Ladislaus: As to Manning Level Maintenance, we have an estimate of £350,000 and the forecast outturn is £715,000. Could we have some more information as to the reason for the over double of that figure?

1460 **Hon. N Feetham:** Yes, this is as a result of the estimate making provision for a minimum manning level. It is then obviously impacted by what happens on the ground, such as expenses for covering officers for sick leave, things such as Frontier queues, I believe, and crime-led investigations, especially during the weekend.

1465 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am at subhead 2 and line 9. So the estimate for 2023-24 was £50,000, yet the forecast outturn for the Motorboats and Launchers — Fuel and Lubricants was £25,000. Could the Hon. Minister confirm whether that is because there was less use of the launchers or what is the reason behind that?

1470 **Hon. N Feetham:** Again, Madam Chair, it is demand-led, so less usage means that we have made provision for an estimate to reflect that accordingly.

1475 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Just one further, so I am at head 2 again, at line 23, the 999 Emergency Hotline, the estimate for 2024-25 of £12,000, could the Hon. Minister confirm whether that is a one-off cost for the setting up of that line or is it a recurrent expenditure from here on out?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, we are dealing with the recurrent expenditure. We are in the white pages. All of this is recurrent. It is not one-off. One-off is in the I&D.

1480 **Madam Chair:** Head 35 to stand part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 36, Prison; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Madam Chair: Head 36 to stand part of the Bill.

1485

Clerk: Head 37, Income Tax; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, just looking at the complement and it seems to have gone down, as has the salary cost. The Minister has obviously mentioned his recruitment of two

1490 individuals. I was wondering whether the Minister can advise whether that is actually reflected in
the salary numbers and the complement.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, this is a point I made earlier in relation to Personnel and
Development Department. The hon. Gentleman will see that there are three supernumerary staff
1495 referred to in the context of the complement, and as I told the House earlier, all of the
supernumerary staff are being moved from there to the Personnel and Development Department.
I will allow the Hon. Mr Feetham to speak about the recruitments but, as I understand it, those
are contractual recruitments not reflected here. They are not civil service recruitments. The figure
1500 that affects this number is the explanation I gave earlier about the supernumerary staff. The
hon. Gentleman should have seen it there. It is the £65,000 going down to £62,000, because those
three supernumerary staff have moved to the Personal and Development head.

Hon. R M Clinton: Sorry, Madam Chair, I did not know whether the Minister was going to say
anything. The Chief Minister seemed to suggest that these were not civil servants. Is that the case?
1505

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, these are civil servants. The three supernumerary staff
are civil servants. They are moved to where all Civil Service supernumerary staff now are, which
is the Personnel and Development head. But they stay in the Departments in which they were.
They have not been lost to the Department. They are just booked because they are
1510 supernumerary. They are booked under the Personnel and Development head. That is what I
explained to the House earlier when I was dealing with the Personnel and Development head.

The question the hon. Gentleman asked was about the recruitments that have been
announced by the Hon. Minister, and what the Hon. Minister has already informed the House
about is that they are recruited on contract, which means they are not civil servants.
1515

Madam Chair: Anything further from the Hon. Mr Clinton?

Hon. R M Clinton: Yes. Madam Chair, just for the sake perhaps of my memory and for new
Members of the House, can the Chief Minister explain exactly what is the difference between
1520 supernumerary staff and a normal civil servant within a head of establishment for the
Department?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, there is no difference between an individual who is
supernumerary and an individual who is in the complement. They are all civil servants.
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Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chairman, so why would two individuals who work exclusively, I
assume — I am happy to be corrected— for the Income Tax Office and not be within the
establishment of the Income Tax Office. I fail to see the logic.

Hon. Chief Minister: Because, Madam Speaker, as I explained when I was dealing with the
Human Resources Department this year, now Personnel and Development Department, and
indeed I think in other years when I have also explained this point, where individuals are
supernumerary and there are very many reasons why an individual may be supernumerary, they
may be there for a short-term period.
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The Income Tax Department may have asked to do an exercise and they may require three AOs
for 36 months, for example; or three EOs for 36 months. Traditionally, there was a view that you
sometimes put those supernumerary staff in the Department. If you do that, Madam Speaker, you
will lose control of how many supernumerary staff you have. How would we quickly be able to see
that we have at least three supernumerary executive officers? When there is an EO vacancy
1535 somewhere else, if you do not know that you have an EO supernumerary, you might go out and
do a promotion round, when in fact you have got somebody who is supernumerary, and because
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they are already EO, they should take the post in complement so that they are secure in their EO post. That is the reason it has been done. It has got nothing to do with them being a different class of civil servant. It is just about where they are in that period and keeping control of those numbers.

1545 I hope that is clear enough for the hon. Gentleman.

Madam Chair: Nothing further? Head 37 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 38, Financial Services; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

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Madam Chair: Head 38 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 39, Gambling Division; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

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Madam Chair: Head 39 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 40, Postal Services; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1560 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** There, Madam Speaker, I just wanted a clarification. Rather than clarification, it is clear from the establishment figures on page 124 that there has been an increase there of post-delivery persons. Perhaps the Minister could indicate, was that because there were vacancies there or because they decided that the service needed more people at that level?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Chair, this is the deal that was done with the unions.

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Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Sorry, what deal was done with the unions? I am not following.

1570 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, there were a number of individuals here who had been employed long term as temporary staff, and the agreement with the union was that they would, from memory, because it was a previous Minister, that they would be brought into the complement and they would then be able to fill the posts of post-delivery person as those became available in the complement.

So what hon. Members will see is that in the coming years, the supernumerary number will go down as they become subsumed in the post-delivery person complement of 22, which there is here.

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1580 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see, so those people which are currently booked as supernumerary post-delivery persons, those nine, in forthcoming years will be reflected higher up along the line as post-delivery person but above the supernumerary heading. But if that is the agreement, why has it not happened already? Is there like an agreement to transition people over a period of time?

