

# PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

## ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

FRIDAY, 9 APRIL 2021

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### 1. REPORT ON THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION'S VISIT WEEK CONDUCTED IN THE EDEN AND CENTRAL KAROO DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE 28 SEPTEMBER 2020 to 2 OCTOBER 2020.

##### 1. PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WEEK

The Western Cape Provincial Parliament's Standing Committee on Education (herein after the Committee) embarked on a visit week from 28 September to 2 October 2020.

The visit week, like all, is the key mechanism established by the Western Cape Provincial Parliament (WCPP) to achieve its constitutional oversight mandate in the province. It is intended to ensure that Members of the Provincial Parliament, through its standing committees, are continually kept abreast of developments and social issues in the province. It also affords the opportunity to undertake oversight visits and interact with communities and institutions in order to assess the needs and challenges they experience.

The purpose of the visit week was based on the COVID-19 pandemic the country is currently dealing with. Taking this into account, schools across the province have dealt with and have implemented measures to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. More important measures, such as personal protective equipment (herein after the PPE) and safety guidelines, have been created to assist and protect learners while their return to school is being phased in.

Given the statement above, the Standing Committee deemed it necessary to undertake an oversight visit week to the Eden and the Central Karoo District. The report contains key aspects pertaining to the oversight visits of the Standing Committee. The report makes recommendations and requests information in order to understand the dynamics and the situation of the area better during this period.

The report also contains the Committee's recommendations to the Minister of Education on the impact of COVID-19 and the social issues affecting the areas visited.

## **2. The Committee**

The Standing Committee on Education's visit week included the following Members:

Allen, R I (DA)  
 Bans, A P (ANC)  
 Botha, L J (DA) (Chairperson and leader of the delegation)  
 Bosman, G (DA)  
 Brinkhuis, G (Al Jama-ah)  
 Christians, F C (ACDP)  
 Kama, M (ANC)  
 Mackenzie, R D (DA)  
 Makamba-Botya, N (EFF)  
 Marias, P J (FFP)  
 Mitchell, D G (DA)  
 Sayed, M K (ANC)

## **3. Overview**

The main objective of the visits was to assess the schools, check the PPE and to get an overall status of these selected schools.

## **4. Visit to the Hoërskool Murraysburg in Murraysburg on Tuesday, 29 September 2020**

Mr RH Andrews, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

### **4.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school**

- 4.1.1. The school is located opposite the Murraysburg Hospital in a suburban neighbourhood. The staff complement is approximately 21 and there are approximately 476 learners. After the school reopened, only 466 learners returned. Currently, four learners are.
- 4.1.2. There is a hostel at the school that accommodates about 45 learners, but currently only 24 learners are housed.
- 4.1.3. There is a conference room that can accommodate about 45 individuals. The school has sufficient water treatment facilities and parking.
- 4.1.4. Political interference in this area is mild although the crime statistics are very high, primarily because of house breaks, domestic violence, vandalism, substance abuse and theft. The school has an alarm system that tracks the response. The school is surrounded by a palisade fence that is 1,8 m high. There is no school hall.
- 4.1.5. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff.
- 4.1.6. Everyone entering the school grounds must practice social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart).
- 4.1.7. By using an infrared thermometer, the body temperature of all staff members and learners who enter the school must be taken.
- 4.1.8. Personal protective equipment (PPE) containing masks, hand sanitisers and bleach has been obtained by the school. Signs and posters stating "No mask, No entry" were

- shown at the school entrance. The school is not aware of the amount of PPE it would need to obtain. Two face masks were issued to each learner as PPE from the school.
- 4.1.9. For certain learners or employees who have a high temperature or who do not feel well, the school has converted a classroom into an isolation location. This is in the event they test positive for COVID-19.
  - 4.1.10. Ms Schafer, Minister of Education, last visited the school two years ago, according to Mr Andrews, the principal.
  - 4.1.11. The school has five volunteers from the EPWP supported by the District Municipality to assist with feeding learners during the lockdown. Three meals a day are provided to learners. The budget allocated for gas to be used for cooking meals has not increased and it has remained the same for the past four years.
  - 4.1.12. The school does not have a sports field and utilises a community sports field, which in turn has now being used by the Municipality.
  - 4.1.13. In order to allow for privacy when showering, the girls' and boys' showers need to be upgraded as there is currently no privacy. It is important to repair the windows of the hostels as some are broken and cannot be closed.
  - 4.1.14. The school's Wi-Fi connection is still unreliable.
  - 4.1.15. There is no water or hand sanitiser in the bathrooms.

#### **4.2. Concerns raised at the Hoërskool Murraysburg**

- 4.2.1. The literacy level of learners entering primary school is of a Grade 4 learner capacity.
- 4.2.2. The school's quintile status is quintile 3, which needs to be changed to a no-fee school to serve the poor community of Murraysburg.
- 4.2.3. Many windows had been broken at the school and the windows have been replaced. In July and August 2019, the contractor (Edge to Edge) told the WCED that they would not replace the third round of windows as the contractors had already utilised its own budget for the second round of broken windows.
- 4.2.4. The Murraysburg population census shows that there are 500 individuals in the area, but that is not a true reflection of the number of individuals in the area. This inaccuracy affects the school and the number of learners that the school and the hostel can be accommodated.

#### **5. Visit to the Murraysburg Primary School in Murraysburg on Tuesday, 29 September 2020**

Mr GW Williams, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

##### **5.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school**

- 5.1.1. This school is situated in a residential area. The school has adequate ablution facilities.
- 5.1.2. The staff compliment is approximately 36 and there are 1 294 learners.
- 5.1.3. The school has a staff room that can host approximately 30 and a school hall that can host 100 people. There are CCTV cameras that are monitored by the school's secretary. The alarm system is currently faulty with the result that there is no security at the school. The school is surrounded by perimeter fencing that is 1,8 m high. All the windows are fitted with burglar bars and the external doors are fitted with steel gates.
- 5.1.4. The school has a hostel that accommodates 158 learners and is 100 m down the road from the school. Not all the learners have returned after the lockdown period.

Farmers of the area are apprehensive about sending farmworker learners regularly to school because they fear they may contract the virus. Approximately 9 to 10 learners per grade are absent daily.

- 5.1.5. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff and learners.
- 5.1.6. Everyone entering the school grounds must practice social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart).
- 5.1.7. By using an infrared thermometer, the body temperature of all staff members and learners who enter the school must be taken.
- 5.1.8. Personal protective equipment (PPE) containing masks, hand sanitisers and bleach has been obtained by the school. Signs and posters stating “No mask, No entry” were shown at the school entrance.
- 5.1.9. For certain learners or employees who have a high temperature or who do not feel well the school has converted a classroom into an isolation location. This is in the event they test positive for COVID-19.
- 5.1.10. The school is neat and has a number of maintaining issues, including a visible leaking water tap at the ablution area. It has been reported to the WCED, but it has received no feedback.
- 5.1.11. The school has a feeding scheme to feed the learners of the school.
- 5.1.12. The school practices the platoon system with the intermediate phase learners with one session from 08:00 to 11:30 and another from 11:30 to 14:40. The foundation phase learners work on a rotation system.
- 5.1.13. The teaching of learners in Xhosa at the school only takes place from Grade R to Grade 3.
- 5.1.14. The school’s Wi-Fi connections are still unreliable.
- 5.1.15. There has been only one pregnancy at the school in the last three years.

