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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Government explore opening up the Northern Defences**

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia and the Minister for Heritage Steven Linares recently paid a familiarisation visit to the Northern Defences in order to learn how to best proceed with the refurbishment and restoration of the area.

The site visit was conducted by Government project manager Carl Viagas and included the newly appointed Government Archaeologist Kevin Lane.

The Government received eight expressions of interest into the Northern Defences earlier this year and is now considering the way forward with one of the entities in question. The scale of the project is considerable and it is clear that this will have to be done in phases and that it will take time. However, it is also clear that the potential of the site from a heritage, tourism and leisure point of view is also impressive. The Northern Defences combine 1000 years of history in one site with fortifications dating back from medieval times all the way to the Second World War.

Work on cleaning and clearing part of the site is expected to commence shortly.

The project is being progressed by an inter-ministerial committee chaired by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia and composed of different stakeholders, including Environment Minister John Cortes, Tourism Minister Neil Costa and Heritage Minister Steven Linares. In parallel to this a working group has been established at official level in order to move things forward.