1585 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker. It is that the complement of post-delivery personnel currently stands at 22, and as those retire or leave to other posts, then those who are supernumerary will no longer be supernumerary. The number of supernumerary individuals will be reduced because as you have more of the vacancies available at the top, the number that are supernumerary is 22 — sorry, will be less than 9 because the 22 will stay current.

So they are supernumerary because we have 9 more than the numeral 22. As the 22 start to make way, the 9 will reduce.

1590 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** But let me talk about the practicalities. At the moment, there are 22 — the establishment of post-delivery persons is 22 and those positions, I assume, are filled. Added to the supernumerary, you have got 31 post-delivery persons who are actually available to the Director of Postal Services to deliver mail. Given the Hon. Chief Minister's answer, it is suggestive

1595 that the establishment is not going to change but the supernumerary number will be reduced gradually. But is he suggesting that the delivery of mail can be done with less personnel?

Hon. Chief Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker, because the new personnel have different timings to the old personnel.

1600 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, just for the sake of my sanity, can the Chief Minister explain the difference between the supernumerary staff showing an establishment on the Postal Services, and the conversation we just had about the supernumerary staff for Tax Office. Why is it that here they appear, and yet in the Tax Office they do not? What is the logic?

1605 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, because Postal Services is different, and these grades are not transferable. So a post-delivery person is not an AA, an AO, an EO, or HEO, etc. They are employed to provide services only in this Department. There are no post-delivery persons in any other Department which the Personnel and Development Department could deploy them to in the event that they were to run out of work in one particular Department. They are not
1610 supernumerary for the purposes of the whole of the Civil Service. These are very specifically supernumerary only to this Department. I do hope that does not help the hon. Gentleman's sanity.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, as we increasingly get on, my sanity is definitely going out the window, if we had windows. But, Madam Chair, does he not appreciate that what he has just
1615 said defies logic because the two individuals — going back to the Tax Office — who are specialists in transfer pricing, etc., as the Hon. Minister has explained on several occasions, are hardly the sorts of individuals you transfer to any other Government Department? Does the Chief Minister just not see that?

1620 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Sorry, the hon. Gentleman says that an EO from the Income Tax Department is not transferable to another Department; is that the question?

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chairman, if the two individuals recruited by a Tax Office who are
1625 specialists in transfer pricing have been given a grade, and I am not familiar what grade they have given, if they are now saying that they are at the discretion of the Government transferable to, for example, the transport section, I am sure they will be delighted.

Hon. Chief Minister: Absolutely, Madam Speaker. Ecstatic, no doubt. However, they would not
1630 be the people that we are talking about because we have not discussed those people. I told the hon. Gentleman that those people had been recruited on contract. They are in the GDC, they are not in these white pages, but it appears that his sanity just cannot get around this.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, so now we hear they are not civil servants, they are GDC
1635 contract employees.

Hon. Chief Minister: Not now, Madam Speaker. I have told him during the course of my
1640 intervention this morning, the Minister has told this House on a number of occasions and I think in the public statements that we have made. I specifically said these are not the people who the hon. Member has talked about as the contracted individuals who are being brought into the Income Tax Department.

If the hon. Gentleman listens to everything that is being said, it might actually be very good for his sanity, Madam Chair.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Can I just return to the logic of this; the logic argument? I think the answer
1645 that the Chief Minister gave to my hon Colleague is that the logic for doing it this way, the

1650 supernumerary staff in this area, in Postal Services, is because there are no post-delivery persons anywhere else. But if we were to turn back to page 39, booked under Personnel and Development as supernumerary staff, you have got, for example, a leading firefighter or a Deputy Director of Nursing Services. There are no leading firefighters anywhere else. So why would you not put the postal delivery persons there as well? In the same argument, it would not be that there are no other postal delivery persons, there are no leading firefighters in any other Department, and yet that person is not booked in the fire brigade part.

1655 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Because that is the grade that they have, Madam Speaker, but they are not working in the Departments which those grades relate to. They are working in other grades because, for reasons which I would assume the hon. Gentleman would be aware of, they have had to be moved out of those Departments and they are working in other Departments but they have kept their grades.

1660 But to keep them in view, they are there so that we can always remember that they are there. That does not affect the logic of this particular Department having its supernumerary staff there because there is a reason specific to that Department why they should be there.

1665 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So to understand that logic then, the hon. Member is saying that if I look at the table on page 30, every person on that list under supernumerary is not in the Department which you would think they are if you looked at the title of the job? That is right. So the Education and Training Policy Adviser is not in Education. Have I understood his answer?

1670 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, that is not exactly the case, because personnel across the board in Government is not a syllogism. Because it is not a syllogism, the hon. Gentleman cannot make that comparison.

1675 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** With respect, I was not making that comparison. He suggested in his answer that the difference in the logic was that when it comes to post-delivery persons, they are booked here and different to the firefighter because the post-delivery persons are in the Department. He suggested that everyone in 30 was not in the Department. That is why I was seeking his confirmation. It appears that that is not the logic either. I am trying to understand why they are booked in different ways.

1680 **Hon. Chief Minister:** That is the logic, Madam Speaker, but it is not logic which is syllogistic. That is what I am explaining to the hon. Gentleman. If he wants to insist on it being syllogistic, the answer is it is not syllogistic.

1685 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I am sorry, Madam Speaker, but it is — either the answer is everyone on page 30 is not in the Department and that is the logic or it is not but what he cannot do is give the answer that it is both.

1690 **Hon. Chief Minister:** In some instances it might be neither, Madam Speaker, because the hon. Gentleman should be reminded of the classic syllogism elephants have ears, Socrates has ears, Socrates is an elephant. No, Madam Speaker, that is not the position.

Madam Chair: Head 40 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 41, Equality; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1695 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Chair, can the Hon. Minister clarify what Shop Mobility is exactly, please?

1700 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Shop Mobility is something I have been informed that started during your time when you were in office. It is services to provide repairs to mobility scooters.

1705 **Hon. A Sanchez:** I can see from the Book — the three Books that I have here, that as far as I can see it goes back to at least 2019 and the sum is always £48,000. Am I right to assume that this is some type of services contract and, if so, can the hon. Member confirm, does he have the information as to what private entity it is and whether it has always been the same private entity?