## **5.2. Concerns raised at the Murraysburg Primary School**

- 5.2.1. The Committee raised concern about how it was possible for a teacher to teach both English and Afrikaans at the same time to learners. Could this not be split into two subjects?
- 5.2.2. The school raised concern about the learners who are not on par as they are only attending school three days a week and there have been lengthy breaks due to COVID-19.

## **5.3. Recommendations for the Hoërskool Murraysburg and the Murraysburg Primary School**

The Committee RECOMMENDED that:

- 5.3.1. The WCED investigate whether the Municipality of Murraysburg is able to lower the utility bill of the school, such as with an indigent grant.
- 5.3.2. The WCED investigate whether the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport can assist the Hoërskool Murraysburg with its sport field and to have Mass Participation, Opportunity, and Access, Development and Growth (herein after the MOD centre) at the school. Also to investigate what resources could be made available through the MOD centres.
- 5.3.3. The WCED investigate the possibility to assisting with a bus which could be utilised by both the high and primary schools of Murraysburg. Also investigating the

- transport from farms to schools, as the schools indicated the reluctance of farmers to bring learners to school during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5.3.4. Reevaluate the quintile status of the school given the fact the school is a quintile 3 in a quintile 1 community.
  - 5.3.5. Consider the state of the hostel showers and provide privacy for the showers, as well as investigating the possibility of upgrading the infrastructure of the school. The school to provide the correspondence on this matter to WCED and what the response was for this upgrades.
  - 5.3.6. The WCED investigate the water leakage at the school and whether this maintenance could be done.
  - 5.3.7. The Department of the Premier and the WCED provide a report on the status of e-learning at the both the high and primary schools of Murraysburg. Maintenance was done a week prior to the Standing Committee on Education's visit and to date nothing had been done.
  - 5.3.8. The WCED explore the possibility of having a school of skills in the area, as the high school has an increase in the number of dropouts.
  - 5.3.9. The principals of both schools make contact with the business community of areas to assist where there are needs.
  - 5.3.10. The WCED investigate whether Xhosa can be taught in all subjects from Grade 4 to Grade 7 at the primary school since Xhosa is being taught at the high school.
  - 5.3.11. The Standing Committee engage or arrange workshops with the Economic Cluster about how to generate the upgrading the town within the context of skills development.
  - 5.3.12. The WCED provide a specific plan of support for schools that are far from economic activities, which should include the supply chain management of goods and service and the provision of a list of suppliers and how this will be put into action in those communities. When this plan has been received, that the Committee will be able to interrogate the plan.
  - 5.3.13. The WCED and the DBE renegotiate the norms and standards, taking into account that the schools are located far from economic activities and require larger budgets based on the distance schools need to drive in order to obtain general equipment.
  - 5.3.14. During the visit the Committee found that the Hoërskool Murraysburg was a quintile 3 school while the primary school was a quintile 1 school. The question was asked why this was the case. What is the reason for the difference? Has a request for this quintile status of the high school been received and what was the feedback?

**5.4. Information requested for the Hoërskool Murraysburg and the Murraysburg Primary School**

The Committee REQUESTED that the WCED:

- 5.4.1. Provide a report on the Edge to Edge contractor who was assigned to the Hoërskool Murraysburg and the work that was done by the contractor.
- 5.4.2. Provide a report on what type and the number of interns who were received for the district of the Karoo.
- 5.4.3. Obtain the Financial and Fiscal Commission's report that indicates the poverty of this community in the Western Cape.

**6. Visit to the Mandlenkosi Secondary School in Beaufort West on Wednesday, 30 September 2020**

Mr MC Manqunqa, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

## **6.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school**

- 6.1.1. This school is fully enclosed and there are only two entrances to the school. The school is fitted with an alarm system but it is dysfunctional due to vandalism. The school has adequate ablution facilities.
- 6.1.2. The staff compliment is approximate 14 and there are 485 learners. It has a conference room that can host approximately 20 people.
- 6.1.3. This school is situated in a very volatile area where the crime rate is very high due to substance abuse, domestic violence, housebreaking, theft, vandalism and high political interference.
- 6.1.4. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff and learners.
- 6.1.5. Everyone entering the school grounds must practice social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart).
- 6.1.6. Using an infrared thermometer, the body temperature of all staff members and learners who enter the school must be taken.
- 6.1.7. Personal protective equipment (PPE) containing masks, hand sanitisers and bleach has been obtained by the school. Signs and posters stating “No mask, No entry” were shown at the school entrance.
- 6.1.8. For certain learners or employees who have a high temperature or who do not feel well the school has converted a classroom into an isolation location. This is in the event they test positive for COVID-19.
- 6.1.9. The school utilises the church as the school has insufficient classrooms to accommodate all the learners.
- 6.1.10. The school had a high rate of COVID-19 infections. About 355 tests were done on learners (registered on NHLS dashboard) from 14 to 17 September 2020 and of those tests 273 were negative, 50 were positive and 32 were inconclusive. 26 Staff members (including teachers, the secretary, general workers and teacher assistants) were tested and of those tests 15 were negative, 1 was not tested, 7 were positive and 3 were inconclusive. The provincial Department of Health has started with contact tracing. The school has since been decontaminated and all the teachers and learners who tested negative returned to school. The Grade 12 trial examination has been postponed for three days due to this. Furthermore, the feeding scheme could not take place on 30 September 2020 due to the kitchen staff who tested positive.
- 6.1.11. The school is very well maintained.
- 6.1.12. While conducting the walkabout of the school premises the boys’ ablution area reeked of marijuana.
- 6.1.13. The number of learners who take Mathematics and Physical Science is not very high at the school.
- 6.1.14. The school has local assistance to feed learners who attend Saturday classes for extra assistance.
- 6.1.15. The school has limited Wi-Fi available but awaits the installation of fibre for the area.
- 6.1.16. The school’s pass rate in the past three years was: 88% in 2017; 91,2% in 2018 and 79,3% in 2019.
- 6.1.17. To date, the school has had 120 learners who have not returned to school.

## **7. Visit to the Hoërskool Sentraal in Beaufort West on Wednesday, 30 September 2020**

Mr R Gerhardt, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

## **7.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout of the school**

- 7.1.1. The school is situated in a residential area about 1 km out of the town. The school only has four entrances and is surrounded by a 1,8 m-high steel fence. There are adequate ablution facilities. It has a hall that can accommodate approximately 300 people. It has a rugby field and three tennis courts at the back of the school.
- 7.1.2. The crime statistics in this area are very low and it is mostly housebreakings and theft that occur.
- 7.1.3. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all the security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff and learners.
- 7.1.4. Everyone entering the school grounds must practice social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart).
- 7.1.5. By using an infrared thermometer, the body temperatures of all staff members and learners who enter the school must be taken.
- 7.1.6. Personal protective equipment (PPE) containing masks, hand sanitisers and bleach has been obtained by the school. Signs and posters stating “No mask, No entry” were shown at the school entrance.
- 7.1.7. The school has transformed a classroom into an isolation area for those learners or staff who have a high temperature or who do not feel well in order to isolate those individuals in the event that they test positive for Covid-19.
- 7.1.8. The school does accommodate learners from the poorer community. On average only 70% of the learners pay school fees. The school gets about R79 000 from the WCED and the school therefore has to raise funds.
- 7.1.9. There has nine staff members who are being paid by the WCED and the rest of the 27 staff members are paid from the school’s budget. Therefore during the COVID-29 lockdown, the staff was asked to take a 30% decrease in their salary for those months while we were under lockdown.

