

ANNEXES

REPORTS OF DEPARTMENTS LAID ON THE TABLE

ANNEX I CIVIL STATUS & REGISTRATION OFFICE

Madam Speaker, I report as follows in respect of Ministerial responsibilities for the Civil Status & Registration Office.

The department, which is currently immersed in a period of transformation, continues to deliver at pace all its services ranging from Passports, Nationality, Births, Deaths, Marriages and most importantly in the current climate of the jurisdiction, ID Cards, Immigration, VISAS and Asylum.

Despite increasing volumes in virtually all their workstreams, the team delivers these crucial services for our jurisdiction. The following are relevant figures for the period July 2023 to June 2024.

PASSPORT APPLICATIONS

The Passport Section of the Civil Status & Registration Office has received 7495 applications for Gibraltar variant passports and 226 applications for UK passports.

BRITISH NATIONALITY

89 adults were granted British Nationality in 2022 under the discretionary provisions of Section 18(1) and 18(2) of the British Nationality Act 1981.

52 minors were also granted British Nationality under the provisions of Section 17 and Section 15 of the British Nationality Act.

95 adults and 30 minors have also been registered as British Citizens under Section 5. This section provides an entitlement to registration as British Citizens for all persons who have been

naturalised or registered in Gibraltar as British Overseas Territory Citizens.

PERMANENT RESIDENCE

277 British Citizens have obtained permanent residence in Gibraltar.

IDENTITY & CIVILIAN REGISTRATION CARDS

A total of 8587 ID cards and 3507 Civilian Registration Cards have been produced.

APOSTILLES

The Department has apostilled 6879 documents under The Hague Convention.

ASYLUM

During this period, one very complex Asylum case has been fully considered by the department and a new claim for Asylum is currently under investigation.

BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP SECTION

With regards to Marriages and Civil Partnerships, a total of 1786 Marriages were performed in Gibraltar. In addition, 25 Civil Partnerships and 80 Conversions from Civil Partnership to Marriage were also undertaken.

These figures indicate that Gibraltar continues to be a popular wedding destination, boosted by media exposure such as the TV programme "Mariés au Premier Regard" ("Married at First Sight") series which returns to Gibraltar again this September.

This has spearheaded increased interest by other programmes and marriage related workstreams internationally. The team, in collaboration with my Ministerial colleague, Christian Santos, are working together to further promote Gibraltar as a wedding destination.

Additionally, in February this year, the Head of the CSRO also travelled to the UK with the CEO of Visit Gibraltar to attend the UK Weddings and Honeymoons awards in London, to further promote Gibraltar as the ideal jurisdiction for marriages.

BIRTH & DEATH REGISTRATION

333 live birth registrations have been undertaken and 278 deaths have been registered.

Additionally, a new major departmental project has also been initiated with ITLD, to create an entirely new back-office environment for the Birth, Death, and Marriages section, focusing on the issuance of certificates and related processes.

By modernising their back-office infrastructure, this will improve efficiency, accuracy and overall service quality. The new system provides a more streamlined and user-friendly experience for both staff and clients.

GIBRALTARIAN STATUS

304 British Nationals have succeeded in obtaining Gibraltarian Status under the discretionary provisions of Section 9 (1) of the Gibraltarian Status Act and the subsequent entitlement to registration provided under Section 5 of the Act.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that plans for relocating the Civil Status & Registration Office to their new premises are proceeding rapidly.

Shortly after the summer, the department will continue to provide all its services in new spacious and modern offices, offering improved facilities for both personnel as well as all their service users.

ANNEX II

DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL & DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker, report on the Department of Personnel & Development.

In the dynamic and rapidly evolving landscape of modern Gibraltar, our Public Service must continually adapt to meet the expectations of the citizens we serve.

Recognising the immense value of our workforce, HMGOG has acknowledged that the term "Human Resources" no longer adequately encompasses the expanded role of this critical department, which includes nurturing talent and fostering innovation.

A restructure and rebranding of HR was considered imperative to reflect its wider role in Public Service and to reinforce our commitment to developing a collaborative and innovative workforce:

Since this restructure in January 2024, the department has been adopting a more strategic focus on key areas such as recruitment, training, talent management, employee retention, learning, and development, as well as succession planning, all aimed at enhancing our organisational success across the Public Service.

In addition to these strategic functions, the department is reviewing and developing its roles in Employee Wellbeing, Workforce Conduct, Occupational Health, Disciplinary, Policy Formulation, and Compliance.

The department is committed to providing personal and professional development opportunities and supporting Public

Service employees at all levels throughout every stage of their careers—from recruitment to end of service.

We aim to ensure that every Public Servant is equipped to contribute and thrive within the evolving need of our community to deliver a modern, efficient and equitable Public Service.

