

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2015

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Report of the Standing Committee on Human Settlements on its oversight visit to the Wolwedans Housing Project, Grootbrakrivier (Mosselbay), dated 5 May 2015, reports as follows:**

Delegation

The delegation consisted of the following members:

Maseko, LM (DA) (Chairperson and leader of the delegation)

Hinana, NE (DA)

Magaxa, KE (ANC)

Paulsen, NM (EFF)

Schäfer, BA (DA)

Alternate member

Dijana, TM (ANC)

1. Introduction

On 14 April 2015, the Standing Committee on Human Settlements was requested to investigate a petition by Mr John Jacobs on the Wolwedans Housing Project and to look into the recommendations stemming from the Royal Haskoning Structural Engineers report.

The petition by Mr Jacobs listed complaints raised by the community on the poor quality workmanship, structural defects, deflecting foundations and the formulation of cracks in the houses.

The Royal Haskoning Structural Engineers' report, dated 19 February 2014, corroborated most of the issues listed in the petition. The report listed the defects and provided recommendations for remedial action in terms of cracks, monitoring of piling and foundations for possible deflection.

The Department of Human Settlements was tasked in a meeting dated 1 October 2014 to address and resolve the outstanding issues raised in the petition by Mr Jacobs and the faults listed in the Royal Haskoning report. The Committee resolved to conduct an oversight visit to Grootbrakrivier to observe the status of the Wolwedans Housing Project.

This Committee report discusses the Committee's findings to date. It also includes the findings and recommendations stemming from the oversight visit undertaken by the Committee on 5 May 2015.

2. Overview of the visit

The visit commenced with a meeting at 09:00 in the Old Council Chambers at the Grootbrakrivier Municipal Office. Representatives of the Department of Human Settlements, the Mayor, municipal officials, structural engineers from Aurecon (Consulting engineers for the Wolwedans Housing Project) and members of the public were in attendance.

The Department briefed the Committee on the status of the Wolwedans Housing Project. In addition hereto, Mr Thiart from Aurecon briefed the Committee on the design, defects and remedial work that was implemented on the housing project.

After the meeting the Department, municipal officials, Aurecon and members of the public accompanied the Committee on a walk-about of the rehabilitated housing project.

3. Background on the Wolwedans Housing Project

The Mosselbay Municipality embarked on a programme to upgrade the living conditions of people living in informal settlements in the Grootbrakrivier area. Acquiring suitable land for relocation and the upgrading of informal settlements proved challenging. To ensure optimal land usage, all informal settlements in the area were combined and integrated with the formal Wolwedans and the adjacent Green Haven areas. Through a combination of incremental *in situ* upgrading and relocation of households, approximately 675 housing opportunities were created.

Construction on the slopes in Wolwedans was deemed to be challenging. Skilled engineering and design solutions were required to construct suspended reinforced concrete slabs on end bearing piles to prevent excessive settlement. During the time of construction in Wolwedans, extreme dry spells were experienced and piling was performed in overly dry soil. Extreme seasonal climate conditions which veered from very dry spells to excessive rain, resulted in water retention which adversely affected the foundations of the structures. The variation in heat levels, water retention and the difference in the material fibre utilised for construction had an adverse effect on some of the structures foundations. This resulted in cracks in the

walls and foundation slabs. During this time no provision was made for stormwater management systems and/or stabilising interventions due to budgetary constraints.

The petition by Mr Jacobs summarised the above mentioned complaints. This was escalated to the Standing Committee on Human Settlements for further investigation. Funding to the value of R6 million was provided to the Mosselbay Municipality for housing rectification projects. In addition hereto, the Department approved an additional amount of R9 million for storm water management and retaining walls to ensure that the structures' foundations were not damaged due to severe water run-offs.

4. Findings and observations

During the walk-about of the Wolwedans Rehabilitated Housing Project the Committee observed the following:

4.1 Warping foundations

Committee members were invited into the houses of community members to observe the cracks in their structures. They pointed out cracks in the foundation slab as well as warping slabs under the structures.

Aurecon in their report dated 22 April 2015, indicated that the warping slabs did not compromise the structural integrity of the structures. DMS Consulting Structural Engineers in their report on the Wolwedans Housing Project dated 21 April 2015 corroborated the statement. They indicated that the warping was caused by the lack of temporary support props during the curing of the slab.

4.2 Cracks in the walls

The majority of the structures in the Wolwedans Housing Project had diagonal cracks spreading from windows, doors and air vents. These cracks were reported to be superficial cement cracks and could be fixed with a filler when routine maintenance was done.

Mr Thiart of Aurecon indicated that the cracks were caused by temperature variations that caused the material used to either expand or contract. He indicated the cracks were superficial and would not affect the structural integrity of the structure.

4.3 Horizontal cracks in the “V” joints

Numerous houses throughout the walk-about had horizontal “V” joint cracks where the structural walls connected.

