

**OVERSIGHT REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION;
CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION DURING THE NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK
ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2015, IN THE STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY -
CHROMEVILLE LIBRARY**

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) conducted a Provincial Week in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (the municipality) from 14-18 September 2015, which was intended to enable Parliament, Provincial Legislatures, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the NCOP to monitor the state of infrastructure in the nine provinces.

The theme for the Provincial Week was: "Advancing infrastructure investment and development for better services to communities". As part of the joint programme for the week, the Portfolio Committee on Education; Culture, Sport and Recreation (the Committee) undertook an oversight visit to Chromeville Library in the Steve Tshwete Local municipality on 17 September 2015.

House resolutions emanating from this Committee report will be referred to the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation for the necessary interventions and report back to the Legislature.

2. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT VISITS

The focus of the oversight visit was to assess the general functionality of the Chromeville Library and to assess the department's delivery of library infrastructure services in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

3. METHOD OF WORK

The Research Section conducted preliminary visits to identify projects for oversight visits by the Committee. Their findings and recommendations were incorporated into the research report, which was presented to the Committee. Subsequently the programme of the Social Transformation Cluster oversight visits was developed and approved.

Invitations were sent to the department (MEC and HOD) informing them of the oversight visits and requesting the necessary support from the Nkangala District Office. Other stakeholders such as the Office of the Auditor-General, the Department of Finance and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) were also invited. The Nkangala District Municipality and the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality were already engaged by the NCOP, as they had received invitations and the programme.

On 15 September 2015 the Committee was briefed by the researcher on the Chromeville Library and the state of library services in the municipality. The Committee subsequently considered and adopted its report on 18 November 2015.

4. CHROMEVILLE LIBRARY

The oversight visit commenced with a briefing session at the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (Banquet Hall), at which the Hon MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation (DCSR) and the HOD of the DCSR briefed the Committee on the library profile and its functionality within the municipality. The Committee interacted with the department on the presentation and then drove about 15km to the library to do the site inspection.

(a) Main Observations

The DCSR has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with municipalities that clarifies its role in terms of library services. The MOU stipulates that the DCSR will be responsible for the provision of support services; trainings of staff; promotional material; books; ICT; and infrastructure where possible.

For the financial year 2015/16, the DCSR planned to provide 10 libraries with ICT services; to improve access to information management; to provide library infrastructure facilities; promotional material; library marketing and library materials to learners, educators and the community. It was reported that the planned target was achieved.

The Committee made the following observations during the site inspection of the library:

- The library is well built and functional, but very small, considering the population of the area it serves and that it is the only library in the area. The community needs a bigger library;

- Although the library is easily accessible to the community, it is situated next to a liquor outlet, which is not conducive to the school children who use the library;
- The library has internet connectivity and free wi-fi is available;
- There is a small Early Childhood Development play area in the library;
- Training of library staff is a challenge affecting the municipality at large.

(b) Library Profile

Chromeville library is in ward 22, under the leadership of Cllr MJ Sekgwele. The library is situated at number 10271 Chromeville, Mhluzi Township in Middelburg. The population of Chromeville is estimated at 3 250. The library was established in 2011 and it was officially opened by the Honourable Executive Mayor, Cllr Masina on 18 September 2011.

The library's total book collection is 911 (Including Municipal and Provincial stock) and the library has a total membership of 397. It was noted that Chromeville library is actually a library depot and study centre, which is well-used by learners. However, it is housed in a municipally owned building, which happens to be right next to a tavern. Safety is also a concern as there are many activities happening around the library, although the Committee noted that two security guards provide 24 hour security at the library.

Membership of the library is free of charge. The statistics of all users visiting the library is recorded daily at the library. Only members who do not reside in Steve Tshwete Municipality pay a membership fee, which is used as a retention fee that is refunded to the member when they move from the area.

(c) Functionality

The Committee verified that the library was functional and is frequently used by the community, especially school children for studying purposes. One (1) full time qualified librarian was provided by the municipality and one (1) library assistant was provided by the DCSR. The municipality also provided with one cleaner, one gardener and one Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) staff.

The DCSR reported to the Committee that funding for the library was provided through the conditional grant (Community Library grant) received from the national Department of Arts and Culture.

The DCSR also reported to the Committee that they had facilitated the following:

- Purchase of books and library furniture;
- Provision of internet connectivity for library users;
- Provision of computers;
- Installation and connection of SLIMS system;
- Installation of security system.

