

OVERSIGHT REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (COGTA) ON THE PRE-TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE (PRE-TLP) CONDUCTED AT MANGWENI AND LANGELOOP WATER TREATMENT ON 23-25 JUNE 2015 AT NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY - DEPARTMENT OF COGTA

1. INTRODUCTION

The Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) programme will take place at Nkomazi Local Municipality from 7 – 11 September 2015. As part of the preparations for the main TLP event, the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (the Committee) undertook pre-TLP oversight visits from 23 - 25 June 2015.

Two (2) projects of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (the Department) were visited and two (2) public hearings were held. The House resolutions emanating from this Committee report will be referred to the Department for the necessary interventions and report back to the Legislature before the TLP event.

2. PURPOSE OF THE PRE-TLP AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

The purpose of the pre-TLP oversight visits to the projects was to verify their functionality, identify their challenges and to assess the service delivery by the Department of COGTA.

At the public hearings, the purpose was to listen to the community voice their concerns and then allow the departments to respond accordingly and indicate what interventions they would provide to fast track service delivery to these communities.

3. METHOD OF WORK

The researchers conducted preliminary visits to identify projects to be visited by the Committee. Their findings and recommendations were incorporated into the research report, and subsequently the programme of the Social Transformation Cluster oversight visits and public hearings for the week of 23 - 26 June 2015 was circulated to the Committee Members.

Invitations were sent to the Department (MEC and HOD) informing them of the oversight programme and requesting them to ensure the availability of the Department officials to interact with the Committee during the oversight visits and to respond to the concerns of the community in the public hearings.

The Nkomazi Local Municipality (Executive Mayor and Speaker) and all municipal structures were invited to accompany the Committee. Other stakeholders invited to the pre-TLP programme were the Office of the Auditor-General, the Department of Finance, South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the House of Traditional Leaders (HTL).

On 23 June 2015, the Committee was briefed by the researcher and site inspection was conducted at Mangweni Water Treatment Plant. On 25 June 2015, the Committee further conducted the oversight visit at Langeloop Water Treatment Plant. The Committee subsequently considered and adopted its pre-TLP report on 10 July 2015.

4. ANALYSIS ON THE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY OF NKOMAZI MUNICIPALITY

The researcher indicated that the Department of COGTA has confirmed that the municipal 2014/15 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) was adopted and currently under implementation until 30 June 2015. The municipality has a draft 2015/16 IDP; it is aligned to the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP). It was also reported that the municipality has a housing backlog of the following:

Basic Services Backlog

| Basic Services | Number of households |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Water supply | 23 910 |
| Sanitation | 35 261 |
| Electricity | 9800 |
| Refuse removal | 20 540 |

The municipality did not receive a Blue Drop Certificate due to the following factors:

- ❖ Ageing infrastructure;
- ❖ Lack of skilled process controllers as required according to the Regulation 2834;
- ❖ Lack of Operations and Maintenance plan;
- ❖ Insufficient funds for Operations and Maintenance, however these challenges are being addressed to improve their status.

It was further indicated that during the 2013 Blue Drop assessment, Water Treatment Works were assessed and scored according to a Blue Drop risk rating. Nkomazi Municipality was rated amongst the high risk category as it is operating at 82.29% risk. The quality of water was found to be in an acceptable range as per South African National Standards (SANS) 2014.

At the beginning of 2015, Nkomazi Municipality submitted a corrective plan of action to remedy their current situation. During the 2013/14 financial year, the Department of Water and Sanitation, through Water Services Operating Subsidy grant (WSOS) availed **R 12 million** to assist the Nkomazi Local Municipality. Again in the current financial year, **R15 million** has been budgeted through WSOS to address the shortcomings within the Water Treatment Plants.

With regards to the replenishing of ageing bulk infrastructure, the municipality is finalizing its updated Water and Sanitation Master Plan for long term, while the refurbishment or renovation of projects is being addressed.

The Department reported that in relation to the prevention of the contamination of water resources, the municipality has an Approved Incident Management Plan in place which is implemented to prevent contamination of water resource.

