



THE original Parliament buildings in Cape Town were constructed between 1875 and 1884. | African News Agency (ANA) File

■ LEGISLATURE

Sites identified for the relocation of Parliament

But feasibility study into move to Pretoria not yet concluded, according to a spokesperson

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THE Public Works Department has identified possible construction sites for the relocation of Parliament from Cape Town to Pretoria.

This emerged in a written response from Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi to a parliamentary question from the EFF's Leigh-Ann Mathys, who had enquired about the status of the possibility of moving Parliament.

In his written response, Nxesi said the construction sites could not be confirmed until the Secretary to Parliament had signed off on the accommodation requirements for the national legislature.

"For this to happen, Parliament must give guidance and take the decision to move the parliamentary precinct away from Cape Town and also legally pronounce Tshwane as the seat of Parliament by way of proposing a constitutional amendment on Tshwane/Pretoria as the new legislative capital of the Republic of South Africa," he said.

Nxesi also said Parliament's decision would be informed by a comprehensive feasibility study.

In May 2018, National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete announced that service provider Pamoja Pty Ltd

had been appointed to conduct a six-month socio-economic and impact study.

This was almost two years after former president Jacob Zuma said the government could save billions of rand if it did not have to fly and accommodate government officials and politicians from the country's administrative capital, Pretoria, to Cape Town, the legislative capital.

Nxesi said the relocation of Parliament from its seat in Cape Town was primarily the responsibility of Parliament itself, with his department playing a supporting role.

He said the national legislature was responsible for developing the business case for the relocation of the parliamentary precinct from a strategic operations point of view.

It was also responsible for initiating internal processes and debates within Parliament and giving the go-ahead for the investigation into the feasibility of relocating Parliament, and providing his department with short-, medium- and long-term user requirements.

Nxesi also said his department was responsible for the enhancement of feasibility and socio-economic impact studies, and to outline possible accommodation solutions.

He added that they would assist with the investigation, planning and,



MINISTER of Public Works Thulas Nxesi.

ultimately, the implementation of the project, if deemed feasible.

The minister said various engagements had been held with Parliament over several years.

He said the project involved mainly the production of a comprehensive feasibility study report relating to socio-economic impacts of Parliament remaining in Cape Town versus it relocating to Pretoria, and project due diligence.

Nxesi said the socio-economic impact assessment studies had to be completed and the necessary funding sourced in order to conduct in-depth investigation into the possible construction sites identified.

Yesterday, Parliament spokesperson

Moloto Mothapo said the feasibility study had not been concluded.

"It is thus among issues the sixth Parliament will consider as part of a legacy report," Mothapo said.

Parliament was to have received a report on the study in January 2019.

At the time of going to press, Mothapo did not furnish a "full response" on what had caused the delay in completion of the study.

"If we relocate, it is not just moving Parliament, it is moving MPs. It is moving 1 300 support staff and their families," acting Secretary to Parliament Penelope Tyawa said in September last year. "It is finding spaces and places and ensuring that location is closer to offices."

The Capital City Business Chamber said it was looking forward to the possible relocation to Pretoria, which is the hub of diplomatic society in South Africa and Africa.

Chrys Haitas, executive director for strategic business development, said it would make sense for the administrative and legislative seats of government to be in the capital city.

Haitas said the move would cut costs for government instead of having to run its affairs between two cities.

No comment could be obtained from the Cape Chamber of Commerce at the time of going to press.