## **8. Visit to the Primêre Skool AH Barnard in Beaufort West on Wednesday, 30 September 2020**

Mr A van Staden, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

### **8.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school**

- 8.1.1. This school is situated in a residential area next to the Bastiaans Secondary School. This school has four entrances but only two entrances are in use. It is surrounded with a 1,8 m-high wire fence. The school is fitted with an alarm system that is monitored by Beaufort alarms and CCTV cameras that are monitored by the principal.
- 8.1.2. The school has a staff complement of approximately 35 and has 1 100 learners. Two security guards render a security service at night and during the day community workers assist with access control and they also assist with PPE at the entrance gates.
- 8.1.3. The school has a conference room that can host approximately 20 people and a hall that can accommodate approximately 200 people.
- 8.1.4. The crime statistics are very high in this area, such as domestic violence, substance abuse, house breaks, theft and gang violence. Political interferences are moderate.
- 8.1.5. The school has adequate ablution facilities parking.
- 8.1.6. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff and learners.

- 8.1.7. Everyone entering the school grounds must practice social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart).
- 8.1.8. By using an infrared thermometer the body temperatures of all staff members and learners who enter the school must be taken.
- 8.1.9. Personal protective equipment (PPE) containing masks, hand sanitisers and bleach has been obtained by the school. Signs and posters stating “No mask, No entry” were shown at the school entrance.
- 8.1.10. For certain learners or employees who have a high temperature or who do not feel well the school has converted a classroom into an isolation location in the event that they test positive for COVID-19.

## **8.2. Concerns raised by the School**

- 8.2.1. The school raised the concern that it required tougher security fencing for the school. This would not allow individuals to cut the fence to gain access to the school’s property.
- 8.2.1. The school indicated that the high municipal bills have been increasing monthly. The payment of these bills has been difficult for the school and has led to the school’s account being in arrears.

## **8.3. Recommendations for the Mandlenkosi Secondary School, the Hoërskool Sentraal and the Primêre Skool AH Barnard**

The Committee RECOMMENDED that:

- 8.3.1. The WCED investigate the possibility of replacing the wire fencing with a stronger fence around the AH Barnard Primary School as the school is not secure from criminals.
- 8.3.2. The Beaufort West Municipality investigate the high municipality bills of the AH Barnard Primary School and the surrounding schools as the tariffs for those areas are particularly high.
- 8.3.3. The WCED monitor the needs of Muslim learners at schools in Beaufort West, for example related to prayer and Ramadan.
- 8.3.4. Comparing the conditions at the Hoërskool Sentraal, which is a former Model C school, with that at the Mandlenkosi Secondary School and at the Primêre Skool AH Barnard, which have been serving the learners of mainly unemployed parents and guardians, the inequality in education is tied to the deeper socio-economic inequalities that were very visible. There is an urgent need to ensure that the infrastructure is safe, that there are sufficient classrooms and sport facilities, and that the focus on Mathematics and Science is closely addressed at the Mandlenkosi Secondary School and the Hoërskool Sentraal.

## **8.4. Information requested for the Mandlenkosi Secondary School, the Hoërskool Sentraal and the Primêre Skool AH Barnard**

The Committee REQUESTED that the WCED:

- 8.4.1. Furnish the Committee with the report on school principals and deputy principals reflecting their gender. The report should include all the visited schools of Beaufort West where the top management is male and the WCED must also advise the Committee on processes in place to bridge the gender gap by bringing gender balance in the top positions.



- 8.4.2. Encourage schools that are struggling with water shortages to embark on obtaining water tanks and borehole systems as a contingency plan due to the water crisis in the region.

**9. Visit to the Primêre Skool George Fredericks in Merweville on Thursday, 1 October 2020**

Mr NA Claassen, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

**9.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school**

- 9.1.1. The George Fredericks Primary School is situated in a residential area opposite the VGK Church.
- 9.1.2. The school has four entrances, but only two entrances are in use. The school is surrounded with a 1,6 m-high wire fence. The staff compliment is approximate 11 and there are 225 learners at the school.
- 9.1.3. This precinct has a conference room that can host approximately 20 people and a hall that can accommodate approximately 300 people. The crime statistics in this area is very low and there is no political interferences. There are adequate ablutions facilities.
- 9.1.4. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff.
- 9.1.5. The practice of social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart) must be applied by everyone entering the school grounds.
- 9.1.6. The body temperature of all staff members and learners who require entry to the school must be taken in a non-invasive manner by using an infrared thermometer before the staff members and learners can get access to the school.
- 9.1.7. The school has received personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes masks, hand sanitisers and bleach. The school's entrance displayed signs and posters indicating "No mask, No entry". Learners received two face masks from the school as part of the PPE.
- 9.1.8. The school has transformed a classroom into an isolation area for those learners or staff who have a high temperature or who do not feel well in order to isolate those individuals in the event that they test positive for Covid-19.
- 9.1.9. The school is a multi-grade school from Grade R to Grade 12. There are also combined grades due to lack of teachers at the school.
- 9.1.10. Most parents of learners are seasonal workers and are not educated.
- 9.1.11. The school has no MOD centre at the school or any other available sport activities. The school struggles with funding to take learners to sporting activities outside of Merweville.
- 9.1.12. The Wi-Fi of the school does not work and this makes it difficult for the principal and staff to communicate with other schools in the region.
- 9.1.13. The school has a shortage of teachers as most teachers do not want to teach in Merweville.

**10. Visit to the Primêre Skool Merweville in Merweville on Thursday, 1 October 2020**

Ms G Mans, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

**10.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school**

- 10.1.1. This school is situated in the small town of Merweville on the hill. This precinct has only two entrances and ten classrooms, but only five classrooms are been utilised due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The staff compliment is approximately 6 and there are 73 learners. The school has a conference room that can host approximately 15 people.
- 10.1.2. The school is fitted with an alarm system that is being monitored by the school's secretary. This precinct is surrounded by a 1,2 m-high wire fence. There are two tennis courts. The school has complied fully with the OHS regulations. The crime statistics are very low in this area with no political interference. This school has adequate ablution facilities and vehicles parking outside the school grounds.
- 10.1.3. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff.
- 10.1.4. The practice of social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart) must be applied by everyone entering the school grounds.
- 10.1.5. The body temperature of all staff members and learners who require entry to the school must be taken in a non-invasive manner by using an infrared thermometer before the staff members and learners can get access the school.
- 10.1.6. The school has received personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes masks, hand sanitisers and bleach. The school's entrance displayed signs and posters indicating "No mask, No entry". Learners received two face masks from the school as part of the PPE.
- 10.1.7. The school has transformed a classroom into an isolation area for those learners or staff who have a high temperature or who do not feel well in order to isolate those individuals in the event that they test positive for Covid-19.
- 10.1.8. A number of learners come from violent homes in Cape Town.
- 10.1.9. The school is a fee-paying school and learners pay R100 per month. Because the community is poor, the school has made arrangements with parents to pay only R50 if they can afford it. The school received many donations from various donors.
- 10.1.10 There is no MOD centre at the school, but the school has various sporting activities and extramural activities.