The Committee raised a concern that assistant librarians were incorrectly being referred to as librarians. However, the department and the municipality assured the Committee that this matter was being rectified as a study was underway to train assistant librarians; some assistants were studying towards becoming qualified librarians.

The Committee was also informed that the library had participated in the Back to School campaign in January 2015 and the World Book Day in March 2015. The library is also part of the Friends of the Library programme.

(d) Library Services and infrastructure

The Committee verified the following services/ facilities at the library:

- Circulation desk;
- Study area;
- Computers and internet connectivity;
- Children's section/ECD play area;
- Magazines/Newspaper area;
- Librarian office;
- Kitchen;
- Toilets;
- Parking area;
- Entrance gate.

(e) Infrastructure

According to the Steve Tshwete Municipality Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) for 2015/16 financial year, very few areas have access to libraries and there is a huge backlog in the provision of community libraries. In the areas provided with library facilities, the biggest challenge was maintenance and some of those libraries require renovation, upgrading and even construction of new libraries.

The IDP has thus identified that all the libraries at Steve Tshwete have infrastructure and maintenance challenges and needs to be upgraded. The libraries such as Eastdene and Chromeville are housed in small buildings, which cannot accommodate users.

Furthermore, there is non-compliance of section 5(3)(b) of the South African Public Library and Information Service Bill, 2012 which states that libraries should be a minimum distance from busy roads, so as to avoid noise pollution and so as to minimise the number of users that need to cross roads with heavy traffic. Libraries must be a minimum distance from areas zoned for alcohol consumption or the sale of alcohol (for example, bars and restaurants) as such places generate noise and their patrons often create disturbances for library users. It was also noted that Hendrina library is located in-between busy streets with heavy traffic flow and Chromeville is located next to a liquor store.

The infrastructure challenges are attributed to the departmental reliance on grant funding. Over the past five years the Province has been implementing library services using the Community Libraries Services Conditional Grant; there has been no funding for library services from the equitable share.

4.1. FINDINGS

The Committee made the following findings for the Chromeville Library:

- (a) The municipality and the DCSR are not complying with the South African Public Library and Information Service Bill, 2012 [Section 5(3)(b)] because the Chromeville Library is situated next to a liquor outlet.
- (b) The library is a popular venue for learners to study but it is too small to cater for the needs of the community. According to the IDP of the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, all the libraries in the municipality have infrastructure and maintenance challenges and they need to be upgraded. New libraries also need to be constructed.
- (c) There is a need for more qualified librarians and trained library assistants in the municipality at large.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation must:

- (a) Ensure that it complies with the South African Public Library and Information Service Bill, 2012 so that a library is not situated right next to a liquor outlet. Provide a progress report by 31 January 2016.
- (b) In conjunction with the municipality at the next scheduled IDP meeting, discuss a plan for the construction of a new library to service Chromeville and the surrounding areas. The department should aim to include the new library on its 2016/17 priority list for provision of infrastructure services. Provide a progress report by 31 January 2016.
- (c) Fast track the training of library assistants and ensure that each library in the municipality has a qualified librarian, as well as sufficient trained library assistants by the end of the 2015/16 financial year. Provide a progress report by 31 January 2016.

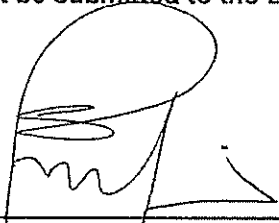
5. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson would like to thank the Honourable Members of the Committee and Hon KC Dhlamini from the NCOP for their constructive inputs made at the oversight visit to the Chromville Library during the NCOP Provincial Week (14-18 September 2015) in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. The Committee also thanked the Legislature support staff for the necessary assistance provided during the week.

The Committee also extended its appreciation to the DCSR for providing the requested information and support to the Committee. The presence of the Hon MEC at the oversight visit was appreciated. The Committee acknowledged the work which has been done by the DCSR in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality to provide library services, infrastructure and resources to libraries in the municipality and the Nkangala District. In the same breath, the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality must be thanked for their collaboration with the DCSR in providing this very important service to the community.

The Committee requests the House to adopt this report with its findings and recommendations. The department is expected to investigate all the observations and findings of the Committee in this report and implement the House Resolutions herein.

A progress report on the implementation of the House Resolutions in this report must be submitted to the Legislature on or before 31 December 2015.



HON. SK MASHILO

18/11/2015

DATE

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