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Chairman's Report

The year under review was a period of considerable change for the Planning Authority, a process which is set to continue with the proposed amendments to the Development Planning Act.

We have prepared a Business Plan which provides vision and direction for the next three years. The Plan details the organisational structure and the resources necessary to bring about a quality leap in the Authority's performance.

The Planning Authority was set up to administer a comprehensive land-use planning system for Malta. Eight years down the line the achievements of this organisation are considerable. We have managed to protect valuable urban and rural areas, developed policies which amplified the Structure Plan objectives and improved our development control systems. It was a learning experience for all of us and criticism has not been lacking.

The issue of delays in the processing of applications is being successfully tackled. A total 7,393 applications were determined during the review period, reflecting a 31 per cent increase over last year's performance. By end September 2000 the pending caseload was the lowest in 22 months. I must thank the Development Control Commission members and the Directorate for this impressive performance which I am sure will be sustained over the next year.

But the public certainly expects much more of the Authority. They want prompt service delivery, correct and informed decision taking, effective enforcement, good information channels and regular consultation. The increasing public awareness of environment issues, the devolution of power through the local councils and the militancy of non-government organisations or ad-hoc pressure groups all point at these rising standards of performance expected of us as a public institution.

This changing scenario led us to review our whole organisational structure and work methods to ensure we make utmost use of our rich human resource. This exercise is being complemented with a review of the Authority's policies and changes in the Development Planning Act.

Last year we commissioned the Management Efficiency Unit at the Office of the Prime Minister to conduct an organisational and operation review of the Authority. Over 100 recommendations were made and a change agent was appointed to set the process of change in motion.

The most fundamental change has been a restructuring of the Directorate where the nine functional units were regrouped under three assistant directors responsible for the following areas: forward planning activities; development services; and corporate services. This new management system is enabling us to concentrate our resources on our statutory obligations and on clear deliverables. Our objectives are clearly outlined in the Business Plan. We want to improve our customer interface, expedite the decision-making process, increase accountability, transparency and consistency, speed up the preparation of local plans and integrate our planning policies with those of government departments and agencies. Our performance during the past year shows that we are moving in the right direction.

The enforcement function of the Authority is showing clear progress. We have been carrying out an average of one direct action a week and this is driving the message home that illegal development is not tolerated. Meanwhile, an impressive improvement has been registered in the number of complied enforcement cases. We closed 926 cases during the review period, up from 602 two years ago.

In April, the local planning, strategic planning, traffic planning and environmental management functions were grouped under once assistant director responsible for Forward Planning. A project management approach was adopted in an effort to maximise the use of our in-house expertise in these four areas. It involved a cultural change in our work methods but the move has begun to pay off.

In June, Forward Planning published the Draft North Harbours Local Plan. A wide public consultation exercise on the proposals was held and the feedback we have received is indicative of the increasing public awareness of planning issues. The North West Local Plan is next due for publication and we expect an equally healthy debate on land-use issues in this area of Malta.

Progress has been registered in the on-going review of the Structure Plan. Through the Inter Departmental Planning Committee we have been building bridges with government departments and agencies, highlighting the need to streamline planning policies with their own policies. This as well involves a cultural change and we hope that the various public consultation exercises we shall be conducting on the issues to be tackled in the
Structure Plan Review will serve to create the right synergy between the Authority and other public authorities.

Towards the end of the review period our mapping and land-surveying services have been incorporated under one assistant director who is also responsible for information technology, finance and human resources. Mapping and land-surveying are two areas with ample commercial potential and the financial results for this year are extremely encouraging.

Our Human Resources section has effectively spearheaded the change process with a human resources audit at the beginning of the review year. This audit is examining the Authority's objectives and functions in relation to the available resources and structure. The Information Technology Section has likewise been gearing up for the change process with an Information Systems Strategic Plan outlining the way forward for the next three to five years.

This financial year has been one of great personal satisfaction. We have prepared the necessary groundwork and are revamping our whole land-use planning system to deliver what is rightfully expected of us.

Director's Report

Having recently attended a number of European and International planning forums, it would be opportune for this contribution to focus on development issues and the international planning context. In the ongoing globalisation process, we cannot isolate ourselves and be oblivious to what is happening all around us. Malta is a small island state but it demonstrates problems which are similar to those of much larger countries and which need to be addressed through the planning system.

At the time that the Structure Plan was being prepared in 1990, the European Commission was just about starting to look into issues of sustainable development. It published a draft document titled "The Green Paper on the Urban Environment" which reflected the Commission's commitment to achieve real improvements in the quality of urban environment. Since then the EU has come a long way, albeit slowly. The adoption by the informal Council of Ministers, responsible for spatial planning in EU member states, of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) at Postdam in 1999, was a big step towards tackling one of the crucial challenges of our time: the problem of resource-depletion and environmentally damaging forms of economic activity and changing lifestyles.

The European Commission and EU member states have also agreed on a set of actions that would encourage the application of ESDP as a policy framework and reference document. One of the first initiatives was to set up a network of spatial research institutions to compare systems and establish data on spatial issues in a comparable format. The planned actions are focused on three principal strands: promoting a spatial dimension in community and national policies; improving knowledge, research and information on territorial developments; and preparing for an enlarged territory of the European Union.

The current French Presidency of the Union took the initiative to extend the scope of ESDP to non-EU Mediterranean states. The Planning Authority was recently invited to attend a meeting of the EU member states' agencies responsible for spatial planning along with 12 other non-EU Mediterranean countries. The French Presidency is taking the proposals of this meeting forward to the forthcoming Barcelona IV conference. The proposals include:

An initiative to ensure that the subject of 'town and country planning' is incorporated in the discussions on Euro-Mediterranean relationships at the Barcelona IV conference in November; to consider holding, on an annual or twice yearly basis, an extended meeting of the EU Spatial Development Committee with third Mediterranean countries; to organise an annual meeting of Ministers responsible for 'town and country planning' in the EU and in the 12 non-EU Mediterranean countries; to set up a standing expert committee to contribute to the aforementioned meetings; to integrate the EU funding programmes under MEDA and INTERREG programmes; and to introduce twinning arrangements with countries in the south Mediterranean of multi-disciplinary multinational teams to work in these countries addressing spatial development issues.

The guiding principles for sustainable spatial development in Europe, largely influenced by ESDP policy orientations, were discussed at the 12th European Conference of Ministers responsible for

Regional Planning meeting in Hanover. I have been closely following the work of CEMAT since 1985 as a member of the committee of senior officials. The planning system adopted by Malta falls in line with the Torremolinos charter for spatial planning adopted by the Council of Europe in 1983. The document entitled "Guiding principles for sustainable development of the European Continent", adopted by CEMAT, seeks to achieve social cohesion through sustainable development policies which integrate the social and economic requirements of development within the territorial constraints of ecological and cultural functions. The main principles of this policy document can be summarised as follows:

To promote territorial cohesion through a more balanced social and economic development of regions and improved competitiveness; encourage development generated by urban functions and improve the relationship between town and countryside; promote more balanced accessibility; develop access to information and knowledge; reduce environmental damage; enhance and protect natural resources and heritage; enhance cultural heritage as an attractive resource for development; develop energy resources while maintaining safety; and encourage high quality, sustainable tourism.

Last summer Berlin was the venue of a Global Conference on the Urban Future (URBAN 21) jointly organised by the United Nations and the German Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning. About 4,000 participants from all over the world took part in this event. The Berlin declaration adopted by the conference proposes, amongst others: the adoption of effective urban policies which integrate the social, economic, environmental and spatial aspects of development; the adoption of appropriate land-use planning and implementation measures to promote vibrant economies, functioning land markets, affordable housing and suitable infrastructure; the promotion of an integrated public transport infrastructure, better management of the use of the private car and high priority to urban development policies in the framework of national and regional policies.

