

# Municipality admits 'serious problems'

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DIKGATLONG Municipality has admitted that it is experiencing "serious financial problems".

In response to actions by the Barkly West Ratepayers Association regarding electricity cuts and poor service delivery, the Dikgatlong municipal manager, Kagiso Modise, indicated that the chief financial officer could not be suspended, pending the outcome of a Municipal Public Accounts Committee (Mpac) investigation.

"Mpac is also investigating the alleged unauthorised payments to Moeti Construction and other shareholders," Modise added.

He also pointed out that the municipality could not respond to any requests to dissolve the council, place it under administration, request for a forensic audit or a Section 106 investigation to be conducted into its financial affairs as that was the competency of provincial government.

He added that the municipality was in the process of implementing a financial recovery plan as it was not meeting some of its financial obligations to Eskom, Sedibeng Water Board and Vaalharts.

"The level of service delivery in the municipality is negatively affected by insufficient financial

and non-financial resources. Challenges are experienced from time to time, especially fleet for refuse and sanitation. We are doing our best to catch up."

Modise gave assurances that services would improve once the municipality's financial position improved.

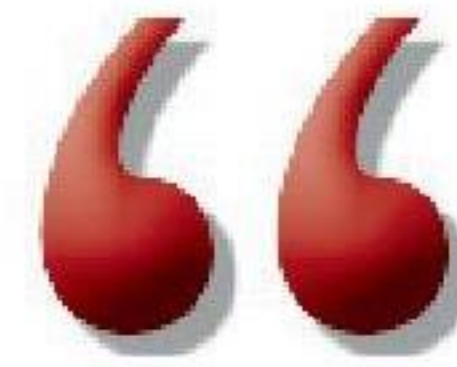
He requested anyone with allegations regarding the alleged sale of property adjacent to the Vaal River in Delporthoop, or any misappropriation of funds and payments made by the municipality, to provide information to the police or the Hawks for investigation.

He also explained that a temporary solution had been provided to reduce the impact of the sewage problems at the Mataleng four-way stop, Longlands and Barkly West Primary School.

"The Longlands pump station panel is fixed, but also temporarily for now, and it is running effectively. Quotations for the new panel have already been received to place the order now because it takes about three months to order the panel."

Modise said that two manholes next to the pump station were blocked, resulting in the sewage overflow.

"One manhole has already been fixed but the maintenance team is still struggling to unblock the



## WE WILL CONDUCT A GROUNDWATER POLLUTION ASSESSMENT IN ALL THE AFFECTED AREAS TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF THE SEWAGE PROBLEM

other manhole because it seems there is a hard, foreign object that is obstructing the system and needs to be blown out with the machine."

He added that the municipality had tried to borrow a machine from Sol Plaatje Municipality as it was without one.

"The machine from Sol Plaatje Municipality is broken. Dikgatlong Municipality will have to hire the machine from Coastal Hire."

He stated that a new pump had been installed at Barkly West Primary School, while the pump station is currently running.

"The municipality is in the process of finalising the service level agreement between the contractor and consultant. As soon as the service level agreement is sealed, the project for the refurbishment of

the pump stations, funded by the Department of Water Affairs, will commence."

Modise refuted reports that sewage was running into the Vaal River.

"Clean spring water is flowing through the alluvial diamond digging, through the old hospital building to the Vaal River. We will conduct a groundwater pollution assessment in all the affected areas to determine the impact of the sewage problem."

He warned that the services of consumers who were in arrears would be interrupted until payment arrangements were entered into.

Modise stated that the municipality was waiting for approval for funding to install high-mast lights in all areas of Dikgatlong, including Sewende Laan and Delporthoop.

He indicated that a municipal employee had to manually pump the water at the Longlands pump, including on Saturdays and Sundays.

"We will revise the pumping times to ensure that dam levels are not very low when officials start pumping. In other instances, the problem is reduced water pressure or water restrictions by Sedibeng Water due to non-payment."

He added that the Bufferzone

housing project was stopped because of the outstanding water linking services project.

"The Department of Water Affairs is funding the linking services project. The consultant and contractor have already been appointed for the project. The Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs made a commitment to secure funding for the completion of incomplete houses once the water linking services to connect Bufferzone is completed."

Modise said that the installation of basic services would commence after the relocation process, to prevent vandalism.

He said that a service provider would assist with machinery to remove rocks at Rooirand, Mataleng and Newstands for the Debeer roads and stormwater project.

He stated that a grader from the Department of Public Works will be used to open access roads and remove asbestos in Koopmansfontein.

"The programme will include scraping of roads and sports fields, removal of rubble and clearing of illegal dumping sites. The municipality will only be required to provide diesel from its budget or from operations and maintenance budget from the district municipality."