1710 **Hon. C P Santos:** It is a services contract, the name of the company — I can check and let you know because I do not know exactly what the name — I believe it is service — I will let you know because I do not know the name of the actual company. As far as I am aware, I can check but I think it has been the same company.

1715 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am conscious that we have now been in Committee for two and a half hours and some of us have the liberty of moving in and out of the House, others do not. I wonder whether this might be a convenient moment to break for 15 minutes.

Madam Chair: We will recess for 15 minutes and I will come back to the Hon. Mr Origo.

The House recessed at 12 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 12.15 p.m.

**A Bill for an Act to Appropriate Sums of Money to the service of the
year ending on 31st day of March 2025—
Clauses considered —
Continued**

1720 **Madam Chair:** Yes, the Hon. Mr Origo wanted to speak.

Hon. G Origo: Thank you, Madam Chair.

1725 At part 2, subsection (6) on Rents and Service Charges, I note that the last year's outturn was £233,000 but this year's was £190,000. In my experience, rents and service charges have been increasing, so I wanted to ask the reason for this downturn in the expenses. Has the premises for equality moved or can the Minister please explain?

1730 **Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, with the change of ministerial portfolios the offices have changed and we have also got extra offices because we have taken in the supported needs and disabilities office. So that is where the difference in rental and service charge is.

Hon. G Origo: Thank you to the Minister.

1735 Madam Chair, could I ask with respect to part 2, subsection (8), Marriage Counselling, it seems to be a fixed expense of £12,000 a year. Can I ask the Hon. Minister if this is demand led or whether this is just a fixed salary expense given to the marriage counsellor?

Hon. C P Santos: From what I understand, this is also something that you originated when the GSD was in office, but this is a contractual amount, an annual figure of £12,000 for marriage counselling.

1740 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, with respect to part 2, subsection (9), Equality, can the Hon. Minister please explain what this expense includes? It appears to be a quite stable, static £90,000, £100,000 a year. Can he explain what are the heads that fall under this?

1745 **Hon. C P Santos:** Equality is all the different projects that are worked on from the Department itself, the Department for Equality, but now it is also split between the Supported Needs and Disability Office and the Ministry of Equality itself, so any campaigns or anything that we choose to do from the Ministry.

1750 **Hon. G Origo:** Finally, Madam Chair, could the Hon. Minister please confirm on part 2, subsection (12), in relation to contribution to the GDC staff services, is it £296,000 estimate with respect to the salaries of the five GDC employees which were going to be employed next year?

1755 **Hon. C P Santos:** This is correct. The contribution to GDC is the new staff. As I said, we have already taken in the supported needs and disabilities officers as well as supported employment so this is the extra staff that we have at the Ministry.

Madam Chair: Head 41 stands part of the Bill.

1760 **Clerk:** Head 42, Employment; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, on Other Charges, to line 7, Rents and Service Charges, £29,000 outturn for 2023-24, and a £94,000 estimate for 2024-25. I would be interested to know why.

1765 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Chair, the extra – the increase of £73,000 includes the cost of unit 78 at New Harbours. This was previously at another head, in head 24, Economic Development, and its newly acquired offices for the Employment Tribunal as well in Europort.

Madam Chair: Head 42 stands part of the Bill.

1770 **Clerk:** Head 43, Culture; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1775 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, could the Hon. Minister please explain at part 2, subsection (14) what the expense estimated for next year with respect to Elite Funding, marked at £10,000, relates to?

1780 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Chair, Elite Funding is a new head. It is an extra support, financial support, for people going into vocational training over and above what is already given under the educational scholarship as these are private – some are private institutions and the tuition fees are sometimes more expensive so we want to give an option to those getting into that type of educational training.

Madam Chair: Head 43 stands part of the Bill.

1785 **Clerk:** Head 44, Tourism; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1790 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, could the Hon. Minister please explain the reason for the savings, if we could call it, in relation to marketing at part 2, subsection (13)? We had estimated £700,000 in expenses but this came out to £615,000. Have we slowed down on marketing efforts with respect to tourism?

1795 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Chair, it is not that we have slowed down doing marketing but we are using different marketing strategies. There are things that do not necessarily need physical – someone to physically be there. It can be via advertising and digital advertising, so we are trying to streamline the costs of this. If you look back at 2022-23 it was only an expense of £300,000. Last year we went up to £615,000 and we are trying to streamline, so making a saving but not necessarily by marketing the product less.

1800 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, if I can turn to subhead 2, line 17, Information Officers, Contracted Services, the estimate for last year was zero and it came in at £107,000. This year, for 2024-25, we have £198,000. What is this in relation to and who is the contract with?

1805 **Hon. C P Santos:** We noticed last year that we needed some extra support with regards to information officers. This is not just with regards to the coach park and the terminals. This is also extra help that we have on the Upper Rock with regards to helping traffic management. The £107,000 is a pro rata of the £198,000 that are contracted for five information officers. I would need to check who the contract is with exactly, but that is why the difference between £107,000 and £198,000. One is pro rata and one is for the full 12 months.

1810 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chair, I am grateful for the answer.
So we would imply there is some sort of long-term contract in place going ahead and, if so, does the Minister have any information as to the contract? I am surprised he does not know who the contractor is.

1815 **Hon. C P Santos:** I needed to double check but the supplier is JT Security and – yes, I need to check the length of the contract but it is – I need to check the length of the contract. I am unsure of that now.

1820 **Hon. R M Clinton:** I am grateful to the Minister for that.
So these five labelled information officers, they seem to be doing varied sorts of duties. Are they, just for the sake of understanding their role, there to assist tourists, giving them information as to tourist sites and other information, or are they really about traffic management?

1825 **Hon. C P Santos:** The contract is a supply services agreement. I have the person that does the information – the information officer just does information officer duties as and when required, and then whenever we need the extra support on the Upper Rock when we have a lot of cruise liners, it is a different set of people that come. So it is not the same person that comes that is a tourist information officer that does that, too. So the contract is to supply services. So, for example, we have up to five people within our contract, so if we need extra support we do not use the same tourist information officers to do the traffic management on the Upper Rock.

