

Failure of the Council for the Built Environment is symptomatic of leadership failure at the DPWI

By **Madeleine Hicklin MP** - DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure

House Chair

Minister Patricia de Lille's undertaking for a renewed commitment by the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) in the 2022/23 Annual Performance Plan (APP) to transform the Built Environment sector through policy reform and collaboration to professionalise occupations, producing skilled and fit-for purpose Built Environment Professionals (BEPs), driving programmes that create economic opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups and expediting the empowerment of women, youth and people with disabilities in the built environment sector sound incredibly impressive and very much like the Democratic Alliance's stated policy of creating a Capable State that will rescue South Africa from the brink of an abyss.

But then you realise that this has not been achieved - because the CBE has failed dismally in all of the above.

It is an indictment, a sad reflection of the ANC's poverty policies, and a reflection of a leadership deficit in the DPWI and in the CBE. No one is willing to address these governance challenges that are core to the entity's failure to deliver on what is needed for it to achieve its legislative mandate. The report served here reflects a dramatic underspending across a host of programmes aimed at carrying out the very mandates stated above.

The current profile of the six BEPs under the CBE, reveal 66% of registered professionals are white, 24% are African, 6% are Indian and 4% are Coloured. The same can be said for registered candidates by race or gender – an indictment on the ANC Poverty Policies that fly in the face of government's commitment to the upliftment of the citizens of this country.

The number of research reports on issues impacting transformation in the BEPs had an approved budget of R369-million yet a dismal 2,98% was spent. The number of advisory briefs developed and submitted to relevant stakeholders had an approved budget of R246-million. An abysmal 1,21% was spent – despite the fact that the gender transformation advice desk begged the CBE for budget. They were told there was no money. There was money – only not for them!

Despite a critical leadership deficit at the CBE that has seen a flood of resignations - including that of its own CEO and COO - almost 55% of the CBE's approved budget of R57,298-million was spent on the compensation of employees and it is asking for additional budget in the coming financial year.

Programme 2 deals with empowerment and economic development. Here the approved budget of R2,016-million was underspent by 97,56%. A monumental failure on the empowerment and support of women-owned professional practices, people with disabilities, youth and on the number of collaborations on the transformation in the Built Environment.

THIS IS A DISGRACE. A slap in the face for South Africans looking for the dignified life only the DA can offer.

Programme 3 talks to Professional Skills and Capacity Development, the District Development Model. The DDM is an abject failure, primarily because of flawed monitoring and evaluation and despite this, the CBE managed to spend 43,09% of its budget.

Programme 4's approved budget of R615-million for Research and Knowledge Management saw R14 000 – 2,2% - being spent. A woeful performance, typical of the attention the CBE has shown to transforming the Built Environment.

Programme 5's public protection, policy and legislation had an approved budget of R1,172-million. 55% was spent. But, between 2018 and 2021 there was no financial allocation for compliance reports on Built Environment legislation and policies. This is extremely worrying because it means that not a single compliance report was forthcoming from the CBE.

Turning to Agrément SA, the greatest challenge here is a lack of a transversal link to properly inform municipal, provincial or national departments of human settlements, for example, about the innovative building products and techniques on offer. While strides have been made, and the Democratic Alliance welcomes them, more has to be done if the core mandate of this entity – that of the certification of innovative building materials for the construction industry - is to be met.

These green products must be aggressively marketed as Agrément-certified, energy-saving and innovative construction products must be incorporated into tender specifications and requirements for all future construction plans. We must reduce our carbon footprint and promote these innovative building initiatives in the years to come.

I thank you.