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Ugu slammed for non-delivery

Public Works MEC Peggy Nkonyeni came down hard on Ugu District Municipality for its failure to provide adequate water and sanitation to newly built RDP homes on time. The MEC said housing project delays had been at the centre of many protests in Masinenge and Merlewood, where work had at times ground to a complete halt due to financial constraints at Ugu. She was speaking at a roadshow held at the Port Shepstone Civic Centre recently where mayors, councillors and Amakhosi were present to receive feedback on various projects undertaken by Human Settlements and Public Works. The MEC pointed out how lack of water and sanitation had forced the department to stop work on the projects until Ugu was able to install basic infrastructure, adding that this had had a major impact on the RDP houses. The Masinenge, Merlewood, KwaNzimakwe and Gamalakhe housing projects in particular, she said, had stalled for a long period because Ugu said it had no funds available. "We have had situations where we can't hand over completed houses because they have no access to water and sanitation. Sometimes people end up illegally occupying these homes because they are tired of waiting." She highlighted that the Auditor General had in his report stated that Public Works had incurred more than R5.2 million in irregular expenditure because of lack of progress and accountability from municipalities which had carried out housing projects on behalf of the department. Ugu mayor Sizwe Ngcobo said communities in rural communities had been faced with severe drought and that funds were being diverted towards this. He said however that he hoped "alternative solutions" would soon be reached. Public Works and Human Settlements MEC Peggy Nkonyeni.