

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS CONDUCTED AT TONGA WATER TREATMENT WORKS AND MANANGA WATER RETICULATION AT NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY - DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (the Committee) conducted oversight visits over the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs as mandated by Section 114 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 108 of 1996); to oversee the performance of the Department and hold it accountable.

The Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) project took place at Nkomazi Local Municipality from 17– 20 September 2019.

2. PURPOSE OF THE SITE VISIT AND A PUBLIC HEARING

- The purpose of the site visit was to assess the provision of services by the Department and to check the overall functionality of the Tonga Water Treatment Works and Mananga Water Reticulation.
- To assess the provision and sufficiency of quality water in Nkomazi Local Municipality;
- To obtain the views from the Nkomazi Local Municipality communities through a public hearing held at KaMhlushwa Stadium on the provision of the delivery of basic services; this involves areas such as Tonga Block A, B, D and part of C, Mzinti, Mangweni and Mananga;

- To assess the extent of service delivery rendered by the Department of COGTA at Nkomazi Local Municipality

3. METHOD OF WORK

In preparation for the TLP, the Portfolio Committee after the approval of the Legislature programme informed the Department about the TLP and oversight visits to be conducted on 18 and 19 September 2019. The Committee then met on 18 and 19 September 2019 with the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Other stakeholders invited were South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Executive Mayor for Nkomazi Local Municipality, Cllr JM Mkhathswa, Local Councillors, House of Traditional Leaders (HTL), Public Service Commission (PSC), Auditor General's Office, Provincial Treasury and Community Development Workers (CDWs).

4. OBSERVATIONS

- The Department was represented by the Chief Director, Mr. S Ngubane and Senior Officials from the Department of COGTA.
- The Nkomazi Local Municipality, (Mayor, Councillors and officials from the municipality) were in attendance during the oversight visit and public hearing.
- The Committee commended the Department for the work done thus far in ensuring that the water is purified and that the Nkomazi community get clean water.
- The municipality is faced with challenges of supplying 33 mega litres per day to 41 mega litres; pressure is low; there is a need to increase the plant; infrastructure of taps.

- The cost estimate to implement the upgrading of the clear water pumps at the Tonga Water Treatment Works amounts to R69 390 999.00 to finalise the project.
- The total estimated time required to implement the project is thirty eight (38) months for upgrading of Tonga Water Treatment Works.
- Tonga Water Treatment Works capacity for 2018/2019 is currently abstracting 33 mega litre per day (33MI/day) module 3 of 4 completed. (Maximum capacity will be 41 MI/day) and the Committee commends the Department for trying to meet the needs of the communities.
- The Nkomazi Local municipality obtained unqualified audit outcome in 2017/2018 financial year.
- The Committee commends the municipality for employing a woman at technical positions as it was previously male dominated career.
- Nkomazi Local Municipality (NLM) considers the option of entering a public-private initiative with regards to the operations and maintenance of the Tonga Water Treatment Works (WTW).

5. PRESENTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS/NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

5.1. Background on the Tonga Water Treatment Works

The Chief Director, Mr S Ngubane reported that the Tonga (WTW) supply the following areas with clean water which are Tonga Village, Hospital and RDP housing area, Tonga Block A, B, D and part of C, Mzinti and Mangweni. He reported that due to inadequate bulk infrastructure, Nkomazi Local Municipality (NLM) obtained funds and commenced with upgrading of the components. The Department reported that the components upgraded to date are:

- Tonga Water Treatment Works (WTW): 2018/2019 capacity = 33 ML/d (module 3 of 4 completed) (Max capacity will be 41 mega litre per day (ML/d));
- Tonga Raw Water Pump Station: is to be upgraded from 2019/20 financial year (FY) from 25ML/d to 33 ML/d;
- Tonga Raw Water Rising Main: designed capacity = 45 ML/d (Max capacity = 45 ML/d);

The Department reported that Tonga WTW comprises of a 17 ML/d conventional plant which was constructed in the 1980's. In 2013 the plant was upgraded with 8 ML/d. It comprised a new inlet works, filters, clarifiers, blowers and mechanical and electrical work for the eventual 25 ML/d plant. It was to be constructed in phases. The all-inclusive project cost was R 51 million. In 2018 another 8 ML/d module comprising two clarifies and four filters was added. The all-inclusive project cost was R 85 million and not 33 million as reported by the department. The current capacity is 33 ML/d. However, due to insufficient capacity of raw water system current production is 20 ML/d