Malta is certainly not alone in facing up to the challenges of the new millennium in a fast changing world where economic realities make it incumbent upon all of us to address issues of development pressures on our fragile environment taking into account the long-term perspective. Integrated Resource Management and Sustainable Development must not remain just clichés, but the implications of implementing these principles demand a more responsible attitude by many of our institutions and agencies operating outside the Planning Authority.

In my view the Planning Authority is carrying out its fair share of responsibilities in this regard. We need to put more energies into such an integrated approach through the whole decision process, both at the strategic national level and the more local decentralised level.

Planning Authority Board Members

Chairman

Mr Christopher Falzon BSc (Eng.) MPhil, Grad.Dip (Maths), MICE, C.Eng.,A&CE, Eur.Ing.

Deputy Chairman

Mr Victor Torpiano BA(Arch) B.Arch(Hons)A&CE

Independent Members

Mr Paul Gauci B.E.&A. (Hons), A&CE, M.A. (Reg.Plan.)

Profs Victor Ferrito BSc, MSc, PhD(Wales)FIFST,FRSH

Mr Alfred Mangion B.Pharm.

Mr Salvator Mousu'

Dr Tanya Sciberras Camilleri LLD

Mr Ronald Azzopardi (appointed on 2 November 1999)

Mr Reginald Abela (resigned on 2 November 1999)

Public Officers as members representing Ministries

Mr Joseph Aquilina

Mr Lawrence Buttigieg BE&A(Hons), A&CE

Mr Edwin Muscat

Mr Moses Azzopardi A.C.I.S. Dip.(M)

Mr Louis Vella BSc MSc (appointed on 1 October 1999)

Mr Kevin Gatt BE&A(Hons), MSc(London), DIC, MCIWEM, C.Eng., A&CE (resigned on 1 October 1999)

Members of Parliament

Hon Michael Bonnici MP

Hon Joe Mizzi MP

Secretary

Mr Francis Tabone

The Planning Authority Board

Meeting 28 times on a bi-weekly basis, the Planning Authority Board has continued to provide strategic guidance to the organisation, focusing on internal restructuring, policy updates and major development applications.

The Board, as presently constituted, was appointed on 1 November, 1998 for a period of three years. An Executive Committee, composed of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, the Director of Planning and three Board members, met fortnightly to prepare the Board's agenda and to discuss matters of an urgent nature. The Executive Committee reports to the Board.

High on the Board's agenda was the internal restructuring of the Planning Directorate. A strategy prepared by the Management Efficiency Unit following an intensive review of the Directorate's operations began to be implemented during the year under review. Mr Matthew Gatt, who was appointed Change Agent to spearhead the change process, kept the Board regularly briefed on the progress achieved.

Meeting in public, the Board approved a number of major development applications which included: the Manoel Island and Tigne' projects; the Cirkewwa terminal project; the Cruise Passenger and Ferry Terminal at Pinto Wharf; the Cottonera development project; the Master Plan for City Gate and Freedom Square; the extension to the Tal-Qroqq Hospital and the redevelopment of the Verdala Hotel.

The Board also approved the inclusion of a standard condition in development permits for sites in major tourist areas. The condition sets operating times for construction and other noise-generating works.

The Ta' Qali Action Plan was approved in November 1999 following changes to the plan requested by Government. The Chalet and Qui-si-Sana Development Briefs were presented to Government following a public consultation exercise. The Board approved the draft North Harbours Local Plan and the draft Waste Management Subject Plan which were subsequently published for public consultation and towards the end of the review period the Board approved two subject studies, on tourism and retail, which will also be released for public consultation.

Policy updates and changes were also high on the Board's agenda. The 1993 regulations on advertising were amended to allow the display of temporary commercial advertisement signs without the need to obtain the Authority's consent. The policy on swimming pools was also amended to enable the Authority to take a more flexible approach to applications for swimming pools in the countryside. Amendments to the policy on the provision of car parking for penthouses was approved by the Board in June and amendments to the policy and design guidance for fish farms were approved in July. In early summer the New Policy and Design Guidance 2000 was approved. The new Guidance will come into effect on November 1, 2000 replacing a more restrictive and limited policy document which dates back to 1988. The new policy will radically overhaul the Authority's policies and regulations on buildings with a view to promoting higher quality development in Malta's urban environment.

At its last meeting for the financial year, the Authority Board approved revisions to the General Development Order of 1997 which will increase the types of development that do not require a full

development permission. The Board also approved amendments to the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations which, among other initiatives, will increase public participation and access to information and establish a Register of EIA Consultants.

On the heritage front, the Board approved the scheduling of Xlendi Valley in Gozo, including the whole valley system and a flour mill. The Authority scheduled the inland cliffs at Tas-Sellum and Wied Ghajn Zejtuna, Mellieha and approved the extension of the Timber Balcony Grant Scheme to Valletta and Floriana. The cart ruts at Ta' Durell, Sannat, Gozo were scheduled in July and Planting and Landscaping Guidelines were approved in August. The Authority also issued conservation orders for Buskett Gardens and for Villa Alhambra in Sliema.

The Board approved the Business Plan which covers the period October 2000 to September 2003 and monitored the preparation of the local plans. Matters of a procedural nature were determined by the Board during the year under review.

Chairman's Office

Organisational Change

During the period under review the Authority carried out an exercise to develop its organisation structure in line with the key recommendations of the Organisational Review which the Planning Authority commissioned from the Management Efficiency Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Authority has appointed three Assistant Directors who report to the Director of Planning. These posts cover responsibilities on Forward Planning, Development Services and Corporate Services. New management structures have been identified to promote more effective operations in all areas. In each of these areas the Authority has identified new synergies that are expected to bring about qualitative and quantitative improvements within a defined cost framework.

A considerable turnover of senior staff has added to the challenge of developing these new structures in the context of a continued need to meet the Authority's objectives in the formulation of Local Plans, the revision of the Structure Plan and the ongoing assessment of development applications and enforcement operations, together with the other obligations the Development Planning Act places on the Authority.

Public Relations

In line with the Authority's communications strategy - Planning Made Simple - the Communications Office has concentrated its efforts on translating planning concepts into simple and clear terms for public consumption.

The public consultation exercise on the North Harbours Local Plan proved to be an ideal tool to achieve this objective, albeit within the limits of the local plan area which has a population of 62,000 people. Booklets were sent to each household, exhibitions put up in every local council, public meetings organised in all localities and media exposure was sought to generate a debate on planning issues pertaining to that area.

There was a very encouraging response to the various PR initiatives undertaken and future public consultation campaigns will be able to draw on the experience gained through the North Harbours Local Plan.

During the period under review the Communications Office issued over 85 press releases and co-ordinated 15 press coverages which included launches, press conferences, seminars and presentations.

The Office is also the point of reference for the day to day press queries. Arrangements for group visits, interviews, briefings or participation in television or radio programmes are made through this office.

An exhibition on French Urban Design was organised in conjunction with the French Mission for International Relations and the French Ministry of Equipment Transport and Housing. The exhibition was held in the Planning Authority foyer.

A daily review of all the local print media is carried out by the Communications Office. This helps the Authority to keep tab on public opinion on land-related issues. Complaints or reports of planning infringements are followed up by this Office and responses issued where appropriate. It is also the responsibility of the Office to correct any erroneous information reported in the press.

Another aspect of public relations is liaison with local councils. The Office keeps local councils regularly informed on the development applications received and on the agenda and decisions of the Development Control Commission, the Planning Authority Board and the Appeals Board.

Complaints Office

The Complaints Office at Chairman's Office handled 285 complaints, 39 of which originated from the Ombudsman. 149 cases had to be re-opened bringing the total number of cases handled to 434. The Complaints Office dealt with its cases within the following time-frame:

5 days	106 (24%)
10 days	72 (17%)
15 days	52 (12%)
20 days	35 (8%)
30 days	56 (13%)
30+ days	113 (26%)
Total:	434

The development control process generated the largest number of complaints, 137cases, followed by enforcement with 92 cases. Each case is investigated and a reply given in writing. Where necessary meetings are arranged with complainants in an effort to find solutions to problems raised. The Complaints Office regularly reports to the Planning Authority Board suggesting measures for further action where this is deemed necessary.