1835 **Hon. R M Clinton:** So, Madam Chair, this is my last question on the point, really.
So these are not actually individuals that have any particular skillset in terms of knowledge of the tourism product or that type of information or history or heritage, these are just basically security officers?

1840 **Hon. C P Santos:** No, that is incorrect. We have the information officers. We have three currently who are permanently with us, and they get trained up to be information officers and know the tourism product and go through the tour guide training. Then we have up to two other people who we choose, who we call upon as traffic management within the Upper Rock when necessary. But those people do not necessarily need to know the tourist product. They are there to help the overspill of having 6,000 passengers on a cruise ship. But the information officers are just exclusively information officers and they are trained up to be so.

1845 **Madam Chair:** Head 44 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 45, Youth; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1850 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Chair, I see on the establishment of youth there are two members of staff are classified as industrial staff. Can the Minister – because I take it all the others are what we generally call the youth workers and so on. What are the industrial staff?

Hon. C P Santos: Madam Chair, if I am correct the industrial staff would be the caretaker and the cleaner.

1855 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Yes, because there is a separate expenditure for cleaning, so there is cleaning services, so I do not know, we either contract out the cleaning services or we have a cleaner.

1860 **Hon. C P Santos:** The youth service has many different premises so the one cleaner cannot clean all youth clubs as well as the premises and the offices. So I think we – am I correct in thinking we also outsource cleaning to some other clubs because there a lot of different clubs and offices and stuff? So we have a full-time cleaner with us and then we outsource whenever necessary.

1865 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, could the Hon. Minister explain what types of expenses are put under the head in part 2, subsections (6) and (7), Youth Activities and Youth Grants, both coming in at a respective £40,000 and £39,000?

1870 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Chair, with regards to number (6), Youth Activities is different outings or different events that are organised by each youth club in order to provide activities that are outside of the remit of the actual youth centre itself, and that is subdivided by all youth clubs. Then in subhead (7), Youth Grants is money that is given to four different organisations that provide services outside the service itself. So they apply for a youth grant. This is cub scouts, I think St John's Ambulance and Duke of Edinburgh.

1875 **Madam Chair:** Head 45 to stand part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 46, Drug and Alcohol Awareness and Rehabilitation Services; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1880 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, section 2, line 13, on Drug Awareness, the estimate for both 2022-23 and 2023-24 was £30,000 but the actual figure for 2022-23 comes back at zero and the forecast outturn for 2023-24 is also zero. Is there a specific reason why no money seems to have been spent on drug awareness by the Drugs and Alcohol Awareness Rehabilitation Service?

1885 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Chair, the drug awareness – this is one thing I questioned when I first got into office. It may seem that it is a promotional campaign for drug awareness. It was actually a programme to send people to overseas rehabs if necessary. We found that the services already offered in Gibraltar are enough and we have not sent anyone overseas, so that is why we have gone down to a nominal amount of £1,000.

1890 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Line 20, Secondments; the actual for 2023 on secondments was just over half a million pounds and the forecast outturn for 2023-24 is £625,000. Could the Hon. Minister clarify what these secondments are?

1895 **Hon. C P Santos:** The staffing is now – comes under a secondment from the Care Agency, so it
comes under secondment because we pay it as opposed to the Care Agency paying it and us
getting them as a secondment. We actually take on those salaries ourselves. So the difference is
1900 because in the past year we realised we needed a little bit more staff because as it is demand led
we do not know how many people are going to be at Bruce’s Farm itself. So the estimate is still
the same as it was in 2023-24 and that is why we – that is the difference.

Hon. A Sanchez: Can the Hon. Minister clarify whether these secondments have anything to
do with the fact that the staff complement of the aforementioned Department is now standing at
1905 zero?

Hon. C P Santos: We took over – well, the Care Agency took over the drugs – well, Bruce’s Farm
and the DARS programme as from 2021. So there used to be a Department of one person that
used to work for the admin side. We do not require that person anymore so that person has been
1910 moved into another Department. I am not quite sure where that person has been moved to, but
the secondment is with regards to the management and the staffing by Care Agency staff.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Hon. Minister clarify what relief cover constitutes exactly? Because
the actual expenditure for 2022-23 was just over a quarter of a million pounds and the forecast
1915 outturn for 2023-24 is almost £2,000. Could he elaborate on what relief cover is exactly?

Hon. C P Santos: The forecast outturn ended up being £196,000 last year with an estimate of
£200,000 this year. The relief cover is cover for one to ones, whenever someone needs to go on
suicide watch or someone has some further issues that they need one-to-one care, and that we
1920 can only estimate what the issues that will arise will be.

Madam Chair: Head 46 to stand part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 47, Housing; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1925 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

Can I ask on the – this is 2(20) on Incidental Estate Security where there is an actual cost of
130, which last year is – the outturn is 390 and there is a notional provision. I assume, but I am
asking the Minister to confirm, that this is the cost of the security that was rolled out in certain
estates as a pilot project. Is the fact that they have a notional cost for this year reflective that that
1930 scheme may not continue or –

Minister for Housing and the University (Hon. P A Orfila): We have had problems in the past
– sorry, Madam Chair. We have had problems in the past with evictions, etc., and so that is why
we have such a high elevated figure. Hopefully, that is a nominal £1,000 we may not use as much
1935 as we need. It is there in case.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. So there is not a fixed decision, policy decision, yet in relation to
extending those arrangements and I assume by the Minister’s answer that there is no contract in
place to continue that? These are *ad hoc* arrangements which are used whenever the Department
1940 has a requirement in certain estate; is that right?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Chair, that is correct.

Hon. D J Bossino: May I ask in relation to the same item, given that there was an actual
1945 expenditure of around £130,000, did that all go to the same company or does the – sorry. (**A
Member:** 390.) No, no, actual expenditure of 2022-23 of £130,000 and then there is a forecast

outturn, as my colleague has rightly mentioned, of 390 for 2023-24. Have those sums gone to the same entity and, if so, is she able to reveal which entity?