Aurecon reported that these cracks only affected the cement and did not extend to the structural wall. They attributed the occurrence of the cracks to the expansion and contraction of the cement when subjected to temperature variations. Aurecon indicated that the aforementioned cracks would not affect the stability of the structures and could be fixed with a filler during routine maintenance.

4.4 Stabilisation of street embankments

Throughout the walk-about the Committee was able to observe the construction of retaining walls and sidewalks. The Department informed the Committee that an amount of R9 million was allocated to the Mosselbay Municipality for stormwater management systems and retaining walls to stabilise the slopes in Wolwedans and to deflect water away from properties.

4.5 Leaking geysers

The Wolwedans community members informed the Committee members that they were experiencing problems with their geysers. They indicated that the geysers were leaking water and requested that the Committee assist them in having the matter remedied.

4.6 Structural defects

The petition by Mr John Jacobs listed two houses which were deemed to be structurally defective. In addition hereto house numbers 4064 and 4093 were identified as structurally defective. Cracks had formulated in the block slab (foundation) and the walls of the structures. The cracks spread throughout the main living areas and were visible in both the inside and outer walls. The defects to the two houses were never reported nor were they included on Mr Jacobs's petition.

Aurecon informed the Committee that a structure would only be deemed defective if the foundations deflected. They informed the Committee that any deflections which had been reported in the Wolwedans structures were within the design parameters and posed no threat to the stability of the structures.

The Royal Haskoning Report indicated that the structural stability of the structures in Wolwedans should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that foundations have no further deflection.

4.7 Budgetary implications

In the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) 2015/2018 and the 2014 Adjusted Estimates of Provincial Expenditure Speech, Minister Meyer indicated that an amount of R6 million was granted to the Department of Human Settlements, specifically for housing rectification projects in Mosselbay.

In addition to the aforementioned, the Department indicated in a report dated 29 April 2015, that an additional amount of R9 million had been approved to assist the Mosselbay Municipality with drainage challenges experienced in Wolwedans, Grootbrakrivier.

In March 2015, a partial amount of R4.5 million, derived from the R9 million mentioned above was given to the Municipality for the construction of Phase 1 of the storm-water channels, retaining walls and sidewalks. The remaining R5 793 915 million was handed over to the Municipality in this (2015/2016) financial year for the finalisation of the project. The Department indicated that 70% of the work has already been completed and that Phase 1 of the project should be finalised by 30 June 2015.

5. Recommendations/Actions

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Department:

- 5.1 Ensures that Mr Jacobs is updated on all repair work done on the houses in Wolwedans.
- 5.2 Repairs the defects stipulated in the petition including those of houses number 4064 and 4093 by 30 September 2015.
- 5.3 Determines the validity of the warranty on geysers and provide the necessary assistance with having the faulty geysers replace or repaired.
- 5.4 Assists the municipality in strengthening consumer education workshops, to create awareness in terms of maintenance and to educate the Wolwedans community on how to identify and report structural defects.

2. The Standing Committee on Human Settlements, having undertaken an oversight visit to the Moorreesberg and Malmesbury Housing Projects on Tuesday, 26 May 2015, reports as follows:

Delegation

The delegation consisted of the following members:

Maseko, LM (DA) (Chairperson and leader of the delegation)
 Hinana, NE (DA)
 Magaxa, KE (ANC)
 Schäfer, BA (DA)

1. Introduction

During the NCOP oversight visit week in September 2014, the delegation was informed of poor quality workmanship and structural defects contained in the Integrated Rural Development Plan (IRDP) houses in Rosenhof, Moorreesberg. Stemming from the abovementioned complaints the Committee decided to investigate the allegations and embarked on an oversight visit to Moorreesberg to observe the status of the Rosenhof IRDP Housing Project.

In addition to the aforementioned, the Committee conducted an oversight visit to Malmesbury observe the status of the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) Phola-park housing project, the West Bank Community Residential Upgrade Programme (CRU) and the Abbotsdale Integrated Rural Development Plan (IRDP).

This report discusses the findings and recommendations stemming from the oversight visit undertaken by the Standing Committee on Human Settlements.

2. Overview of the visit

The visit commenced with a meeting at 09:00 in the Swartland Municipal office boardroom. Representatives of the Department of Human Settlements, the Mayor and Municipal officials were in attendance.

During the meeting the Department briefed the Committee on the status of the housing projects in Moorreesberg and Malmesbury.

After the meeting the Department, Municipal officials and members of the public accompanied the Committee on a walk-about of the four housing projects.

3. Rosenhof IRDP Housing Project in Moorreesberg

The Rosenhof Housing Project was approved in December 2001, constructed in March 2002 and completed in June 2003. The development made provision for 813, 27m² low income residential units.

