

# **STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION**

**65/2010**

**19 May 2010**

The existing predicament in which the Government now find themselves over the plans for a dolphinarium at Rosia Bay stems directly from their decision to change the conditions of a tender for that site after the tender itself had actually been awarded. This raises a number of serious political questions about the way in which the Government have mishandled the development of this area, quite apart from the concerns that have already been voiced by others as to the actual nature of the proposed project itself.

It will be recalled that Rosia Bay was put out to tender in 2002 together with the Victualling Yard and the Grand Magazine site. The reason for this was because it had proved difficult to find a developer to refurbish the Rosia Mole alone unconnected to any other project because of what the Government described as the “limited potential for maximising commercial opportunities”. The Grand Magazine was therefore included in the tender as an incentive to developers and as part of the package for the development of Rosia Bay.

However, when the tender was actually awarded for the construction of The Anchorage project on the Grand Magazine site, the Government changed their minds as to what the tender would comprise. A project which at first included the Victualling Yard and Rosia Mole was effectively left only with the most profitable part for the developer which was the construction of flats at the Grand Magazine site. The impression given at the time was that the successful tenderer had not been keen to proceed with the development of Rosia Mole. The Government therefore ended up accepting a contribution of £300,000 from the developer for the refurbishment of Rosia Mole even though it was a requirement of the tender that the developer should have carried out these works themselves. The conditions of the tender were changed after the tender had been awarded not only in respect of Rosia Bay but also in

respect of the density of The Anchorage increasing both the number of flats and the height of the buildings.

The Government later told Parliament in 2006 that they intended to carry out improvement and beautification works at Rosia Bay and that this would happen during 2006/2007. The aim was to convert the Rosia Mole into a leisure/bathing facility for the public to enjoy if a new project with heritage aspects which was then being considered did not materialise. The reality is that the heritage project did not materialise but neither did the Government's own project for the refurbishment and public use of the area.

At the end of 2007, in answer to questions from Shadow Minister for Development and Planning Dr Joseph Garcia the Government confirmed to Parliament again that they wanted to see a "development at Rosia Bay to include leisure, water sports, public bathing facilities etc". When pressed by Dr Garcia again at the last question time in February this year, the Government confirmed that they had now received "a formal proposal" for the establishment of a dolphinarium and other related leisure activities for Rosia Bay. They added that if their negotiations with the prospective developers were satisfactorily concluded they "would not be going down the tender route". In other words, the site would now be directly allocated.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister with responsibility for Development and Planning Dr Joseph Garcia said:

"The Government are entirely to blame for the present state of affairs. It was the Government that pandered to the interests of developers by changing the conditions of a tender which included Rosia Bay after the tender had been awarded. It was also the Government that did not fulfil the promise that they made as far back as 2006 to commence the refurbishment of Rosia Bay for public use.

It is the shameful manner in which the Government has mishandled the development of Rosia Bay in the past that has led directly to the present controversy over the establishment of a dolphinarium. The site at Rosia Mole has been allowed to remain derelict for years and the people of Gibraltar have been deprived by this Government of the

opportunity to enjoy it because it has not been refurbished by anyone.”