



Deputy Chief Minister

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Government completes revolution in Town Planning and presents e-planning portal**

The Government has today launched its e-planning portal which will be the mechanism through which the details of all planning applications will be made available on-line. The level of information that will be automatically accessible to members of the public will be greater than ever before and the system will be light years ahead of anything that Gibraltar has ever seen.

The system has already been presented to the Development and Planning Commission and to architects and allied professionals who are likely to be those who will make the most use of it. It has also been presented to statutory consultees involved in the application process and the feedback throughout has been very positive.

The e-planning portal will allow the general public to see everything that relates to a planning application including the actual designs, any reports, decisions and permits. It will also be possible to monitor the different stages of an application and dates will be given providing a time-line of its passage through the planning process.

The new system will lead to huge savings in time for the Department of Town Planning and Building Control through the use of modern technology. The existing system meant that each application needed to be processed manually, then photocopied and then distributed in an envelope to the different recipients. This could take a number of days. The new system will allow the department to determine who should receive the plans and to distribute them at the touch of a button. The statutory consultees then submit their views on each application and the members of the Development and Planning Commission, which is a statutory body, is responsible for taking the decisions.

This streamlined process will therefore save time and paper. Applicants will also benefit from reduced costs in terms of printing costs as they will no longer have to print eight copies of all their plans.

There are a number of modules for internal use only like one dealing with complaints and enforcement issues which will be easily accessible showing how each one of them has progressed.

There will be two types of access to the system. The first will be public access and the second will be access for registered users like architects and industry professionals who use the system regularly. The latter will have access to a profile page which will list all the applications that they have submitted.

The public will be able to submit comments on any application on the spot after they have registered as a user of the system. They will also be able to see planning permits, approval notices and relevant documents.

The system will allow the user to interrogate it by conducting a search in a different number of ways. There is provision for a simple search, a weekly or monthly search or a made to measure search using specific criteria.

In order to improve the visual experience, there is a map of Gibraltar which shows the location of the site that an application, or a number of applications, relate to.

Commenting on the planning portal, the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, who is responsible for Town Planning, said:

“This fulfils the commitment of the Government to place the entire planning process on-line. Government applications have been available on-line for a number of years now, including the plans. This information is now added to by having all planning applications displayed for everyone to see and comment on. It is what we promised we would do and we have done it.

I want to thank the Town Planners and the staff of the Town Planning and Building Control Department for their unstinting support in making this happen, as well as the Government’s IT department and everyone else who has been involved.

The truth is that this Government has carried out a revolution in Town Planning. We have moved from a closed and secretive system which met behind closed doors, which did not publish the agenda or the minutes, and where Government projects were not discussed to a system which is open, which meets in public, where Government projects are not only discussed but are sometimes sent back for improvement. This latest step completes the transformation that the Government set out to achieve. Planning is no longer treated like a state secret. The public are entitled to information and we have made sure that more information than ever before will now be available electronically for anyone who wants to access it.

The Government has plans to develop the system even further in the future.”

The e-planning portal is available through the Government’s e-Government platform [www.egov.gi](http://www.egov.gi)