## **10.2. Recommendations for the Primêre Skool George Fredericks and the Primêre Skool Merweville**

The Committee RECOMMENDED that:

- 10.2.1. The WCED investigate the possibility of having a MOD centre at the George Fredericks Primary School.
- 10.2.2. The Department of Premier investigate the poor to no Wi-Fi connection at the George Fredericks Primary School.
- 10.2.3. WCED investigate the possibility of a school bus or learner transport that could assist with the school's transport needs.
- 10.2.4. The schools of Merweville, which once faced closure and exist in an area with extreme social problems where many learners come from really tough family backgrounds, are doing extremely well by working with the local community and installing great hope. The WCED, however, needs to ensure that the shortage of teachers is addressed and that the focus is placed on learners taking Mathematics and Science.

## **11. Visit to the Hillcrest Secondary School ("Sekondêre Skool Hillcrest") in Mossel Bay on Thursday, 30 January 2020**

Mr IG Kroneberg, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

## **11.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school**

- 11.1.1. The Hillcrest Secondary School is situated in the Garden Route and forms part of circuit 2 in the Eden and Central Karoo District.
- 11.1.2. Currently the school has 1 311 learners with three home languages: Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. The school has 36 learners who have migrated from six nationalities. The school has 35 teachers and two SGB staff members. The school has received 500 application for exemption from school fees.
- 11.1.3. The Hillcrest High School has achieved the following matric passes: in 2017: 68,6%; in 2018: 73,5% and in 2019: 84,3%. They received the 14th highest bachelor's pass out of 47 schools. They also received the Premier's Award for more than 10% improvement in the pass rate from 2017 to 2019.
- 11.1.4. The teacher-learner ratio is 1:37 but currently the Grade 8 classrooms' ratios are 1:45, 1:49 and 1:50. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff. The practice of social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart) must be applied by everyone entering the school grounds.
- 11.1.6. The body temperature of all staff members and learners who require entry to the school must be taken in a non-invasive manner by using an infrared thermometer before the staff members and learners can get access to the school.
- 11.1.7. The school has received personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes masks, hand sanitisers and bleach. The school's entrance displayed signs and posters indicating "No mask, No entry". Learners received two face masks from the school as part of the PPE.
- 11.1.8. The school has transformed a classroom into an isolation area for those learners or staff who have a high temperature or who do not feel well in order to isolate those individuals in the event that they test positive for Covid-19.
- 11.1.9. Infrastructure: The school has massive land available at the back and it tried to sell the land to the Dr Julius Consortium, but the WCED turned down the request. Due to the back of the school leading to an open area, learners jump over the fence and hide in the bushes. Learners are often robbed on their way to and from school. This land creates a huge safety risk at school.
- 11.1.10. Maintenance: All old asbestos roof sheets were replaced by WCED in 2017. This year the whole school's exterior walls were painted as well as the interior walls of the hall. The school still plans to paint the interior walls of each classroom. The WCED has installed new fencing along the whole perimeter. Ablution facilities are still needed for the boys.
- 11.1.11. The school has a waiting list of about 80 learners. The problem the school experiences is that many Mossel Bay parents do not register their children on time. Parents want to enrol their children at the beginning of each school year.
- 11.1.12. The Hillcrest High School is a fee-paying school, although it serves learners from very poor communities. The school does not form part of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). The school applied for the NSNP Programme but was denied because of its quintile 4 status.

## **11.2. Recommendations**

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the WCED:

- 11.2.1. Investigate again whether an additional high school could be built in the Alsa area as this will reduce the learner numbers.

- 11.2.2. Determine what, if any, progress has been made with the building of the new high school in the Asla area, which will address the overcrowding and high rate of unplaced learners in Mossel Bay, despite the WCED making this commitment and the municipality making land available.

### **11.3. Information requested**

The Committee REQUESTED that the WCED provide:

- 11.3.1. A report on when the WCED plans to upgrade the Consumer Studies room at the school.
- 11.3.2. Feedback about when the mobile toilets for the boys will be completed.
- 11.3.3. With the high level of gang-related activity at the school, the Committee was pleased that the improvements to the safety infrastructure, including new CCTV cameras and a new fence, have been made. It is however concerning that a proper access gate is not yet in place, that the WCED's Safe School Programme is yet to allocate R30 000 from last year to sustain some of the safety measures and that no feeding scheme is in place.

## **12. Visit to the Primêre Skool Melkhoutfontein in Stilbaai on Friday, 2 October 2020**

Ms RK Flores, Principal of the school, received the Committee.

### **12.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school**

- 12.1.1. Melkhoutfontein is approximate 1 km away from the school. The school is surrounded with wire steel fencing and in front of the school is a 1,8 m-high palisade fence. There are only four entrances to the school grounds. The school is fitted with an alarm system that is monitored by Suidpunt Security. The school is divided into two sections, those are the VKOD and the Anglican Church organisation.
- 12.1.2. The staff compliment is approximate 28 and there are 523 learners. There are 20 classrooms and a conference room that can host approximately 20 people. The school has complied fully with the OHS regulations.
- 12.1.3. The crime statistics in this area are very low and there are no political interferences in the area.
- 12.1.4. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the schools must wear cloth face masks and sanitise their hands after each interaction with staff.
- 12.1.5. The practice of social distancing (being more than 1,5 m apart) must be applied by everyone entering the school grounds.
- 12.1.6. The body temperature of all staff members and learners who require entry to the school must be taken in a non-invasive manner by using an infrared thermometer before the staff members and learners can get access to the school.
- 12.1.7. The school has received personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes masks, hand sanitisers and bleach. The school's entrance displayed signs and posters indicating "No mask, No entry". Learners received two face masks from the school as part of the PPE.
- 12.1.8. The school has transformed a classroom into an isolation area for those learners or staff who have a high temperature or who do not feel well in order to isolate those individuals in the event that they test positive for Covid-19.
- 12.1.9. The school has not received new furniture from the WCED.
- 12.1.10. The school is situated on a slop which has which has uneven terrain.

- 12.1.11. The path which most learners utilise to get to and from school are at times dangerous, as gangs target learners.
- 12.1.12. The school is built on the churches grounds and often it takes a while for any maintenance to be done.
- 12.1.13. During the winter season the entrance gets very muddy and which closes off the entrance to the school.
- 12.1.14. The school has received assistance with from local community of the area.
- 12.1.15. There is no sports field for sporting activities to take place.
- 12.1.16. The school is built on a slope and therefore all classrooms at the entrance have a small terrace of 1 m from the ground, which does not have a fencing, learners could sustain injury if they fall.

## **12.2. Recommendations**

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the WCED:

- 12.2.4. Investigate the possibility of purchasing a new school as the current school is on the church's ground, which leaves the maintenance of the school to the church and the church is not always able to do that.
- 12.2.5. Investigate whether there is ground available for sporting activities.
- 12.2.6. With a brand-new security system in place, a functional food garden, thorough implementation of COVID-19 protocols and overall excellent leadership by the teachers despite tough conditions, the school urgently requires much-needed learner transport, an access road and revamped infrastructure, especially regarding the steps, as the uneven terrain and walls compromise the safety of the learners.
- 12.2.7. Investigate the possibility of new furnishings for the classrooms and the possibility of a school hall.