In line with our continuous efforts to enhance the efficiency, adaptability, and overall performance of the Public Service, the Office of the Chief Secretary, the GDC Secretary and the Department of Personnel & Development have been implementing a more regular and structured approach to staff transfers across various departments and agencies.

This is designed to create a more versatile and skilled workforce, ensuring that our Public Service remains dynamic and responsive to the ever-evolving needs of our community.

The Department of Personnel & Development has undertaken comprehensive measures to ensure strict adherence to all policies, thereby promoting consistency, transparency, and the efficient use of public funds.

The restructure of the Human Resources Department, into the Department of Personnel & Development is only one of various recent measures introduced to create a collaborative, innovative, cohesive and unified Public Service.

ANNEX III DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY

Madam Speaker, I report also on developments in the Department of Social Security.

It is remarkable to see that, in this day and age the Department of Social Security still pays out cash payments to many Elderly and most vulnerable in our community.

However, the number of individuals that are paid in cash over the counter has been reduced substantially.

Pre Covid-19, the department was paying 3,244 persons their benefits in cash. From these 2947 have gradually transitioned to Bank therefore a total of 297 continue to attend our premises on a monthly basis.

However, our Government has a commitment to support those persons unable to have a bank account, therefore the Department of Social Security is in the final stages of identifying suitable and accessible premises in a prime location to continue to pay cash benefits to our Elderly and vulnerable citizens.

ANNEX IV HM CUSTOMS

I report, Madam Speaker, on my responsibilities for HM Customs.

HM Customs Gibraltar continues to acknowledge its obligation to assist the economy through the collection of import duty and fees, whilst at the same time controlling the importation and exportation of restricted goods and preventing the trafficking of prohibited items.

Due to its geographical nature, Gibraltar boasts entry points via sea, land and air. Needless to say, this comes with its challenges for law enforcement. Whilst responsibility for the movement of persons lie on partner agencies, the cross-border movement of goods falls firmly on the shoulders of our customs teams. This is why the department is equipped with the staff and assets that allow it to perform its duties and indeed the legislation that empowers it to prosecute offenders.

This January, the Government invested in recruiting 14 new officers. The selection process included written and physical examinations, the top 50 of which were then invited to an interview. I would like to thank the Department of Personnel & Development and indeed HM Customs for making this rigorous process a success. Each and every recruit is proving to be an asset to the department already and we thank them for their efforts in completing their induction training with flying colours.

In addition, the department has continued the career development of its staff by promoting 3 officers to Senior Customs Officer and 11 to Executive Customs Officer.

COMMERCIAL MOVEMENT OF GOODS

Madame Speaker, HM Customs has embarked on the upgrade to ASYCUDA [HM Custom's database] to its latest form, Version 4.4. Colleagues from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) are already in Gibraltar installing software and ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is in place. The target date for its implementation is the 1st January 2025.

In conjunction with this customs officers have completed a full review of our Integrated Tariff Regulations 2017, in order to include the latest updates to product classification and commodity codes as recommended by the World Customs Organisation (WCO).

Furthermore, through our HMRC colleagues in the UK, HM Customs has obtained access to the WCO online training platform.

All this will introduce the customs declaration systems of the future, providing for more efficient procedures that will facilitate trade without compromising on controls. The processes also open themselves to pre-arrival declarations and express consignments, that may be introduced to expedite documentary checks beforehand, avoiding unnecessary delays when the goods arrive in Gibraltar. What's more, training will also be extended to Customs Clearing Agents and other ASYCUDA users to support their businesses enterprises.

FIGHT AGAINST CRIME

Madame Speaker, in the last year you may have heard of two important seizures of cocaine that were being transported in underwater concealments using commercial ships. This method of drug trafficking is a difficult one to detect since in most cases the crews are unaware that their legitimate operations are inadvertently being used by criminal organisations to transport their drugs across the Atlantic into Europe. We can proudly say

that both consignments, totalling 508kg, are safely off the streets.

I think you will agree, Madame Speaker, that our customs officers closely form part of our daily lives. We are used to seeing customs officers at our entry points and indeed patrolling along our streets or waters. This serves as a deterrent for criminal groups, something which HMGoG is committed to continue whatever the future might bring. Furthermore, a lot of work also goes on behind the scenes. Proof of this are the recent cocaine detections by officers working in plain clothes and acting on intelligence.

The department recently had to decommission one of its Drugs Dogs. It has successfully found another animal which is just as proactive and promises a good future. A new handler was selected, and they have now successfully completed their training.

Our dog detection teams are important assets in the detection of illicit cash and drugs, and will no doubt serve to protect our society well.

LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION

Madame Speaker, HM Customs continues to maintain close cooperation with other agencies. It is not rare that officers are the first to arrive at the scene whenever an incident occurs either on land or at sea.

Their frontline work makes them key players and responders whenever there has been a national crisis; for examples the OS35 spillage or when assisting the supply of water from Spain following the Powers Drive fire. This is why they continue to take part in most exercises organised by the Office of Civil Contingencies.

Furthermore, customs officers are part of Gibraltar's compliment of Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme (JESIP) instructors, to improve how different organisations work together to respond to incidents; and Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) practitioners, who offer support to those involved in traumatic experiences.

TRAINING

Madame Speaker, HM Customs continues to develop its capabilities by investing in training the trainers. Over the last year, three officers attended the UK to update their qualifications with respect to Personal Safety Training allowing HM Customs to certify their own officers under the College of Policing.

Another officer attended a four-week course and is now licensed to instruct other Dog Handlers. This approach provides for the most cost-effective method of maintaining a well-trained organisation.

TRADE UNIONS & CUSTOMS

Madame Speaker, over the last year the Collector with the assistance of the Industrial Relations Team and the Office of the Chief Secretary has been working closing with the GGCA and UNITE, both of which have members within HM Customs. I am pleased to report that all issues have been resolved without the need of entering trade disputes.

This aims to create a happy work force in which officers feel that their wellbeing matters; something that will no doubt assist in serving the community better.

ANNEX V

THE CIVIL AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report on matters concerning the Civil and Public Service, which is currently thriving.

Despite criticism at times, our departments are working full steam ahead in order to reach a shared vision of excellence, modernisation, innovation and efficiency in Public Service. It is my honour to outline the significant strides we have made in the past year, with some notable advancements having been made within the last 6 months.

CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT

Madam Speaker, in last year's Budget session we made a solemn pledge to strengthen our workforce by addressing crucial gaps in administrative support, and more specifically in finalising the recruitment of Administrative Assistants. I am, therefore, pleased to report that we did. Through rigorous selection processes aimed at identifying the best talent, we successfully on boarded 61 dedicated administrative assistants. into our esteemed service. We promised, and indeed, we have delivered.

On the recruitment front, and as per our commitments, we have seen further progress with interviews for Senior Officers, Senior Executive Officers, Higher Executive Officers and Executive Officers all having taken place within the last year. These appointments have been crucial as we continue to ensure proper succession planning throughout the Public Service.

CUSTOMER CARE HUB

Madam Speaker, we know Gibraltar prides itself on being a community that embraces different cultures and values multilingualism. As an inclusive Government, we are committed to ensuring that all members of our community can readily communicate with our services.

I am therefore proud to confirm the fulfilment of another manifesto commitment with the addition of a Moroccan Arabic-speaking staff member to our Customer Care Hub team.

This important step significantly enhances our capacity to deliver comprehensive assistance to Moroccan community members, thereby enriching our overall customer service capabilities.

Additionally, and most importantly, this ensures everyone feels welcomed and supported when interacting with government services.

We have also further expanded the online eGov chat service team. This service now facilitates direct connections with dedicated eGov support staff, ensuring prompt resolution of queries.

This proactive approach ensures that the majority of inquiries during working hours receive immediate responses, with a focus on resolving issues on the same day. All our customer services are now centralised for those who require this at 323 Main Street.

Madam Speaker, all of our efforts are being directed in advancing to becoming an even more responsive public service that meets the diverse needs of our community.

OMBUDSMAN

And on the subject of meeting the needs of our community, the Office of the Chief Secretary has been actively engaging with the Ombudsman.

This partnership is instrumental in identifying areas for improvement and implementing solutions that ensure our services meet the highest standards of fairness and accountability. Our engagement strengthens our commitment to transparency and responsiveness in all our dealings

NEW OFFICES

Madam Speaker, we have constantly affirmed, the effectiveness of our Civil and Public Services, hinges greatly on the suitability of their office environments.

It is for that reason, I am delighted that the inauguration of new offices for the Civil Status and Registration Office, will be later this year.

This modern facility will provide the team an environment where they can continue to deliver their best work, and ensure ongoing improvements in service delivery and efficiency.

Madam Speaker, these are not the only new offices we intend on relocating to improve the working environment for our staff.

By this year, we will have commenced the relocation of other departments, to modern offices, further improving our operational capabilities and service standards.

We prioritise our public servants and these developments are a testament to that commitment.

AI INITIATIVE

In pursuit of modernisation, we have initiated active engagement with leading businesses specialising in artificial intelligence and automation in the UK and Ireland Public Service.

Madam Speaker, embracing these technologies holds the promise of significantly streamlining operations by reducing the burden of repetitive tasks.