The Complaints Office will link up with the Local Councils Complaints Handling System when this service is introduced.

Chairman's Office Secretariat

The Secretariat at Chairman's Office is the point of reference for Government ministries, departments and agencies. Queries to the Authority are channelled through this office and applications, particularly those involving the public sector, are monitored by Chairman's Office. The Office provides secretarial support to the Chairman and the Planning Authority Board.

DCC Secretariat

The Development Control Commission Secretariat is responsible for the processing of development applications following a decision by the Commission. Recent internal procedural changes have increased the responsibilities of this Secretariat which is now also responsible for the preparation of the Development Control Commission agenda. The changes were instrumental in reducing the pending caseload to around 2,850. During the review period the Commission determined over 7,300 applications.

Director's Office

The Change Process

A process of change in the Directorate's organisational structure and procedures is underway and this is reflected in the Authority's three-year Business Plan October 2000 - November 2003. The Plan is designed to both guide and respond to that change. It provides a vision for the future and details the organisational structure and resources which will be necessary to realise that vision and take the planning service in a quality leap forward in the new millennium. Whilst the changes will be implemented, new legislative changes are expected to come on board which would influence further the change already set in motion. A one-year action plan sets out a detailed framework for shorter term change, as well as setting out the Authority's work programme. Detailed objectives are included in this plan, which will be cascaded down the hierarchy as part of the new procedure for performance assessment across the organisation.

Policy Guidance

During the review period a range of new or amended policy guidance was developed and approved.

The Development Control Policy - Swimming Pools Outside Development Zone, approved in January recognises that, although swimming pools are an attractive amenity, they may have an impact on the landscape and contribute to the urbanisation of the countryside. The objectives of the policy are to permit pools where appropriate whilst containing the spatial spread of development Outside Development Zone, minimising the take-up of land and limiting the extent of visual intrusion. The policy sets out a series of criteria to achieve these objectives.

A Commuted Parking Payment Scheme for Hamrun was introduced in April, with a levy of Lm900 for each commuted parking space within the CPPS Zone covering the commercial centre.

An amendment to the policy on the Provision of Car Parking for Penthouses was approved in August. The amendment provides that where a penthouse is proposed as an extension to an existing building, parking (or a CPPS contribution in lieu) is only required for the penthouse and not for the whole building. For new buildings which include penthouses, the policy remains unchanged.

Following lengthy preparation and consultation, Development Control Policy and Design Guidance 2000 was approved by the Authority and endorsed by the Minister at the end of July, coming into force on 1st November. This new policy document replaces DC 1/88. It contains 115 policies covering all aspects of building development including residential, commercial and industrial development, updating, amending and broadening the content of the former DC1/88 document.

The main objective is to promote high quality development that is sustainable, improves and safeguards the environment, makes efficient use of land, is visually attractive and is appropriate to its surroundings. The review is the result of an extensive analysis of the DC1/88, its gaps and short-comings, and of on-going consultations with the Chamber of Architects and the Planning

Consultative Committee of the Planning Authority. The Authority expects that the document will achieve more consistent decision making in the planning process.

Policy and Design Guidance 2000 combines policy statements and standards to provide a holistic working manual for architects, developers and the Planning Authority itself when assessing development applications. The Guidance applies to all urban development. The areas which it covers include: general design principles; building heights; plot and dwelling sizes; access; basements; garages; doors, windows and balconies; materials; gardens and boundaries; penthouses, lifts and roof structures; building elements; amenity; industrial development and commercial development. To facilitate use and interpretation, the Guidance includes illustrations and an explanation of the objectives and intention of each policy.

Significant changes from previous policies include revised provisions on penthouses, washrooms, residential rooms on terraced houses/maisonettes, staircases, materials for facades, buildings on ridges, services on roofs, garage door widths, basements below front gardens, residential and commercial use of basements, vehicle access policies, boundary walls and minimum dwelling sizes.

In addition to the policies which were adopted, work began or continued during the review period on the preparation of a number of other new policies. Topics include petrol stations, industrial development in residential areas, shooting ranges and the revison of the 'Use Classes Order'. The review of current policies 'Development Outside Built-Up Areas' and 'Parking Provision for Local Shops, Offices and Catering Establishments' is also underway, to amend particular provisions of these policies.

Legal Office

The Legal Office provides legal service to Planning Authority, the Directorate, the Development Control Commission and to the Planning Authority Board.

Most new policies, circulars, contracts and reports by the Directorate are vetted by this Office in relation to the legality of their contents. Help and advice is also given on the drafting of new legislation and procedures. One of its major roles is its representation of the Planning Authority before the Planning Appeals Board, administrative tribunals and the Law Courts. Importantly, it also keeps Planning Authority officers updated with recent decisions, judgments or interpretations of legislation, from the Courts and the Appeals Board, which have a direct impact on decision making.

For the review period, there was a substantial increase in litigation with new appeals to the Appeals Board and an increase in Constitutional and civil cases.

The Legal Office also dealt with cases before the Permanent Commission Against Corruption, the Tribunal for the Investigation of Injustices as well as cases before the Civil Court, Court of Appeal, Constitutional Court and the Magistrates' Courts, these last cases mainly dealing with criminal prosecution and assistance to the police. Most Court of Appeal cases and other court cases decided in the review period confirmed the legality of the Planning Authority's decisions and actions, with a few isolated cases which were sent back to the Appeals Board.

The Legal Office also continued to attempt amicable arbitration of cases whenever possible, keeping in mind its role to defend the Planning Authority according to law. This has proved successful in many cases. A database for legal cases has been finalised and this year will see the implementation and logging in of all new cases in this system.

FORWARD PLANNING

The Forward Planning Division within the Planning Directorate was formally set up in April 2000 as part of the general restructuring of the Directorate. It incorporates the strategic planning, local planning, transport planning and environmental management functions of the Authority. The reorganisation exercise being undertaken in these four areas will help streamline the forward planning functions of the Authority in a way that would maximise the use of human resources by concentrating on clear objectives according to set priorities within a project management framework. This project management approach will entail a cultural change in current work practices but is set to improve the timely delivery of products in the forward planning area.

Local Plans

Work on the five remaining local plans continued in earnest during the year under review although progress was hampered by staff movements and resignations.

A draft North Harbours Local Plan was published in June incorporating the localities of Msida, Ta' Xbiex, Gzira, San Gwann, Pieta', Sliema, St Julian's, Swieqi and Pembroke. An intensive public consultation exercise complemented the publication of the plan which will regulate land use in these areas until 2010. Public meetings were held in each of the nine localities, printed material was distributed door to door with the help of local councils, inter-active exhibitions on the Plan proposals were put up in each local council office and a mobile planning office toured the localities for the convenience of the public.

In the run-up to the local plan launch, the Planning Authority organised a 'Mind Mapping' art competition among fourth-grade school children in the plan area. Each classroom was asked to prepare a seven-metre long mural showing important landmarks in the vicinity of their school. An exhibition of the works was held inside the Authority foyer. St Monica School in Gzira was declared winner.

Around 1,000 comments were received through the public meetings and in writing. The submissions received were wide-ranging in scope and even included two petitions, one from San Gwann residents and another from Madliena residents. The submissions are being evaluated and a revised draft of the Plan is being drawn up in the light of the submissions received.

