EC HOUSING DEPT TO TAKE OVER HOUSING PROJECTS FROM UNDER PERFORMING CONTRACTORS

The department will take over projects where contractors do not meet desired delivery targets on all housing projects in the province. Dismal performances by contractors results in blockages of housing projects which compromises the quality of houses and time frames set for housing delivery. So far the department has unblocked 60 of the 140 blocked housing projects.

These blockages are caused by poor administration by main contractors resulting in unpaid monies to subcontractors and workers on site, subcontracting to contractors with no expertise or capacity build quality homes on the scheduled time frames. The department is considering available options within legal and policy parameters to assume overall responsibility for housing projects in the province. Shoddy workmanship, slow delivery rate and administration blunders by contractors affecting the delivery of houses will not be tolerated. Strigent measures are also applied on payment methods for contractors. Payments are now made after the department has verified that the end product (houses) meets all the requirements. In addition, underperforming contractors could see some of their work diverted to best performing contractors and those lagging behind the schedule have been requested to submit urgent turn around plans and will work during the December holidays to meet the targets.

In an effort to address to unblock these impediments, project managers with technical expertise have been appointed and dispatched to sites to unblock the projects. This week head of department, Ms Nandi Sishuba embarked on site visits to Cala, Cofimvaba and other areas to unblock housing projects. As part of monitoring these projects, 75 unemployed graduates from fields of Building Science, Quantity Surveying, Construction Management, Civil Engineering, Project Management, Town Planning to work as site supervisors on housing projects.

The unemployed graduates will be working closely with the Project Managers. The Project Managers will have to mentor them as each Project Manager will be assigned to a student and will be deployed in the local municipalities within the Regional offices. The department has a target of 15 000 houses to be delivered to beneficiary by March 2009. We remain confident that with these intervention measures, we will achieve and even exceed the target of 15 000 homes and spend the conditional grant of R1,2 billion.

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