It was indicated that the Municipal Blue Drop score in the previous financial years was as indicated below;

Blue Drop Status of the following financial years

| 2009/10 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---------|---------|---------|------------------|
| 54% | 17% | 17.2% | Awaiting results |

The decline in the performance of the municipality is evident on the score that is due to poor water management, insufficient funding for Operations and Maintenance (failure to implement preventative maintenance plan) and other related Blue Drop key performance indicators.

5. FINDINGS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT SITE INSPECTION OF MANGWENI WATER TREATMENT PLANT

After the briefing by the researcher, the Committee had conducted an inspection in loco and noted that not much has been done to the project as there was no structure in place.

6. Recommendations made by the committee

The Committee recommended that the Department must submit a detailed report regarding the Mangweni Water Treatment Plant by 31 July 2015.

7. LANGELOOP WATER TREATMENT PLANT

7.1. Background

The site is at the apex or top of the mountain wherein the Langeloop water reservoir is elevated for the easy flow and distribution of water. However, the pump engine has been installed in order to complement or boost the reservoir which is 95% complete.

The Water Treatment Plant is used to pump water from the Mlumati Dam to the mega water tanks where chemicals are used to purify the water before transportation it to the filter for further purification. The Department reported that the tanks are at a size of 3.5 mega liters and there are two tanks that are functioning and there is only one water filter for purification.

According to the Department, the tanks are about ten (10) years in existence. The Committee was also informed that a request was made to build another water treatment plant at Driekoppies so that it can be used as a supplement and a response is still awaited.

7.2. Comments by the Committee

Provision of free water to all

During the public hearing, a challenge of water was raised; it was indicated that sometimes water is sold to the community of Langeloop by the municipality.

The Committee wanted to know the corrective measures that have been taken to address the selling of water to the community. The Department indicated that internal control measures would be instituted; meanwhile, awareness programmes on free water for all would be conducted for the communities to know their rights.

Safety

The Committee, having heard that the water tanks are not protected and in most cases are not closed, raised a serious concern on the safety of the community indicating that they might end up drinking poisoned water. In its response, the Department indicated that, there is no guarantee that the water cannot be poisoned; however, the Department is trying its level best to ensure that the new project is completed as a matter of urgency as it is 95% complete.

The Committee further required the Department to indicate how long the other mega water tank had not been functioning. The Department indicated that the mega water tank had not been working for about three months and the cost for the replacement is about R40 000-00 and can only be fixed in the next financial year. The Committee was dissatisfied about the response as this matter touches the lives of the people. The Department was then requested to attend to this matter and not to wait for the next financial year.

8. Findings

After the interaction with the Department, the Committee found that:

- a. The project is about 95% complete;
- b. Water has been raised as a major challenge in Nkomazi Local Municipality;
- c. The safety of the Langelooop community has been compromised as the water tanks are always not protected and closed. The risk of poisoning the water is high.

9. Recommendations

After the findings the Committee recommended that the Department must:

- a. Fast-track the completion of the Langeloop Water Treatment;
- b. Ensure that the municipality uses water tanks to provide free water to the community weekly while finalizing the water treatment project;
- c. Ensure that security measures are applied to ensure safety and that clean water is provided to the community before 31 August 2015.

10. PUBLIC HEARINGS

The public hearings were held at the two venues (Mgobodzi Community Hall and Mbangwane Thusong Centre); the communities' main challenge is the lack of water which in many instances it is sold to them whenever it is available.

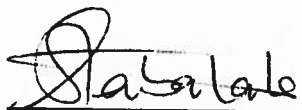
11. Recommendation

The Committee recommended that the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs must attend to all the issues raised and **submit the progress report before 31 August 2015.**

12. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson wishes to thank the Hon. Members of the Committee for their participation and contributions during the deliberations on the Pre-TLP site visits and public hearings. The Chairperson further extends her appreciation to the Department of COGTA as well as the Nkomazi Local Municipality and Traditional Leaders for supporting the programme of the Committee.

Lastly, she also wishes to thank the Legislature support staff for supporting the Committee during the Pre-TLP.



HON. GC SHABALALA
CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE &
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

17/07/2015
DATE