The North West Local Plan is next due for public consultation. The plan boundary runs roughly from Ghallis Point in the north to Wied Fulija in the south. It includes all the rural, coastal and settlement areas west of Mosta, Siggiewi and Qrendi and Ta' Qali. The area has a distinctive rural character and contains both historic and relatively modern holiday settlements. The main towns are Mellieha, St Paul's Bay and Rabat but there are also
smaller settlements which are closely associated with the agriculture industry like Mgarr and Dingli. The plan is in its final stages of preparation and should be published for public consultation in the beginning of 2001.

October 1999 saw the launch of the first phase of the public consultation on the Central Zone Local Plan. Over 40,000 leaflets were distributed in homes in Iklin, Ghaghur, Mosta, Lija, Qormi, Hamrun, Birkirkara, Attard, Naxxar, Balzan and Santa Venera inviting residents to suggest ideas

for the plan. The Central Zone Local Plan will cover 33 square kilometres with a population 110,000. Several surveys have been undertaken in preparation for this plan. These include a land-use survey and an archaeological survey which have been completed and a hydrology and geology survey which is well under way. An agricultural survey is due to start soon and a draft report of survey has been prepared identifying the issues, needs and requirements of the area.

Work on surveys and research has progressed appreciably in most areas covered by the Gozo & Comino Local Plan. Meetings with interested parties are held on a regular basis, most particularly with government ministries, departments, agencies and constituted bodies. This local plan, incorporating both Gozo and Comino, will look into, among other issues, the future development of air and sea links, road congestion, infrastructural improvements, the large vacant housing stock, the seasonality of commercial operations, development on ridges and social and community facilitites. The findings so far indicate significant differences between Gozo and mainland Malta.

Structure Plan Review

A Core Team chaired by the Director of Planning is steering work on the review of the 1992 Structure Plan. Topic paper coordinators are examining the key issues addressed in the Structure Plan, mainly: demography; housing; social facilities and community care; employment (including an industry subject study, garages and warehousing); retail; tourism; leisure and recreation; minerals; waste; public utility services; urban conservation (including archaeology); rural strategy (including agriculture); coastal strategy (including aquaculture and fisheries); visual landscape and transport.

Each topic paper involves various stages of consultation with key players before a final draft is published for public consultation. The first consultation drafts to be completed were the Tourism and Retail topic papers which were approved for publication by the Planning Authority Board in September.

The draft Tourism Topic Study follows extensive consultation with the tourism authorities. The study examines current trends in the sector, the land-use implications of this industry, current policies and future demands and options. Various surveys were carried out to obtain the required data. These included a Tourism and Recreation Community Survey, a Tourism Survey, a Cruise Passenger Survey, a Tourism and Recreational Trade Survey and a Survey of Tourism and Recreational Facilities.

The Retail Topic Study contains a detailed strategic assessment of retail requirements in Malta. The study estimates the floorspace required for shopping over the next 20 years, basing its projections on consumer spending trends. It assesses the current performance of existing primary and secondary centres and compares it to international trends in retailing, particularly in southern Europe.

A Public Attitudes Survey was undertaken in July 1999 to examine people's opinion on a number of land-use issues in the run up to the Structure Plan review. The questionnaire contained 46 statements, two open-ended questions and a section requesting socio-economic information from respondents. Over 5,700 valid responses were received and a report analysing the findings is to be published in October.

The first drafts of the topic papers on utilities, demography, the elderly, education, people with special needs, leisure, recreation and transport have been completed. Meanwhile work continued on the studies on health, employment, housing, landscape, utilities, coastal strategy and rural strategy. An agricultural land mapping exercise is under way and a major part of the North West and Central Zone local plan areas has been completed. An agricultural land capability exercise has also been undertaken in collaboration with the Agriculture Department and the University of Malta.

Other studies carried out during the year under review concerned density, urban capacity and census data integration.

The draft of the Waste Management Subject Plan was published for public consultation in June. The Plan was amended in the light of the feedback received as further work continued on the identification of strategic options for the Structure Plan Review. A training course in waste management was held for Planning Authority and Government employees.

Work on a Minerals Subject Plan was started late in the last review period and a draft for public consultation should be finalised by early next year once the remaining data has been collated. As part of this project the Authority has undertaken a mapping exercise to identify land uses around existing quarries.

A draft Coastal Subject Plan is expected to be completed by end 2000 for public consultation. Several studies have been carried out in connection with this plan including one on ornithology and another on coastal engineering.

Several consultation meetings and seminars were organised during the year under review to facilitate public consultation on the Structure Plan Review. A database containing all consultees has also been compiled and a seminar was held for government departments, agencies and other public bodies. It was organised in conjunction with the Inter Departmental Planning Committee.

The potential accession to the European Union and the adoption of the aquis are expected to affect spatial planning in Malta, particularly in the areas of environment, agriculture, transport and regional policy. The Authority participated in the run up to the screening process, was represented on the working group on waste management and was responsible for compiling Tables of Concordance and Screening Lists through a comparative analysis of local and EU legislation.

In April 2000 a training seminar on the potential impact of EU membership on planning was organised for senior Authority staff in conjunction with the Malta-EU Information Centre. Planning Authority employees following a University Diploma Course in Planning also attended a seminar on the European Union which concluded a week of lectures on the European Union and planning.

Environmental Management

The past year saw an overhaul in the Authority's work practices in the area of environmental management. In line with the Authority's change programme, there was a shift towards a project management system which focuses in work priorities, maximises the use of human resources and increases motivation.

A new set of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations were approved by the Planning Authority Board at the end of the review period. The regulations have been assessed by Prof Brian Clark, professor of Environmental Management and Planning at the University of Aberdeen. The regulations conform with European Union EIA directives. The new regulations, if approved by the Ministry for Home Affairs and the Ministry for the Environment, would provide for the establishment of a register of EIA consultants, increase public access to documentation and improve the public consultation process, among other initiatives.

Considerable work was done in the area of integrated heritage management. A GIS-based, data heritage system was successfully applied as a pilot project for Pieta'. The results were presented to the Local Council and the Parliamentary Secretary at the Home Affairs Ministry. Another project, the Mdina Heritage Management and Conservation Plan, was enriched with the contribution of the University of Dundee which carried out a character analysis of the old city. A seminar is planned to be organised to present the findings of the studies as well as the recommendations. A heritage plan for Dwejra in Gozo is also under way.

Work on the designation of urban conservation areas continued in Zebbug, Siggiewi and Gharghur and all Gozo urban conservation areas have been reviewed. A number of properties have been protected through scheduling, the most significant scheduling was that of Luzjata and Xlendi valleys in Gozo.

The period under review saw the issue of the first conservation orders for the Cittadella, Buskett Gardens and for the Alhambra, a private property in Sliema. In all three cases the Authority is liaising with the owners to ensure the implementation of the conservation order.

In July the Planning Authority awarded Lm9,679 in grants to help owners of timber balconies in the Three Cities and Kalkara to repair or replace their balconies. The grants were awarded through the Historic Building Grant Scheme introduced in 1996 as an incentive to owners and tenants to carry out restoration works on old buildings. The scheme will now be extended to Valletta and Floriana.

A considerable amount of work was also done on the National Protective Inventory, with a focus on archaeological sites. Work on rural, industrial and military heritage databases has been started.

The Authority is also pursuing its efforts to obtain a heritage gain from particular development applications. The projects identified to date include a geological park in Qala, the restoration of Fort Madliena, an interpretation strategy for Gebel Ciantar and the restoration of part of the Victoria Lines.

The monitoring of quarry sites continued throughout the year with a focus on hardstone quarries. A number of infringements were discovered and action was taken on some softstone quarries operating without a permit. The Authority is also providing a blast monitoring service and during the year it has registered an increase in the commissioning of such jobs.

Since February the Authority has participated in the Coastal Area Management Programme CAMP (Malta) project. Staff members are involved in three main projects - sustainable coastal management, marine conservation areas and soil erosion. To date the Authority has obtained $30,000 in funds through this project.

