

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND TRANSPORT; COMMUNITY SAFETY, SECURITY AND LIAISON

OVERSIGHT VISITS TO LEKWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY DURING THE PRE TLP, 24 – 25 AUGUST 2016- DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY, SECURITY AND LIAISON

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature (the Legislature) has a responsibility in terms of Section 118 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, (the Constitution) to facilitate public involvement in its legislative and other processes. In terms of Section 133 (3) (b) of the Constitution, Members of the Executive Council of a province must provide the Legislature with full and regular reports concerning matters under their control. Section 115 (a) and (b) of the Constitution empowers the Legislature to (a) "*summon any person to appear before it to give evidence on oath or affirmation, or to produce documents*" and sub-section (b) states that "*the Legislature or any of its Committees may require any person or provincial institution to report to it*".

The "Taking Legislature to the People" is a project in line with section 59 and 118 of the Constitution which states that both the National Parliament and Provincial Legislature must facilitate public involvement in the processes of the Legislature and the committees, to ensure '*effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government*'. The purpose of the TLP is to reach out to the communities and to enable the people to have access to the Legislature, especially people who are living in the deep rural areas. The Legislature seeks to hear the voice of the people and to ascertain whether provincial government delivers services effectively and efficiently within the respective municipalities.

In carrying out its oversight and public participation mandate, the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Transport; Community Safety, Security and

Liaison (the Committee) conducted oversight visits in the Lekwa Local Municipality (the municipality) from 24 – 25 August 2016. This was done in preparation of the “Pre-Taking the Legislature to the People” (TLP) event, which will take place from 12 to 16 September 2016.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SITE VISITS

The following objectives shaped the oversight visits to the projects of the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison:

- To determine challenges impacting on the Police Stations in meeting the national standards.
- To assess the challenges affecting the functionality of the Police Stations (e.g. office space; operational budget for CPF).

3. METHOD OF WORK

The Committee was briefed on the projects by the Research Unit on 16 August 2016 and thereafter decided to conduct a site inspection to the police stations.

On 24-25 August 2016 the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Transport; Community Safety, Security and Liaison conducted oversight visits to Sakhile Police Station and Standerton Police Station at Lekwa Local Municipality (Gert Sibande District). Officials of the department at District level were invited to accompany the Committee to the oversight visits.

4. OVERSIGHT PROJECTS VISITED

4.1. STANDERTON POLICE STATION

4.1.1. Background

The station is right in the CBD and has four (4) sectors, though not well functioning due shortage of SAPS members and vehicles. The station services a population estimated at 100 000 - 200 000 community members and the area is formal

residential, informal residential, business, industrial and the farming areas on the out skirt of town covering Thuthukani power station situated in about 35km from Standerton.

4.1.2. Deliberations

In the presentations made by the Station Commander ; the CPF Chairperson), and SAPU Shop Steward they indicated challenges the police station come across in their attempt to meeting the National Standards. Among others; their challenges included that the building is not accessible for people with disabilities as it has no ramps; security risks due to uncontrolled access resulting from the station not having a fence; holding cells not having proper security to prevent escapes; there is no provision for the truck to load prisoners at the door of the holding cells due to spacing problem as a results prisoners walk from their prison cells to where the track is parked- this poses a danger of escapes ; a larger portion of the station space is used as the SAPS vehicle garage repair centre-this consume parking spaces needed by the station; and shortage of SAPS personnel, equipments for the station and the CPF.

The Committee emphasized that the police station must strengthen the relationship with the local municipality in order for them to assist in some of the challenges they face.

4.1.3 Findings

The Committee made the following findings in respect to Standerton Police Station:

1. There is a shortage of SAPS personnel and inadequate provision of needed equipments for the Police Station.
2. There is no proper support to basic resources that member of CPF require to perform their duties. (i.e. whistles, torches, handcuffs, portable Radios, identity cards and reflectors).
3. There is a need for a satellite police station at Thuthukani power station and related farming areas as the kilometer radius between the area and the police station limits accessibility of police services.

4. The SAPS vehicle garage service/repair centre is located within the station premises and therefore creates unnecessary overcrowding of broken or scrapped vehicles that renders the police station untidy and limits required parking space.

4.1.4 Recommendations

The following are the recommendations made by the Committee:

1. The department and the Provincial SAPS Commissioner must escalate the staffing inadequacy to the ministry of police and the National SAPS Commissioner for their intervention and normalization of service at the police station, also ensuring provision of necessary equipment.
2. The department and the Provincial SAPS Commissioner must ensure that all the CPFs are adequately provided with necessary and required minimum working tools as they are playing a critical role in the policing services.
3. Mpumalanga SAPS must consider establishing a satellite police station at Thuthukani to ensure that they get services closer to where they stay.
4. The department must identify an alternative place where the SAPS vehicle garage service/repair centre could be relocated to other than in the police station.

4.2. SAKHILE POLICE STATION

4.2.1. Background

Sakhile Police Station is located at 3688 Hlongwane Drive, Shivovo Section, in Sakhile Township, it appears like it was started as a satellite police station and later on confirmed as a fully fledged in 1990 without properly designed for that purpose. The township is growing bigger while the police station remains so small with a limited personnel that makes it difficult to respond to the number of reported crime matters.

4.2.2. Deliberations

The Committee received a briefing from the Station Commander upon arrival at the police station. The following matters were presented to the Committee.

4.2.2.1. Infrastructure

It was reported that the station is providing police services to an estimated population of about 172 000 people. It was also indicated that there is reasonable number of foreign nationals, i.e., Ethiopians, Somalians, Malawians, Nigerians, etc., who reside in the area of jurisdiction.

The Committee noted that the physical buildings of police station are in a poor condition and too small to accommodate the SAPS personnel as well as the community members. The community service centre is very small and has no seating space for those who visit the premises.

4.2.2.2. Taverns

The Committee noted the challenge of station is the many taverns that are mushrooming within the township of Sakhile with most of them situated within residential areas; thus, there have been many complaints from the members of the community.

4.2.3. Findings

The Committee made the following findings in respect to Sakhile Police Station:

1. There is a lack of adequate resources in the police station (i.e. office space, shortage of SAPS personnel and office furniture).
2. The police station has a challenge of absenteeism of SAPS Members due to a number of factors, including ill-health, personal and psychological problems, which resulting in fewer SAPS members available at the station being overloaded with work.

4.2.4. Recommendations

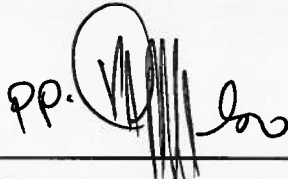
The Committee made the following findings in respect to Standerton Police Station:

1. The department and the Provincial SAPS Commissioner must escalate the staffing inadequacy to the ministry of police and the National SAPS Commissioner for their intervention and normalization of service at the police station, also ensuring provision of necessary equipment.
2. The department and the Provincial SAPS Commissioner must come up with a plan to address the challenges relating to the SAPS members being incapacitated due to a number of factors including ill-health and psychological problems.

5. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Hon GC Shabalala, extended her appreciation to Members of the Committee and departmental officials, all stakeholders and the support staff of the Legislature for their participation during this oversight visit to the communities of the Lekwa Local Municipality, in enhancing the oversight role of the Legislature.

The department must implement the House Resolutions and provide a progress report on all issues raised by 07 September 2016.



HON. GC SHABALALA (MPL)

31. 08. 2016

DATE

**CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND TRANSPORT;
COMMUNITY SAFETY, SECURITY AND LIAISON**

