



Date: 3rd July 2018

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## Budget Speech 2018 – The Hon Paul Balban

### Introduction

Mr Speaker, I will try to keep my contribution to the budget debate this year as short and to the point as reasonably possible while trying not to do any injustice to any of the Ministerial Portfolios that I am responsible for, or the many projects that have been completed or embarked upon during the past financial year.

Financial year 2017/18 has been a very busy year for the Ministry of Infrastructure & Planning. The Traffic Plan has seen the need to work very closely with other departments including the Legislation Unit and IT&LD who have been instrumental, as many of the projects and schemes have required legislative changes and have depended on IT support.

Mr Speaker, if I want to grab people's attention, other than growing a beard, there is only one thing I need mention, and that is ZONE 2. I have nothing more to say about my beard at the moment but I will have plenty more to say about Zone 2 in a while.

### Technical Services Department

Mr Speaker, I will start my address by turning to my Ministerial responsibilities for Technical Services. Technical Services Department continues to provide technical support to Government generally on a wide range of construction and engineering related matters, as well as meeting their defined responsibilities of maintaining public infrastructure. These include coastal engineering works, cliff stabilisation schemes, works to retaining walls, together with the maintenance of highways and sewers.

The department has also provided support on the implementation of several key projects related to the Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan or STTPP, launched in March last year. Mr Speaker, most notably this year with regards to Coastal Engineering works has been the repair of the existing rock revetment at Camp Bay, damaged during the heavy storms experienced this year, in time for the bathing season. Cliff Stabilisation works have continued this year with the construction of the second phase of a new high capacity rock catch fence on the East side slopes.



Mr Speaker, no one can forget the large rock fall that occurred at the Aerial Farm site this March. Technical Services was responsible for overseeing the event from the moment that the rocks fell until the road was successfully reopened.

The Department continues being involved, working closely with Geotechnical engineers to assess the probability of future rockfalls at this location and elsewhere. Above all else, SAFETY is the most important consideration when it comes to rock falls, regardless of the inconvenience that the rock fall itself may cause residents or the population at large.

Mr Speaker, the Infrastructure Section of the Sewers Department have continued to maintain the public sewerage network as part of Government's commitment in this area. The relining works to the existing foul sewer network along Devil's Tower Road were completed last year and this has provided additional flow capacity in the area. Works were also completed at various locations to provide additional flood alleviation measures in areas which were severely affected following periods of heavy rain.

Mr Speaker, this coming year Technical Services will be continuing its major desilting and cleansing works to the Main Sewer along Rosia Road and southwards towards Camp Bay.

Major desilting and relining works are also expected to be carried out to the Main Sewer running under Line Wall Road from the area of the City Hall to NatWest House together with general gully cleansing, manhole repairs and the general upkeep of the public storm and sewage networks throughout.

Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the Infrastructure Section and On-Call Officers of the Technical Services Department for their hard work and commitment during those times in the past year where Gibraltar has suffered from storms and very heavy rain. It is thanks to the hard work and dedication of this team, whilst most of us are at home, sheltered, that the impact of these storms is not greater on both our sewerage and road networks.

Mr Speaker, the Garage & Workshop, continues to provide a service to maintain the fleet of Government vehicles, including the refuse collection vehicles.

### Highways Section

Mr Speaker, the Highways Section of Technical Services have continued to maintain and repair our roads and footpaths throughout the year. Roads especially, have seen greater wear and tear this year as a direct result of ongoing development from both public and private sectors. Careful planning and thought is essential when considering what roads are resurfaced and when, because resurfacing is a very costly and disruptive exercise which is not long lasting near to areas of construction, due to heavy goods vehicles carrying heavy loads. There is a fine line between ensuring that our roads are kept in as good a condition as reasonably possible without investing huge amounts of taxpayer's money on projects that would be unfortunately short lived as a result of construction.



Last year, major resurfacing works were undertaken at St. Bernard's Road, part of Europa Road and along part of Rosia Road. This year funding will be sought to see the continuation of our resurfacing programme in areas least affected by construction and road repairs will continue as necessary.

