

**Budget Vote Debate 11**  
**Public Works**  
**By**  
**Hon. KP Sithole, MP**

6 May 2015

Honourable Chairperson,

Firstly, the Minister and the Director General must be commended on achieving an unqualified audit report for the first time in 15 years; this clearly shows that the turnaround strategy has borne some fruit. One only hoped that this commendation could be applied across the board within the department.

There is a large shortage of professionals on property management, a situation that has been chronic within the department. The continual lack of skilled personnel will mean that the department cannot move forward with its plans, which undermines its capability of delivering services.

The Property Management Trading Entity (PMTE) is also struggling as a result not having proper personnel. There is no head of investment management, which is a direct result of not having a proper overall management branch of the PMTE.

Corruption, mismanagement and poor performance have led to the public works department failing to deliver on its mandate and this has directly impacted on the grand projects that it has promised to undertake. Poor planning for these projects has been the result and even the Inner City Regeneration plans have been moving at a snail's pace.

Small towns and rural areas suffer the brunt of the department's poor performance because most do not have direct access to government department offices. Many people have to travel long distances to obtain services and even in those cases, there are no guarantees that they will be helped at all. The development of government precincts in these areas is crucial yet these are delayed because the department is dragging its heels on this issue.

The Council for the Built Environment (CBE) suffers from a disturbing lack of transformation; however, this is also reflected within the sector itself, as it still takes 12 years for students to be properly accredited, which is a great hindrance to many. This has directly discouraged many black students from pursuing this qualification as the length of time it takes to get it requires one to have the time to acquire it, which most of these students do not have.

The Expanded Public Works Programme is a good programme developed to create jobs for the poorest of the poor; however, it has evolved into a political party tool instead of being a national programme to benefit all South Africans. In places such as Tshwane, it has been used by the ANC led municipality as a membership recruitment strategy; others areas include Sokhulum, Dark city, Mamelodi West, Soshanguve, Ekangala and Atridgville/Soulsville.

This is not the first time this issue has been raised, yet it seems to have been swept under the carpet; if this was being done by any other party, there would be a huge outcry from the government itself. As the IFP, we request the urgent intervention of the Department and Minister in this regard, because public projects should not be abused by narrow political party motives.

Another area that needs the Minister's input and leadership is that of the finances owed to the West Rand. Funds were transferred from the development of the West Rand and used to help build the President's homestead in Nkandla. The question is when is this money being taken back to the West Rand, where development has clearly been stalled, and how long will this take?

These and many other issues hinder the department's progress and ability to deliver services. As the IFP we desire to see the department serving all South Africans and not just the privileged few; if issues such as these are not dealt with, then we will not move forward in the development of our people or the country.

The IFP supports the budget vote.