

● **Committee agrees on water, electricity for some informal settlements**

Services plan for land invaders

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After a heated debate on Monday, the Nelson Mandela Bay human settlements committee agreed to provide services for 20 informal settlements that were illegally invaded.

The plan presented to the committee could see hundreds of residents who invaded land get access to basic services such as water and electricity.

The DA has, however, warned that the move goes against the national and provincial government's stance on land invasions, saying this will result in people jumping the queue when others have been waiting for years for houses.

The city is facing a housing backlog of 84,000 units.

The areas that are expected to receive services include Moegesukkel, M17 Mother-

well, Gunguluza Area 10, Chat-ty, Kamesh Langa, Missionvale, Motherwell NU29, Khayam-nandi, Wells Estate and Govan Mbeki.

In total, 20 areas are listed in the report by human settlements boss Nolwandle Gqiba.

"Households will be pre-screened against the housing subsidy system to establish whether they qualify for a government subsidy," Gqiba said.

"Those that qualify will be settled systematically, but those that do not will be redirected through a land-disposal policy to alternative serviced sites to buy at market value or rent where they can start building their own houses through other options."

She said expanded public works programme recruits would work as field workers during the project.

Households would also be profiled.

DA councillor Nqaba Bhanga said: "There must be a serious moratorium in terms of these invasions – they must never be tolerated.

"At the housing indaba, we agreed that to solve the crisis we must identify where these parcels of land are and profile them, whether they are suitable for people to reside there."

In August, councillors at the housing indaba decided a moratorium would be placed on evictions.

The indaba was preceded by a motion by the ANC that the council would make the final decision on any evictions.

"Anybody who thinks these people have a right to jump the queue and bypass the people of Ekuphumleni who have been waiting for 25 years is mistaken," Bhanga said.

"The people who have been waiting for 25 years must not be forgotten because of people who invaded land two years ago," he said.

Bhanga said the DA would support the plan on condition that queue-jumping would not

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ANC COUNCILLOR

be tolerated. DA councillor Duncan Monks warned that the report lacked basic information.

"Whether we agree or disagree on this item, it does not take us forward," he said.

"We want this implementation but we need to know how.

"This could amount to millions of rands and we have not evaluated that.

"This also goes against many decisions that we have made in the past.

"This includes the recommendations that were done when the ANC led the last time.

"This goes against national and provincial decisions.

"We are taking a stance that goes against correct beneficiary management – surely this committee doesn't support that."

ANC councillor Sizwe Jodwana suggested a workshop be called for all councillors.

"This will affect all ward councillors because they are the most affected by land invasions," he said.

"We are talking about people who have invaded land illegally.

"What are we saying to

those who have been on the waiting list for many years?"

"Are we not saying to them that invading is correct if they will get the land?"

"If we are going to consider people who invaded land before people on the list, we are going to have a serious problem."

Gqiba said a workshop would be held to outline the process.

"Budget and how we are going to avoid queue-jumping – those are the things that need to be communicated and thrashed out in the workshop."

Gqiba said the provincial and national departments of human settlements would be invited to attend the workshop.

"They are the ones who will be responsible for the screening of beneficiaries," Gqiba said.