During the walk-about of the Rosenhof Housing Project, the Committee accessed several houses to observe the condition of the buildings. Several of the residents pointed out that the structure's walls become water-logged during rainy periods and that the roofs were leaking. The residents indicated that no form of ventilation was implemented during construction and that no provision was made for the plastering of internal and external walls.

The Municipality indicated that no major structural defects had been reported. They informed the Committee that the structures were sound and that the projects specifications did not provide for ceilings and plastering of walls. They indicated that the roofs were not fitted with asbestos but with cement fibre sheets and that the houses were built according to the bid specifications at the time. No provision was made for ceiling boards and plastering due to insufficient funding.

The Municipality had made provisions in its budget for maintenance and the rebuild of defective houses. The Municipality indicated that the project contractor still continues to conduct rectifications on houses irrespective of whether the guarantee period had expired. The Committee was informed that residents have been residing in the houses for a period of approximately 10 years and that routine maintenance was not being done on the houses. They indicated that due to the lack of maintenance, the condition of some of the houses had deteriorated.

4. (UISP) Phola-Park, Ilinge Lethu Housing Project in Malmesbury

Phase one of the Phola-park Housing Project initially consisted of 245 sites. On 21 September 2007 an amount of R570 000 was granted to the Swartland Municipality for the implementation of basic services. The total cost for Phase one of the Phola-park Housing Project amounted to R27 737 483. Planning approval for a total of 621 sites to the value of R 2 346 555 was granted by the Department of Human Settlements on 3 February 2015.

During the walk-about the Committee was able to observe Phase two and three of the Phola-park Housing Project. Houses were being built *in situ* of the people residing in the area. The Committee was informed that some residents were relocated but that once the project was finalised they would be returned to the area. In addition hereto the Committee was informed that only one family per plot was allowed.

The Ilinge Lethu Thusong Centre is situated close to the Phola-park housing project providing easy access for residents and children. The roads in Phola-park are not tarred and storm water drainage systems have yet to be installed. Concrete structures which contained precast toilets were visible as well as basins with running water.

In addition hereto the members were informed that New Africa the building contractor for the Phola-park Housing Project, was not from the area. The Contractor was selected by the people of Phola-park to construct the houses in the area. The Committee was informed that local labourers were employed to build houses.

During the walk-about the members were able to observe a vacant site in Ilinge Lethu Phola-park which was still being prepared for basic services. The 600 serviced sites will predominantly be allocated to african backyard dwellers from Ilinge Lethu. Phase two of the 600 sites will be allocated to predominantly coloured backyard dwellers and the remaining sites will be allocated to the elderly, child headed households, farmworkers and the disabled as specified in the housing demand database. The Municipality indicated that the housing applicants are younger than 40 years of age. American Society for Landscaping Architects (ASLA) was identified as the building contractor for the housing project.

5. West Bank Community Residential Upgrade Programme

The Department of Human Settlements granted approval for the upgrading of 152 houses in Westbank, which were constructed in 1928. The cost pertaining to the upgrade of the 152 units amounted to R23 239 888. The CRU project commenced in December 2012 and was finalised in June 2013. The structures consisted of two rooms with a surface area of 24-27m² per unit.

The Committee was able to observe the rectification project of the semi-detached houses and the free-standing houses which have been upgraded. The houses were all fixed and painted according to specification.

6. Abbotsdale IRDP Housing Project

The 392 unit IRDP Housing Project in Abbotsdale commenced on 20 December 2011 adjacent to the N7 national route. A total of 543 service sites were approved at a total cost of R15 847 998. Top Structures were approved at a budget of R 30 800 321 and formed part of the Municipal's housing delivery programme. Final approval was granted in March 2013 for the total amount of R46 648 319.

During the walk-about the Committee was able to observe semi-detached units, free-standing single units and semi-detached double story units. The Committee was granted access into a disabled-friendly house that was constructed and equipped for a person in a wheelchair. Provision was made for a ramp to access the house from the outside. The toilet and bathroom was constructed to accommodate a wheelchair. The kitchen counters were installed low enough for a person in a wheelchair to access.

Further hereto the Committee was allowed to view a double story unit which was owned by Ms Johanna Pieterse. The Municipality in conjunction with private partnerships had provided Ms Pieterse with furniture for the unit. The unit consists of two bedrooms situated on the top floor, a kitchen, bathroom and lounge. The wooden

rails leading to the upstairs bedrooms were detachable to accommodate the transfer of furniture. In addition hereto the unit was equipped with prepaid electricity.

7. Recommendations/Actions

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Department assist the Swartland Municipality in strengthening consumer education workshops, to create awareness in terms of maintenance and to educate the Rosenhof, Moorreesberg community on how to identify and report structural defects.

8. Conclusion

The Chairperson thanked the Executive Mayor, Mr Van Essen, the municipal officials and the Department for the excellent work rendered in the Swartland region.

Further hereto, the Chairperson thanked the Swartland Municipality and the departmental officials for accompanying the Committee on the walk-about and for answering the Committee's questions.