

## Only three of more than 200 land audits done in Eastern Cape

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Housing development in several municipalities in the province could stall this year due to poor planning and lack of land auditing.

It emerged this week in the Bhishe legislature that only three of the more than 200 municipalities had conducted land audits in order to make land available for speedy housing provision, especially for people living in informal settlements and backyard shacks.

Last year, the department fell far short of its delivery targets with millions of rands intended for the provision of houses to the needy being unspent.

Eastern Cape human settlement MEC Helen Sauls-August was expected to brief the legislature on how she proposed to deal with this huge housing delivery challenge. She said that the three municipalities to have completed their land audits were Nelson Mandela Bay, Buffalo City and King Sabata Dalindyebo municipality.

So grave was the situation that more than 111 000 people who live in informal settlements and about 20 000 backyard dwellers see no prospect of being provided with decent housing in the future.

“This lack of land auditing will further curtail the development of sustainable, integrated human settlements for the province,” DA member of the legislature Dacre Haddon said.

He added that people in rural areas where lack of housing was acute would suffer most.

“Because the province is essentially rural, a lack of land planning will have negative consequences for the establishment of rural housing developments,” he said.

Parties have urged the provincial government to ensure all municipalities have the capacity to conduct land audits.

They also blamed the department for still building low-cost houses away from essential community facilities such as schools, shops, clinics and places of employment.

This week, Nelson Mandela Bay mayor Zanoxolo Wayile said making land adjacent to Port Elizabeth’s affluent suburbs available to the poor was one of the priorities for his municipality during his term of office.

He hoped the move would promote the social integration of various groups within the municipality, thus ending the apartheid-era spatial development planning