



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement
Western Cape Provincial Parliament
IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

Ref Number: 11/4/1/2/12

PETITIONS COMMITTEE

**REPORT OF THE PETITIONS COMMITTEE ON THE RIEMVASMAAK INFORMAL SETTLEMENT
PETITION**

REPORT

The Petitions Committee, having considered a petition received from the Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement in Ashton, reports as follows:

1. Introduction

In September 2017 a petition from Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement in Ashton was referred to the Committee for its consideration.

The salient elements of the petition are as follows:

- (i) The community of the Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement claims to be living without basic services for the past seven years.
- (ii) A total of 131 households are without drinking water, electricity, flushing toilets and proper housing.
- (iii) Several letters were written to the Mayor of the Langeberg Municipality and the community of Riemvasmaak is aggrieved that its concerns were not taken seriously by the local-government structures.
- (iv) Mr Stanley Papa and Mr Damon Carstens claim their plots were taken from them by the Langeberg Municipality and they wish to have their respective properties returned to them.

The Committee resolved to engage with the Langeberg Municipality and the Department of Human Settlements to provide clarity as to whether basic services could be provided to them and whether the Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement could be included in discussions of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

This report discusses the Committee's recommendations which were agreed to during the engagement sessions with stakeholders regarding this petition.

2. Overview

On 13 April 2018, Mr M Dirkse, Acting Manager of the Public Education and Outreach Section, provided an overview of the petition submitted by the Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement in Ashton. During this overview session the Committee needed to establish and obtain feedback from the Department of Human Settlements and the Langeberg Municipality. The Committee further requested clarity whether there was a plan to provide basic services to the community of Riemvasmaak and whether Riemvasmaak was considered for inclusion in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the Langeberg Municipality.

A letter dated 8 May 2018 was received from the Langeberg Municipality indicating that at the time that the first petition was submitted on 15 August 2017 to the Executive Mayor, the Langeberg Municipality had already established an Ad-hoc Committee to consider the challenges the Municipality was facing with regard to informal settlements. The Municipality further indicated that Riemvasmaak was an informal settlement that was situated on land that was not suitable for housing development and which would make the provision of services costly for the Municipality.

The Council in its feedback letter indicated that provision had been made in its 2018/19 budget to provide some basic services namely:

- (i) Prepaid water stand pipes in accordance with the minimum standards as prescribed in the national norms and standards;
- (ii) Refuse removal;
- (iii) Sanitation through chemical sanitation, as these areas are temporary settlements which would be moved as soon as suitable land was acquired; and the Council added that they were negotiating with the Department of Human Settlements in this regard; and
- (iv) Electricity, although is a costly investment it was estimated that it would cost approximately R12 000 per unit, which was not affordable to the municipality at that stage.

Following this letter, the Committee requested clarity about the timeline to provide these basic services and for how long these services would be provided.

Subsequently, the Committee resolved to undertake an oversight visit to the Langeberg Municipality and the Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement on 8 June 2018. During the meeting with the Municipal Manager, Mr SA Mokweni, and the Mayor, Mr JM Jansen, all factors were discussed, including the short-term solutions and long-term solutions for the informal settlements in Ashton. Following that meeting, the Committee resolved that Langeberg Municipality must provide clarity to the pro-active steps in respect of providing basic services to the community of Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement. The Committee further requested that time frames for implementation of the short-term services must be communicated. The Committee deemed it necessary to engage with the petitioners in order to provide them with feedback about its meeting with the Municipality.

Furthermore, the Committee engaged with the Langeberg Municipality, the Department of Human Settlements and the Department of Local Government and requested that:

- (i) The Langeberg Municipality seek the necessary assistance and investigate every possible angle in providing basic services as soon as possible to the residents of the Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement.
- (ii) The Langeberg Municipality investigate the possibility of utilising its disaster funds in order to speed up the process of providing basic services in the area.
- (iii) The Minister of Local Government and the Minister of Human Settlements seek assistance in providing basic services to the residents of the Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement.
- (v) The Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement be included in the 60 informal settlements earmarked for upgrade as part of the Provincial Informal Settlements Strategic Framework of the Department of Human Settlements.

During the meeting of 28 September 2018, the Committee discussed the email from the Langeberg Municipality dated 5 September 2018. The email outlined a way forward regarding this petition. The Municipality informed the Committee that the area is cleaned regularly since June 2018. The Municipality has gone out on tender for the installation of prepaid water stand pipes. The stand pipes will be installed in all the informal settlements in the Langeberg area to ensure that these areas have access to basic services. The Municipality has engaged the affected communities to inform them about the services and the costs associated with the provision of these service. The Municipality also informed the Committee that the tender for the chemical toilets has also been advertised and a compulsory briefing took place on 24 August 2018 and the tender closed on 17 September 2018. These chemical toilets would have to be placed as close as possible to the shacks for easy access, however, in most cases the informal settlements will have to be arranged in an orderly manner so that the truck, which would service the toilets, could actually drive through the area. The Municipality highlighted that they were not in a position to carry all the costs associated with the provision of basic services. For instance, the cost of providing electricity is estimated at R12 000 per unit. Given the number of shacks, it would be very costly to provide electricity to all of them. The Langeberg Council

resolved that the Minister of Human Settlement be approached for financial assistance to electrify these areas.

In conclusion, the Committee resolved to conclude this petition, but, on the substance of the matters raised in this petition, it was deemed necessary to make further recommendations.

3. Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS that:

- 3.1. This petition be referred to the Standing Committee on Local Government as the matter falls within the competence of that Committee; and this recommendation is made in terms of section 5(3)(b) of the Western Cape Petitions Act (Act 3 of 2006).
- 3.2. When the Standing Committee on Local Government discusses the Riemvasmaak Informal Settlement petition, an invitation be extended to the Petitions Committee.



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MR DG MITCHELL, MPP
CHAIRPERSON: PETITIONS COMMITTEE
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT
DATE: 27 November 2018