New Straits Times : 26 September 2006&#65533; PUTRAJAYA: Applications for housing projects will be approved in four months, beginning next year.

However, this speedy Planning Delivery and Land Development Process System will only benefit housing developers who opt for the build-then-sell concept. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said in a move to encourage developers to adopt the "build-first" system, local authorities would establish one-stop centres that would help expedite approvals for building plans and land conversions.

He said under the system, developers of build-then-sell projects would be able to submit all three applications for: "conversions and sub-division", "surrender and re- alienation", "planning approval and building plan", simultaneously.

"The four-month (approval period) is to encourage developers to adopt this (build-then-sell) concept

"The concept is not compulsory and they (those who sell-then- build) can still use the conventional system," he said, adding that all state governments had agreed to the decision and the 38 municipal councils nationwide would adopt the system from early next year.

Najib was speaking to reporters after chairing the 55th National Council Meeting for Local Governments, here yesterday.

He also said a set of guidelines to provide barrier-free access in public buildings and facilities for the disabled would be issued to local authorities.

It also covers guidelines for owners of existing buildings to facilitate necessary changes to make them disabled-friendly.

"This is to improve existing and new buildings so that the rights of the disabled are protected and that the group&#65533;s contributions to the nation are increased."

Najib added a directive would be issued to operators of multi-level car parks for the installations of closed-circuit televisions and presence of security personnel.

He noted that many had yet to adhere to this ruling, providing little security to the public.

Also present at the meeting was Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting.

On a separate matter, Najib said the government would conduct a study on the weaknesses of local authorities.

Headed by the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan with the co-operation of Public Service Department director-general Tan Sri Ismail Adam, the findings would be tabled at the next National Council meeting.