Mr Speaker, pelican crossing lights and equipment continues to be replaced and maintained working jointly with the Gibraltar Electricity Authority. Countdown timers will continue to be provided at other crossings this coming year. Last year, new pedestrian crossings were introduced at Europa Road in the area of Shorthorn Estate, at Rosia Road by Bayview Terraces, by Harbour Views Estate on Westside Road and most recently a speed ramp/raised zebra crossing was constructed at the entrance to Laguna Estate. These crossings are all aimed at improving our existing pedestrian routes and making access safer for all as recommended in the STTPP.

Road closures and diversions on the Public Highway, are overseen by the department to ensure coordination and the minimisation of disruption and is an important part of the work done by the Department, both for its own in-house works and for all other utility companies and contractors.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the third phase of the project to address Main Street's paving joints was completed last year and further maintenance works to the paving stones on Main Street will be completed this year. Mr Speaker, I would like to thank all the staff at TSD, the Garage & Workshop Management and all technical grades within these departments for their hard work this past year.

## Parking

Mr Speaker, I will now talk about ZONE 2. There is much to say about parking in general.

This past 12 months has seen the STTPP pushing social boundaries, namely in the realm of parking, but generally in the context of change. Parking is but one of those matters that evokes very strong and powerful feeling within the community, especially when the car has been an intrinsic part of us for so very long. Car ownership, will arguably become one of the most challenging aspects to tackle in the future if we are to become an environmentally responsible society.

Mr Speaker, some parking initiatives have been very well received indeed, others have been less popular or even out rightly criticised by others, but none-the-less Zone 2 has been topical to say the very least, having featured colourfully within local conversation and in social media interactions. Good, bad or indifferent, everyone has had something to say about ZONE 2. However, it has been acknowledged by many, not least the Hon Daniel Feetham when he recently stated here in a preamble to a supplementary question that, and I quote, "residential parking schemes are good but the reality is that this involves taking very difficult decisions". The Hon Member is absolutely right, a parking scheme does require many difficult decisions to be taken - they are really hard work and one size does not fit all. To prod the beehive from a distance with a very long stick and run away in fear of being stung, for fear of being unpopular with the electorate, or even for fear of receiving the most lemons is not what this is all about, in my opinion. This is all about leading and doing what one thinks is the right thing to do and sometimes difficult and unpopular decisions need to be taken. This is what is expected from a Government. This is about trying to improve our environment and our health, for us and for successive generations, it's about making life easier even though it may not



seem that way at first, while trying to achieve certain common aims and benefits for us all. I trust that the community at large may understand and perhaps even embrace, the very difficult work that is being done as part of the STTPP.

Many other cities around the world are making considerable and sometimes very unpopular changes to the way they go about their daily lives, trying to achieve more sustainable living by encouraging alternative modes of travel and transport to achieve a reduction in pollution.

Mr Speaker, it is already clear that the Parking Schemes are starting to show benefit. Residential Parking Schemes try to achieve better parking opportunities for residents while trying to accommodate visitors and commerce at appropriate times. Parking schemes also lead to the identification and the reduction of derelict and abandoned vehicles which free up more parking space. Mr Speaker, in my mind there are only 2 options, either do little for the reasons I have already alluded to, that is, to avoid being unpopular, or try to tackle the matter in a way that is responsible, well-structured, well timed and scientific in its approach.

Mr Speaker, for the avoidance of doubt, I need to stress yet again that all Residential Parking Zones are “PILOT” and will therefore remain under scrutiny until the whole parking scheme is rolled out, for all of Gibraltar. At this stage, when all of Gibraltar is zoned then the ENTIRE Residential Parking Scheme will enter its final PILOT phase, as a WHOLE. Mr Speaker, because the effect of zoning cannot be determined at commencement, it is essential that each zone is allowed to settle, allowing time for stakeholders to provide feedback and designers to have the time to analyse its effects. Therefore, Zone 1 will not cease to be a pilot scheme simply because Zone 2 is implemented, nor will Zone 2 stop becoming pilot in nature simply because Zone 3 has been launched. This is the scientific and right way of doing things because no Zone is an island Mr Speaker. All zones are different and they react differently when there are more than one zone working in parallel.

