



INVADED TERRITORY: The Nelson Mandela Bay municipality is to formalise all invaded land in the city. This is after the majority of councillors approved an item brought by mayor Mongameli Bobani on Tuesday. In the picture is the Bay West informal settlement near KwaDwesi

Picture: EUGENE COETZEE

Bay land invaders to get services

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Thousands of residents who invaded land illegally in Nelson Mandela Bay will get services.

This is after the majority of councillors resolved to formalise invaded land in the city, approving a recommendation by mayor Mongameli Bobani on Tuesday.

This means that the municipality will instal services such as water, sanitation and electricity at the various sites.

The council resolved that money be sourced from the Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG) and that fieldworkers be appointed

from the expanded public works programme to determine how many people are living in the informal settlements.

They will also consider using unemployed graduates.

The city faces a housing backlog of 85,000 units.

In a heated debate at Tuesday's council meeting, DA councillor Nqaba Bhanga said land invasions had destroyed one of the metro's first black suburbs, KwaMagxaki.

Bhanga said teachers, principals and other black professionals who bought property there in the hope of providing better living conditions for their families were crying as their property values had

dropped. "If you drive on the road from Uitenhage to Redhouse, you'll see a sea of shacks next to one of the first black suburbs, he said.

"Their property has been destroyed by one man, namely councillor Bobani."

DA councillor Duncan Monks said the item sought to legitimise land invasions – which went against provincial and national government policy as well as the constitution.

"It's not even allowed according to the correct beneficiary management system because it will enable people to jump the housing list," he said.

Responding to Bhanga, ANC councillor Mbulelo

Gidane said the DA should take ownership of the land invasions on the Uitenhage road because he had tried to get former mayor Athol Trollip, suspended municipal manager Johann Mettler and Bhanga to address those residents.

"I wrote to you and asked if we could have a meeting on a Sunday but you ignored me. They [DA] are the cause of that invasion," Gidane said.

Municipal spokesperson Mthubanzi Mniki said the city did not encourage land invasions, but was forced by law to provide services when people were already living in an area.

"Failure to do so will be a human rights violation."