

Salary payment crisis brewing at municipality

STAFF REPORTER

WHILE the city is currently facing a water crisis, another is brewing in the corridors of the Sol Plaatje Municipality.

Concerns have been raised about the municipality's ability to pay the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers for October and November, while the city's debt to Eskom is believed to be in excess of R150 million.

Come clean

DA caucus leader Christopher Phiri yesterday called on Sol Plaatje executive mayor Patrick Mabilo "to come clean with EPWP workers about the fact that Sol Plaatje Municipality does not have sufficient funds to pay them for October and November".

"The fund for EPWP workers is currently standing at only R46 000 while an amount of approximately R1 million is needed to pay the close to 500 project workers every month," Phiri said.

He added that it was "reprehensible" that Sol Plaatje was avoiding breaking the news to the EPWP workers, "rather

encouraging them to continue working in spite of the fact that there is no money to pay them".

"We further denounce the actions of the former ANC mayor of Sol Plaatje Municipality, who told the EPWP workers that they must start working today (on Monday)," Phiri said.

Phiri added that the party would be taking the matter up with the mayor.

"We cannot tolerate a situation whereby EPWP workers are tricked into working for nothing. If Sol Plaatje doesn't have the guts to tell the EPWP workers the truth, then we will."

He stated that the DA would also be submitting questions relating to the financial state of the municipality.

"This month it is EPWP workers, who will it be next month? The sustained payment of wages of Sol Plaatje employees is increasingly unstable. Sol Plaatje must lay all its cards on the table now, so that we can prevent a salary crisis in the very near future."

According to Phiri, the municipality failed to pay R70 million to Eskom in July because the local authority needed the money to pay salaries. "To date it owes Eskom R150 million," he added.