

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION; CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION

TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE (TLP), STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY: OVERSIGHT VISIT CONDUCTED AT RIETKUIL LIBRARY, HENDRINA ON 14 MARCH 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

Section 118 (1) (a) and (b) (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa empowers a provincial legislature to facilitate public access to and involvement in its oversight processes. The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature conducted the Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) event at Steve Tshwete Local Municipality from 13 – 17 March 2017.

The Portfolio Committee on Education; Culture, Sport and Recreation (the Committee) has a mandate in terms of Rule 119 of the Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature to hold the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (the Department) accountable through various oversight mechanisms during the course of a financial year. The Department is responsible for Outcome 14 of the Provincial Outcomes, which relates to its mandate of nation building and social cohesion in the Province, which is in line with the ideals of the National Development Plan.

As part of the TLP event, the Committee undertook an oversight visit to one of the libraries in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (the Municipality) and also participated in the Joint Social and Economic Cluster Public Hearing to listen to the concerns of the community relating to delivery of government services. House resolutions emanating from this oversight visit report will be referred to the Department for implementation and report back to the Legislature.

2. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT VISIT AND PUBLIC HEARING

The purpose of the TLP oversight visit conducted on 14 March 2017 and Public Hearing conducted on 16 March 2017 was as follows:

- (a) To assess the overall functionality, infrastructure and quality of services delivered by the Department to Rietkuil Library and the provision of library services in the Municipality;
- (b) To solicit the concerns of the community of Steve Tshwete regarding delivery of services by the Department.

3. METHOD OF WORK

In preparation for the TLP visits, the Research Unit conducted preliminary visits to projects of the Department in the Municipality and identified projects to be visited by the Committee.

The findings on the state of the Department's service delivery in the Municipality were captured in a research report, which was considered and approved by the TLP Political Steering Committee. The report and an approved programme for the TLP oversight activities was thus circulated to the Committee and relevant stakeholders such as the Municipality, the Department, Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT), Provincial Treasury, the Office of the Auditor-General SA and the Office of the Public Service Commission.

Subsequently the Committee met on 05 May 2017 to consider and adopt its draft TLP report. The House resolutions emanating from this report were referred to the Department for implementation and report back to the Legislature.

4. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The following observations were made by the Committee on the delivery of library services in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality:

- (a) The Department has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, which clarifies its role in terms of provision of library services. The MOU stipulates that the Department will be responsible for the provision of building infrastructure, library books and promotional materials, ICT infrastructure and equipment, provision and training of staff.
- (b) The Municipality has eleven (11) public libraries, all of which were reported to be operational but with varying infrastructure and maintenance needs. According to the Department, the Municipality is one of the best municipalities in Nkangala District in terms of library services.
- (c) Although Rietkuil Library was operational, the library at KwaZamokuhle (about 25km away) was burnt down during service delivery protests in 2014. The library was in the process of being re-constructed.
- (d) No new library building infrastructure was planned for the 2016/17 financial year in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, but in the 2017/18 financial year the Department will begin with planning and design of a new ideal library to replace the old Chromeville Library.
- (e) The Committee welcomed this move as it was in line with its House Resolution after conducting an oversight visit to this library in 2015 and found the library to be in contravention of Section 5(3) (b) of the South African Public Library and Information Service Act, 2012 as it was very small and situated next to a liquor store.

- (f) It was also noted that Hendrina Library was located along busy streets, while Mhluzi Library was situated adjacent to a busy junction and super market.
- (g) The Department managed to achieve its set target for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years to provide all 11 libraries in the Municipality with ICT infrastructure and services. However, it was reported that the internet service was slow at some libraries, including Rietkuil Library and that although the anti-theft devices were installed at all libraries, there were eight (8) libraries where the system was not working. Maintenance of the head count system was also not done.
- (h) The Department was in the process of migrating from SITA Information Management System (SLIMS) to the Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) system to improve the cataloguing and management (tracking) of library books. The SLIMS had proven to be too slow in terms of cataloguing books, which ultimately led to the Department getting a qualified audit opinion in the 2015/16 financial year.
- (i) Regarding access to library services in the Municipality, the 2016/17 IDP, indicated that it was only the newly established settlements which did not yet have access to libraries. The Municipality plans to provide these communities with container libraries.

5. INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT, MUNICIPALITY AND LIBRARY MANAGEMENT AT RIETKUIL LIBRARY, 14 MARCH 2017

At a briefing held at the library, the MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation Hon N Mahlangu, was accompanied by the Nkangala District Director (Mr. BM Mtshweni), the Chief Director: Arts and Culture (Dr. M Lubisi) and other senior departmental officials. The Department briefed the Committee on the library profile and the Department's support to the library. The apology of the HOD was acknowledged; the reason being ill health. The librarian, her assistant and the Head Librarian from the Municipality were present to respond to the Committee's questions. The Speaker of the Municipality, MMC's and ward councillors were in attendance, as well as a representative from the Office of the Auditor-General.

The following was noted from the presentation on Rietkuil Library:

Background

Rietkuil Library is a small library near ESKOM's Arnot Power Station and it services the community of Rietkuil. It was initially owned by ESKOM but the Municipality took ownership of it in 2006 and transferred it to the community of Rietkuil outside the ESKOM premises, which has an estimated population of 2 800. The library services learners and pre-school children from one primary school and three Grade R centres in Rietkuil, as well as ESKOM employees. It operates as a branch (depot) library, with the main (regional) library based at Middelburg.

Book Provisioning and book selection

The Department has provided the library with a total of 9 217 library material (books) to date. The Municipality also purchases library material for the library when necessary, from the Municipality budget. Book selection is done by the library staff as they record the needs of the community and submit the requests annually in June/July to the Department for procurement thereof. The Municipality and the librarian indicated that the Department took too long to deliver the procured books to the library.

It was reported that the library contains books in the following categories:

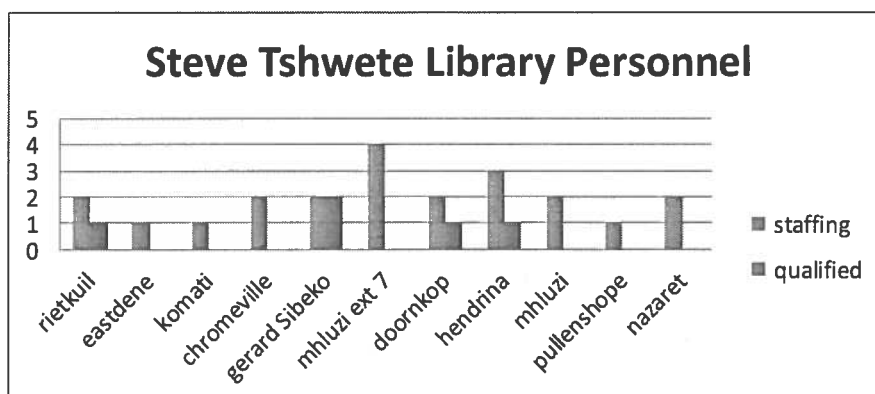
- Adult fiction and non-fiction
- Junior fiction and non-fiction
- Toddler's fiction
- Reference works and institutional material (college and university material for in-house use)
- Study guides
- Indigenous language books
- Newspapers, periodicals, magazines

Membership and Provision of staff

The library was reported to have a membership of 265. Utilization of the library is free of charge and details of members are recorded by the library. The library makes use of inter-library loans and each member may borrow up to four books for a period of fourteen days.

The Department appointed one (1) qualified librarian and the other two (Library Assistant and General Worker) were appointed by the Municipality.

The table below shows that six (6) of the libraries are operated by two personnel while, Hendrina and Mhluzi libraries have three (3) and four (4) personnel respectively. Three (3) libraries have one staff member. It was a concern that most of the libraries do not have qualified library personnel. This raises challenges to the Department and the Municipality as to what extent they manage to provide libraries with qualified staff and to what level the trainings provided constitute a formal qualification.



Provision of ICT and related services

It was noted that the Department has provided the following equipment and infrastructure at the library, through conditional grant funding from national government (Community Library Grant):

- Three (3) computers;
- A satellite dish;
- Installation of a server and network cabling for provision of free internet and email services;
- Two (2) scanners for library material (anti-theft security system)
- Head count system
- Two (2) photocopiers (a small color copier and a bigger machine for black and white copies);
- Fax and scanning machines

The library users had access to services such as internet, printing, faxing, copying, scanning services, as well as use of CD's and DVD's.

It was noted though, that the internet and WI-FI was very slow at the library and interferes with the Municipality's network. The anti-theft system had been making a noise, thus it was turned off. There was a shortage of one keyboard and a mouse for one of the computers.