The Authority was also involved in another project, ARAMIS, which is funded through the EU Raphaele Programme. Through this project, which concerns Arab mills and irrigation systems, a medieval site in the limits of Dingli was restored.

Transport Planning

The Transport Model has been finalised and is awaiting data regarding forecasts on housing and employment which will be used to make a transport prognosis for the next twenty years. This powerful tool simulates the daily use of Malta's road network and serves to forecast the effects of policies and of individual development proposals.

The on-going Traffic Volume Survey was enhanced during the past year. Four permanent traffic counters have been installed in strategic locations in order to capture data throughout the whole year. The counters, located in Marsa, Msida, Mriehel and Ghajnsielem, were installed in the beginning of the year to indicate seasonal changes as well as traffic growth in the main arterial network.

Apart from its use in the Transport Model, the data from this survey is used to calculate traffic growth and assist in forecasting future growth. Another four permanent counters are to be installed during the next financial year.

Following the approval of the Planning Authority Board of the updated policy on the Commuted Parking Payment Scheme (CPPS), work continued on other areas to be included in the scheme. The Planning Authority Board approved the inclusion of Hamrun in the scheme.

The funds collected from Valletta and Floriana through this scheme are to be used for the conversion of Crown Works Ditch into a 950-space car park, which will be used in conjunction with the park-and-ride scheme for Valletta. The funds collected from Sliema are to be partly used in conjunction with a proposed multi-storey car park at Qui-si-Sana. The funds collected from Sliema will be fairly distributed in relation to the sites from where they were collected.

Discussions have been held with St. Paul's Bay Local Council on the utilisation of the CPPS funds from that area and a brief is being prepared for a site in St Julian's.

The assessment of Traffic Impact Statements (TIS's) improved during the year under review as a result of staff training. TIS's assessed over the past year included those for the new hospital, the Cruise Passenger Terminal and the Manoel Island and Tigne' project. The level of TIS's submitted has continued to improve, as more professional groups are equipping themselves with the right software to carry out junction assessments.

The Planning Authority has appointed consultants MS3 to undertake a survey data on parking standards and traffic generation rates. The fieldwork started in May and should be completed by November 2000.

Following a request by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Planning Authority headed a team appointed to update a transport strategy for Valletta and Floriana, prepared by Colin Buchanan and Partners in 1994. The team included representatives of the Public Transport Authority, the

Works Division, the Valletta and Floriana Local Councils and the Valletta Rehabilitation Committee.

As an important factor of the strategy was the Park-and-Ride scheme, the Authority was asked to commission a feasibility study regarding its operation. Auditors from MSD Consulting Ltd. carried out the study and found that the project will be financially feasible even at a comparatively low fare. The study assumed the project will utilise pedestrian-friendly electric buses to ferry commuters from the Park-and-Ride site to Valletta and back.

The Authority is meanwhile working within another team, this time under the direction of the Policy and Planning Unit of the Health Department, to obtain funding under the EU fifth and sixth frameworks for the purchase of electric buses. If implemented, the project could become one of Europe's largest schemes, utilising only solar powered buses.

The Authority continued to assist local councils on traffic management plans. The latest computer software in traffic management was acquired by the Authority to analyse the suitability of schemes for the various vehicles that could be allowed through a particular area.

The number of Planning Control applications submitted has continued at a steady average of nine applications per month. During the past 12 months a total of 105 planning control applications were decided. Following a Planning Authority Board decision planning control applications proposing amendments to schemes in the public interest and initiated by the Directorate are now being decided by the Board.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Development Services encompasses both the Development Control and Enforcement functions. This merges the two complementary areas normally associated with the processing of development applications and the enforcing of planning conditions and control of illegal development. This year is marked with an increased throughput and decreased assessment periods in line with the general objectives to increase efficiency standards within the PA.
Development Control

The Planning Authority determined 7,393 applications between October 1999 and September 2000, a 31 percent increase over the previous year. This led to a drop in the number of pending applications from 3,699 to 2,855 over the same period.

The number of applications received and decided on a monthly basis are shown in Table 1. The pending caseload has effectively been reduced to 1997-1998 levels, as shown in Table 2.

Table 1

Month	Received	Decided
October 1999	629	607
November	531	569
December	475	351
January 2000	499	556
February	515	624
March	630	730
April	589	588
May	602	576
June	544	637
July	510	601
August	560	709
September	464	845
Total	6,548	7,393

Applications received and decided

Table 2

Year	Decided	Pending caseload
1995 - 1996	8,169	3,913
1996 - 1997	7,444	4,392
1997 - 1998	9,243	2,757
1998 - 1999	5,635	3,699
1999 - 2000	7,393	2,855

Pending caseload figures at the end of the financial year

The increase in the speed of determination of applications by the Development Control Commission was the result of various factors. The Commission, appointed in October 1998 and composed of entirely new members, initially determined applications at a slower rate than the previous commission. The situation has changed and the Commission is now determining applications at practically the same rate as its predecessor.

Furthermore, the internal restructuring of the Authority, the administrative changes in the preparation of the Commission's agenda and the additional effort made by the Directorate all contributed towards this improved performance. The number of pending applications at the end of the financial year was the lowest registered by the Authority in 22 months, as shown in Figure 1.

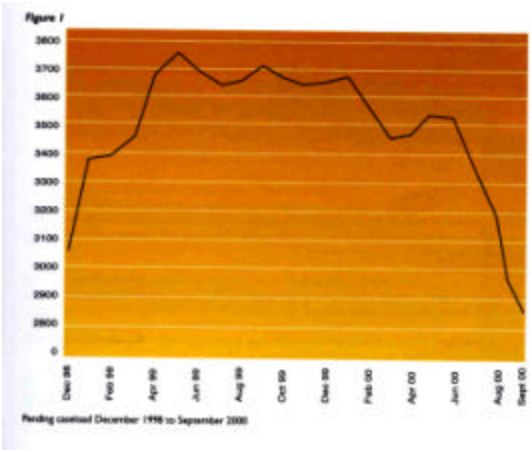

Table 3 shows the decisions made by each decision-making body of the Planning Authority. The Planning Authority Board determined 27 applications, up from 18 applications the previous year. The proportion of decisions taken by the Development Control Commission increased from 60.2% last year to 65.8% this year, continuing the previous trend. Inversely, the proportion of delegated applications continued to decrease, from 34.11% in 1998-1999 to 29.63% in 1999-2000. The proportion of refused applications and the overall proportion of approved applications remained stable.

Table 3

Planning Authority		
	Number of applications	Percentage
Approved	24	0.32
Refused	3	0.04
Total	27	0.36
Development Control Commission		
Approved	3,228	43.67
Refused	1,636	22.13
Total	4,864	65.80
Delegated (case officers)		
Approved	2,190	29.63
Summary		
All approved	5,442	73.62
All refused	1,639	22.17
All withdrawn	312	4.21
Total	**7,393**	

Decisions made

GDO notifications

During the review period the Authority processed 5,044 notifications which, according to the General Development Order of 1997, do not require a formal development application. This shows a 79% increase over the previous year's performance of 2,822 notifications processed.

The notification procedure, while providing a fast track for minor development, involves considerable administrative and technical work, apart from site inspections. The increase in GDO notifications was partly due to more notifications for the installation of satellite dishes.

The GDO section of the Authority is being strengthened to meet the growing number of notifications and further increases are expected through the revision of the Development Order.

Around 17% of the notifications received were not accepted, down from 24 per cent the previous year. This indicates that the provisions of the General Development Order are being better understood by applicants and architects.

Policies

The Planning Authority's policies on buildings were radically overhauled through the Development Control - Policy and Design Guidance 2000 which will come into effect on November 1, 2000 (See Director's Office Report on page 12-13).

Since 1 January 2000 applications for buildings to be used by the public have had to cater for people with special needs. The move was in line with Structure Plan policies and taken in view of the Access for All - Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) legislation approved by

Government. The Authority is consulting the National Commission for Persons with Disability on applications received which fall under the Access for All policy.

