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Author:
Sithandiwe

BCM mayor lists achievements as 100-day milestone nears

SITHANDIWE VELAPHI

As mayor Princess Faku approaches her first 100 days in office, she has listed the steps she has taken to improve the lives of Buffalo City Metro's residents.

As part of her drive to clean up the metro, she has hired 200 workers, who started work on Monday.

Faku was speaking to the Dispatch on Tuesday, after visiting wards 7 and 9 as part of the build-up to her 100 days in office milestone.

She was elected as mayor on March 28.

"Some of the cleaners are in East London, others in Qonce, Bhisho and Mdantsane. As we move on, we are going to increase the number.

"The purpose is to beef up our efforts to make sure that the city is clean," she said.

When she was elected, Faku said cleaning up the city was one of her priorities.

Fixing potholes, sorting out billing queries and getting Mdantsane's NU2 swimming pool operating were also high on her agenda.

"This week, accompanied by my team, I will be assessing the progress made on the pool.

"It is in our interest for the pool to be up and running."

The city has been criticised over the slow pace of the pool's construction.

Faku called on people to work with the city by not littering.

"I am active on Facebook. If someone sees a place that is not being cleaned, please message me.

"From the outset we said we want the city to be clean.

"We are appealing to communities to work with us as we clean the city. We also have a project to clear the bushes.

"We said we want potholes to be fixed and we have a dedicated target of fixing 70 potholes per day. That is being done."

Faku said the city, under a new campaign called "Tell Us, Sixelele", was also working towards resolving ratepayers' billing queries.

"We are working hard to make sure these issues are resolved.

"We have been visiting the city's various billing offices to resolve complaints."

Referring to the pothole repair action plan, mayoral committee member for infrastructure and engineering Yomelela Tyali said each of the city's 50 wards had 10 "pothole agents".

"We are going to ensure that the agents are capacitated. We are having ongoing discussions with the department of public works to ensure our infrastructure programmes are sustained."

There were, however, some challenges, including ageing infrastructure.

"We have infrastructural challenges relating to electricity. We are going to revamp our energy infrastructure."

On the issue of illegal connections at Stoney Drift, where ratepayers had been at loggerheads with informal settlement residents, Faku said the metro would move the latter to another site where they would have electricity and water.

"We have spoken to the Stoney Drift community. We are happy to say in the next five months the squatters from Stoney Drift will be moved to a new site.

"The place they are now occupying is not suitable.

"Illegal connections are expensive to the city. It costs about R120,000 to repair a damaged transformer due to illegal connections."