South African Library for the Blind Act, 91 of 1998 (the Act)

The Committee noted that the library did not have any services for the blind (Braille or audio services). In terms of the Act there are two (2) libraries out of the 11 libraries in the Municipality that are catering for the blind, namely Gerard Sekoto public library (based in the CBD) and Mhluzi public library, which have mini-laboratories to allow blind persons to utilize audio materials.

Marketing

The library benefits from the marketing programme of the Department that aims to promote the culture of reading for the community of Steve Tshwete Municipality. The Department rolled out this programme through different campaigns such as:

- UNESCO International Mother Tongue Day, 21 February
- SA Library Week, 18 -26 March
- World Book Day, 23 April
- International Museum Day, 18 May
- Africa day, 25 May
- Librarians Day, 8 July
- IFLA Congress, 19-25 August
- International Literacy Day, 8 September
- National Book Week, 3-9 September
- LIASA Conference, 2-6 October

- Open Access Week, 16-21 October
- World AIDS Day, 1 December

In addition to the above days, there are the National commemorative days such as Human Rights Day, Freedom Day, Workers Day, Youth Day, National Women's Day, Heritage Day and Day of Reconciliation whereby all libraries exhibit themed displays that are aimed at educating learners and communities about the significance of that month's particular theme. The Department also arranges with the Department of Education circuit offices to market libraries at local schools.

Other infrastructure

The library is well-built and maintained; the toilets are in good working condition and there is a welcoming reception area. There was a circulation desk for library staff, which was neat and tidy.

6. FINDINGS

After the deliberations and inspection of Rietkuil Library, the Committee made the following findings:

- 6.1. The process to deliver books procured by the Department was very slow; in most cases delivery to the library was delayed.
- 6.2. The library is at risk of vandalism and crime, as there was no fence and gate around the premises.
- 6.3. The community library at Kwa-Zamokuhle, about 25km away from Rietkuil Library, was burnt down during service delivery protests in 2014 and was in the process of being renovated.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommended that the Department must implement the following at Rietkuil Library:

- 7.1. Improve the turnaround time for delivery of procured books to the library and submit a progress report in this regard by 31 May 2017.
- 7.2. Strengthen the security measures at the library to ensure the safety of the building, staff members and patrons. Submit a progress report by 31 May 2017.
- 7.3. Liaise with the Municipality and submit a technical progress report by 31 May 2017 on:
 - (a) Re-construction of Kwa-Zamokuhle community library, indicating scope of work and timeframes for completion.
 - (b) Implementation of library awareness programmes in that community and how the causal factors that led to the burning down of the library were addressed.

8. PUBLIC HEARING AT THEMBA SENAMELA STADIUM, MHLUZI

The Social Transformation Cluster TLP public hearing was held at Themba Senamela Stadium on 16 March 2017 in conjunction with the Economic Transformation Cluster.

Government departments MEC's, HOD's and senior officials were present, as well as the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip councillors and CDW's were present. Other stakeholders included the Office of the Auditor-General and Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.

The following issue pertinent to the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation was noted:

- There was a query raised about opportunities provided by the Department in terms of Karate.

The Hon MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation urged the community to identify people within the community who were interested in and with the necessary abilities to participate in Karate and submit their details to the Department via the District office.

FINDING:

- 8.1. The Hon MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation informed the community that the Department will support the sport of Karate in the 2017/18 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 8.2 The Department must provide a costed breakdown of the 2017/18 plans to support Karate as a sporting code.

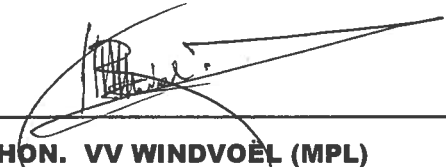
9. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson would like to thank the Honourable Members of the Committee for their constructive input during the oversight visit to **Rietkuil Library** in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

The interaction with the Hon MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation and senior officials from the Department; the Speaker of the Municipality, councillors and officials; as well as the library staff and management was appreciated.

The House is requested to adopt this oversight report with its findings and recommendations.

The Department is required to implement the House Resolutions contained in this Committee report and submit a progress report to the Legislature by 31 May 2017.



HON. VV WINDVOËL (MPL)

**CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION; CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION**

09/05/2017.

DATE