

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

TUESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2022

COMMITTEE REPORT

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE PREMIER AND CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS ON ITS OVERSIGHT VISIT TO WI-FI SITES AT THE CENTRE FOR E-INNOVATION (CE-I) OFFICE (4 DORP STREET) AND GROOTE SCHUUR HOSPITAL ON 27 JULY 2022

1. The delegation

The delegation of the Standing Committee consisted of the following members:

Botha, LJ (Chairperson and leader of the delegation) (DA)

Brinkhuis, K (Additional Member) (Al Jama-ah)

Maseko, M (DA)

Plato, D (Alternate) (DA)

Xego, M (EFF)

Apologies

Baartman, DM (DA)

Dugmore, CM (ANC)

The Procedural Officer, Ms W Achmat and Committee Assistant, Ms M Mrubata accompanied the delegation.

2. Introduction

The Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters was updated by the Department of the Premier on 3 June 2022 on the status of Broadband and information security operations. The Committee thereafter resolved to conduct an oversight visit to the Wi-Fi sites at the CE-I offices at 4 Dorp Street and Groote Schuur Hospital on 27 July 2022. The intention

of the oversight visit was to assess the facilities and to get an overall impression of the status of the delivery of services, including challenges at the Wi-Fi Sites at 4 Dorp Street and Groote Schuur Hospital. This report discusses the Committee's findings to date that stemmed from the site visit.

3. Overview

Director-General, Dr H Malila and his team from the Department of the Premier (DoTP), (see attached list of officials in attendance) welcomed the Committee at 4 Dorp Street at the Network, Infrastructure and Operations Centre (NIOC) and proceeded to brief the Committee on the status of the NIOC, Broadband and Public Wi-Fi. During the oversight visit, the Premier, Mr A Winde, accompanied the Committee on a walk-about at the NIOC. The officials informed the Committee on the manner in which information is collected and monitored, for all Western Cape Government (WCG) Wi-Fi sites. The Committee experienced first-hand how the systems works from a health, education and environmental perspective and the capabilities that have been created for citizens through public Wi-Fi access. These systems were built over eight years to improve the lives of the Western Cape citizens.

Following the briefing, Dr H Malila and team travelled with the Committee to the Groote Schuur Hospital to view their radiology information system that manages the medical imagery and associated data that provides diagnosis and/or treat diseases of patients.

4.1. Findings emanating from the visit at the CE-I OFFICE

The State Information Technology Agency (SITA), together with its partner Liquid Intelligent Technologies (LIT), is rolling out a 10-year broadband programme on behalf of the WCG. The scope of the programme includes WCG corporate sites, schools, healthcare institutions, libraries, Cape Access Centres, as well as satellite administrative offices and depots of the WCG. The telecommunications network is designed and built to carry data, voice and video communications and is capable of providing public Internet access through Wi-Fi hotspots on the same infrastructure. The network infrastructure provides access to government clients as well as businesses to better serve the citizens of the Western Cape.

The Department set up 76 Cape Access Centres and the expanded Public Wi-Fi project (through the DotP) intends to finalise installing Wi-Fi hotspots at over 1 600 WCG buildings by the end of October 2022. The Wi-Fi hotspots can only be installed at sites that has a 100 megabits per second (Mbps) broadband connection. 1 378 sites has been installed to date (50 WCG sites are pending the upgrade of broadband connectivity from 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps).

The Public Wi-Fi is active in all 25 municipalities, and in 317 of 375 wards with WCG buildings. Citizens have the ability to dial up into a network.

The challenges reported by the Department of the Premier are that the public Wi-Fi service is dependent on the rollout of the broadband (upgrades), and therefore is susceptible to the same risks; approximately 200 WCG sites are either located in urban areas that are well serviced by other public Wi-Fi networks or in affluent areas that do not meet the objectives of the Public Wi-Fi project. Some site owners do not want the Public Wi-Fi service to be installed due to perceived risks. The country's social ills affect the situation on the ground at the Public Wi-Fi hotspots.

It was reported that there has been a large uptake of the service since the installation of Public Wi-Fi, particularly in under-served areas; positive feedback about citizens getting jobs and

skills through the Public Wi-Fi and some site owners have identified the Public Wi-Fi as the root cause of improved safety.

The Department reported that the primary value of broadband improved service to citizens, access to remote working, service continuity and information security. The secondary value

was that the WCG was one of the first entities nationally to seamlessly switch to the MS Teams platform at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic; the Department reduced investments in ICT infrastructure equipment, enabling innovation, enabled other broadband network providers to improve connectivity to businesses and citizens by utilising LIT'S expanded infrastructure and SITA was able to add national and local government sites.

The Public Wi-Fi project map was presented to the Committee (additional information on this is available on www.westerncape.gov.za/wifi); as well as an overview of the usage and the top applications (i.e. YouTube, Google, Facebook, etc.) used by citizens.

The NIOC is responsible for the global management of IT services relating to the independent monitoring of the WCG Network, Broadband Points of Presence (POP's), Network infrastructure and Computer servers across the buildings of the WCG with a focus on hospitals, clinics, district offices and all other sites connected to the corporate network. In addition, the monitoring of key systems, the monitoring of Internet connectivity, special investigations where IT services are problematic, actions and interventions to restore IT services and both reactive and proactive approaches with a focus on security are also included.

5. Acknowledgement

The delegation thanked the officials of the Department of the Premier, including the officials of Groote Schuur Hospital, for their willingness to share valuable information with the Standing Committee.

6. Conclusion

The Delegation successfully concluded its visit.

Report to be considered. (Committee to decide when adopting)