

## **Building Plan Approvals:**

### **Building Plan Application Management System Modernisation**

The Building Plan Application Management System (BPAMS) modernisation initiative is a transversal collaboration across the spheres of government (between Western Cape Government's Red Tape Reduction Unit, and Stellenbosch Local Municipality's Building Development Management Department).

This initiative exemplifies a strong all-of-government approach and unwavering commitment to continuous improvement, operational excellence, and exceptional service delivery. This intervention reflects the department's proactive approach to enhancing a critical, business-facing government service - demonstrating both agility in responding to business feedback, and a forward-thinking mindset in modernising systems and processes to enable an ease of doing business environment.

During the initial phases of the interventions, a comprehensive business process assessment was first conducted on the building plan approval process. This involved engaging directly with businesses and developers to gather valuable insight into their overall customer experience, as well as soliciting suggestions for improvement.

Based on this collaborative feedback, the Building Plan Application Management System was significantly modernised and enhanced with new functionality. These enhancements not only addressed the concerns raised by stakeholders but also introduced new functionalities designed to keep businesses and clients informed at every stage of the application process—right up to the final decision and its communication. This user-centric approach has led to a more transparent, efficient, and responsive system, reflecting a strong commitment to continuous improvement and stakeholder satisfaction.

The enhancements made to the building plan approval process, a key business-facing government service, have significantly contributed to creating a more enabling environment for ease of doing business. These improvements have not only streamlined operations but also elevated decision-making efficiency, enabling the department to

consistently achieve over 85% of building plan decisions within legislated timeframes. More recently, the department achieved 90% of decisions within legislated timeframes.

In 2025, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism appointed external independent consultants, to conduct an impact assessment on ease of doing business interventions carried out. Below are some of the key highlights pertaining to this initiative.

The intervention has delivered substantial and measurable benefits, including:

1. **Increased municipal efficiency** through reduced processing effort and enhanced staff productivity.
2. **Accelerated turnaround times** without compromising on quality or strict compliance standards.
3. **R32.8 million in avoided financial holding costs and construction-related price escalations.**
4. **Broader economic benefits cautiously estimated at over R580 million,** underscoring the intervention's far-reaching impact on the local economy.

In addition, an article published in the media in February 2026 further shone a spotlight on the Stellenbosch region and its performance regarding building plan approvals. The following extract highlights this point:

*"Stellenbosch is swiftly becoming one of South Africa's leading property hotspots, with over R13 billion in residential building plans approved in the Western Cape in 2025." (Article headline: How Stellenbosch is evolving into a property powerhouse, rivaling Sandton – IOL)*

These outcomes reflect a high-performing, responsive public service that is not only operationally excelling but also economically impactful, setting a benchmark for innovation and effectiveness in government service delivery.

By implementing the modernisation of the Building Plan Application Management System, the department not only reaffirmed its dedication to serving businesses and the broader community but also showcased its innovative spirit and responsiveness.

These efforts have significantly elevated the user experience, reinforcing the department's role as a forward-thinking regulatory authority, dedicated to continuous improvement and service delivery.