

BCM mayor faces angry crowd at KWT imbizo

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Buffalo City Metro mayor Xola Pakati had an angry reception at his first 2019 mayoral imbizo in King William's Town on Wednesday.

Among their complaints residents accused him of meddling in the employment of workers in the metro.

After addressing 1,500 residents at the Victoria Grounds, Pakati listened as residents demanded answers about jobs, housing delivery and roads.

Resident Noxolo Tshaka said: "In King William's Town we are left behind in everything. Why is the budget allocation not equal to that of East London? We need answers. We need you to install cameras in the central business district. Cars are stolen every day here. When people go to pay rates at the civic centre they don't relax because they constantly have to check up on their cars outside because there are no cameras in the CBD."

Zukiswa Mthembu said: "We had temporary workers here and you, mayor, absorbed the leaders of those workers. I was one of those leaders but I was not absorbed because I am from King William's Town, from Xhwithinja. Why is King William's Town always neglected? Only people from East London were absorbed – why is that? You are our mayor too, you need to satisfy all of us."

Responding to the heated accusations, Pakati told the Dispatch: "It is the administration that hires people in BCM."

"Where have you ever heard of a mayor being in charge of employing people? Those people were howling when I was talking about employment and talking about the expanded public works programme.

"I told them how the process of employment works.

"I was there for service delivery matters, not gossip."

Residents from Phakamisa reported that RDP houses were being sold in the area.

Resident Dumisa Mashini said: "We are begging you as the leadership of this institution to investigate the houses that are sold in Phakamisa. Follow up on this!"

Pakati spoke at length about housing development in the inland wards. He received applause when he said the metro would continue to work with the police to evict residents who were hellbent on illegally invading completed RDP houses meant for other beneficiaries.

He said: "On the issues raised by residents of Ward 25, the first

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one was a concern regarding the housing project in Phakamisa. We can confirm that the project is currently undergoing implementation with 800 houses already completed.

"There have been issues regarding house allocation in the project and this is being given attention. We have obtained an order to evict some people who illegally occupied houses in the project."

He was silent on the crisis of illegal waste dumping outside the Berlin Roundhill waste site, which affected the community of Nkqonkweni mostly.

Neither did he address the fears of King William's Town sports veterans about the city's plans to demolish the Victoria Grounds stadium.