Mr Speaker, it is not the intention of this Government, as surely it is not the intention of any other Government to make life difficult for residents, on the contrary, but it is a well-known fact that we have a parking problem, or probably more accurately, a vehicle ownership problem. Nevertheless, a brave scheme of this nature is seen by some as an ideal opportunity for political mischief and to try to score cheap, but short-lived, political points. Mr Speaker, within just days of its launch, having hardly seen the light of day, the opposition had already launched a scathing attack against Government, describing Zone 2, and I quote, a “sad indictment of the failure of the Government’s parking plan, and it should be scrapped” those were the words of the Hon Trevor Hammond. Mr Speaker, I have not heard much more from the honourable gentleman about Zone 2 lately - perhaps he is saving it all up for his budget speech. In fact, I am not hearing so much about Zone 2, anymore.

Mr Speaker, the STTPP, I hope will be seen as a set of documents that will lay the foundations for the future regarding Traffic, Transport and Parking. This is not my plan, nor is this the Government’s Plan, this is our Plan, Gibraltar’s Plan and it should be built upon by future Governments. The groundwork has now been done, Mr Speaker. Never before has a project of this nature or magnitude, scientific and solid in its grounding, been carried out in Gibraltar. Mr Speaker, the STTPP simply CANNOT be wrong. You may agree with certain parts of it, disagree with others, not all the concepts will be achievable, others may even be economically unviable, even socially unacceptable at this moment in time. Nevertheless, the STTPP should open our minds to the vast potential for change that exists for us. Add to it, contribute to it, be part of it.



Mr Speaker, lets really think about this objectively, at the end of the day, the STTPP and indeed Zone 2 is not a political document or plan conceived in a smoky room, by a political party some dark and rainy night. The STTPP, often lambasted politically by the GSD was drafted by world-wide professionals in the field, working closely and backed up by a working group comprising of local, technically qualified professional civil servants, the same civil servants that, would have, no doubt delivered this sort of plan to them, had they been the party in Government, had they been brave enough. Yet, one could almost sense the rubbing of hands in glee at the mere thought of the imminent political feeding frenzy about to be unleashed at the smell of fresh blood gushing out of what the opposition thought was the lethal wound sustained to the Government's Parking Plan. A Plan which was in their opinion, an ill-thought-out plan. At least that is what they hoped for.

Mr Speaker, just days after this political onslaught, the picture had suddenly and dramatically changed in some of the areas of Zone 2 as residents started to receive their permits and begun occupying their parking spaces. I have received many positive messages and letters from residents of Zone 2 who had been unable to use their vehicles for many years due to the massive parking problem within this area, this has now changed. Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, I am not stating that Zone 2 is perfect by any means, there still needs to be more tweaks and we still need to take onboard further feedback, but it is a very good basis from which to start. There are many different yet conflicting needs within Zone 2, and these still need to be considered thoroughly. Yet that one, solitary reference to political bravery across the floor of this house that day gave me certain peace, it confirmed to me why the politically fraught issue of parking had never been fully tackled by the members opposite in the 16 years that they were in Government, I then knew that I had to be on the right track, in as far as at least putting such a politically brave Environmental Plan to the test. Mr Speaker, there is no Planet B as Emanuel Macron recently put it.

Mr Speaker, only last week I announced the launch of ZONE 3, which will cover a large part of the South District. Work on this scheme is ongoing and will go-live this autumn. Mr Speaker, Zone 3 is therefore my next challenge. Following that, no doubt Zone 4, 5 and 6. The biggest and totally avoidable teething problem arising from a Zone Scheme comes as a result of the delay in permit applications, despite the many press releases, official notices and advertisements issued. And even with an amnesty period, the initial weeks of a parking zone is not truly indicative of how it will perform a few weeks after its launch and even later still. I hope that Zone 3 residents will be quick to apply for permits to avoid the issues that arose with Zones 1 & 2. I hope that Zone 3 is allowed time to settle down before it can be properly assessed and before it is politically shot down. I know, for a fact that many residents are waiting in positive anticipation for Zone 3 to start.

Mr Speaker, there has never been such a major overhaul of Gibraltar's parking arrangements and the challenge is certainly an exciting and interesting one. It gives us a very valuable insight into social parking behaviour and the differing needs of different sectors of the community. Parking for commercial vehicles is now being considered as parking schemes start to displace these vehicles from within highly populated residential areas. Mr Speaker, there are already plans in place to address these issues.