Also in January the Authority adopted a more flexible approach to applications for swimming pools in the countryside. The new policy document permits the construction of swimming pools in areas outside the development zone, subject to a range of criteria designed to protect the landscape and designated areas.

Since last summer a new condition was added to permits for development in major tourist areas. The condition sets operating times for construction and other noise-generating works. The condition is being applied to new development applications approved by the Authority in specific streets identified in St Paul's Bay, Sliema, St Julian's, Marsascala, Mellieha, Xlendi and Marsalforn.

The Authority's policy on parking for penthouses was amended in August. Through the revision, where a penthouse is proposed as an extension to an existing building, parking is only required for the penthouse and not for the whole of the building.

Legislation

Towards the end of the review period, the Planning Authority Board approved revisions to the General Development Order of 1997. The amendments will widen the types of development which do not require a formal development application. Certain commercial development will also be permitted under the new General Development Order.

The 1993 regulations on advertising were amended in November. It is no longer necessary to obtain the Authority's consent to display certain commercial advertisement signs. Under the revised regulations, temporary commercial advertising may be displayed for up to 28 days. The amended regulations have strengthened the Authority's enforcement powers in this area. During the period under review the Authority's enforcement personnel regularly removed billboards which were either dangerously located or displayed for a period longer than that permitted by law.

The Development Planning (Use Classes) Order 1994 was amended in April. The changes concerned industrial estates run and managed by the Malta Development Corporation and introduced more flexibility in certain cases of change of use.

Enforcement

During the review period the Authority issued 1,232 stop and enforcement notices, a marginal increase over the previous year when 1,188 notices were issued. The figure still compares well with previous years and reflects the increasing public compliance with development regulations. The geographical distribution of the enforcement notices is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Area	Number of enforcement notices
North	323
South	422
Central	288
Gozo	199
Total	1,232

Enforcement notices by area

A total 294 enforcement cases were closed during the review year after the developer removed the illegal structures himself or otherwise complied with the enforcement notice. This trend in compliance was already evident last year when there were 255 such cases of compliance. Another 580 cases were closed after the owner applied to sanction the illegal development. In all, 926 enforcement cases were closed during the review period (Table 5).

Table 5

	Sanctioned by PA Permit	Owner complied with notice	Withdrawn cases	Total
South	153	122	19	294
Central	123	73	17	213
North	159	65	15	238
Gozo	145	34	1	180
Totals	580	294	52	926

Enforcement cases closed

Towards the end of the previous review period the Authority, in conjunction with the Works Division and the Administrative Law Enforcement Police, started to carry out an average of one direct action a week to remove illegal development around Malta and Gozo.

This momentum was maintained throughout the review period and a total 49 such operations were carried out. These operations and the ensuing publicity serve as a major deterrent against abuses in the building sector.

Among the most notable direct actions taken were the removal of a concrete bridge in Chadwick Lakes, warehouse development in Bidnija, footbridges abutting on the fortifications in Cospicua and a whole block of buildings opposite Verdala Palace in Buskett.

In March a full list of all pending enforcement notices were placed on the Planning Authority website. The information is subdivided by locality and shows the enforcement notice, the year of issue, the address and a short description of the infringement.
During the review period the Authority carried out a newspaper-based publicity campaign encouraging potential property buyers to ensure that the property they are about to purchase is built according to law.

In summer the Authority introduced an emergency enforcement service on weekends to clamp down on development abuses over weekends.

CORPORATE SERVICES

During the review year the areas of Finance, Human Resources, Support and Procurement Services, Information Technology, Mapping and Land Survey were regrouped under a new management responsibility for Corporate Services. The move was made in the context of the Planning Authority's change process which aims to make the organisation more effective, efficient, transparent and accountable.

Land-surveying

Setting-Out/Civil Engineering Section

The setting-out of scheme alignments and road formation levels for development permits is one of the Authority's main land-surveying functions. Resources are also employed on projects for the Housing Authority, the Roads Department and local councils. Assistance in the form of levelling information and topographic surveys is also provided to architects and other clients.

More effort was made during the review period to increase the number of setting-out requests processed within five working days (figure 1). Almost 50% of the requests are now being dealt within five working days as opposed to the targeted 10 working days. This had the dual benefit of improving services to clients while releasing resources for other initiatives.

Figure 1

When extensive areas within scheme are earmarked for development, it has become the Authority's practice to survey the land, establish the scheme alignment and study the proposed formation levels. This has helped reduce technical problems at setting-out stage from 11% to 7%. As to the timeliness of setting-out requests, the trend remained relatively the same. Setting-out of scheme alignment and road formation levels for road surfacing was carried out in 30 localities. 35 of the 51 requests received came from the Roads Department.

Unlike previous years which saw the Authority prepare topographic surveys for Government housing projects, the Setting-out/Civil Engineering Surveys Section is being requested to set-out housing blocks and carry out levelling works for the calculation of volumes after excavation works. This is in line with the Authority's objective to be involved in housing projects from inception to completion.

In February setting-out request procedures at the Authority's Gozo Branch were brought in line with those applied in Malta. Performance in this area is being monitored on a monthly basis and the results are encouraging.

Topographic Surveys Section

The Topographic Surveys Section has continued to register a shift in demand, as external requests for surveys continue to increase (Table 1). This has generated a 76% increase in revenue over the previous year.

Table 1

Topographical Surveys (October 1999 - September 2000)		
	N° of Surveys	**Area Covered**
Internal requests	42	0.339kms²
External requests	64	1.313kms²
Total	106	**1.652kms²**

Although the number of surveys carried out show a decline, the total area actually covered has been increasing consistently. During the review period the area covered by topographic surveys shows an increase of 35% over the previous year.

In December the Roads Department appointed this section to carry out surveys on 35 kms of arterial and distributor roads. The project of vertical control densification of second order benchmarks (BM) within urban areas continued to register progress as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Area	N° of secondary benchmarks	Distance covered in kms
Rabat	8	6.3
Birkirkara	18	17.5
Three Villages	17	17.2
Dingli	4	3.2
Siggiewi	10	7.0
Total	**57**	**51.2**

To date more than 130 benchmarks have been established in 13 local council areas, mainly in the northern part of the island. For every benchmark a detailed description sheet including a photograph of the site location, a site plan and the acceptable height level of the benchmark, has been prepared.

In parallel with the vertical control densification project, the levelling schemes are also being updated indicating road surface levels, the proposed road formation levels and the direction of the surface water run-off.

The localities covered during the review period are Gharghur, Naxxar, Mosta, Mgarr, Zebbiegh and parts of Birkirkara and the Three Villages.

A case study to densify the horizontal control network within urban areas is currently being carried out in Mellieha and St. Paul's Bay. This project aims to establish a network of coordinated points allowing consistent grid referencing between different survey and mapping activities.

A precise electronic total station together with ancillary equipment were acquired to carry out the necessary field observation. A windows based least squares adjustment package was also purchased to carry out network adjustment of field observations.

In May a number of in-house training sessions were held for survey support staff. The aim was to ensure that staff members are kept up-to-date with practice advancements within the surveying field in order to provide reliable assistance to senior staff.

Information Technology

An Information Systems Strategy for the Planning Authority has been drawn up with the help of consultants PriceWaterhouseCoopers. The main objectives were to establish the business requirements of the Authority, evaluate the effectiveness of current information systems, identify target information systems to be implemented over the next three to five years and establish measures to monitor the cost of ownership of information systems within the organisation.

The main deliverables of the strategy can be split into three: quick win projects, pilot projects and a medium term interim review.

The Quick Win Projects include a corporate reference library, a building levy decision support system, the installation of time accounting terminals to record staff attendance, a project management system for the forward planning areas and the upgrading of the Upgrade Networking Infrastructure.

