

REPORT ON THE TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE (TLP) OVERSIGHT VISIT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION; CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION CONDUCTED AT KWA GUQA PUBLIC LIBRARY, EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, 14 MARCH 2018 – DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION

1. INTRODUCTION

A provincial legislature is empowered by sections 114 and 133 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (the Constitution) to hold the relevant Member of the Executive Council accountable for the Department's performance and service delivery in line with planned projects as per their Annual Performance Plan for the particular financial year.

The Portfolio Committee on Education; Culture, Sport and Recreation (the Committee) conducted an oversight visit to Kwa Guqa Public Library in Emalahleni Local Municipality (the Municipality) on 14 March 2018.

The House resolutions emanating from this Committee report will be referred to the Department and the Municipality for implementation and report back to the Legislature.

2. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT VISIT

The main objectives of the TLP oversight visit to Kwa Guqa Library were to assess the state of the library infrastructure and the level of support provided to the library to enable its efficient functionality.

3. METHOD OF WORK

The Political Steering Committee for the TLP in Emalahleni Local Municipality resolved to adopt the proposed programme for the Social Cluster, which included an oversight visit to Kwa Guqa Public Library on 14 March 2018. The 2018 TLP visit was a follow-up visit to the visit conducted on 09 July 2014. The Department was requested to present an updated progress report on the 2014 House Resolutions with the aim of accounting to the Committee and also providing feedback to the community.

The relevant stakeholder invitations were issued during the coordination of the visit. The Nkangala District Management team, Head Office, Municipality and management of the

Kwa Guqa Public Library provided the required support for the Committee's visit. The Committee met on 18 April 2018 to consider and adopt its draft report.

4. INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

4.1. KWA GUQA PUBLIC LIBRARY

4.1.1. Briefing session

The HOD and his team briefed the Committee at Mthimukulu Old Age Centre on the updated progress report on the 2014 House resolutions on Kwa Guqa Public Library and the library profile. The Committee welcomed the presentation and interacted with the Department, the library management and the Municipality.

4.1.2. Background

The library is located in Kwa Guqa, Extension 14 (Ward 3). It is a small building which was constructed in 1980 by the Municipality and reportedly serves a community of about 130 920 people who are mainly Zulu, English, SiSwati, Ndebele, Xhosa, Sotho and Tsonga speaking. The community of Kwa Guqa has 10 primary schools and 12 secondary schools; 4 pre-schools and 3 adult education centres. The library is mainly used by learners and adults in need of internet services. Currently, there are 1680 registered library members (809 adults and 871 children).

The Portfolio Committee visited the library on 09 July 2014 and made the following findings:

- Deteriorating building infrastructure due to poor construction and no maintenance
- Lack of special rooms for reading, studying and computers (not an ideal library)
- Unsuitable study area (outside room not ventilated and poor lighting)
- No ablution facilities on site for library users
- No designated play area and Early Childhood Development resources
- Insufficient furniture (furniture was also outdated)
- Use of an outdated SIRS catalogue system
- Vandalism and theft due to lack of proper security
- Inconsistent delivery of Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS) material
- Poor signage on route to the library and on the actual library

4.1.3. Observations by the Committee

(a) Infrastructure

It was noted by the Committee that since the 2014 visit, there has not been any improvement to the building infrastructure. The library building, which is too small, is slowly deteriorating due to lack of maintenance. The poorly constructed outside room used for studying purposes, is also very small and does not have adequate ventilation and lighting. The Committee urged the Department and the library management to make provision for at least two desk or ceiling fans that could also be donated by local business people.

The matter of upgrading the library was also raised by the Committee during the 2014 visit but the Department has since taken the route to construct two new libraries in Emalahleni using the ideal library model. These are Klarinet Library (completed in 2016) and Thubelihle Library (which is still under construction).

In 2014 the Portfolio Committee recommended that the library should be upgraded. According to DCSR, the Municipality did not make any request for upgrading of this library.

Challenges identified:

- The library facility does not meet the minimum norms and standards of an ideal library since it is too small to cater for the 29 schools in the fast growing community.
- The facility requires an upgrade or new structure that will meet modern standard of a library including section for computers, study area, reading area, service to the blind and activity rooms/discussion rooms.
- The Department has included the library in its 10 year infrastructure plan for its consideration of upgrade in the outer years.
- The issue of the security in the public library is still a challenge and there is continuous engagement with the Local Municipality to find solutions.