## **13. Conclusion**

The Committee successfully concluded its oversight visit and took cognisance of the urgency of the challenges experienced at the various schools that were visited. It was evident that the schools needed the Committee's support in their endeavours to succeed against the challenges noted in this report.

## **14. Acknowledgements**

The Committee thanks the principals and the teachers of the different schools that were visited for their willingness to share valuable information with the Standing Committee on Education. A special thank you was extended by the Committee to the support staff for the successful visit week and for the professional service that they provided to the delegation of Members of the Standing Committee. The support staff included Mr Ben Daza, Ms Wasiema Hassen-Moosa, Mr Waseem Matthews and Mr Anwille Barends.

**2. Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning on its oversight visit to Klein Ezeljacht Farm near Genadendal on 12 February 2021, as follows:**

**Delegation**

The delegation consisted of the following members:

America, D (DA)  
Baartman, D M (DA)  
Makamba-Botya, N (EFF)  
Marais, P J (FF Plus)  
Marran, P (ANC)  
Maseko, L M (DA)  
Smith, D (ANC)  
Van Der Westhuizen, A P (DA: Chairperson and leader of the delegation)

**1. Introduction**

Section 114 (2)(b)(i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa mandates provincial legislatures to provide for mechanisms to maintain oversight over the Provincial Executive Authority in the province. The Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning conducted an oversight visit to the Klein Ezeljacht Farm near Genadendal on 12 February 2021 prior to the State of the Province address that took place in the area on 17 February 2021. Members of the Standing Committee on Local Government accompanied the Committee.

The purpose of the visit was to engage with the farmer and the Department of Agriculture to obtain an overview of the farming activities, partnerships, successes and challenges as well as the support provided by the Department of Agriculture and other government departments.

**2. Overview of the visit**

The delegation was welcomed by officials from the Department of Agriculture and by Mr André Cloete, the leaseholder of the farm. Mr Cloete provided the delegation with an overview of his journey as a farmer, his accomplishments, challenges and successes as well as the assistance obtained from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD).

**3. Findings**

3.1 The company, Altius Trading 237 (Pty) Limited, secured leasehold rights to Klein Ezeljacht under the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy Scheme from the DALRRD. This company is owned by Mr Cloete and his sons. Mr Cloete is awaiting confirmation from the DALRRD to purchase the land and in turn obtain a title deed. The two main enterprises on the farm are livestock and fruits.

Mr Cloete acted as a role model to some aspiring farmers in the area. He has successfully improved the irrigation system and started a new crop protection strategy. The farm produced a number of apple varieties that included Rosy Glow

apples and Packham pears for the international market. Other farming activities include Merino sheep, barley and oats. Under Mr Cloete's management, the workforce on the farm has increased from five to 18 thus increasing employment opportunities in the area.

- 3.2 The farm has been part of the Market Access Programme (MAP) that was initiated by Department of Agriculture in 2010. The MAP Programme set out to strengthen the economic sustainability of existing and new previously disadvantaged farmers by addressing a range of challenges across the value chain such as access to markets by farmers.
- 3.3 The drought, restrictive regulations, and load shedding has had a significant impact on farming productivity.

#### **4. Resolutions**

- 4.1 The Committee RESOLVED that it will engage with the Department of Agriculture regarding an update on the request made by Mr Cloete, as a participant in the Department of Agriculture's MAP Programme, to the DALRRD to purchase the farm.
- 4.2 The Committee RECOMMENDED that, in order to assist fruit farmers in the Genadendal area to schedule farming activities such as irrigation outside of load shedding times, the Department of Agriculture engage with Eskom in the Western Cape requesting Eskom to avoid load shedding during critical times for the collective fruit farming industry.

#### **5. Acknowledgements**

The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Department of Agriculture and Mr Cloete for an informative engagement.

### **3. Report of the Standing Committee on Local Government on its oversight visit to Genadendal on Friday 12 February 2021 as follows:**

#### **Delegation**

The delegation consisted of the following Members:

America, D (Chairperson) (DA)  
 Maseko, L M (DA)  
 Van der Westhuizen, A P (DA)  
 Smith, D (ANC)  
 Makamba-Botya, N (EFF)  
 Baartman, D M (DA) (Additional member)  
 Marran, P (ANC) (Additional member)  
 Marais, P J (FF Plus) (Additional member)

## **1. Introduction**

The Standing Committee on Local Government embarked on an oversight visit to Genadendal to inspect the repair work that was done to “Die Groot Brug” in Genadendal. Mr A Franken,

Mayor of the Overberg District Municipality and Mr M van Eeden, Manager Roads Division, briefed the delegation on the repair work that was done to “Die Groot Brug” and accompanied it on a tour of the bridge.

## **2 Overview of the visit**

“Die Groot Brug” is situated on a proclaimed provincial road near the LR Schmidt Moravian Primary School and Emil Weder Secondary School in Genadendal. In November 2020 a child fell of the bridge and fortunately sustained no serious injuries. Infrastructure remains a major challenge for the Municipality and with the assistance of the Provincial Government the Municipality could address some of the needs. The bridge was prioritised for repairs to ensure that no injuries occur to the people of Genadendal due to the state of the bridge.

## **3. Key issues discussed**

It was highlighted by Mr Franken that the Overberg District has the best roads per kilometre in the country in relation to the budget they receive and that could only be achieved through good governance and management. The Overberg District Municipality maintains the provincial roads on behalf of the Provincial Government in terms of a Motion of Understanding.

This repair project entailed the upgrading and erecting of new guard railings, danger plates, painting of the road markings and the paving of the pavement to ensure the safe access to the surrounding schools.

The upgrading of the bridge commenced in January 2021 and was completed on 5 February 2021 with only a few minor tasks that still needs to be completed.

The Roads Unit of the Overberg District Municipality was the contractor and only internal resources were used to complete the project at an estimated cost of R60 000.

## **4. Recommendation**

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Overberg District Municipality and the Theewaterskloof Municipality ensure that additional fencing be erected along the river to ensure the safety of the residents and pedestrians.

## **5. Acknowledgements**

The Standing Committee wishes to commend the Overberg District Municipality and in particular the Mayor, councillors and officials involved with the repair and upgrading of the bridge.



#### 4. Report 10/2021

**Ref: Health Update/'Adjusted' Alert Level 3 lockdown**

**Draft Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19, in performing oversight over the work of the provincial executive authority as it responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, including oversight over any part of the provincial executive authority, any provincial department, any organ of state and any provincial entity involved in activities dealing with the pandemic, on the themes/meetings covered for January 2021, as follows:**

**The Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 consists of the following members:**

Mr R I Allen (DA)  
 Mr D America (DA)  
 Ms D M Baartman (DA)  
 Mr G Bosman (DA)  
 Mr F C Christians (ACDP)  
 Mr C M Dugmore (ANC)  
 Mr B N Herron (GOOD)  
 Ms P Z Lekker (ANC)  
 Mr P J Marais (FFP)  
 Mr D G Mitchell (DA)  
 Ms W F Philander (DA)  
 Mr A P van der Westhuizen (DA)  
 Ms M M Wenger (DA) (Chairperson)  
 Ms R Windvogel (ANC)  
 Mr M Xego (EFF)

**Alternative Members:**

Ms L J Botha (DA)  
 Mr R D MacKenzie (DA)  
 Ms L M Maseko (DA)  
 Ms N D Nkondlo (ANC)  
 Mr M K Sayed (ANC)  
 Mr D Smith (ANC)

**Procedural Staff:**

Ms Z Adams, Procedural Officer  
 Ms L Cloete, Senior Procedural Officer

##### 1. Introduction and Background

The Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 (the Committee) was established by the Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament on 14 April 2020 in accordance with Standing Rule 119(1)(b) of the Standing Rules of Western Cape Provincial Parliament. The Committee was tasked with the responsibility to perform oversight over the work of the provincial executive authority as it responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, including oversight over any part of the provincial executive authority, any provincial department, any organ of state and any provincial entity involved in activities dealing with the pandemic.