The Pilot Projects include a Site Development Control (SDC) system within a pilot environment such as the processing of GDO applications. This project shall include the introduction of embedded workflow, electronic document imaging, decision support features and a unified user interface to support the viewing of geo-spatial data. A second project will evaluate the cultural impact of using workflow within the organisation. Business processes to be piloted may include administrative processes across the entire organisation such as leave planning and purchase requisitions.

Medium Term Interim Review will decide on the choice of data platform. To do this the Authority shall consider the outcome of Government's strategic direction for its own corporate database platform, the results of
the SDC pilot project and the Authority's funding commitments and availability, among other factors.

The old Ms-Mail system was replaced by Lotus Notes at the beginning of the review period. The changeover was preceded by an in-house training course for users. The system introduced a number of enhancements in the Authority's e-mail systems in the following months.

The Authority continued to maintain and upgrade its network resources during the review period . The initiatives undertaken included the installation of a new Lotus Notes server and an advanced autoloader backup device. The hard drive space on the central applications server was increased to cater for the ever-growing demand for storage.

60 network workstations were installed during the review period. These resulted in over 100 upgrades being performed in a ripple down effect. A further 40 hard disks were also installed.

Attention continued to be given to protection from virus infiltration. The corporate anti-virus software was upgraded to increase protection and administration capabilities. Full virus scans are regularly performed.

The Authority's information technology quality system was continually maintained to meet the ISO 9002 requirements. An audit was carried out by British Standards Institute and the certification was confirmed. The next official audit is scheduled for November 2000.

Connecting the Authority's information technology network with that of the Government may be one of the key factors to improved service delivery. Areas which the Authority and Government could share include the local councils complaints handling system, the devolution of the licensing system and the excavation permits (trenching) system.

An electoric mail connectivity would reduce the turn around time for communications with Government. An agreement to set up such a link was reached with MITTS Ltd. The link will initially be used for the Complaints Handling System and electronic mail. Such a link could be upgraded in future to cater for the transport of other data such as GIS based information.

Mapping

In line with its long-term role as a National Mapping Agency and in accordance with its mission and purpose, the Authority has continued to provide the best possible mapping service to both internal and external clients.

Large scale mapping production continued with the plotting of Dingli, Rabat and San Martin reaching a total nine square kilometres of data acquisition and the publication of 100 survey

sheets at 1:1000 scale. Aerial triangulation and the necessary preparations for Madliena and Pembroke were finalised and data capture of both areas was initiated concurrently.

In order to keep Ground Control at a good pace ahead of photogrammetry, Geodetic and Topographic Surveying work was carried out in Madliena and Pembroke and extended to San Gwann to cover a total area of 14 sq. km. Last year's remaining computations and compilation of data of San Martin was finalised and field observations for the Birkirkara block completed.

In addition to this, a total of 25 survey stations were established to tie-in a number of surveys either to the national reference system or to the base map.

Land-surveying and Mapping personnel carried out a survey of the Salina coast road for the Roads Department returning substantial revenue. The Mapping work partly consisted in the observation and computation of a 9.5 km long traverse, field data capture using Global Positioning System (GPS) in Stop & Go mode and final plotting of 3.2 km of carriage way.

During the year under review, Mapping personnel carried out various other works including a 1.25 hectares survey at Dingli for up-dating purposes, an extensive reconnaissance survey of Mdina and the land-use survey for the Central Local Plan. The latter involved significant commitment in terms of human resources and time.

In order to assure a high quality product, quality control tests were carried out on each block of photogrammetric data. Staff members are following in-house training in computations and analysis of data utilising a sample of over 300 points which were measured for the area of Rabat.

Densification of the Precise Levelling Network was finalised by fixing three additional benchmarks and observing 22 sections with a total length of 15 km of levelling observations. From a detailed survey carried out to evaluate the status of the existing benchmarks in Valletta and the north-east area, it transpired that 31 benchmarks were either missing or in a bad state and 10 benchmarks were fixed as a replacement.

Over the past year the Authority was involved in various international projects, including the CAMP "Malta" Project. These projects exposed Mapping personnel to new experiences and further commercial opportunities. This has enabled the Authority to consolidate its portfolio of services as a National Mapping Agency.

In the past year the Authority augmented the number of mapping services offered to external clients. Apart from the provision of licences for the use of the topographic base map, other commercial projects were successfully undertaken. Of specific interest was the development of a tourist map according to client specifications and the provision of photogrammetric service to external clients on a commercial basis.

A number of internal requests arose from various activities where the Authority has an operational or contractual commitment to deliver products or services. During the past year a major proportion of the Authority's mapping resources were dedicated to satisfying these internal requests.

Over the past twelve months the Authority continued to maintain and develop its Geographic Information Systems and Data, ensuring that the applications developed in-house will integrate seamlessly with the business process of the organisation.

As owner of Street and Council information in the common data base, the Authority continued to maintain and update the streets data set. This ongoing activity ensures the currency of one of Mapping's key spatial products.

The Authority has also provided a service of GIS consultancy to a number of external entities.

Human resources

The past twelve months saw a thorough review of selection systems and the adoption of new ways of selecting employees. New selection techniques like psychometric tests, work-sample tests, structured interviewing and group exercises were introduced and are achieving the desired results. Recruitment was a busy area as a lot of staff movement was registered during the review period. The next phase involves the standardisation of recruitment procedures for the organisation.

An integrated training strategy has been finalised and will be launched once budget requirements are approved. The strategy is based on three pillars: a Management Development Programme that would enable participants to become familiar with advanced principles of management in areas directly relevant to the organisation; a training strategy which addresses the needs identified in the annual training needs analysis conducted for each employee as part of the Performance Management and Appraisal Programme; and short courses in areas such as development control, forward planning and enforcement organised with the help of foreign universities.

During the past 12 months a number of Planning Authority staff have completed academic courses leading to a Diploma in Planning Studies, an undergraduate degree in Environment Planning and Master degrees in Geographic Information Systems and Environmental Planning and Management. In addition, a number of employees are reading for doctoral degrees overseas.

A new Performance Management and Appraisal Programme was developed to ensure that the overall objectives of the Planning Authority's business plan are achieved. The new programme is a complete rethink of the existing performance appraisal system. It is simpler and primarily focussed on objectives and dialogue between the employees and their supervisors. Training was provided to employees with direct supervisory responsibilities and a handbook was developed and made available to all Planning Authority staff.

Two new policies were introduced during the review period: a whereabouts policy which gives management more control over employee working time; and an electronic time recording system that provides management with more precise information on work attendance. This second measure also introduced greater flexibility for employees to manage their time.

Industrial relations remained a major item in the human resources portfolio. Work in this area was dominated by a still on-going industrial tribunal case between the Planning Authority and the Union Professjonisti Awtorità ta' l-Ippjanar.

Development Control Commission

Between October 1999 and September 2000 the Development Control Commission met 135 times and determined over 7,300 applications. The backlog of pending applications was absorbed during the review period. The Commission is now holding two formal sittings a week to determine applications and a third weekly sitting to determine requests for reconsiderations. Through the new procedures, the Commission is vetting files which are about to be placed on its agenda to ensure that the applications have been adequately processed.

The members of the Commission are:

Chairman	Mr Victor Torpiano BA(Arch) B.Arch(Hons) A&CE
Members	Mr Paul Borg BE&A(Hons) A&CE Mr Saviour Borg BE&A(Hons) A&CE Mr Andrew Ellul BE&A(Hons) A&CE Mr Carmel Ellul BE&A(Hons) A&CE Mr David Pace B.Arch A&CE Mr Anthony Mifsud HND Agric.

