

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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The Opposition consider that the forfeiture of OEM's "affordable" housing projects was inevitable. Mr Bossano had predicted during the course of the election campaign that it would be impossible for the projects to be delivered on the anticipated budgets. That made them commercially unviable. It is now clear that the decision to destroy the Rosia Tanks and to use the site for a residential development was Mr Caruana's alone in an attempt to deliver "affordable" housing before the election, something which, in any event, did not materialise. It was Government that foisted Rosia Tanks on the developer, with all the negative consequence that has entailed since then for the community, the developer and ultimately for the purchasers and the residents of the area. The Government should have listened to the Heritage Society and the residents of the South District and chosen better sites to develop.

In fact, coupled with the disputes within OEM itself, it appears that the viability of the projects has been an important factor in the decision not to invest further funds in the developments.

The Opposition consider that responsibility to protect the purchasers of all the OEM developments is firmly with the Government. It is fundamental that the buyers in these ex-OEM developments should not have to suffer the extra costs of bridging loans etc which is affecting purchasers of properties at Waterport Terraces, resulting from the delays the government has presided over as the developer of that estate.

Shadow Minister for Housing, Charles Bruzon, said:

"The GSD's record as a developer is already very negative. Everything they develop, whether in terms of housing or otherwise, is delayed. Now the purchasers of Nelson View, Bayview Terraces and Cumberland Terraces face the uncertainty of repossession by Government of these sites, as well as the

likely further delays that the Government's involvement will bring. There is no question that the decision by the Government to insist on the destruction of the Rosia Tanks for a housing development was a bad idea in the first place and was only designed by Mr Caruana to save his own political skin at the election. It was a bad decision for Gibraltar and is turning into a nightmare for the purchasers."

ENDS