The meetings have been held virtually, so as to comply with COVID-19 lockdown regulations issued by National Government, as well as a decision of the Programming Authority, to enforce social distancing rules.

## **2. Election of Chairperson, Adopted Themes and the Rules of Engagement**

On 17 April 2020, Member M Wenger (DA) was elected to serve as the Chairperson of the Committee in accordance with Standing Rules 82(1) and 85. The Committee adopted 12 themes around which it would address the COVID-19 pandemic. The 12 adopted themes were as follows:

1. Health Department Responses and Preparations
2. Policing, Security and Police Brutality
3. Food Security
4. Protection of the Vulnerable
5. Disaster Management and Local Government Oversight
6. Economic Recovery, Support and Livelihoods
7. Transport and Infrastructure
8. Schooling and Education
9. Human Settlements
10. Citizen Surveillance
11. Intergovernmental Relations and Community Cooperation
12. Government Finance and Budgets

**Additionally, the Rules of Engagement during virtual meetings were indicated as follows:**

1. All meetings would be open to members of the public and media via livestreaming;
2. All Members microphones must be muted at the beginning of the meeting to avoid background noise;
3. Members are to flag Points of Order in the Chat Function of Microsoft Teams (the application through which virtual meetings are held);
4. All videos and audio must be switched off to improve the quality of the connection; however, if a Member/Minister/HOD/Official is speaking, they may put on their audio and video;
5. Participants must switch off their microphones once they are finished speaking;
6. In terms of maintenance of order, in accordance with the “Directives for Sittings of the House and Meetings of Committees by Electronic Means”, ATC’d on Friday, 17 April 2020, Section 8 states that “when a Member is considered to be out of order by the presiding officer, the presiding officer may mute the microphone of such a Member and call such a Member to order”; and
7. Section 10 of the Directives ATC’d on 17 April 2020 speaks to the application of Standing Rules. Section 10 states that “in instances where these directives are not clear or do not cover a particular eventuality in respect of sittings of the House or meetings of the committees by means of videoconferencing, the Standing Rules must apply as far as this is reasonably and practically possible and, in instances where they cannot be applied, the ruling by the presiding officer must be final”.

**The themes/meetings covered in January 2021 included:**

- a) Health Department Responses and Preparations
- b) Intergovernmental Relations and Community Cooperation

- A briefing by the Premier and the Director-General of the Department of the Premier on the Adjusted Alert Level 3 Lockdown
- A briefing by the Provincial Minister and Head of the Provincial Department of Health on the situational analysis of the pandemic, focusing on the following: The latest figures and
- expected peak in the Province, oxygen management, hospital capacity, fatality and mortuary management, and vaccine roll-out readiness.

### 3. **THEME: Health Update and ‘Adjusted’ Alert Level 3 Lockdown**

#### 3.1 **Overview and background**

The Committee requested a briefing from the Premier, the Provincial Minister of Health and the Western Cape Department of Health for an update on the COVID-19 pandemic in the Western Cape, on 13 January 2021.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive information on the situational analysis of the pandemic in the Province in the light of the aggressive resurgence of the COVID-19 virus in the Western Cape Province, including information with respect to the latest figures and expected peak in the Province, oxygen management, hospital capacity, fatality and mortuary management, and vaccine roll-out readiness for the Province.

#### 3.2 **Briefing by the Premier and Director-General of the Department of the Premier: Observations and challenges**

- 3.2.1 The Premier of the Western Cape, Mr A Winde, informed the Committee that South Africa was on the verge of hitting the peak during the second wave of the pandemic and that people could not relax their COVID-19 precautions, as hospitals were full and there was immense pressure on the health system overall. At 13 January 2021, the number of new infections, hospital admissions and deaths were higher than it ever was before since the first case was recorded in the country in March 2020.
- 3.2.2 A total of 190 000 new COVID-19 cases were recorded between 1 January and 13 January 2021, and there were approximately 4 600 COVID-19 related deaths. At 13 January 2021, there were approximately 15 000 people with COVID-19 in hospitals, nationally, which placed a considerable strain on health facilities, personnel and equipment. Approximately one third of all COVID-19 patients in hospitals were utilising oxygen.
- 3.2.3 Dr K Cloete, Head of the Provincial Department of Health, briefed the Committee on the efficacy of the Adjusted Regulations announced on 28 December 2020. By reinstating the alcohol ban on 28 December 2020, there was a significant reduction in trauma cases. There was a 47% reduction in trauma cases from the previous week before the alcohol ban was reinstated, and a 58% reduction in cases in the peak if one compares New Year’s Day to Boxing Day. If one compared New Year’s Day in 2020 to New Year’s Day in 2021, there was a 65% reduction in trauma cases for all emergency centres across the country.
- 3.2.4 Dr H Malila, Director-General for the Department of the Premier, informed the Committee that the prohibition on the sale of alcohol has been very effective in reducing trauma cases in the five key hospitals in the Province, and by extension, all health facilities in the Western Cape. There were approximately 77 COVID-19 related matters that were forwarded to the Liquor Licensing Tribunal, which resulted in three licenses being revoked, five dismissals of applications, four matters where

the licensee was issued with stricter conditions, six suspensions of licenses, one cancelled license, 27 fines, and 30 matters were still pending.

- 3.2.5 The Premier indicated that the preferred approach to implementing Regulations or lockdowns would be to take a differentiated approach going forward i.e. implementing different levels of regulations or lockdowns for different areas depending on the severity of the COVID-19 situation in those areas. Major lockdowns had a major impact on the economy, therefore the differentiated approach was preferred going forward. The country could not afford to continue with the blanket implementation of Regulations or lockdowns. Shorter interventions were needed so that less harm was inflicted on the economy.
- 3.2.6 More business support packages were needed during lockdowns, as many businesses were closing their doors because of the lockdown Regulations and were unable to re-open as they could not pay salaries and bonds, or repay loans.
- 3.2.7 Closing beaches during the lockdown had an impact on the oceans economy, from the vendors and fishmongers, to the restaurants and hotels. This is a massive industry where many business owners were impacted in terms of not being able to generate an income during the height of the tourism season, which would have sustained them, financially, for the rest of the year. Therefore, it was critical to push for further Unemployment Insurance Fund and other businesses support programmes.
- 3.2.8 The Premier indicated that extra hospital beds were supplied to health facilities across the Province. These were permanent beds that would be utilised for other purposes post the pandemic.
- 3.2.9 There were certain areas of the Province that showed less steep curves in terms of infections, which indicated that there was a certain amount of immunity emerging in some communities.

