

■ MUNICIPALITY

City's budget spend hobbled

MARVIN CHARLES

THE CITY'S energy and climate change department is at risk of under-spending its budget on its community electrification programme.

According to the directorate, the department's operating budget for the year to date was R416 million, but it had only spent R377m, which translated into a 90.7% budget spend.

The electricity generation and distribution period budget was R410m, but only R372m has been spent.

Mayco member for energy and climate change, Phindile Maxiti, said: "This is largely to do with unrest, crime and other factors which are hampering electrification projects in areas across the metro.

"There are delays that are outside of the City's control," he said, adding that in the 2018/19 financial year, 22% out of a budget for electrification specifically, R80m, was not spent.

The directorate said there was a risk of under-expenditure in the electrification project.

"It would be where certain community representatives want to force the City to use specific contractors or there is unhappiness over the process of the City's expanded public works programme.

"There are stumbling blocks to electrification, due to the areas being too volatile and violent at times to complete the electrification projects.

"Often electricity officials must be escorted by law-enforcement officials in order to do work in some communities," Maxiti said.

In the 2018/19 financial year, the City said it was committed to spending more than R4 billion over the medium term to upgrade informal settlements and provide water and waste services.