



**Press Release
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CONCERTED PLANNING KEY TO IMPROVED DELIVERY

The delivery of integrated sustainable human settlements should take a concerted posture by all stakeholders. This is a view of newly appointed Mpumalanga Human Settlements MEC, Mr Speedy Mashilo when he addressed the Department's two-day strategic planning session currently underway at White River in Mbombela. The assembly which has brought under one roof the department, municipal officials and other stakeholders such as quality assurer - National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBC) and housing associations is reviewing the last six month's performance and crafting better strategies to facilitate and fast track the development of integrated human settlements and other significant services to communities for the 2017/18 financial year and beyond.

The Department's performance indicates challenges around proper planning, poor coordination with municipalities and other role players. "We must make sure that the role of municipalities, housing associations and other stakeholders is fine-tuned to realise central coordination", charged MEC Mashilo. The Provincial Executive Council (Cabinet) has approved the provincial integrated Human Settlements Master Plan to enable the Department to deliver mega projects in a guided manner. Participants were informed that the Human Settlements Master Plan will inform the sector's long term horizon, mid-term strategy and annual implementation programme.

The session acknowledges that challenges such as inept planning and lack of serviced land, amongst others that continued to bedevil the Department can be addressed if all stakeholders join forces. "In my assessment since joining the Department, I established that not all people need houses, but serviced land by municipalities to afford people and opportunity to build for themselves. That view is a totally misconstrued fact", emphasised MEC Mashilo. Furthermore, the Department has recently appointed senior managers as part of its organisational improvement which has challenged service delivery over the last few years.

It also came out strongly that engagements with municipalities are supposed to be in terms of the cooperative governance principles of Chapter 3 of the Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 which deals with Intergovernmental Relations. "A question therefore is whether do we involve and consult municipalities in terms of cooperative governance principles", asked MEC Mashilo. Other critical concerns to be addressed include the increased pace of issuing title deeds, improving the conditions of farm dwellers, improved relations between Municipalities and Housing Associations. There was consensus amongst the stakeholders that a holistic planning, cooperation with traditional leadership and development of strong policies could be solutions to service delivery challenges.

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