

Update on Hornlee's Breaking New Ground housing scheme

Access to adequate housing for all remains a challenge throughout South Africa, but Knysna Municipality's Breaking New Ground (BNG) housing scheme will soon see the construction of 155 new homes in Hornlee.

Knysna Executive Mayor Elrick van Aswegens explained that providing housing remains one of the authority's main concerns. "This is, in actual fact, a function of National and Provincial Government. But as housing is a problem that affects the daily lives of many families in Knysna, we are committed to the implementation of our delivery plans. As such, I am proud to say that the initial phase of constructing the first 42 units is progressing well."

"The Hornlee Housing Office began with the beneficiary verification process in September 2018, after the project was approved," said van Aswegen. "The potential beneficiaries of these houses are all members of the Hornlee community, with applicants joining the waiting list as early as 1996."

Meetings to explain how further processing of applications would be handled were held with the community of Hornlee between September and November 2018. The affected local councillors and ward committees of wards 6 and 11 respectively also attended these consultative meetings. A total of 205 applications were processed to test their qualification status through the relevant Housing Subsidy System (HSS), normally administered by the Western Cape Government Department of Human Settlements (WC DoHS), in cooperation with Knysna Municipality.

"To date 147 qualifying beneficiaries have been identified and confirmed by the WC DoHS. There were unfortunately a number of applications that did not meet the selection criteria as defined by the National Housing Code, 2009," van Aswegen continued. "The Hornlee office began with completing the subsidy forms of the captured applications in December 2018. The DoHS has informed us that the balance of successful applicants will be confirmed by the end of March."

A formal tender procedure to appoint a contractor for the 155 BNG units was initiated in June 2019. After following all due processes and complying with all the Municipality' Supply Chain (SCM) criteria, JPB Construction was appointed as the successful contractor in September 2019. Public meetings with all stakeholders followed, where the new contractor was formally introduced to the community and a broad outline of development work and site management was presented.

"JPB Construction began with activity on site in October 2019, under the supervision of our project management team and KM as the developer/client. This team consists of our Integrated Human Settlements Directorate and Sintec Consulting Engineers."

So far, all successful applicants are over 35 years old, with 18 being over the age of 60. There are also 12 approved disabled applicants, four of whom are wheelchair bound. The

beneficiation process will continue to prevail until all 155 beneficiaries have been identified and confirmed.

“Personal files on each beneficiary have already been opened and will be firmed up during individual consultations expected to start soon,” she said. “We’ll organise a consumer education workshop for the new owners before they move into their new homes. This will arm them with the necessary tools for responsible home ownership.”

“Local municipalities can only act as agents on behalf of the State when it comes to providing access to housing,” van Aswegen concluded. “It is one of many examples of functions expected from municipalities that are not specified or allocated to them under the Constitution of South Africa. Still, Knysna Municipality knows that we must do what we can to provide this crucial, basic service to our people. Construction of these 155 new homes is only one chapter of a much larger plan that will see more homes handed over to qualifying residents in the future.”

ENDS

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