The Department indicated that at the beginning of each financial year, it holds a forum with municipalities to evaluate the conditional grant usage and protocols. During this forum the Department encourages municipalities to apply for upgrading and construction of library infrastructure. Nonetheless, DCSR has indicated that KwaGuqa Library is being prioritized for 2021 upgrade.

The Committee is cognizant of the Department's plans to roll out ideal libraries and the criteria used for providing libraries in communities. The distance of depot libraries from

these ideal libraries also needs to be considered; ultimately the Department is responsible to provide all communities with equal access to library services.

(b) Provision of staff

During the 2014 visit, the Committee had noted the staff shortage; there was only one (1) qualified Librarian who had to manage the library without any assistants. However, it was appreciated that this challenge had been addressed with the appointment of a Junior Librarian by the Municipality and three (3) EPWP workers (1 by the Department and 2 by the Municipality) who assist as shelf attendant, cleaner and groundsman.

The library thus has a qualified Librarian – Mrs TR Mabuza who is responsible for management, marketing and promotion of the library. She has 12 years of experience. The Junior Librarian assists her with overall library functions.

(c) Security services and provision of ICT

The Committee noted that despite the Department reporting in 2014 that the security system was installed and operational, there was still a serious challenge of vandalism and burglaries by certain irresponsible community members. The risk of theft was preventing the installation of computers and other expensive equipment. The library is also poorly fenced, which increases the risk of vandalism, burglaries and theft.

As long as the library remains in the community of Kwa Guqa, its security and resourcing must be a priority to the Department so that effective library services can be provided. The scourge of vandalism and burglary of government infrastructure that is intended to benefit the community must not be tolerated at this library or any other library.

In 2014 it was reported that the Department had provided the library with seven (7) computers through conditional grant funds. However, during the 2018 TLP visit the Committee was informed that five (5) computers had been stolen on 02 December 2016. It was reported that the matter was reported to the SAPS but no computers were recovered.

(d) Provision of ICT

The library provides internet services and WI-FI to the community but they have to pay for print outs and faxes from the photocopier machines; these were provided by the municipality and were operational at the time of the Committee's 2018 TLP visit.

The Committee was informed by the Department that the current internet system was planned to be discontinued in all Emalahleni libraries by the end of February 2018 and a new service provider would be appointed to install the new Broad Band system, which is faster and has more capacity.

(e) New Library Management system

The Department has phased out SLIMS (SITA Library Information Management System) due to its inaccuracy and inefficiency especially on minor assets that led to a negative audit finding in 2016/17 financial year. The Department is, through a service provider, in the process of developing a new Library System that will address all challenges relating to library functions and operations.

It was noted that the library book stock declined from 9 990 in June 2014 to 7 814 in March 2018. It was also noted that the library has not received any new books since 2016 due to the aforementioned challenges in relation to management of the Department's minor assets register. The Committee urged the Department to finalize the process urgently so that library personnel are able to manage book stock and report accordingly to the Department.

The 3M security system for books is being installed but was not yet integrated into the security and counting system due to the absence of a library catalogue system, after the discontinuation of SLIMS (SITA Library Information Management System) at all libraries.

(f) Book provisioning

In the progress report on the 2014 House Resolutions, the Department reported to the Committee that library books had already been procured, which are relevant to the school curriculum (CAPS); expected delivery was scheduled to take place before the end of the 2017/18 financial year. Furthermore, the Department reported that books were procured for all eMalahleni libraries in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years.

The Committee noted however, during the site inspection at the library on 14 March 2018 that some of the books on the shelves were very outdated and reiterated the importance of a library, as one of the hubs of learning in a community, to have contemporary content to keep its members and visitors informed and educated. It was noted though that the date for delivery of the newly procured books was said to be before 31 March 2018.

(g) Furniture and Equipment

In the progress report on the 2014 House Resolutions, the Department reported to the Committee that in the financial year 2017/18, Kwa-Guqa Public Library was one of the libraries that benefited from furniture and electrical appliances, which were already delivered to improve the library's atmosphere and to create a conducive learning environment for the community.

