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**The Secretary
KwaZulu-Natal Legislature
Private Bag X9112
Pietermaritzburg
3201**

Dear Madam

Parliamentary Questionnaire No. 147/2025 Ms. S.V. De Boer (DA) to ask the MEC for Human Settlements:

1. What is the status of the 128 Landsdowne Flats built under the joint R38 million project between the Department of Human Settlements and Engen originally intended to provide ownership homes for residents who previously lived in the barracks for over 30 years;
2. Why have the affected residents who were forcibly relocated from the barracks under the pretense of future home ownership still not received title deeds despite being told to pay an administrative fee until transfer was completed;
3. Has the Department received or acknowledged the NHBRC report on the structural and construction issues affecting the flats and what actions were taken in response to its findings;
4. Why has there been a shift from administration costs to full rental fees for these units despite the original promise of home ownership;
5. Under what legal framework was this change made;
6. What investigations have been conducted into allegations of corruption and maladministration linked to the handling of this housing project, and what were the outcomes;
7. Can the MEC explain why no response has been issued to correspondence from local representatives and officials regarding the residents' complaints;
8. What role has the municipality played in the ongoing failure to transfer ownership or resolve structural defects in the units and has it been held accountable;
9. Is the Department aware of the continued health and safety risks currently faced by residents due to unresolved building issues and what urgent remedial actions are being planned;
10. Given that, the NHBRC report is over 8 years old; will the Department conduct a new structural assessment of the units to address current, more serious risks;
11. What support will be provided to residents who are now being unfairly forced to pay rent for homes they were promised ownership of; and
12. Will there be any financial redress or legal resolution?



Question 1

What is the status of the 128 Landsdowne Flats built under the joint R38 million project between the Department of Human Settlements and Engen originally intended to provide ownership homes for residents who previously lived in the barracks for over 30 years?

Response

The units in question were built with eThekweni Municipality and not the provincial department of Human Settlements. Tenants were promised that the Landsdowne flats were to be sectionalised and transferred to their names. Soon after they had moved-in, the tenants refused to sign the offer-to-purchase documents.

Question 2

Why have the affected residents who were forcibly relocated from the barracks under the pretense of future home ownership still not received title deeds despite being told to pay an administrative fee until transfer was completed?

Response

Yes, tenants were promised that the Landsdowne flats were to be sectionalised and transferred to their names. Soon after they had moved-in, the tenants refused to sign the offer-to-purchase documents, citing the reason that the designs were wrong and the property was of poor building standards.

Question 3

Has the Department received or acknowledged the NHBRC report on the structural and construction issues affecting the flats and what actions were taken in response to its findings?

Response

The Human Settlements department of eThekweni Municipality acknowledged receipt of the NHBRC report. The recommendations of the report were received and reviewed by the municipality for further consideration.

Question 4

Why has there been a shift from administration costs to full rental fees for these units despite the original promise of home ownership?



Response

Tenants did not accept permanent tenure form for this project citing poor workmanship.

Question 5

Under what legal framework was this change made?

Response

The project was apparently built for ownership but tenants rejected ownership as per question 4 above.

Question 6

What investigations have been conducted into allegations of corruption and maladministration linked to the handling of this housing project, and what were the outcomes?

Response

eThekweni Municipality is not aware of any allegations of corruption and maladministration linked to this project.

Question 7

Can the MEC explain why no response has been issued to correspondence from local representatives and officials regarding the residents' complaints?

Response

Municipality and province is not aware of the correspondence being referred to here.

Question 8

What role has the municipality played in the ongoing failure to transfer ownership or resolve structural defects in the units and has it been held accountable?

Response

The Municipality currently receives no income from the project, due to rental boycotts, and thus relies on operational funding to do repairs to the project. Repairs are only limited to emergencies (water related), due to limited funding in that regards.

Question 9

Is the Department aware of the continued health and safety risks currently faced by residents due to unresolved building issues and what urgent remedial actions are being planned?

Response

The eThekweni Municipality's Human Settlements is aware of the continued health and safety risks that are faced by the residents and the municipality is attending to emergency matters where it is able to.



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Question 10

Given that, the NHBRC report is over 8 years old; will the Department conduct a new structural assessment of the units to address current, more serious risks?

Response

It is an important requirement that the NHBRC report be reviewed first and get new recommendations, given that it has been 8 years since it was issued. The building is in existence for approximately 14 years now has no major structural damage.

Question 11

What support will be provided to residents who are now being unfairly forced to pay rent for homes they were promised ownership?

Response

eThekweni Municipality has no recourse to provide to tenants as there is currently no income generated in rentals from the project. There is a rent boycott from the project.

Question 12

Will there be any financial redress or legal resolution?

Response

Question unclear to provide a response.

Submitted by:

Mr. S. M. Mbili
Head of Department

Date:

22/5/2025

Mr. S. A. Duma, MPL
MEC for Transport & Human Settlements

Date:

28/05/2025