



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By:

The Honourable David Burt, JP, MP

Premier of Bermuda

Government Reform 2019 -2023 Review and Planning for 2024

14th July 2023

Mr Speaker, I rise today to provide an update on the Government Reform initiative. In the Government's 2017 platform, we committed to reforming the public service. And, as we have shown time and again, this Government follows through on its commitments to the electorate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members will recall learning about the Strategic Planning Framework for Government Reform, which was tabled in this Honourable House on 1 March 2019. This framework was produced in consultation with PwC and set out a starting point for the building of a comprehensive roadmap to advancing Government Reform between 2019 and 2023.

Mr Speaker, the Framework comprised six (6) strategic areas: Strategy, Processes, Platform, People, Perspective, and Performance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members will also recall the Government established the priorities would focus on the People and Information Technology work streams. Workshops and training sessions aligned departmental mission statements with the vision for a "Future-forward Government for the People of Bermuda." Budget structures were redefined to enable Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) and Public Value Assessment for decision-making on service delivery.

Mr Speaker, there were six People objectives, and by People, I'm referring to Government employees. These included:

1. 100% of public officers have completed annual performance appraisals
2. Additional performance-based pay/recognition is provided to the top 20% of performers
3. 50% of all public officers participate in a Government wellness program
4. Implement a centralised training platform accessible by all public officers
5. Consistent succession plan created and approved for all permanent secretaries
6. 60% of roles in the Public Service have documented detailed job descriptions.

Mr Speaker, all six (6) of the People Objectives have been advanced with foundational policies and programmes successfully implemented towards achieving the reform objectives.

Mr Speaker, the Government has introduced a successful leadership programme. Thirty-four graduates completed the programme as part of the pilot cohort, and the public service is now preparing for a second cohort. A succession planning policy was completed for all public service roles. Additionally, all critical and hard-to-fill posts across the public service were identified to enable the implementation of a system-wide Succession plan.

Mr Speaker, this Government and Honourable Members know that our public officers work tirelessly to serve the people of Bermuda, and we must ensure that their hard work is acknowledged. Therefore, to recognise and encourage continued excellence in service delivery, we introduced the Public Service Excellence Award (PSEA) programme, which highlights public officers' outstanding work and contributions of public officers each month. I am proud to personally participate in the awards ceremony each month at the Cabinet Office, where I meet with the recipient and with the Head of the Public Service to commend them on their outstanding work.

And, **Mr Speaker**, also important to note is that the age-old bonus programme that awards up to \$1,000 per year to technical officers for outstanding performance has been expanded and can now be used to recognise exceptional performance across all segments of the public service.

Additionally, Mr Speaker, we created an online appraisal process and provided an inventory of learning and development programmes accessible to public officers.

Mr Speaker, in keeping with the People focus and the wellness initiative continues to deliver programmes in health and well-being to officers. To date, there have been over 13 initiatives and close to 1500 public officers participating in group challenges to encourage healthy lifestyles.

Mr Speaker, Each of the policies and programmes that have been advanced or implemented represents a necessary foundational building block towards Government reform and a more efficient and effective public service.

Mr Speaker, there were eight (8) Information and Technology Objectives. The public health crisis proved to be a significant disrupter in this area, and while Paperless 2023 was an original core objective, planned resources were required to be redirected to support the immediate needs of providing contactless services to the community. More than 80 digital forms and apps have been released to the public since 2019.

Mr Speaker, with the exception of COVID-specific forms and apps, most of the 80 remain a core part of the current part of our delivery model, with new web-based applications and forms coming online to support operations. Meanwhile, a digital strategy was completed, and work is currently advancing on the delivery of a unified payment gateway for the Government to support end-to-end online payments and reconciliation for all government departments.

Mr Speaker, in our ongoing effort to improve the service we deliver to the people of Bermuda, a Service Standards Policy has been completed, and the Government has now commenced the roll-out of customer service training aligned with this policy. Therefore not only have public officers been informed of the standards we seek to achieve, but we have now commenced the work to train all public officers on the standards we expect, supporting them in their role while also providing benefits for the people we serve through improved customer service.

Mr Speaker, to prepare the Government to take a strategic look at its services very early in the roll-out of the Government Reform initiative, a series of workshops and training sessions with Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments provided for all Departments' "Mission Statements" to be aligned with the Vision for "a Future-forward Government for the People of Bermuda." The aligned Mission Statements have been reflected in Business Plans and the Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure publication for several budget cycles.

Mr Speaker, further training in subsequent budget cycles resulted in the redefining of the approach to budget development to achieve service-specific budget structures to align with the requirements of Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) and provide for the introduction of a Public Value Assessment to determine the relative value of all of the services provided by the Government. This data is now available internally for decision-making relative to the future of the delivery of Government services.

Mr Speaker, work on the outstanding initiatives will continue through the end of the year; simultaneously, a team has been assembled, and assessments have been undertaken to review lessons learned and advance the development of the Government Reform Plan 2024 – 2027.

Mr Speaker, having used the last few years to develop and implement the necessary foundational policies and programmes, the 2024 Plan is intended to:

- a) Build on the foundation by better advancing digital initiatives;
- b) Focus on the specific needs of the high-touch departments to increase efficiency in service delivery.

Mr Speaker, also, in addition to the strategic objectives outlined in the Strategy Planning Framework, the 2024 plan highlights lessons learned and identifies areas for improvement in resource planning, staff involvement, culture change, and performance management.

Mr Speaker, technology is expected to drive change in the service in the future. About twenty customer-facing Departments will be prioritised and are expected to be among the early cohort to deliver end-to-end digital services.

Mr Speaker, to support these endeavours, a well-trained, talented workforce will be required to support these endeavours - both existing employees and new recruits to fill critical roles will drive the process.

Mr Speaker, while the Government of Bermuda endeavours to be the employer of choice, attracting talent can sometimes be challenging. Recent market research conducted as a part of the Bermuda Omnibus Survey has provided statistically relevant data to help focus communications, address perceptions and better understand the various target groups so that we can attract the best talent in the future.

Mr Speaker, what I have outlined to this Honourable House is further confirmation that the reform this Government committed to is well underway. Not only is this yielding benefits for the people of Bermuda through more efficient and effective services, but also to our public officers by providing an improved working structure, fair rewards, and initiatives that recognise their valued contributions.

The Government will continue to advance these vital reforms and deliver on creating a more efficient public service for the people of Bermuda.

Mr Speaker, before I close, I would also like to take a moment to thank Dr Derrick Binns, Head of the Public Service, who has been leading this reform and who is today serving his last day as a public servant. He is retiring after 37 years of service, in which he has held roles including Permanent Secretary and Cabinet Secretary.

On behalf of the Government, I thank Dr Binns for his leadership, for his devoted work, and for the decades that he has given to public service.

Thank You, Mr Speaker.