

Statement by Drakenstein Municipality Executive Mayor: **Conrad Poole**

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Action plan to improve services at Building Control Department

Our motto in Drakenstein is: “A Place of Excellence”. Daily, hundreds of employees work from dawn to dusk to make sure we achieve this goal. However, local government is never without its challenges and unfortunately, sometimes we have to do serious introspection and admit that we are not as successful in some areas as we would like to be. After a thorough look into our Building Control Department, we have reached the conclusion that this particular service can definitely perform better. The Building Control Department forms part of the Directorate of Planning and Economic Development. This directorate is tasked with creating, facilitating and promoting an environment for economic growth in Drakenstein. It is thus critically important in creating opportunities for progress and development for all residents and businesses in our town. The Building Control Department is a key component, as it is responsible for evaluating and approving all building plans. Before any person or development can build anything in Drakenstein, the necessary plans and paperwork must be submitted to building control for approval, to make sure it adheres to legislation and by-laws. The department is aided by other internal role-players such as infrastructure, land use planning and the fire department to mention a few.

The admitted decline in service quality has resulted in frustration from our customers and delays in approving new opportunities for development. With the appointment of a new Executive Director for Planning and Economic Development, Lauren Waring, the shortcomings were quickly identified and an action plan has been provided to me setting out how the problem areas will be dealt with efficiently and effectively. These plans include filling critical vacancies in the department as well as incorporating new technology, which will enable the municipality to process, review and approve building plans more quickly and efficiently. The Director and the Manager for Building Control will also be meeting with practitioners and developers to discuss the challenges, changes required and the impacts thereof.

To implement these plans will take time. We realise that this could possibly frustrate our customers in coming months. We want to ask our customers to please be patient during this time. We apologise in advance for any inconveniences and I want to assure you will continue to work as diligently as possible to deliver services that you expect from us. The results will be worth it. We will continue to update you as our plan unfolds for this section, as some of the changes will affect where and how plans are submitted. It is important that you are fully aware of these changes. Please continue to give us feedback and inputs via our Customer Care Centre. During business hours you can call us on 021 807 4782. After hours you can contact 021 807 4665. You can also send an email to customercare@drakenstein.gov.za. We value your input.

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