1950 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Chair, I would have to check those and see exactly whether we used more or not.

Hon. D J Bossino: I suppose I can either communicate separately with the hon. Member or, alternatively, file a formal Question in the next session of the House.

1955

Madam Chair: Head 47 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 48, University of Gibraltar; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1960

Madam Chair: Head 48 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 49, Fire and Rescue Service; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1965 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am at subheading 2, line 5. I note that the estimate for 2023-24 was £25,000. The forecast outturn was £46,000. I wonder whether the Hon. Minister could shed some light as to the reason for this outturn.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, it is demand led.

1970

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful for that answer. I understand that it may be demand led, but perhaps he could shed some light as to whether, for example, it could be that one of the appliances broke down, needed maintenance or –

1975

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, we do not have the details here.

Madam Chair: Head 49 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 50, Airport, Fire and Rescue Service; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1980

Madam Chair: Head 50 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 51, Civil Contingency; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

1985 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** At head 1, I am at (d), Employees' Pension Contributions. The forecast outturn for 2023-24 is £9,000. The estimate for 2023-24 was the £9,000 as well and the actual 2022-23 was close to the £9,000. Why, therefore, do we now have an estimate of zero for 2024-25?

1990 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Chair, the contributory scheme member is no longer there. He has retired.

1995 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Just one further question. At subhead 2, I am at line 12, weather transmission reports. Those came under – sorry, they came to £3,000 as a 2023-24 estimate. The forecast outturn was more than double and we now see an estimate of £10,000. Could the Hon. Minister provide some information as to the reason for the increase in those?

Madam Chair: Madam Speaker, we had to contract the services of a new service provider and hence the increase.

2000 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I may, at part 1, subsection (1)(a) on Salaries, I note that the
outturn is £132,000 for this year but the estimate for next year is £53,000, yet in terms of the
complement of staff there are no changes. Can the Hon. Minister please explain the difference in
the £80,000 in salary so we can see?

2005 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Chair, the salaries is less because of retirement of a member of staff
who was seconded to a different Department.

Madam Chair: Head 51 stands part of the Bill.

2010 **Clerk:** Head 52, Sport and Leisure; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Chair, on subhead 1(1), the Personal Emoluments, the salaries bill
seems to go up by £20,000, yet on the establishment we have a reduction of two members of
staff. So we have two members of staff less but yet a £20,000 increase in the salaries on
subhead 1(1).

2015 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Chair, I am informed that is because of vacancies that were available
and have been filled.

2020 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Okay. So if I then take you to subhead 2(6), the contribution to the GDC in
respect of staff services, we have increased the complement there by three but yet we have
increased the forecast or the expenditure as compared to the forecast by quasi £200,000. That
seems a quite high remuneration for three members of staff.

2025 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Chair, the complement of staff has risen simply because the
Industrial Relations Team have moved into the same head.

2030 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I think the Minister is trying to explain that the industrial relations staff may
have moved in. I am querying that it is an extra £180,000 for a token – or not for a token, for three
extra people. It seems very high wages. I do not know if it is that or not.

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, the GDC grades are high grades. Sorry, senior grades.

2035 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, in subhead 2(7), for the Europa Point Sports Complex, the
half a million pounds there, can we have some indication where – what exactly does that half a
million go towards?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, those half a million pounds go towards the maintenance
and running of the facilities.

2040 **Madam Chair:** Head 52 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 53, Gibraltar Audit Office; subhead 1, Payroll; subhead 2, Other Charges.

2045 **Madam Chair:** Head 53 stands part of the Bill. Clause 2 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Clause 3.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chair, if I may on this one, I do not know if we are coming to the
actual detail of it or we are just going straight to it. But Contributions of Government-Owned
Companies, zero, 2023-24, and the estimate 2024-25, £1,000 notional amount. I was wondering

2050 whether the Government is considering whether the companies will require any level of support or not in 2024-25.

Hon. Chief Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker. We will consider that issue as the year progresses.

2055 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Given that in 2023-24 there was no actual contribution but rather an advance of £27.6 million, is it the Government's understanding that £27.6 million will be repaid to the Consolidated Fund by the companies?

2060 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, we are going to consider following exactly the model of repayment that was in place when we were elected, which will enable us to see whether that repayment is made during the course of this financial year or another, which was the model that hon. Members must have considered was the appropriate and correct one, given that it is the one that we inherited.

2065 **Madam Chair:** Head 55 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 56, Transfer from Government Surplus; subhead 1, Payment to Social Assistance Fund — Import Duty — Transfer from Government Surplus.

2070 **Madam Chair:** Head 56 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 57, Contribution to the Improvement and Development Fund, subhead 1, Contribution to the Improvement and Development Fund.

2075 **Madam Chair:** Head 57 stands part of the Bill. Clause 3 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Clause 4; head 58, Exceptional Expenditure; subhead 1, Ex-Commissioner Special Inquiry.

2080 **Madam Chair:** Head 58 stands part of the Bill. Clause 4 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Clause 5; head 54, Supplementary Provision; subhead 1, Supplementary Funding.

Madam Chair: Head 54 stands part of the Bill. Clause 5 stands part of the Bill.

2085 **Clerk:** Clause 6, Improvement and Development Fund; head 101, Works and Equipment; subhead 1, Works and Equipment.

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Chair, the subhead 1(m), the Contribution to the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority of £170,000, is in respect of what particular work or equipment?

2090 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am reminded by the Financial Secretary that that is the figure that actually appears on the Green Pages for the GSLA and that relates to the amount for maintenance of children's parks.

2095 **Madam Chair:** Head 101 stands part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 102, Projects; subhead 1, Roads and Parking Projects.

2100 **Hon. D J Bossino:** On 101, I am slightly confused. So it is 1(k) Contribution to the Gibraltar Port Authority?

Madam Chair: We will go back exceptionally but if you have a question let me know. I am looking at the Opposition all the time. Where is your question on head 101?