This enables departments to utilise their time and skills more effectively, enabling a focus on higher-value initiatives.

While still in the early stages, there is a strong interest from both Government and the Public Service to advance on these fronts to improve efficiencies and three departments have been identified to start the testing phase of AI integration.

eGOV 2.0

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to announce the launch of eGov 2.0, which aims to revolutionise eGovernment services by adopting open-source products.

In the short term, we will enhance existing eServices, reducing costs and improving overall efficiency.

Long-term, we aim to streamline processes across all departments, ensuring transparent data sharing and resource optimisation.

We will also transition to m-Government, leveraging mobile technology to make services more accessible and convenient.

Overcoming challenges and ensuring robust data security will be key, but our vision is clear: an "always on Government" providing seamless, secure, and user-friendly services anytime, anywhere.

This initiative will position Gibraltar as a leader in both financial and digital innovation, enhancing our reputation on the global stage.

HMGOG Digital Services and ITLD are working hand in glove together in all projects and we have partnered with Ciklum, an engineering company that is supporting us in the development of our systems.

A team of Ciklum developers are working alongside our own ITLD and Digital Services teams to build the Egov 2.0 using

dot.net, a free and opensource technology, reducing costs in license fees.

IT&LD

Madam Speaker, HM Government of Gibraltar is leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to have a secure and accessible government.

By facilitating efficient government services, improving data sharing, and ensuring greater public access to information, the government aims to address the growing importance of data security and privacy for both the Government and its citizens in an increasingly digital world.

Our IT and Logistics Department is at the forefront of this transformation with several key initiatives.

Firstly, our data centre upgrade enhances reliability, efficiency, and security.

Simultaneously, the recent migration to Office 365 bolsters cybersecurity measures against spam and malware.

Furthermore, we are aligning with OECD standards to ensure transparent data sharing and compliance.

Our development of eGovernment APIs aims to seamlessly integrate services, enhancing operational efficiency.

Additionally, we are facilitating smooth IT transitions for government departments, ensuring uninterrupted service delivery and operational continuity.

ITLD currently manages the following across the entire public service landscape:

- 3300 PCs for HMGoG and RGP;
- 3535 School iPads;

- 837 Laptops; and
- 180 School Mobiles

We are making substantial investments in IT security, software development, and infrastructure.

These investments underscore our commitment to a robust digital environment, strengthening cybersecurity, and ensuring smooth operations for all government departments, schools, and the general public.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

In terms of policy, we have already circulated several documents, such as the ZERO-Tolerance Policy and the updated Special Paid Leave Policy.

The ZERO-Tolerance policy ensures a safe and secure environment for staff, service users, and visitors by prohibiting violence, harassment, and abusive conduct. It emphasises that any form of aggression is unacceptable and will be met with decisive action, thus protecting our employees from threats, verbal abuse, or physical harm.

We want all staff to be reassured that their well-being and safety is of utmost importance. These comprehensive measures underline our dedication to creating a supportive and respectful working environment across all sectors.

We are in the process of issuing the extended sick leave and critical illness policy in the coming weeks that will benefit public servants who may need this due to exceptional and unfortunate circumstances. These initiatives reflect our commitment to the well-being of those in the Government and the wider public sector.

Once again, we promised to deliver, and deliver we have.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

The importance of training and development within our workforce cannot be overstated. We want all our Public Servants to constantly develop their skills and knowledge in fundamental areas of their workplace, equipping them with essential transferable skills.

The Department of Personnel and Development are constantly engaging with various stakeholders to expand and enrich their training prospectus, ensuring a diverse array of opportunities for all staff members.

In collaboration with King's College London, we have offered an opportunity to embark in a Master of Arts (MA) in Leadership and Management to Public Servants who want to further their studies.

EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION AWARDS

Madam Speaker, there is much to celebrate when it comes to the Public Service and the introduction of the Excellence and Innovation Awards has done just that. These awards serve as a vital platform to acknowledge and honour the outstanding contributions of our Public Servants.

We need to recognise and celebrate those individuals who go above and beyond, exemplifying excellence, dedication and innovation in their roles.

These shining examples of exceptional service not only enhance the quality of Public Service but also inspire their colleagues to strive for higher standards and innovative solutions.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, the accomplishments I have outlined are just a few of examples of the hard work and dedication of our Civil Servants, and of our commitment to support them.

As Minister for the Civil Service and the Public sector as a whole, including state-owned enterprises, I am confident that every one of our employees will continue to improve our services, for the benefit of our community.

Together, we will continue to achieve the goals and commitments we have set out. The future is bright, and I am confident that, together, we *will* reach our shared vision of excellence

ENDS