

## **Local Government Portfolio Committee Concerned over Slow Progress on Delivery of Housing Units for Military Veterans**

The North West Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Local Government and Human Settlement has raised serious concerns about the Department of Local Government and Human Settlements' lack of progress on the allocation of houses to the military veterans in the province. This came after the Committee held an oversight meeting with the department and North West Housing Corporation over their 1st Quarter reports for the financial year 2016/17 and 1st draft of the Annual Performance Plan (APP) for the 2017/18 financial year.

The Committee Chairperson, Hon. Motlalepula Rosho said although the matter of the backlogs on allocation of houses to the military veterans was seriously raised in the previous financial year where the draft of the current APP was discussed, the department continuously fail to provide houses to the military veterans.

"It is unfortunate that out of the 142 houses that the department plans to build in the current financial year, they cannot inform the Committee about the number of houses built in the 1st quarter of 2016/17 financial year. There is lack of progress on this strategic government policy that was pronounced by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, and the North West province is not implementing it accordingly and timeously as some of the veterans feel undignified by the government. It cannot be correct that in Ramotshere Moiloa local municipality where there is a lot of struggle icons, no housing unit on this programme has been constructed whilst a plan of 60 units was done by the department, but only 15 beneficiaries were reported to qualify," said Hon. Rosho.

Hon. Rosho also said the department must accelerate housing projects including areas such as Welgevonden, Kwa Mogopa and Makweteng villages in the then Ventersdorp Local Municipality now LM 405, where the elderly complained about RDP houses that are prioritised to young people. "Some of the elderly in these areas have not received their houses yet they submitted applications as far back as 1998," said Hon. Rosho.

She also said the Committee is concerned that there are no close-up reports on the municipalities that were under provincial government' Section 139

(1)(b) interventions. “The Committee needs to assess whether there was value for money and any positive outcomes on these interventions in municipalities such as Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality; Maquassie Hills, Ventersdorp and Ditsobotla Local Municipalities,” she said.

In the 1st quarter ending 30 June 2016, the department spent 23% of the planned 25% of budget which constitutes to R598 372 million. It also oversaw the implementation of the Back to Basics principles and supported the institutionalization of performance management systems in all the 22 municipalities in the province.

MEC Fenny Gaolaolwe said the department will engage the Department of Defence and Military Veterans on how to accelerate allocation of houses to the military veterans. “The department’s main challenge is on the criteria used to allocate houses to the veterans as many do not qualify. The veterans cannot be subjected to ordinary people’s criteria on allocation of houses,” said MEC Gaolaolwe.

MEC Gaolaolwe said the department will submit a close-up report on the municipalities that were under provincial government’s Section 154 and Section 139 (1)(b) interventions.

She said the department will approve extension of housing contracts to fast-track housing deliveries. “We will also engage and assist municipalities to issue clearance certificates so that we can deliver title deeds to new home owners. On the construction of Provincial Disaster Management Centers, we have requested additional funding from the Provincial Treasury to complete them,” said MEC Gaolaolwe.

The North West Housing Corporation (NWHC) spent 14 percent of the 25 percent budget which constitutes to R3,24 million. The Chairperson of the board, Mr. Kgalalelo Tlhaole said the incurred expenditure in the 1st quarter was mostly due to the compensation of employees, transfer payments, and goods and services. “We are in a process of negotiating with the municipalities on payment arrangements for outstanding property rates,” said Mr. Tlhaole.

Hon. Rosho said the department must submit within 14 days a close-up

reports on the municipalities that were under provincial government' Section 139 (1)(b) interventions in the North West Housing Corporation should submit a turn around plan on how they will accelerate performance in the 2nd quarter.

Ends

For more information, contact Ms Namhla Luhabe on 079 527 0628