

## REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PREMIER'S OFFICE; FINANCE; ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM:

### “TAKING THE LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE” (TLP) OVERSIGHT VISIT HELD IN THE NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, EHLANZENI DISTRICT, 18 SEPTEMBER 2019 – MAHUSHE SHONGWE NATURE RESERVE (MTPA)

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#### 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. In addition, sections 114 and 133 of the Constitution, read together with rules 218 and 131 of the Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature (the Rules) directs the Legislature to hold the Executive accountable for the exercising of powers and performance of functions.

In carrying out its constitutional oversight and public participation mandate, the **Portfolio Committee on Premier's Office; Finance; Economic Development and Tourism** (the Committee) conducted oversight visits in the Nkomazi Local Municipality (the municipality) on 18 September 2019.

This report reflects the issues that emanated from the oversight activities during the said date, which will need further intervention of the **Department of Economic Development and Tourism** (DEDT) and its parastatal, **Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency** (MTPA).

#### 2. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

The Committee assessed progress on projects that are assisted by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA). The Committee wanted to interact with project beneficiaries and ensure that the DEDT's and entity's delivery of core mandated services is fast tracked.

### 3. METHOD OF WORK

In preparation for the TLP, the research section conducted pre-site visits to the municipality. Comprehensive research reports were compiled that informed the Committee's programme. The Committee informed the department and entity about the oversight visit to be conducted and the purpose thereof. Invitations were sent to the department, management of the entity and the Municipality requesting them to be part of the visits.

- On 18 September 2019, the Committee conducted an oversight visit to the Mahushe Shongwe Nature Reserve to assess the infrastructure upgrades.
- Subsequently, the Committee met and considered the draft Committee report.

### 4. OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

#### **The Committee observed the following:**

- The Mahushe Shongwe Nature Reserve is a community owned reserve situated in the Nkomazi Local Municipality, in a small village of Mzinti.
- The reserve is approximately (1139 ha) in size and it is not a land claimed nature reserve.
- The land is managed by the Matsamo Tribal Authority and is meant for the purpose of conserving the natural species.
- The reserve faces a challenge of poaching, particularly of the Nyala herbivore.
- The reserve is 100% fenced with a 2.4 high game fence covering an area of 23km.
- The roads inside the reserve are not in a good condition to be used by tourists.
- There is no proper signage leading to the reserve.
- The reserve manager and the thirteen (13) field rangers are responsible for security. There is one (1) access control gate which is always manned by one (1) of the field rangers.
- Mahushe Shongwe Nature Reserve managed to create four (4) employment opportunities for the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) for twelve (12) months.
- The reserve created one hundred and forty two (142) temporary employment opportunities for local community beneficiaries and one hundred and twenty (120) public participants received bicycles, as a mode of transport.

- The reserve managed to successfully host the Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programme.
- Mahushe Shongwe Nature Reserve has an integrated management plan in place.
- The reserve donated an amount of R70 000.00 to the community, for the June 16 Youth Day celebrations in the current financial year.

## 5. INTERACTION WITH THE NATURE RESERVE MANAGEMENT

### 5.1. MAHUSHE SHONGWE NATURE RESERVE

Mr Shoba, MTPA Senior Manager gave an overview on the reserve. He indicated that infrastructure upgrades that were suspended in October 2018 due to the project expiring before the completion of the deliverables, have now resumed and the revised completion date is 30 September 2020.

Mahushe Shongwe Nature Reserve is a community owned reserve and maintains good relations with local community structures and Traditional Leadership. A priority is given to local communities regarding employment and business opportunities and the local community benefits through the generated revenue from the reserve.

#### **The entity outlined the challenges faced by the reserve as follows:**

- There is poaching of animals, particularly of the Nyala herbivore.
- Inadequate budget allocation for the smooth running of the reserve.
- Critical vacant positions.
- No proper offices for the reserve management.
- Insufficient infrastructure and tourism facilities upgrade and maintenance.
- Lack of water.

## **5.2 FINDINGS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE**

**After the interaction with the reserve management, the Committee noted the following:**

- 5.2.1 The entity has spent R11 738 621.94 translated to 65% of its budget allocated for infrastructure upgrades; however, the actual progress on construction is at 56%.
- 5.2.2 The reserve is community owned and has a Mahushe Shongwe Joint Management Committee (JMC) in place; however, there is no working relationship between the reserve and the committee, resulting in lack of representation on decision making processes.

## **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE**

**After the deliberations, the Committee recommended that:**

- 5.3.1 The entity must ensure that the budget is sufficient to complete the infrastructure upgrades and give priority to those facilities that may help generate income. Furthermore, the entity must ensure that expenditure is as per the deliverables.
- 5.3.2 The entity must develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with clearly defined terms and conditions between the reserve and the committee, in order to ensure that both parties' interests are taken into consideration in the decision making processes. A copy of the MOU must be submitted to the Portfolio Committee by 29 November 2019.

## **6. PUBLIC HEARING**

The Public Hearing was jointly conducted by the Economic and Social Transformation Clusters at the Kamhlushwa Stadium on 19 September 2019. There were no issues relating to the entity that were raised during the public hearing.

The Committee moves that the House adopts the report with the above recommendations.

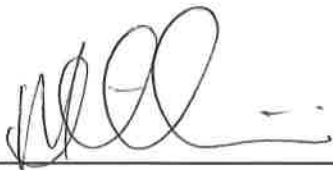
## **7. CONCLUSION**

The Chairperson would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Portfolio Committee for their active participation and constructive contributions during the oversight visit.

In addition, the Chairperson extends a word of appreciation to the Mahushe Shongwe Nature Reserve manager for availing himself to deliberate on matters pertaining to the above mentioned project, the Acting HOD Mr NM Sebitso and Senior Management of DEDT, the entity, the Nkomazi Local Municipality and all other stakeholders for their co-operation during the oversight work of the Committee.

The Chairperson would also like to thank the support staff for contributing to the production of this report.

**Unless otherwise stated the Department of Economic Development and MTPA are required to investigate the observations and findings in this Committee report and implement all the House Resolutions. The report detailing progress in the implementation of all recommendations should be forwarded to the Committee by 29 November 2019 and thereafter on a quarterly basis.**



**HON M LATCHMINARAIN (MPL)  
CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON  
PREMIER'S OFFICE; FINANCE;  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

09-10-2019

**DATE**