The Department further reported that in 2008, the Tonga Raw Water Pump Station was upgraded with 3x85 kW Flight submersible pumps for an all-inclusive cost of R 3 million. Provision was made for a future fourth pump. The work entailed all mechanical and electrical work. In 2009 the Tonga Raw Water Rising Main is upgraded for an all-inclusive cost of R6 million. The Department reported that it has a new 500mm dia uPVC pipeline that was installed alongside the existing 450mm dia FC pipe. The pipe length is 1,500m. And the work entailed pipe laying, installation of different valves and the crossing of the provincial road. The capacity of the rising main pipe system is 45 ML/d.

The Committee was informed that the capacities of the clear water pumps at the Water Treatment Works and rising mains from the Tonga WTW towards the settlement reservoirs are inadequate for the current demand, except for Mzinti which is ± 21 MI/d. The rising main from Tonga WTW towards Mzinti was upgraded in 2014. The capacity of the new line is enough for the Mzinti demand until 2036. In terms of the bulk water master plan for Tonga water supply area, the pumps and the rising mains should have been upgraded in 2013 to 2015.

Currently, the clear water pumps and the rising mains (except Mzinti rising main) do not have the capacity to distribute the clear water that can be produced by the plant (33 MI/d). The Department also reported that time is required to complete a detailed design within eight (8) months; this includes time for topographical surveying and geotechnical investigations. The time required for construction is thirty (30) months and the total estimated time required to implement the project is thirty eight (38) months. He further reported that the funds for the project could be spread over three consecutive financial years; separate tenders should be called for the different rising mains and pumping sets per village. During implementation, a significant number of temporary jobs could be generated for unemployed people.

The Committee was informed that Nkomazi Local Municipality (NLM) is currently clarifying the water allocations and Water Use Licences (WUL's) with the Inkomati Usuthu Catchment Management Area (IUCMA). The installation of pipelines in built-up areas does not trigger assessments in terms of the National Environment Management Act (NEMA); where provincial or national roads are crossed, permission would have to be obtained from the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT) or South African National Roads Agency Ltd (SANRAL). The municipality reported that the replacement of the 'old' rising mains would improve the situation regarding unauthorised connections and reduce the unauthorised consumption and subsequent non-revenue water. Nkomazi Local Municipality (NLM) will also consider the option of entering a public-private initiative with regards to the operations and maintenance of the Tonga WTW.

6. COMMENTS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE

6.1. Tonga Water Treatment Works

The Committee noted that the Tonga Water Treatment Works is progressing well even though there are challenges such as shortage of water and commends the Department as it is able to address some of these challenges.

Blue Drop Status (NLM)

The Committee wanted to know if the Department can be proud of the quality of Blue Drop status/score of the Nkomazi Local Municipality (NLM). In its response, the Department together with the municipality reported that in terms of the blue drop status a report was received during the 2014/15 financial year and it was at 51.4 %. The municipality has not received a blue drop status reports for the past three (3) years. Assessments were done and the municipality is relying on the previous report. The Committee further wanted to know if the department has the necessary capacity to do the water quality tests to improve the Blue Drop Status. In its response the municipality reported that monitoring is done in ensuring that there is quality of water and also submits results into blue drop systems.

The municipality also reported that in terms of the quality of water, the NLM is at 92 % for physical chemical and micro for Tonga Water Treatment Works. There is compliance in water quality and the municipality has employed service providers to compare lab results. The municipality submits the blue drop status to the Department of Water and Sanitation for verification.

In loco inspection to Tonga Water Treatment Works

During the in loco inspection the Committee found that, at the chemical room, the water stays for long and develops flocks or uncleanliness and how the municipality ensures that communities are provided with clean water. In its response the municipality reported that, there is a schedule for cleaning and clarifying the water on a daily basis. At communities, there are reservoirs, water tanks and the municipality ensures that the supplier cleans every six months. The Committee also noted leakages of water in some of the machines or pipes and requested the municipality to explain the value of the leakages. In its response the municipality reported that, its normal for water leakage as the water is not wasted. The tanks need to be elevated so that the storage facility can be enlarged and able to supply water.