### **3.3 Briefing by the Provincial Department of Health: Findings and Observations**

- 3.3.1 Dr Cloete explained that there was a Five-Point COVID-19 Containment Strategy for the Province. The first point consisted of changing community behaviour to prevent infection, the second point focused on surveillance and outbreak response, the third point looked at scaling up the health platform capacity, the fourth point focused on maintaining comprehensive services, and the fifth point was about safeguarding and protecting the well-being of healthcare workers.
- 3.3.2 As at 13 January 2021, there was a decline in the amount of COVID-19 tests that had a positive result. Both private sector and public sector hospitals were full but there was a decrease in the number of COVID-19 patients being admitted on a daily basis. The critical care units in public and private hospitals were under pressure because these facilities were at full capacity.
- 3.3.3 The “reproduction number” measured how many other persons an active COVID-19 positive person has infected. At the acceleration of the first peak in July 2020, every COVID-19 positive case was infecting approximately 1.32 other COVID-19 cases.

In early December 2020, one case was infecting close to 1.6 cases, which meant that every 10 cases was infecting 16 other cases. This was attributed to the second variant of the COVID-19 virus that was more infectious. At 13 January 2021, it seemed as if the Province was stabilising i.e. every one case was infecting one other case. If the reproduction number dropped below one, then the Province would see a decline in cases.

- 3.3.4 At 13 January 2021, there were 3 323 COVID-19 patients in the Province’s acute hospitals (1 889 in public hospitals and 1 434 in private hospitals). COVID-19

hospitalisations seemed to have stabilised, however, psychiatric pressures remained. The Metro hospitals had an average occupancy rate of 93%, the George drainage areas hospitals were at 61% capacity, Paarl drainage area hospitals were at 74% capacity, and the Worcester drainage area hospitals were at 73% capacity.

- 3.3.5 Deaths due to COVID-19 have continued to increase. There was also a delay in reporting of deaths, therefore, the number of deaths was expected to increase as more information was still forthcoming.
- 3.3.6 In terms of the health platform capacity, Dr Cloete stated that the Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities continued to undertake COVID-19 testing and triaging cases. There has also been an active de-escalation of non-COVID-19 PHC services, however, the delivery of medicines to homes has continued. At 13 January 2021, there were a total of 7 693 acute operational public sector beds, 626 intermediate care beds in the Metro (336 at Brackengate, 90 at Lenteguur, and 200 at Mitchell's Plain Hospital of Hope), 64 intermediate care beds at Sonstraal Hospital, and 20 of the potentially additional 136 intermediate care beds have been opened.
- 3.3.7 Temporary tents were commissioned at Khayelitsha, Wesfleur, Mitchell's Plain, Eerste River, Helderberg, Karl Bremmer and Brackengate. These were used for discharges, mainly to ensure a more rapid turnaround time of the operational beds.
- 3.3.8 At 13 January 2021, provincial oxygen consumption was at 69.57% of total capacity. The combined oxygen utilisation in the Western Cape public and private hospital sectors, at the time, was approximately 73 tons daily. This was a slight reduction from the average daily utilisation the previous week. Prior to the pandemic, the average daily oxygen consumption (leading up to March 2020) was 12.2 tons per day. At the peak of the first wave of the pandemic, average oxygen consumption was approximately 27 tons per day. This settled to approximately 17 tons per day post the first peak. At 13 January 2021, the average oxygen consumption was 73 tons per day (48 tons per day in the public sector and 25 tons per day in the private sector).
- 3.3.9 While the public sector hospital consumption of oxygen was at 61% of the Province's production capacity, the additional 31% was used by the private sector. The combined utilisation was above the maximal production capacity of the Afrox Western Cape plant. However, Afrox have put contingency plans in place by bringing additional oxygen into the Province, daily. The utilisation of oxygen would be monitored carefully over the next few weeks.
- 3.3.10 A working group was established to plan for and put measures in place, across the Province, to cope with mass fatalities, should the need arise. The working group developed a strategy for fatality management at provincial and district level, which included mass fatality plans and supporting strategies, communication protocols, and mass burial capabilities, should this be required. The Department of Home Affairs was also supported with the opening of additional offices and the extension of working hours over the festive season so that deaths could be registered more efficiently. In terms of crematoria, facilities were requested to function during the night and over the weekends in order clear the backlogs.
- 3.3.11 In terms of the vaccine strategy, the National Department of Health was driving the procurement process and the Provincial Department of Health was aligned with their efforts. On 7 January 2021, the National Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, announced that that one million doses of the Astra Zeneca vaccine would be acquired from the Serum Institute of India at the end of January 2021, and a further 500 000 doses would be acquired in February 2021. Further negotiations were being pursued with other vaccine suppliers for more stock to be secured via the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative. The Provincial Department of Health's focus was on the readiness to implement the vaccine programme in the Province.

- 3.3.12 The objective of the vaccine programme was to provide equitable and ethical access to COVID-19 vaccines in the Western Cape to reduce morbidity and mortality in vulnerable persons, reduce community transmission through herd immunity, and to protect the health system capability. Phase I of the vaccine programme would focus on the roll out of the vaccine to health care workers in the public and private sectors, care workers, Community Health Workers and health science students. The estimated target for this phase was 100 000 persons. Phase II would focus on essential workers, clients in congregate settings, persons older than 60 years, and persons older than 18 years with known comorbidities. Phase III would focus on all persons older than 18 years. This strategy would be further refined based on expert advice.
- 3.3.13 Dr Cloete warned that the vaccinations did not replace the need for non-pharmaceutical interventions such as mask wearing, social distancing and hand washing, for the foreseeable future. The Department's biggest concern was the non-adherence to protective behaviours. The key consideration was that health care workers continued to face significant strain, and that they needed to be safe-guarded. It was essential to maintain a strong focus on behaviour change to ensure containment of the virus over the next six months, while clarity around the vaccine was still emerging.

#### **4. Acknowledgements**

The Chairperson thanked the Department of the Premier and the Provincial Department of Health for its continued hard work in the sector so far, and especially during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **5. Report 11/2021**

**Ref: Health Update and Provincial Treasury on the vaccine/'Adjusted' Alert Level 3 lockdown**

**Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19, in performing oversight over the work of the provincial executive authority as it responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, including oversight over any part of the provincial executive authority, any provincial department, any organ of state and any provincial entity involved in activities dealing with the pandemic, on the themes/meetings covered for February 2021, as follows:**

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 Mr D M Mitchell (DA)  
 Ms W F Philander (DA)  
 Mr A P van der Westhuizen (DA)  
 Ms M M Wenger (DA) (Chairperson)

Ms R Windvogel (ANC)  
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Mr D Smith (ANC)

**Procedural Staff:**

Ms W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer  
Ms S Jones, Procedural Officer  
Ms B Daza, Senior Procedural Officer  
Mr M Sassman, Manager: Committees

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**2. Election of Chairperson, Adopted Themes and the Rules of Engagement**

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**4. The themes/meetings covered in February 2021 included:**

- 4.1 Health Department Responses and Preparations  
A general update by the provincial Department of Health on the COVID-19 virus development and indicators, as well as vaccine planning, focusing on the following:
  - The receipt of the vaccine in all phases;
  - The numbers and types of vaccines expected for the Province;
  - The roll out planning of the vaccine; and
  - The possibility of a generic vaccine being developed and whether the country would be able to acquire it (stand-over question from previous meeting).
- 4.2 Government Finance and Budgets  
Briefing by the Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities and the Provincial Treasury on funding for the vaccine.