2105 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I think it is the – yes, letter (k), and I just wanted to understand why – what the expenditure, estimated expenditure, of £400,000 related to. It seems to go back to the estimate of 2023-24 but then a focused outturn for 2023-24 drops to £50,000. I just wanted to – if the Minister could explain why that movement.

2110 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Chair, it is mainly in relation to VTS requirements and IT upgrades in relation to the VTS services.

Hon. D J Bossino: So she says ‘mainly’? Was that the answer? I did not quite catch it.

2115 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Speaker. It is in relation to the VTS upgrades.

2120 **Hon. D J Bossino:** If I may, in the next line, (l), contribution to Housing Works Agency, where there is a significant increase from £2 million to round about £6 million from 2023-24 estimates and forecast outturn for that year, and then it drops to £2.9 million. Could I also have an explanation as to why the movement in those numbers and what those relate to?

Hon. P A Orfila: £6 million was to repair the – Madam Chair. It was to repair the housing stock and this year we envisage £2.9 million, not thousand.

2125 **Madam Chair:** Head 101 to stand part of the Bill.

Clerk: Head 102, Projects; subhead 1, Roads and Parking Projects.

2130 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask on 1(a)(i), that is the cost there of £3 million over the estimates, is that related to the Kingsway Tunnel project or some other project?

2135 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, that is not just the tunnel, because I think the tunnel is provided for elsewhere. This is approach works in relation to the tunnel, so changes of traffic flow roundabout and the ancillary works done around there.

Madam Chair: Anything else on 102?

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Chair, on –

2140 **Madam Chair:** Subhead 1, yes.

Clerk: Subhead 2, Relocation Costs.

2145 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Can I just ask, Madam Chair, whether the effectively Project Euston has come to an end?

Hon. Chief Minister: As I understand it, Madam Speaker.

2150 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Under the same subhead but item – oh, sorry, that is a different subhead.

Clerk: Subhead 3, Reclamation Projections.

2155 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I apologise for jumping the gun. Because it is not emboldened, with my eyesight I thought it was part of the other head. Can I ask on reclamation projects what the £1.2 million went to last year and what the proposal is to – for the £400,000 this year?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I think that is principally Victoria Keys coastal protection work and also other studies for other reclamations, potential reclamations.

2160 **Madam Chair:** Anything else?

Clerk: Subhead 4, Other Projects.

2165 **Hon. D J Bossino:** So (p), which is Infrastructure Provision for Housing Projects, what does that relate to?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, that relates to infrastructure provision for housing projects.

2170 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the hon. Member be more specific? He knows I can read, I think, and that has prompted me to ask the question to request from him further particulars.

2175 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the housing projects that he knows at the moment are Hassan Centenary Terraces, Chatham Views and Bob Peliza, so the infrastructure provision for those.

2180 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Okay. We are getting somewhere. In relation to that, can he – given his answer, is he excluding any works in relation to, for example, Road to the Lines? Is that not covered by this expenditure?

2185 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I am delighted, Madam Speaker, that we are getting to the place where the hon. Gentleman remembers what the housing projects are and that, therefore, he has been able to connect the words ‘infrastructure provision’ with the words ‘housing project’ and work out that which is in the public domain and is reflected in the Book. This has not got anything to do with Road to the Lines, Madam Speaker. The answer that he got in the last House tells him that it would not be here.

2190 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask on (r), which is Infrastructure Provision for New Developments, what is within the scope of the new developments part? So, for example, at £2.1 million spent last year, towards which in particular? The estimate for next year would go for what particular project?

2195 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I think this is almost exclusively in respect of the Government’s obligations in relation to the Eastside project; that is to say the provision of services to the border of the plot, from memory.

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Chair, in subhead 4, zulu whiskey, there is the Upgrade of Playgrounds for £100,000. What is the difference between that and the previous section that was answered before that was in respect of playgrounds? Why are they two different sections?

2200 **Hon. Chief Minister:** One is maintenance, Madam Chair, and the other one is upgrade of playgrounds, which is different. So when you are maintaining, you are spending money maintaining the piece of kit that is there. When you are upgrading, you are changing the pieces of kit. So this would be new pieces of kit. I wish him bravo zulu for the rest of the afternoon.

2205 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, if I understood correctly, one is just maintaining and the upgrade will probably cater for my latest pet love for shaded areas in playgrounds and so on? That would be an upgrade and I wish the Minister well in achieving that.

2210 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, it is their job to try and put us in the shade, but we will try to avoid that.

Madam Chair: Anything else on subhead 4? Yes, the Hon. Mr Origo.

2215 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Chair, if I may go back to subsection (w) on part 4, Sewage Pumping Stations, subsection (2) and subsection (3), Western Beach and Europa Point, these were estimated to attract £725,000 and £425,000, yet the forecast outturn is zero and in the other instance £85,000. Is it the Government's intention to proceed with the sewage pumping station works that it was proposing to do next year?

2220 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the answer is that we will be proceeding with those projects or other projects for those purposes. There is no question of not proceeding if the hon. Gentleman is talking about the sewage treatment works. The waste treatment facilities above these pumping stations require more or less work depending on the state that they are in. Those two are not and should not be read to be linked. Hardly the most glamorous part of the
2225 Book for us to linger over, but I hope that explanation assists.

Hon. D J Bossino: What is envisaged in terms of the expected expenditure of half a million pounds under (zn)? It refers to, and I can read, the Traffic Plan, if I can say it in short, but are the hon. Members able to provide further information in relation to what it is expected to cover?
2230

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Madam Chair, this is for work on the Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan. Madam Chair, I gave information on that in my Budget speech and I also have done in the previous session in relation to cycling lanes in answer to questions, so that information has already been answered here.
2235

Hon. D J Bossino: In relation to – sorry, just trying to get the line right – (zs), which refers to the Gibraltar Development Plan and there is a figure of £260,000, given that we have information as to what the tender amount is, which is in excess of £600,000, is it the idea that that is going to be spread out over a number of years?
2240

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Yes, Madam Speaker, the contract to be entered into will be spread over the 24-month period.