6.2. Mananga Water Reticulation

The Committee found that the reticulation wherein taps were installed inside the yard in 2018 at Mananga were not operational. The Committee was also informed that, communities within the area believe that development has not taken place; complaints received was that the community does not receive water on a 24 hour basis; the water is supplied once a week or every three weeks and end up drinking water with animals from the polluted rivers.

The Committee raised a serious concern that the water is an essential basic need and should be provided at all times, the time schedule as reported by the municipality, does not assist communities as kids are at school or other people are working, how does the municipality accommodate such cases and requested the Department and the municipality to provide an explanation on whether the communities are notified in case there are water challenges and unable to supply the water.

In its response the municipality reported that, some communities have Jojo tanks and those who do not have Jojo tanks, Councillors inform them when there are challenges of water shortages and the water is provided through water tanks; zoned six times and not enough pressure. The Committee was also informed that illegal connections to bulk line pumps; tank needs more hours in order to distribute water to communities. The Committee requested that the Councillors, Community Development Workers (CDW) work together with the community members in ensuring that elderly people are prioritised. The Committee also urged the officials of Department of COGTA and the municipality to thoroughly do their work as expected. The Committee also requested the Mananga community members to attend meetings when called by the municipality.

7. FINDINGS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE

After thorough interaction with the Department, the committee found that:

- a) The Tonga Raw Water Pump Station is to be upgraded in 2019/20 financial year from 25 mega liters per day to 33 ML/day.
- b) There is non-functionality of the pump stations at Mananga; hence there is lack of water.
- c) Mananga Community is supplied with water once a week or every three weeks.
- d) Some community members are not informed on meetings of service delivery issues.
- e) There are illegal connections to the bulk infrastructure and the damaging of metering system.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE

After the findings, the committee recommended that the department must:

- (a) Ensure that the upgrading of the Tonga Raw Water Pump infrastructure is done so that it can meet the forecasted water demand.
- (b) Improve or increase the pump station capacity at Mananga so that the communities can be able to have access to water.
- (c) Come up with a mechanism in ensuring that the Department together with the municipality is able to supply water at least three times a week.
- (d) Encourage members of communities to attend meetings and provide awareness programmes on service delivery issues.
- (e) Educate the communities on the negative impact caused by the illegal connections and damage to the bulk infrastructure.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

The public hearing was held at KaMhlushwa Stadium in Nkomazi Local Municipality and the comments were as follows:

- ❖ The communities' main challenge is the shortage of water in all the areas of Nkomazi Local Municipality; leakage of sewer pipes and no supply of free water; it is alleged that water is received once a week or after three months; the issue of illegal connections is also a challenge;
- ❖ The old graveyard has become an illegal dumping site and area for criminal activities;

- ❖ Challenges of road infrastructure especially in Masibekela has been raised;
- ❖ A request for youth empowerment at Nkomazi Local Municipality has been made;
- ❖ Allocation of houses to rightful beneficiaries sometimes is not done due to poor Management of beneficiary list;
- ❖ No electricity for more than a month at Ward 30; alleged that the Councillor is not allowed to assist them;
- ❖ Commends the municipality for road construction and the provision of water at Jeppes Reef (Ward 32);
- ❖ Request for passage road construction at Ward 15 Magudu;
- ❖ There is poor working relationship between the Mawewe Leadership and the Department of COGTA; an urgent solution has been requested to improve the good working relationship;
- ❖ Lack of feedback on local projects by the municipality or for public involvement; it is alleged that there is political interference;

9.1. Recommendations on a public hearing

The Committee recommends that the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs must attend to issues raised at the public hearing. A comprehensive progress report must be submitted by 29 November 2019.

The Department must submit a detailed progress report to the Portfolio Committee on or before 29 November 2019.

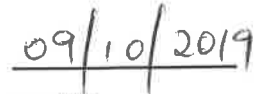
10. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson wishes to thank the Hon. Members of the Committee for their participation and contributions during the deliberations on the TLP site visits and public hearing. The Chairperson further extends her appreciation to the MEC, Mr MJ Msibi, Chief Director, Mr S Ngubane and the Senior Officials of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the Executive Mayor of Nkomazi Local Municipality, Mr JM Mkhathshwa, representatives of House of Traditional Leaders (HTL) South African Local Government Association (SALGA), representatives of Auditor General's Office, CDWs, Contractors as well as the Councillors and officials of Nkomazi Local Municipality for supporting the programme of the Committee.

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

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HON. MC MASILELA


DATE

**CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE &
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS**