



THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER



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Promoting Sustainable Development in Gozo

The Gozo Business Chamber and The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry are concerned with the way development is happening in Gozo. Gozo has a unique character which both Chambers believe has immense potential for a more sustainable economic development and growth that respects the island's culture and authenticity.

The present rate of over development fuelled by existing policies needs to be rethought. Any development needs to be taken within the context where it is taking place, and this includes our rural communities and towns. To this end both Chambers call for established design guidelines which respect the context of our towns and villages. The design of any proposed development needs to be seriously considered and evaluated within the context of the streetscape to ensure that it gives a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness. Clear design guidelines respecting the context of our towns and villages complemented by a well thought out aesthetics policy are required. In this sense Gozo can serve as a test bed where policies can then be deployed at a national level.

There also needs to be a coherent application and interpretation of policies. Policies must be interpreted within their wider context rather than a pick-and-choose approach of abstracts from one policy or another. We are seeing the demolition of terraced houses and buildings which merit conservation to be replaced with apartment blocks, whilst the character of Gozo's urban streetscapes and other aspects such as their proximity to urban conservation areas and outside development zones are being completely ignored.

During a joint media conference at the Cittadella, the President of the Gozo Business Chamber, Joseph Borg highlighted that the Chamber is in favour of sustainable development which promotes quality construction that embellishes the environment and not abuses it. This should be done within the context of Gozo achieving carbon neutrality prior to Malta. "We need to stop, think and plan in the long term" said Joseph Borg, indicating that this is a process which should involve architects, developers and policy makers.

In this context, both Chambers said that the property and construction industry should be incentivised to move towards more sustainable development.

The protection of Gozo's green belts, and a thoughtful and judicious use of what is permissible on outside development zones, including a genuine use of such land when needed, should seriously be considered during the evaluation process of any development.

"Gozo has a unique character. Its uniqueness contributes directly to our competitiveness and it is our duty to ensure that the industry develops in a way which takes into account the unique fabric and character of our islands, the challenges posed by climate change, and the well-being of the community

at large” the President of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, Marisa Xuereb said.

Both Chamber representatives said that the strategic direction for Gozo should be based on sustainable forms of tourism and economic development. They called on authorities to incentivise emerging economic sectors related to digitalisation and the green economy. Such economic opportunities can help Gozo reach carbon neutrality prior to Malta.

Both Chambers believe that Gozo can thrive in many ways. Development should serve the common good and create real economic value which does not impinge on the quality of life.