Inter Departmental Planning Committee

During the period under review the Inter Departmental Planning Committee which was re-constituted in April 1999 in terms of Section 38(3) of the Development Planning Act, 1992 met regularly. The primary function of the Committee is: (a) to give advice on applications for development submitted to the Planning Authority by Government Departments or similar agencies, in the case of rejection of proposal or imposition of conditions deemed unreasonable by the applicant Department; and (b) to act as intermediary between departments and the Authority in order to reach an agreement. The committee met regularly to review several applications filed by the Roads Department, Ministry for Gozo and by the Local Councils of Pieta', Gudja, Mgarr, Xewkija, Munxar and Gharb.

Representatives of department or body corporates considered to be relevant to planning are nominated to sit on the Inter Departmental Planning Committee, which is composed as follows:

Chairman

Mr Anthony Mifsud Dip Bus Law & Accty, FCIPD
Office of the Prime Minister

Members

Mr Marco Abela
Malta Development Corporation

Mr Anton Camilleri BE&A, A&CE
Housing Construction & Maintenance Department

Mr Vincent Cassar B.Arch, FIHEEM, A&CE
Works Division

Mr Albert Mamo
Land Department

Mr Antoine Riolo BSc(Eng), M.Eng, MI Mech. E, C.Eng.
Water Services Corporation

Mr Victor Rizzo
Local Councils Department

Mr Franco Serracino Inglott BA(Hons) Econ MA(Agriecon) (Leeds)
Department of Agriculture

Mr Victor Torpiano BA (Arch Studies), BArch (Hons) A&CE
Planning Authority

Mr Louis Vella BSc, MSc
Environment Protection Department

Users' Committee

The Users' Committee is autonomous from the Planning Authority and appointed by the Minister to whom it reports and makes necessary recommendations at least every six months. The Committee has an audit function with a view to recommend to the Minister changes and improvements aimed at making the Authority more transparent, customer friendly, efficient and above all to exercise its function in harmonising with the fast and fair development of the Maltese economy.

During the period under review the Committee met 15 times and discussed and made recommendations on the following issues: the Development Control Commission; the General Development Order; Local Plans; the sanctioning of development; height limitations; development permit applications report; Commuted Parking Payment Scheme and the procedure for policy adoption. The committee is currently looking into the complaints received by the Authority.

The Users' Committee, the members of which attend in a representative and honorary capacity, is composed as follows:

Chamber of Commerce	Mr Albert Mamo
Consumers' Union	Mr Carmel Bugeja
Association of General Retailers and Traders (GRTU)	Mr Charles Busuttil
Chamber of Architects and Civil Engineers	Mr Piju Busuttil A&CE
Malta Federation of Industry	Mr Henry Attard
Environment and Heritage Groups	Mr Joe A. Doublet Dip.Env.Sci., B.Sc., PGCE, M.Sc(Wales)
Local Councils Association	Mr Charles Zammit

Planning Consultative Committee

The Planning Consultative Committee is made up of representatives of organisations representing various aspects of life in Malta. The members of the Committee are appointed by the Prime Minister. The Committee advises the Government and the Authority on any policy or proposal contained in a development plan on which its advice is sought and on matters the Committee believes it should draw the attention of the Government or the Authority. During the period under review the Committee met three times and discussed, among other items, the Waste Management Subject Plan, the Commuted Parking Payment Scheme and the North Harbours Local Plan.

Chairman

Chamber of Architects and Civil Engineers	Mr Andrew Ellul BE&A(Hons), A & CE

Secretary

Planning Authority	Mr Francis Tabone

Members

The Malta Chamber of Commerce	Mr Louis Apap Bologna
Malta Federation of Industry	Mr Lino D. Abela L.P.
Moviment ghall-Ambjent	Prof. Edward Mallia Ph.D (Oxon)
Nature Trust	Mr David Dandria B.Sc. (Zoology) Hons (Lond), ARCS
Din l-Art Helwa	Mr David Mallia BE&A (Hons), L.R.S.M., Dip.Cons.(Milan), A&CE
Grupp Wirt Storiku	Dr. Mario Buhagiar BA (Hons), M Phil (Lond), Ph.D (Lond)
National Council of Women of Malta	Ms Blanche Martin
Association of Estate Agents	Mr Maurice Tabone
Birdlife Malta	Mr Joe A Doublet B.Sc.
Ghaqda Kaccaturi Nassab u Konservazzjonisti	Mr Saviour Portelli
National Commission for the Disabled	Mr Joseph Bugeja
Ecological Society	Mr Giovanni Buttigieg
Wirt Ghawdex	Mr Godwin Vella
Malta Tourism Authority	Ms Marie Louise Mangion
The Archaeological Society	Mr G A Fairclough
National Youth Council	Mr Anthony Zammit

Association of General Retailers and Traders	Mr Vince Farrugia BA(Hons) Econ., D.Econ. FITD
Local Councils Association	Mr Charles Zammit

Minerals Advisory Board

In the review period the Minerals Advisory Board met twice. Matters discussed included: landscaping and restoration schemes at mineral workings; WSC insurance requirement for dumping and recycling of inert waste in quarries; minerals development applications; the Minerals Subject Plan; planning applications for quarry operations to extend permitted excavation depths; ongoing discussion of alleged grievances at mineral workings; existing quarry operations in close proximity to scheduled sites/property; illegal quarry operations and related illegal development and site visits to quarry sites for the purpose of assessing pending minerals applications and other issues related to ongoing operations.

The Minerals Board is appointed by the Authority and is composed of the following members:

Chairman

Dr. Godwin Cassar B.Arch, Dip BIE (R'Dam), FRTPI, FIMgt, D.UNIV., A&CE

Deputy Chairman

Dr. Dimitrio Duca D.Geol. (Milan), FGS, FIAEG

Members

Police Trade Department	P.C. Vincent Mifsud P.C. Lawrence Cachia
Ministry for the Environment	Mr Peter Gatt (Geologist)
Museums Department	Mr Anthony Pace BA, Mphil (Cantab.), FCCF
Explosives Officer	Mr Annetto Portelli
Department of Agriculture	Mr Franco Serracino Inglott BA (Hons), MA (Leeds) Mr Anthony Mifsud/Mr Anthony Borg
Department for Environmental Protection	Mr Vince Gauci MSc Mr Joe Sultana Mr Joe Sammut Mr Mario Farrugia
Association of General Retailers and Traders	Mr Vincent Farrugia BA(Hons) Econ., D.Econ.FITD Mr E. Aquilina
Water Services Corporation	Dr. John Mangion D.Geol. (Milan), F.G.S. Eng. P. Micallef

	Mr A. Mallia
Department of Health	Mr Carmelo Muscat P.H.I. Mr J. Attard Kingswell Ms Miriam Grech
Acting Secretary	Mr Franco Pisani

Heritage Advisory Committee

The Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC), an independent committee of experts appointed by the Planning Authority, continued to advise the Authority on heritage policy, the scheduling of natural and built heritage sites and the designation of rural and urban conservation areas. It also continued to give its expert view on individual development proposals affecting designated and scheduled areas and sites. During the review period, 144 meetings were held and 43 of these were site inspections. During these meetings, the Committee considered 2,956 applications and visited 372 sites.

Chairman

Perit Konrad Buhagiar B.E.&A. (Hons), Dip. Cons (Rome), A.&C.E.

Vice Chairman

Perit Michael Ellul B.E.&A. (Hons), Dip.Arch. (Rome), F.R.Hist.S. (London), A.&C.E. M.Q.R.

Members

Prof Patrick J Schembri B.Sc, M.Sc Ph.D (Glasgow) Cbiol FIBiol
Prof Godfrey Wettinger MOM, PhD. (London)
Dr Albert Ganado B.A. LLD., KM, MOM
Perit David Mallia B.E.&A. (Hons), L.R.S.M., Dip Cons. (Milan), A.&.C.E.
Perit Joseph Bondin B.E.&A. (Hons), A.&C.E.
Dr Vincent Depasquale B.A., LLD
Mr Joseph C Sammut KM
Mr Joe Attard Tabone
Mr Anthony Pace BA Mphil(Cantab.), FCCF*