

**TO SERVE YOU BETTER AT THE TOWN AND COUNTRY  
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING OFFICE**



Ever mindful of the responsibility to provide an efficient customer service and consistent with the wider goals for public sector reform, the Town and Country Development Planning Office over the past four years has implemented several initiatives to better educate its clientele.

Take for example **The Applicant's Handbook and Guide to Town Planning**, a publication that was produced in 2003, not only to outline the application process but also to offer a compendium of standards, currently used in the assessment of planning applications for development.

Moreover, at the start of 2004, a dedicated **Information Desk** was established to respond to telephone queries relating to planning policy, application processing and the like.

With these improvements in the quality and range of services, it was natural that the web presence launched recently by Prime Minister Owen Arthur would be introduced to give services via the platform of the internet.

Chief Town Planner Mark Cummins has described the website [www.townplanning.gov.bb](http://www.townplanning.gov.bb) as a representation of one of his department's key goals as set out in their Programme Budget Brief 2006 -2009.

"We are constantly reminded that the world is a global village and the use of information and communication technologies has certainly made this a reality. At the Planning Office we have embraced information technology and have used it to advance our own internal systems; as a research tool and through this launch of the website, as a medium to disseminate information to the public," Mr. Cummins stated.

So with client service excellence being regarded as a major driving force what are the other plans for the Town and Country Development Planning Office in the future?

According to the Chief Town Planner, since the introduction of the Development Control Application System in 1991, computerisation has played a key role in service delivery. He said that further computerization

could be expected, in particular the development of the Geographic Information System (GIS).

To this end, measures have been put in place to transform the traditional 'Drawing Office' typically found in planning offices into a modern environment, where the storage and management of data in electronic format are critical. For instance, the paper-based map register of development applications has been converted to digital format and there is ongoing work to fully integrate the historical development information into the GIS. This development has facilitated the deployment of the map register component on the local network, thereby obviating the need for officers to physically go to the 'Planning Studio' to consult the map sheets.

Of course, the creation of a Customer Charter also remains high on the agenda. This will see the department making a public contract with customers to deliver quality service and guaranteeing certain delivery times. This will be bolstered by systematic and purposeful monitoring of customer satisfaction.

- **End** -

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