**5. THEMES: Health Update, ‘Adjusted’ Alert Level 3 lockdown and rollout of the vaccine**

**5.1 Overview and background**

The Committee requested a briefing from the provincial Minister of Health and the provincial Department of Health on an update on the COVID-19 pandemic in the Western Cape, on 03 February 2021.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive information on the situational analysis of the pandemic in the Province in the light of the second wave of the COVID-19 virus in the Western Cape Province, including information in respect of the vaccine planning, focusing on the receipt of the vaccine in all phases; the numbers and types of vaccine expected for the



Western Cape; the roll out planning of the vaccine, the possibility of a generic vaccine being developed and whether the country would be able to acquire it.

## **5.2. Briefing by the provincial Minister of Health and the Head of the Department of Health**

### **Observations and challenges**

- 5.2.1 The Minister of Health, Dr N Mbombo, informed the Committee that the briefing would cover the receipt of the vaccines in all phases, the vaccine roll out planning, the possibility of new vaccines that are being developed, the acquisition of vaccines, as well as the roll out prioritisation. One million vaccine doses had already arrived and a further 500,000 would be arriving at the end of March 2021. Those doses were purchased by the national Department of Health and National Treasury from the Serum Institute of India and Oxford University which is better known as “COVISHIELD” by their developers that will be utilised in the first phase.
- 5.2.2. The Phase I of the vaccine roll out will be primarily targeting healthcare workers in both the public and private sectors—those on the Personnel and Salary Administration System (PERSAL) employed by provinces; those who were not on PERSAL but are working for the Department of Health in the public sector; as well as workers appointed by the City of Cape Town. The Minister stated that nursing students fall under part of the “other” category with community care workers and traditional health practitioners.
- 5.2.3. Minister Mbombo, informed the Committee that the vaccines consisted of two doses. Currently there are 702 000 health workers in South Africa of which 133 000 are in the Western Cape. These figures assisted in determining the total number of doses needed for the first phase.
- 5.2.4. Minister Mbombo noted that a vaccine reduces the chances of infection, transmission and death. Thus, it protects the health system overall. She urged everyone to adhere to health protocols and discouraged people from attending huge gatherings such as churches and restaurants.

### **Health update**

- 5.2.5. Dr Cloete provided the Committee with an update on the COVID-19 virus development and indicators, as well as vaccine planning.
- 5.2.6. Dr Keith Cloete informed the Committee that the province had already passed the peak of the second wave and now shows a decline in the number of daily infected cases. Places like Caledon had almost no active coronavirus cases and the Garden Route is also showing a declining trend.
- 5.2.7. Various data was presented to show the province’s COVID-19 response. These included hospital admissions by area (currently 2 330 COVID-19 patients in acute hospitals) (1 398 in public hospitals and 932 in private hospitals), and utilisation per drainage area, and the total bulk oxygen consumption had been reduced to around 31.41 tons daily when compared to 51 tons daily in the first week of January.
- 5.2.8. Dr Cloete outlined the Department’s plan to assist and safe-guard the wellbeing of healthcare workers.
- 5.2.9. The detailed vaccine implementation plan was provided to the Committee. Dr Cloete explained that herd immunity, or population immunity, would only be achieved if more than 70%-80% of the population were immunised.
- 5.2.10. Details on the various types of vaccines with their efficacy results were provided to Members. Dr Cloete said that Johnson & Johnson was the only vaccine that had a

local manufacturer - Aspen in Gqeberha. Information on the development of the vaccine was provided to the Committee and it was believed that the vaccine would work against the new variant 501.V2. The goal is to vaccinate 40 million South Africans.

- 5.2.11. Current vaccines distribution as at 1 Feb - 98 million doses given with the following breakdown:
  - Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine - 117,000 doses with delivery beginning as of mid-February with total doses that are for the Q1 supply- based on conditions: indemnity, regulatory; and
  - AstraZeneca / SKBio (2,976,000 - 5,028,000) doses. Delivery as of mid/late February, subject to WHO EUL Indicates H1 supply, with 25-35% available in Q1 and 65-75% available in Q2 - based on conditions: indemnity, regulatory
- 5.2.12. The Department has developed an Implementation Framework for the roll-out programme – which will be posted on the WCG: Health website. The plan is to officially start on 15 February 2021.
- 5.2.13. Phase I would include Health Care Workers (Public and Private Health Sectors; Care Workers; CHWs; Health Science students; Traditional Healers), estimated target is 133 000.
- 5.2.14. Phase II would include Essential Workers (Clients in congregate settings; Older than 60 Years; Older than 18 years with Co-morbidities, estimated target 2 million.
- 5.2.15. Phase III would include Older than 18 years and the estimated target is 2, 9 million.

## **6. THEMES: Provincial Treasury on the funding for the vaccines**

### **6.1. Overview and background**

The Committee requested a briefing from the Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities and the Provincial Treasury on the funding for the vaccines on 3 February 2021.

### **6.2. Briefing by the Minister of Finance and the Provincial Treasury on funding for the vaccine.**

#### **Observations and challenges**

- 6.2.1. The Minister Finance and Economic Opportunities, Mr D Maynier, acknowledged the challenging task that lies ahead for the Provincial Treasury in the vaccines roll out. He informed the Committee that the rough cost estimate for vaccination in the province amounted to R1.7 billion. Ensuring sufficient funding for vaccines is the top priority for treasury at the moment.
- 6.2.2. The Minister stated that currently there is significant uncertainty around the demand and supply forecasting of vaccines as well as the finance options available. The Provincial Treasury is in conversation with the National Treasury at the technical level and is waiting for further information on the financing of the vaccine roll out. He added that the Provincial Treasury was concerned that the national government may not allocate sufficient funding to the province. So Provincial Treasury is proactively exploring other available options such as budget reprioritisation, utilising provincial reserve and mobilising the private sector for resources. Once the budget process at both the national and the provincial levels has been concluded, more information around the financing of the vaccines will become available.
- 6.2.3. Mr D Savage, the Head of Department for Provincial Treasury, informed the Committee that this COVID-19 vaccination is an unprecedented exercise. He reminded the Committee of the confined fiscal environment at large. There is

significant budget reduction driven by the new national strategy for the public sector's compensation and non-compensation expenditure.

- 6.2.4. Dr Roy Havemann, Deputy Director-General: Fiscal and Economic Services for Provincial Treasury, briefed the Committee on the cost of vaccines. At the moment, a single dose is estimated at R2.33 and this amount doubles for a two-dose vaccines. R231 is the estimated administrative cost per person related to the vaccines. He stated that each item will be carefully calculated by the treasury and there is a specific methodology in place in the rolling out of vaccines. There are also upfront payments such as building vaccination centres. All these made it crucial for provincial treasury to ensure that there would be sufficient budget to cover the 5.1 million people across sectors in the province. The current estimated cost for the entire vaccine roll out was between R1.2 to R1.7 billion. The Department is also reviewing methods to recoup some of the costs, such as utilising medical aid, etc. He assured the Committee that the provincial treasury is working closely with the national government to ensure that sufficient budget is available for the vaccine roll out. In addition, provincial treasury is also monitoring the types of vaccine arriving in the country.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

The Chairperson thanked the provincial Department of Health and the Provincial Treasury for its hard work in the sector so far during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chairperson also thanked the Members for their participation in the meetings held so far.