

DA concerned about AbaQulusi's finances

Sine Thwala

THE DEMOCRATIC Alliance has voiced their concerns over the annual quarterly draft report of AbaQulusi's finances that was tabled on Monday.

The party said they felt not enough attention was being paid into what was being done with the money allocated to the hiring of Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) workers.

"This money has not been used since last year, depriving unemployed young people of the opportunity to earn an income. A great concern considering the very high rate of unemployment the country is currently facing," said Sbu Nkosi, the DA representative on the Zululand council.

The DA also feels that a forensic audit needs to be conducted to look into the implementation of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) projects.

"It seems as if supply chain policies were not being followed properly and we need to know that this will be looked into," said Sbu.

The irregular expenditure for this past financial year amounted to R130 million, an amount that the DA feels indicates that there is none or very poor financial control within the municipality.

Fruitless and wasteful expenditure was also a cause for concern to the party who say that it is important to note that of the R2.1 million in this category, R1.3 million culminates from Quantum Leap's interest. An interest they feel the service provider does not deserve considering the poor service they are delivering.

"We can't keep paying them R800 000 a month and pay them interest on top of that for poor service. It does not make financial sense," said Sbu.

The DA believes that, with the municipality still in financial

distress, officials should really be trying to cut down on unnecessary costs.

The party is also hoping that council will think more carefully about whether getting help from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) in order to pay Eskom really is a good idea.

"Officials call it frontloading the matter, I call it getting a loan. If the municipality goes forward with this, we will then be paying Eskom and DBSA. As an intervening agent, DBSA will need to make a commission somehow. Leadership with political wisdom would realise that we cannot afford to pay two accounts. We are already struggling with revenue collection. Instead of adding to our financial strains, we need to lighten the load," said Sbu.

The DA feels that these issues should have been discussed in council and were very disappointed

when the speaker only noted them without looking into what they were saying.

The DA's Sbu Nkosi says that AbaQulusi has not made it out of financial distress just yet.