I wish to thank our in-house technical team, especially our Transport Planner, Technical Services and all the civil servants involved in its planning and mapping out on the ground, that have worked very hard indeed to make this very difficult project a reality. Residential Parking Schemes are no mean feat, from every single parking space that needs to be counted, drawn up, each single street



line painted, and every single street sign placed, from the legislation that needs to be drafted to the Zone booklets that need to be written, a vast amount of work goes into each zone. Thank you.

### P&D Parking

Mr Speaker, Pay & Display is seen as a way of allowing non-residents and visitors to park for short periods of time throughout Gibraltar and regardless of zoning. To this end, a further P&D parking was recently introduced along Bayside Road allowing short-term parking of those frequenting the marinas and sports facilities. Another P&D area will shortly be created along the western end of Waterport Road below Waterport Terraces which is currently under construction and will see parking provision double for residents, visitors and surrounding businesses and includes an extra motorbike parking area. This year 10 new Pay & Display machines have been installed providing card payment technology. These are linked via a network to head office allowing for quick response times when machines develop a fault. Older P&D machines that have now been operational for over 6 years will slowly be phased out, making way for these smarter systems.

### Redibikes

Mr Speaker, as part of the STTPP, Government introduced a new bicycle-sharing scheme known as Redibikes in March last year. Redibikes is currently under review to see how it may be improved further so that we may try to encourage greater use. Adjustments are being made to the pricing structure allowing for a longer rental period therefore encouraging greater family and leisure use. Less used bike-stations will be relocated to new sites near the beaches and close to hotels to help increase seasonal and visitor usage.

Mr Speaker, as an avid cyclist, I am extremely keen to see others take up cycling as a means of transport. The bicycle is an ideal mode of personal transport, cheap to run, easy to park and it helps to contribute to a healthy lifestyle and a clean environment. A major review of our existing road network is currently underway in an attempt to provide both segregated and shared use of our road network for this purpose. The introduction of traditional bicycle lanes throughout all areas of Gibraltar, as seen in many other cities will prove difficult, perhaps even impossible due to the lack of space available to segregate vehicles from cyclists. However, all effort will be made to provide cycle lanes where reasonably possible in order to encourage this healthier alternative to other traditional forms of transport and improve cycling safety.

Mr Speaker, we will shortly be introducing a dedicated cycle route through Main Street and Irish Town on a trial basis operating outside of the busy commercial shopping hours. This will be a first step in trying to provide a safe, segregated cycle lane that will hopefully increase user confidence, especially in the more vulnerable groups, like families and young children. There should be no real reason why Gibraltar, may not be able to adopt cycling as a means of transport especially away from the hills to the south. Extra bicycle parking facilities will also be provided in the next financial year to supplement those already provided this past year. Cycling facilities will also be included as part of the new Comprehensive schools' project. My colleague the Hon John Cortes is as keen as I am to see cycling become a means of sustainable transport in our youth.



Mr Speaker, finally on this subject, I was recently very pleased to be able to congratulate a small business that introduced a number of bicycles into their home food delivery service fleet. This small business has taken on board the very essence of the STTPP and are leading by example. I hope that other businesses may start to consider using bicycles or indeed greener fuels such as electric power in the future for their commercial needs.

### Speed cameras

Mr Speaker, the introduction of speed cameras in April 2017 provided, for the first time, the ability to help control speed in order to make our roads safer. The initial pilot scheme saw vast improvements in speed reduction but it has since been necessary to tackle the issue of speeding motorbikes in certain locations. Improvements have now been carried out to allow rear-facing images to be taken of offending vehicles whilst still providing clear images of offending drivers. Rear facing slave cameras have been now introduced at the original sites at Devil's Tower Road, Europa Advance Road and Rosia Road.

Additionally, two completely new sites have been commissioned along Waterport Road and Queensway well known as speeding hotspots only last week. The benefits of speed reduction are well known and include improved road user and pedestrian safety together with a reduction in noise pollution and emissions. It is unfortunate that investment in expensive equipment is necessary to ensure the safety of road users as a result of a small number of inconsiderate, unsafe and disrespectful road users. Nevertheless, as I have said in the past, this Government is fully committed to eradicating speeding on our roads.

