

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

WEDNESDAY, 5 APRIL 2017

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Public Works on its oversight visit to Masakhane and Hawston Primary Schools as follows:

Delegation

The delegation consisted of the following members:

Hinana, NE (Chairperson and leader of the delegation)
Mackenzie, RD
Mnqasela, M
Nkondlo, ND

The Committee Co-ordinator, Ms S Niekerk, accompanied the delegation.

1. Introduction and Background

Section 114 (2)(b)(i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, mandates provincial legislatures to provide for mechanisms to maintain oversight over the Provincial Executive Authority in the province. To this end the Standing Committee on Transport and Public Works undertook an oversight visit to the Masakhane Primary School in Gansbaai and the Hawston Primary School in Hawston. The purpose of the visit was to assess the progress of the remedial works currently underway as reported by the Department of Transport and Public Works (hereinafter “the Department”) to the Committee on a fortnightly basis.

In October 2015 it was reported by the Department that learning at the schools were disrupted following a declaration by engineers that the schools were unsafe due to structural defects resulting from poor construction. A lack of requisite skills by the

project design engineer was cited as one reason for the defective structures. In addition, a lack of specialised structural expertise in engineering within the Department, coupled with reduced project design specifications and documentation, as well limited official scrutiny and a lack of verification of Engineering Professional Services Provider (PSP) documents were also contributing factors to the poor outcome.

The Masakhane and Hawston Primary Schools Project formed part of the National Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) managed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The DBE selected 25 school projects in the Western Cape to the value of R934 million to be rolled out over a planned two year programme from 2012/2013 – 2013/2014. The first phase comprised the completion of 14 schools, which have been completed and occupied. The second phase comprised 11 schools, of which seven have been completed and occupied and four are experiencing infrastructure problems. Masakhane and Hawston Primary are two of these schools. The other schools are Delft South and Scottsdene Primary. Masakhane Primary School has subsequently dislodged from the ASIDI Programme and is funded by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

The Committee has relentlessly exercised its oversight role on the remedial progress currently underway at the schools and expressed its concern on the impact that these delays are having on the learners. The Hawston Primary School site was visited by the Committee as part of the Service Delivery Cluster Visit week in May 2016. Following this visit, the Committee conducted a follow up meeting in September 2016 where it was resolved that the Department be requested to submit a fortnightly progress report to the Committee on the remedial works currently underway at all four schools.

2. Overview

The Committee visited the Masakhane Primary School in Gansbaai and the Hawston Primary School in Hawston on Tuesday, 28 February 2017 and met with officials from the Department, the WCED, Ward Councillors and representatives from the School Governing Body. The Minister of Transport and Public Works attended the meeting in Hawston. The engagement commenced with a briefing by the Department on developments at the respective sites and was followed by a site inspection.

3. Masakhane Primary School

- 3.1.1 The affected areas at the school included the Intermediate and Senior block as well as the Specialist Room walls that were classified as medium risk due to the fact that the proper design was not provided by the Engineer who was responsible to certify that the walls had the ability to withstand normal climatic conditions such as strong winds and rain.
- 3.1.2 High risk areas included the structural stability of the building such as the Computer Room and the Hall. The possibility of the roof lifting or collapsing was a concern.
- 3.1.3 All the affected areas have now been remedied and the learners have taken occupation of the school on 31 January 2017.
- 3.1.4 Outstanding works include the remanufacturing of the louvres for the School Hall, the additional firefighting booster pump required by the Municipality and the manufacturing of the entrance gates.

3.1.5 The anticipated completion date is 15 March 2017.

4. Request for information

The Committee REQUESTED that the Department:

4.1.1 Inform the contractor that the ablution facilities at the Masakhane Primary School is not working and report to the Committee when this has been attended to; and

4.1.2 Inform the contractor to attend to the galvanised steel burglar bars where the top screw appears to be holding up a wooden beam that is attached to the roof.

5. Hawston Primary School

5.1.1 All the risks that have been reported to the Committee during previous engagements have been addressed and remedial measures are currently being implemented to ensure that the building will comply with the original objectives of safety and durability.

5.1.2 The Department committed to complete the structural building of the school in terms of the building contract. This commitment was subject to the construction provisions for delays that reside outside of the control of the contractor. These delays include additional waterproofing repairs and additional civil works. Completion is now planned for 31 May 2017. The original date for completion was 27 March 2017.

5.1.3 The school is funded by the ASIDI Programme but supplemented by the WCED. The provisional budget allocation was R29,5 million against an estimated completion cost of R22,2 million. Savings will be ploughed back into the Education Infrastructure Programme.

5.1.4 All the defects that were identified have been reconsidered, redesigned and certified where necessary. The building has been vetted and verified by the Review Panel of Specialist Engineers. Latent defects are to be expected and will become obvious as the building is utilised. In this respect the contractor is obligated to fix it. There is a ten year guarantee on the workmanship of the building.

5.1.5 When a project suffers delays due to external factors beyond a contractor's control, the contract makes provision for the contractor to notify the Department thereof without being penalised. However, the contract does not allow a claim to be submitted until after these delays have been concluded. These claims are usually based on the measurement and recalculation of the quantities of works that might be affected by this. If authorisation in this respect is granted, the contract completion time is extended. If authorisation is not granted, the contractor runs into penalties. The one way in which the Department can attempt to attend to delays outside that of the contractor's control, where he is granted an extension of time and will not be penalised, is to request acceleration. This is costly and the decision to embark on this practice resides with the WCED. This option was not applied in respect of this school.

5.1.6 The Committee remains concerned that the delays at this school will have a negative impact on the learners and the quality of education.

6. Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Department:

- 6.1.1 Standardise the structural works by having the design and specifications approved upfront by a competent Engineer so that it does not have to re-design specifications for other schools; and
- 6.1.2 Investigate the possibility of replacing the plastic sheeting that covers the windows in the school hall with a different material that does not generate as much wind noise.

7. Acknowledgements

The Chairperson thanked the Minister of Transport and Public Works, the officials from the Department of Transport and Public Works, the Western Cape Education Department, the Ward Councillors and representatives from the School Governing Body for availing themselves to address the Committee.