Madam Chair: Anything else on subhead 4?
2245

Clerk: Subhead 5, Equity Funding/Funding.

Hon. R M Clinton: Yes, Madam Chair.
2250 Could the Government give us an analysis as to where the £10 million that was spent in 2023-24 went by way of equity funding/funding to Government-owned companies and also where the envisaged £10 million will go for 2024-25?

Hon. Chief Minister: Of course, Madam Speaker. Gibraltar Investment Holdings.

Hon. R M Clinton: So that would be the entirety for both years?
2255

2260 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, my memory is not as good as it used to be, just like the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition's eyesight, and mine I hasten to add, but I think I have confirmed this to the hon. Gentleman actually last year. So I am reconfirming something which is now public because I said it last year, and is in the *Hansard*, and the year before and the year before.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Chairman, for the sake of the record that may be the case in previous years. It does not necessarily mean it will be the same this year.

2265 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, for the sake of the record, that is why I answered, but when the hon. Gentleman asked me about last year I gave him the answer that I had given him the answer last year and the year before and the year before. I was not suggesting that that should be something that he, therefore, could not ask me about at the Committee stage because it was public and that is why I gave him the answer. My reference to the *Hansard* is about the previous
2270 year when I had already given the answer.

Madam Chair: Anything else on subhead 5? Let's move on.

2275 **Clerk:** Subhead 6, Brexit Measures.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: It is a generic point, really, on that. Am I to understand these are not all the measures that will be taken in the event – these are not measures in the event of an agreement, are they? Because they are measures being taken irrespective of whether or not there is an agreement? Because I did notice earlier in the – in subhead 4 that there is still a provision,
2280 for example, to the UK European Treaty Joint Facility, so I am assuming that this is not an all-inclusive head or is a head that is irrespective of the other matters. Perhaps the Government can comment on that.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, six is more about NNO but not just about NNO because
2285 the works to the Frontier pedestrian entry point will be done whether we have an NNO or whether we have an NO. But Item C, for example, there is more an NNO point.

Madam Chair: Head 102 stands part of the Bill. Clause 6 stands part of the Bill.

2290 **Clerk:** Clauses 7 and 8, appendix B, Gibraltar Development Corporation.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: There, Madam Speaker, we notice a significant increase in the establishment there of the GDC. I am not familiar, or at least I am certainly not familiar now – I may have been familiar with the entry points if they have not changed since my time in my office
2295 but I am not familiar with what a grade 2, grade 3, grade 4 under the current form is. So I was just wondering, because I noticed that the increases are primarily at grade 2, 3 and 4. What is that in terms of the kind of recruitment that the Government is doing?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, those grades are now more or less equivalent to the equivalent strata in the Civil Service, if that is of assistance to the hon. Gentleman.
2300

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: So something like an AO, EO upwards, HEO, something like that?

Hon. Chief Minister: Yes. So grade 1 AA, grade 2 AO, grade 3 EO, grade 4 HEO, grade 5 SEO,
2305 more or less.

2310 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chairman, on page 176 of appendix B, line 19, Contribution to Economic Development and Employment Company Ltd came in at £11,782,000 for 2023-24 and estimated the same for 2024-25. Can the Government advise what this entity does for £11.7 million?

2315 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** There are two elements in the EDEC. The EDEC is the parent of the training companies and that is the bulk of where we have had – that has been there since 2012 when we first put the £11 million in order to take in the 1,000 unemployed that there was at that time. We keep giving that explanation every year. So the unemployment level is where it is because there are a lot of people in training and this is where the training companies are financed from. In addition to that, EDEC also provides some element of support where we are doing things in terms of economic development which will generate employment and where there are trainings involved.

2320 **Madam Chair:** Anything else on appendix B?

Clerk: Appendix D, Borders and Coastguard Agency.

2325 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Chair, can I ask on (20), which is Security Services, that can perhaps the Minister explain what that sum is payable to? What is it in respect of? Borders and Coastguard man entry points, so why is there a need to pay a sum for security services? I am not sure I understand that.

2330 **Hon. Chief Minister:** That is the cost of airport security, Madam Speaker, the security of the Air Terminal.

2335 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chairman, on line 17 there is something has occurred this year, Leasing Agreements, Contracted Services. There was no provision for it last year but it came in at £15,000 and for 2024-25 it is estimated at £19,000. I would be grateful for some explanation.

Hon. Chief Minister: Those are the leasing agreements for two vehicles, Madam Speaker.

2340 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask on the Professional Fees item, which is 21, again I am not sure why there is a professional fees part of the budget of the Borders and Coastguard Agency and what that could be, so I would be grateful for some information there.

Hon. Chief Minister: Accountancy fees, Madam Speaker.

2345 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chairman, could the Chief Minister elaborate when he says accountancy fees? Are these audit fees or consultancy fees of some sort or system design fees?

2350 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I think that they are consultancy fees because there is an accountant seconded, or not seconded, employed now, to provide services in the Borders and Coastguard Agency and this is the cost.

Hon. R M Clinton: Sorry, Madam Chairman, is this in relation to new software or is it just in relation to financial control *per se*?

2355 **Hon. Chief Minister:** The latter, not the former.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: So can I ask on that, so if this is an accountant presumably seconded from the private sector, is this a specific time arrangement or – because at the cost envisaged it might be cheaper to open a post and recruit for someone in the service?

2360 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, because the service is not just limited to financial control. There will be services throughout the Agency in order to bring in financial control and it is limited, I understand, to three years.

2365 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Chairman, just on this point again, is this an individual that previously had been engaged by the Government in the GHA?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, we do not discuss individuals across the floor of the House but the hon. Gentleman has identified who it is and I would rather we did not identify them by name but that is the correct reference.

2370 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I am just trying to understand the need on the financial control side because if you look at the Borders and Coastguard Agency budget as a whole, most of it is salaries, which are presumably fairly obvious costs, and the element within which any kind of financial control would be exercised seems to be very, very limited. So there is no revenue or anything like that, so I am not sure we really understand this three-year arrangement.

2375 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, we do not agree. There are issues which we need to deal with in the context of the Borders and Coastguard Agency, issues relating to annual leave, how shift patterns are provided for, etc., etc. All of that has a cost consequence and a serious cost consequence and it needs to be resolved for the purposes of ensuring that the people who work in the Borders and Coastguard Agency have fairness across the board and abuse is stamped out where it is happening in some instances, and other aspects of financial control in the Agency and the workings of the Agency which this individual will assist with. That is why we believe it makes sense to do it and that is why we have done it, Madam Speaker.

2385 **Madam Chair:** Anything else on appendix C? There is more or –

Clerk: Appendix D, Gibraltar Health Authority.

2390 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am at page 201 at the top, Establishment continued, the Admin and Support Grades. We have a GHA junior clerk, of which there are 14 full-time, and that goes up to 39 full-time for 2024-25. But then if we go down that list we have a junior GHA clerk/word processor, of which there were two and now there are none. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps explain the difference between those two roles? Because the initial suggestion is that they may be the same role, but then we have word processor, so perhaps some clarification on that.

2400 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I will allow the Hon. Minister to answer now, but just in terms of form so the hon. Lady is aware, where there is italics that is a disappearing grade. So those grades which you ever see in italics is because they are disappearing.

2405 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there has been a review of the workforce at the GHA and a lot of the GHA junior clerks, for example, were the previously AOs and AAs, which have now been regraded to the GHA. So as part of that overall strategy there have been some posts that will be going and there have been some posts that will now be converted into GHA junior clerks.

2410 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful for that answer. I am now at the medical and allied professions and if we go down the list to non-consultant hospital doctor, we have gone down from 16 to 10 full-time in – so 2023-24, 16, and 2024-25, 10. Could the Hon. Minister account for the quite big reduction in those?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Yes, Madam Chair.

2415 If you look at the non-consultant hospital doctors under the heading that the hon. Member has pointed out, it is correct that has gone down, but if you go down to the other side, the Medical and Health Professionals on page 202, you will see that there is now a clinical fellow in medicine and accident and emergency, clinical fellow ortho and trauma, and clinical fellow surgery. These together add up to 10 positions which have been increased, and pursuant to the advice of the clinicians we have amended the posts of non-consultant hospital doctors into these positions.

2420 **Hon. J. Ladislaus:** The same question really as to the Resident Medical Officer which goes down from full-time six and then we see at 2024 it has gone to two, so if the Hon. Minister could perhaps shed some light on that?

2425 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Chair, it is all part of the same move, so if you look there is a total of 10 that have been changed, or the nomenclature has been changed, and that is part of that process.

2430 **Hon. J. Ladislaus:** Now I am moving further down that list on page 201, Approved Mental Health Practitioner, we had four full-time and we will now have three full-time. Can the Hon. Minister shed some light as to whether that is because somebody may have left and are we going to recruit a further practitioner in that area?

2435 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, that is because somebody had left. However, as the hon. Member is aware, and as I confirmed in my speech, we are starting now in September a course where there will be 15 this year and there will be a total of 30 approved mental health practitioners trained. We are in the meantime also recruiting for those positions.

2440 **Hon. J. Ladislaus:** On page 202, I note at the at the very bottom of the Medical and Allied Professions list, Dental Nurse. We had six in 2023-24 but it is now showing as zero in 2024-25. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps explain the reasoning for that.

2445 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, if the hon. Member goes to the Establishment on page 203, you will see that the complement of dental nurses has now increased to 8.5. It is just that we have changed the position of those dental nurses to include it under the nursing complement rather than under the medical and allied professionals. So the complement has actually increased by 2.5 to 8.5 dental nurses.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, if the hon. Lady needs to look at this, there is a footnote referred to which explains that also.

2450 **Hon. J. Ladislaus:** Just one further question. I noticed that Registered Nurse - Chemotherapy are three. We had three in 2023-24, and we are going down to two in 2024-25. Perhaps I am mistaken here, and it has been subsumed elsewhere, but given that we now have obviously the opening of the new suite, etc., surely this should be either kept at the same or increased? Can the hon. Lady explain the reasoning behind the drop in one there?

2455 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am conscious that there is a reason for that. I cannot find it in the Estimates Book but I will ask and get back to the hon. Member on that.

Madam Chair: Anything else on Appendix D?

2460 **Hon. J. Ladislaus:** In terms of the 111 Clinical Advisor – I am just looking at page 204. The 111 Clinical Advisors were at zero in 2023-24 but my understanding is that the service was obviously functioning at that point. Why are they now reflected as 10 in 2024-25? Is it due to the change?

2465 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as a press release that came out in April confirms – I am not quite sure of the date – the 111 service has now passed to the Gibraltar Health Authority and there is now a specific service where patients can call the 111 service. That is the increase from zero to 10.

2470 **Hon. J. Ladislaus:** Supernumerary Posts. Registered nurses, we had zero in 2023-24, and there are now 25 full-time, 2024-25. Could the hon. Lady explain the reasoning for that?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Yes, Madam Chair. These are the nurses that have been trained here and those nurses will be filling in the vacancies as and when they arise.

2475 **Hon. J. Ladislaus:** Madam Chair, I am now at page 205 of appendix D. I am at Manning Level Maintenance. The estimate for 2023-24 was down as 1,000. I can understand that it is demand-led. But the forecast outturn was 1,050,000 for this year. Why, then, has it gone down, as an estimate, for 2024-25 as £500,000?

2480 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we have been filling in the posts so that we are better manned. We are really controlling the budget in these areas. This was, indeed, based on vacancies which are now filled. Additionally, there is a recovery plan in place to ensure that it does not go to £1 million again this year.

2485 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, given that we are about to get into the recurrent payments in respect of the Gibraltar Health Authority, can I invite the House to recess now until 3 p.m. this afternoon where we can continue with this Committee Stage?

Madam Chair: All right, we will recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed at 1.25 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 3 p.m.

2490