

Public Works owe millions to 38 E Cape municipalities

SOYISO MALITI

Buffalo City Metro is not the only municipality owed millions by the provincial public works department.

In fact, the department's spokesperson Vuyokazi Mbanjwa said their records showed that 38 Eastern Cape municipalities were owed a total of R37.9m.

Mbanjwa was speaking following Buffalo City council revelations that public works owed the city R16.1m.

Delivering a cheerless performance report on Wednesday, Buffalo City mayor Xola Pakati said government departments owed the city R67m.

Asked whether the department had been served with a notice that its lights could be switched off anytime soon,

Mbanjwa said it had not. "However, the department has received a reminder for an amount to be paid."

She said the department was in the process of verifying who

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owned buildings used by the department, and "reconciling debt".

Out of the department's total debt, rates and taxes constituted the highest amounts.

Mbanjwa said payments to

BCM to the tune of R4,696,236 were being processed.

She said they were also getting ready to make another payment to BCM of R4,196,431.

She added they got billed for R5,266,928 for an "unsurveyed school, which in terms of the Property Rates Act of 2000, unsurveyed land is not rateable".

National public works spokesperson Bakhalphicebo Nakedi said the department had paid BCM R4,795,709 in December, but "it was not yet allocated by the municipality".

Explaining the debt, Nakedi said: "The difference is made up of debt for a block of flats where the transfer of land owned by the municipality must be finalised by Buffalo City municipality. When concluded, the rates account will be settled by the department."