The Department has already procured library books that are also relevant to school curriculum and expected for delivery before the end of financial year. Books were also procured for all eMalahleni libraries in 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years.

(h) Resources for blind people

In response to the 2014 House Resolution for the Department to comply with the SA Library for the Blind Act (No. 91 of 1998) the Department explained that a survey was done through the database from the Office of the Premier and the Department of Social Development in order to find out where there was a need for the service to the blind. The following libraries were identified in the eMalahleni Municipality: Klarinet Public Library, Phola Public Library, Lynville Public Library and Klipfontein Public Library. The Department reported that the Library for the Blind service was being provided in eMalahleni Main Library. However, the Department was working on a programme to transport blind library users to eMalahleni Main Library for exchanging of materials. Currently home visits were done by the Regional staff for exchanging of materials, whilst some users were able to reach the library by themselves – they are called Champions, as they are able to assist others to use the Computer with Jaws Reader and the Document Reader specially designed for the blind and partially sighted users of the Library.

Thus the Committee noted with appreciation the efforts of the Department as stated above in response to the 2014 House resolution, and to implement the SA Library for the Blind Act (No. 91 of 1998). The Department further indicated to the Committee that in the 2018/2019 financial year, the number of libraries benefitting from the Library for the Blind project, which is being implemented in partnership with Library for the Blind South Africa, will be increased to 21 Libraries.

5. FINDINGS

The Committee made the following findings for the Kwa Guqa Public Library:

- 5.1. The library is included in the Department's 10 year infrastructure plan for upgrade by 2021. However, there are minor maintenance issues to be addressed urgently, as well as provision of fans for the outside study room.
- 5.2. The Department appointed a service provider to develop and install a new Library System to address all challenges relating to library functions and operations.
- 5.3. The Department was in the process of appointing a new service provider to install the new Broad Band system for all libraries, which is faster and has more capacity.
- 5.4. The Department reported that CAPS relevant library books had been procured; expected delivery was scheduled to take place before 31 March 2018.
- 5.5. No effective measures to address the poor security at the library were implemented since the Committee's 2014 visit; as a result five (5) computers were stolen in December 2016. The matter was reported to the SAPS. The Department also reported continuous engagement with the Municipality to find solutions in this regard.
- 5.6. In the 2018/2019 financial year, the number of libraries benefitting from the Library for the Blind project will be increased to 21 Libraries.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

After considering its findings, the Committee recommended that the Department must implement the following and **provide a progress report by 30 June 2018:**

- 6.1. Submit the 10 year infrastructure plan indicating how Kwa-Guqa Public Library upgrade will be prioritized by 2021; urgently attend to all minor building infrastructure maintenance issues and also provide small fans for the outside study room, with adequate security.
- 6.2. Ensure that the new Library Management system is installed and functional in the 2018/19 financial year, thereby ensuring that all library books are accounted for and that the department avoids further audit findings in relation to minor assets register.

- 6.3. Finalize the installation of Broadband at all libraries in eMalahleni Local Municipality as planned and provide confirmation of installation at each library, per ward.
- 6.4. Ensure that the procured library books are delivered to all libraries including Kwa-Guqa Public Library as planned, before 31 March 2018. Provide proof of delivery.
- 6.5. Fast track the case of the five (5) stolen computers as reported to the SAPS and intensify the efforts to engage robustly with the community, Municipality and SAPS in order to improve the security at the library. Provide proof of such engagements.
- 6.6. Submit the list of 21 libraries that will benefit from the Library for the Blind project, which is being implemented in the 2018/19 financial year.

7. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee would like to express her gratitude to the Honourable Committee Members for their constructive contributions during the oversight visit to Kwa Guqa Public Library.

The Committee appreciates the attendance and inputs of the Department and all other stakeholders. The Committee staff is also acknowledged for their support during the visit.

The Committee therefore requests the House to adopt this report with its findings and recommendations. The Department is required to implement the House Resolutions and submit a progress report to the Legislature before 31 May 2018.



HON. TS KHOZA, MPL

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

26/04/2018

DATE