At this point I must thank all staff that deal with the issuing of permits, and the management of our Government parking facilities at Gibraltar Car Parks Limited. I would also like to acknowledge all those involved in policing the many parking areas throughout Gibraltar, and those responsible for overseeing the back office for the speed camera project, including Gibraltar Parking Management Services Ltd and the RGP. Policing is a vital part of any Residential Parking Scheme.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry is also well on track to deliver on other STTPP related projects which shall be announced as they materialise.

### **Public Transport**

Mr Speaker, I will now turn my attention to public transport. The Government continues to give the bus service significant importance in light of the need to provide a robust and reliable means of sustainable mass transit. The MAN buses continue to play a key role in providing the backbone to Gibraltar's public transport infrastructure.

The real time bus tracker service, has been an enormous success and is now operational on all bus routes. Mr Speaker, a new Night Bus Service the N1 was introduced in April this year for the Upper Town, and it now joins the N8. Night buses now access all areas of Gibraltar on Friday and Saturday night and also cover other nights when there are special events. The Night Bus service complements the campaign against drinking and driving. The Upper Town buses continues providing an excellent



much sought-after service to passengers and residents of Mount Alvernia alike, especially as a result of its wheelchair carrying capabilities.

Last August saw the introduction of a number of request bus stops throughout Gibraltar. This change in policy now means that drivers no longer need to stop at each and every bus stop on route when there is clearly no passenger waiting to board or any passenger wishing to alight, therefore improving the frequency and timing of the service.

Mr Speaker, our Transport Inspectors ensure that all users and Undertakings fully abide and conform to all the legal requirements under the Transport Act and allows the Public Transport offering to improve. Mr Speaker, Government continues to work with the GTA in order to identify strategies to better the Taxi Service throughout Gibraltar. The modified City Service roster has shown signs of an improved City Service this year to the extent that complaints are slightly down from previous years.

I wish to congratulate the GTA Committee for their recent acquisition of 2 accessible private hire vehicles which can accommodate wheelchair users. I applaud the GTA Committee's will to continue trying to improve the service provided by its members. I wish to thank Management and all the staff down at the Gibraltar Bus Company especially those behind the steering wheel who work many hours, day and night to provide an exceptional and free bus service to locals in Gibraltar. I would also like to thank our team of Transport Inspectors who oversee and police all matters relating to Transport in Gibraltar.

### **Driving & Vehicle Licensing Department**

Mr Speaker, the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Department have now agreed the introduction of the tachograph system with the UK Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). The necessary administrative procedures have now been agreed by way of a Memorandum of Understanding and service level agreement with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority in the UK (DVLA) who shall source tachograph cards for local drivers, operators and our local enforcement bodies. Mr Speaker after transposing EC Directive 2009/40/EC, changes for motor vehicles undergoing their periodic Roadworthiness Tests (MOT's), became effective as of the 20th May 2018. These new rules and standards implemented by the European Commission, are set out as an objective by the European Union and aim to achieve zero fatalities throughout our road transport network by the year 2050. Among other things, the new test regime will now categorise faults as either – Minor, Major or Dangerous. Motor vehicles found to have minor defects that have no significant effect on the safety of the vehicle or impact on the environment may be issued a Roadworthiness Certificate, but these will be reflected on the Certificate with relevant advisory notes in respect of each of these minor faults. However, motor vehicles that have Major or Dangerous defects will automatically fail the test and shall not obtain a Roadworthiness Certificate. Testing will be more stringent with regards to the limit on smoke emissions, particularly in diesel propelled vehicles known to cause more toxic emissions. Diesel particulate filters (DPF) will now also be rigorously checked and vehicles found lacking these components during examination, will be failed.

Mr Speaker, in anticipation of what could become an electric revolution in the future, electric charging points were recently commissioned within the public parking area at Mid-Town Car-Park.



The first on-street electrical car charging point is expected to become a reality later on this year and is consistent with both the STTPP and Department of the Environment's Thinking Green Environment Awareness campaign. These charging stations will complement the existing private sector initiatives around Gibraltar that must be congratulated for embracing electrical car charging technology and who are also leading by example.

Yesterday, the Chief Minister also announced budget measures in support of those who install mechanisms for the charging of electric vehicles in their home or in a parking space or garage owned by them and attractive further cash back incentives for electric vehicles and electric assisted bicycles without a throttle where the engine cuts off at speeds of 25km/h.

Mr Speaker, the Motorcycle Compulsory Basic Training Course (CBT) continues to be a tremendous success with around 400 new riders having passed over the last year. This initiative has been a massive step forward in promoting safety on our roads.

Mr Speaker, data-sharing with the 'European Register of Road Transport Undertakings' (known as ERRU) via the Driver and Vehicle Services Agency (DVSA) has allowed a better exchange of information between Member States. The European Car and Driving License Information System known as EUCARIS is an example of an information exchange service used by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Department. The service provides EU Member States with the facility to share and obtain car registration and driving licence information. Furthermore, the Department has now implemented the Cross-Border Enforcement Directive (CBE). This system provides cross border access to vehicle registration information so enforcement bodies may identify non-resident offenders. The Directive aims to facilitate the cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences with all EU member states, thereby facilitating enforcement.

Mr Speaker, I wish to thank all the staff within the department, down at the MOT Centre, the vital counter and back office staff, vehicle testers, vehicle examiners and senior management and especially the Chief Examiner for their hard work and dedication.

## **Town Planning & Building Control**

Mr Speaker. Finally, I now turn my attention to my responsibilities for Town Planning and Building Control. Mr Speaker, the Department continues to deal with large numbers of applications seeking Planning Permission and Building Control approval. In 2017 there were a total of 612 applications. Some of these were large, complex applications involving assessment of environmental impacts through the EIA process involving extensive discussions with applicants to try and achieve high standards of design and construction. Building Control issued approximately 250 Certificates of Fitness or Completion during the period, which is slightly up on last year. In 2017, 56 planning, building and demolition applications were received by Government and MOD seeking advice and guidance, which are then taken into account by the Government or MOD in finalising their plans. Mr Speaker, in 2017, 14 DPC meetings were held in Public. I am pleased to say that many people have participated in the democratic process to address the Commission at these meetings either in support of, or in objection to, specific applications. Additionally, the DPC's subcommittee also meets regularly to determine minor applications which greatly help to speed up the decision-making process for more minor applications. In 2017, there were 35 meetings of the sub-



committee. Agendas and minutes of DPC meetings continue to be made available online, together with application forms and planning guidance, ensuring that the planning process remains open and transparent and facilitating ease of access to relevant planning information and documentation.

The e-Planning service continues to operate successfully allowing easy access to application details for the public and providing a platform through which applicants can submit their applications online. Mr Speaker, Town Planning staff have continued to develop the e-Planning system throughout 2017. One of the more significant improvements that has been developed this year is the integration of the department's Geographical Information System into the ePlanning system allowing easier staff access to geographical information when assessing applications. Other development work undertaken this year has included the introduction of a tool to allow staff to undertake high-level shadow analysis of proposed buildings assisting staff when considering the potential impacts of new development proposals.

Mr Speaker, I was pleased to recently announce Part R of the Building Regulations in conjunction with my colleague the Hon Samantha Sacramento. Building Control staff have been working very hard to ensure that this vital piece of legislation would become a reality for the wellbeing of all sectors of society regardless of their needs. Part R provides the necessary framework to provide and improve access and use of buildings by not just physically disabled people but also the elderly and those with hearing and visual impairments.

Mr Speaker, Building Control staff are currently reviewing the Building Rules made under the Public Health Act with a view of updating all 11 remaining Parts bringing them in line with the UK's and European Standards, ensuring that standards are maintained and best practices achieved. This will ensure the health and safety of both the user and occupiers of the built environment. The Tax Relief on Façade Improvements scheme continues to encourage property owners to improve the appearance of their buildings. There were 10 applications under this scheme, in 2017.

Mr Speaker, my department continues to work closely with my colleague the Hon John Cortes who leads on Urban Renewal. Our focus continues to be on identifying specific buildings in need of refurbishment and encouraging owners to undertake improvement works in order to maximise the use of these properties thereby bringing new life back into these urban areas. The Department has also been closely involved with other Government departments and agencies in the implementation of the Street Art initiative which aims to encourage urban regeneration by the use of street art in selected locations.

## **Final Conclusion**

Mr Speaker, finally, I would like to thank all my personal Ministerial Staff who I share most of my working day with, for all their help, support and very hard work during the past year and always.

I also wish to thank all Parliamentary Staff for their hard work and assistance given throughout the year - Thank you.

