

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

THURSDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2021

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1. Report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Public Works on its oversight visit to the George Integrated Transport Network (Go-George) on Monday, 24 May 2021 as follows:**

Delegation

The delegation consisted of the following Members:

Mitchell, DG (Chairperson and leader of the delegation)
America, D (Chairperson) (DA)
Van der Westhuizen, AP (DA)
Mvimbi, LL (ANC)
Herron, BN (GOOD)

The Procedural Officer, Mr J Coetzee, accompanied the delegation.

1. Introduction and background

Section 114 (2)(b)(i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, mandates provincial legislatures to provide for mechanisms to maintain oversight over the Provincial Executive Authority in the province. Flowing from a resolution of the Standing Committee on Transport and Public Works the Committee undertook an oversight visit to the George Integrated Public Transport Network (GIPTN) also referred as the Go-George Project.

Go-George is a scheduled public bus service in the City of George, aiming to provide a first-class public transport service that is reliable, affordable, safe, convenient, accessible, and that contributes to a better quality of life for all.

The GIPTN focused on full inclusion and transformation of the local minibus taxi industry in George, with a Vehicle Operating Company (VOC) wholly owned and operated by local operators to deliver the new scheduled bus service in terms of a contract.

Through an inter-governmental initiative between the Municipality of George, Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works, National Department of Transport and the local taxi and bus operators from the George area this project came about and is funded through the Western Cape Public Transport Operations Grant as well as the national government through the Public Transport Network Grant.

The Go George bus service celebrated six years of service to the George community in December 2020.

2. Overview of the visit

The Committee visited the Go-George depot and was taken on a tour by the Director of Go-George after which the Committee was briefed by the Directors of George Link (PTY) Ltd and the Department of Transport and Public Works.

3. Key issues discussed

The project commenced during 2007 and was initially initiated by the Western Cape Government and the Municipality of George later joined as a partner. There were four stakeholders involved which were identified as affected parties by Government i.e. Uncedo, George Huurmotor Vereniging (GHV), George Taxi Owners' Front (GTOF) and Louis Bus services.

The actual negotiation process started in 2011 during which all aspects regarding the long term contract (12 years) were negotiated and during this period the company George Link (Pty) Ltd was formed. Some of the aspects included compensation, formation of the company, bus ownership, funding of pre-operational cost, contract rates, service to be operated including phased rollout, training of staff and the presence of full time advisors etc.

The local taxi and bus operators with valid operating licenses were consulted on the design and development of the project right from the start. Numerous public engagements were held and all persons employed in the industry were called upon to register on an Affected Persons Register. Shareholders of the VOC called George link comprises 100% of the local taxi and bus operating licence holders.

The following three options were presented to those affected within the industry:

Option one (buy in): Government compensates the operator for the relinquished license(s) and the operator will become a shareholder and possibly an employee within the new transport company;

Option two (buy out): Government compensates the operator for the relinquished license(s) and the operator will not become a shareholder but may still be employed in the new transport company; and

Option three: Do nothing.

A total number of 233 operators participated with 495 licenses affected. There were 219 buy-ins (option one) and 276 buy-outs (option two). The operating license determined the number of shares in the company. If someone had one operating license they were entitled to one share and if someone had ten operating licenses they would be entitled to ten shares.

If taxi operators did not operate as such, their licences were put in safekeeping and all compensation was paid on a sliding scale for both buy in and buy out options. No transfer of permits were allowed and operators had to sign a compensation agreement. The compensation only happened after the relinquishing of the operating license and rollout in an area.

For the first two years following the signature date of the Operator Agreement, George Link only considered persons for employment that were listed on the Affected Persons register. With municipal consent, they could employ persons that were not on the register. There are currently 267 permanent bus drivers, five persons employed in the Finance Department, five in the Human Resources Department and 80 in the Operational Department and continual skills development and training is provided.

The fleet of busses is owned by the municipality who is responsible for the maintenance, insurance and passenger liability. The contract makes provision for the takeover of the buses after its useful life and any additional or replacement buses needed after a certain period must be purchased by the VOC, funded through a negotiated rate to be paid for by Government.

The successful implementation of Phases 1, 2, 3, and 4B has allowed the Go George bus service to transport more than 60% of George residents and it covers approximately 87% of the George urban area. The service currently transports 9,000 passengers per day through a scheduled, reliable and affordable service. The service is expected to roll-out to the additional areas around George to further expand the network.

Despite challenges with rolling out parts of the phase 4A service, the GIPTN is committed to ensuring the successful roll-out of the remaining Phases. With the successful roll-out of Phase 4B completed the roll-out to Thembalethu is the next critical milestone towards achieving an integrated transport network for the people of George.

The planning for Phase 4A roll-out has been progressing and the GIPTN Team is working through the scenarios that will allow for a safe and sustainable implementation of Phase 4A.

A Phase 4A roll-out Framework Memorandum has been tabled and the recommendations have been supported and signed-off by the Accounting Officers.

4. Concerns

It was highlighted that there are still a number of illegal taxis on the GIPTN route and a number of attacks on the busses were aimed at the bus drivers which could have very bad consequences if a driver is injured.

The Provincial Traffic Police is more visible but they are not as prominent in the townships. When they are in the townships they remove the illegal taxis from the road with assistance from the South African Police Service.

5. Resolution

The Committee RESOLVED that it would monitor the roll-out of Phase 4A as well as the operations of GIPTN on a regular basis.

6. Acknowledgements

The Chairperson thanked the Department, the George Municipality and the Directors of George Link for availing themselves to address the committee.

2. Report of the Standing Committee on Education on its oversight visit to the Crestway High School in Retreat on 8 June 2021

The Standing Committee on Education having conducted an oversight visit to the Crestway High School in Retreat on 8 June 2021, reports as follows:

The delegation

The delegation of the Standing Committee on Education included the following Members:

Democratic Alliance

Bosman, G (Acting Chairperson)

Allen, RI

Mackenzie, RD

Apology

Botha, LJ (DA)

Christians, FC (ACDP)

Kama, M (ANC)

Sayed, MK (ANC)

Persons in attendance

Ms. Human, J – Circuit Manager

Mr. Safers, V – Principal

Ms. Jacobs, M- Deputy Principal

WCPP official

Ms. Nomonde Jamce: Procedural Officer

1. Background

The Standing Committee on Education conducted an oversight visit to the Crestway High School in Retreat on Tuesday 8 June 2021 as part of its oversight function.

The purpose of the visit was to inspect the challenges that were experienced by the school regarding the quality of the new building after it was reported that the school had structural challenges although the facilities were new and were handed to the Department of Education at the beginning of 2020.

Upon arrival at the Crestway High School, the Committee was welcomed by Mr. Safers, the School Principal, Ms. Jacobs, Deputy School Principal and Ms. Human, the Circuit Manager.

2. Salient points that emanated from the visit to the Crestway High School in Retreat

Mr. Safers proceeded to brief the Committee on the activities of the school. He reported that the Crestway High School was a dual medium school, with 28 Teachers which consist of 17 permanent Teachers, six Contract Teachers, four School Governing Body Teachers and one Substitute Teacher. The School was established in 1976 in Retreat, currently, it had 1000 learners. The school fee was R1000, per annum and more than 60% of the learners are SASSA recipients. The school was part of the Peninsula Feeding Scheme. The School offers Accounting, Business Studies, Life Science, Geography, Consumer Studies, History, and Computer Applications Technology (CAT) in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. The extracurricular programme of the school includes a variety of sporting and cultural codes. Due to time constraints, the Committee did not get the presentation on the overall activities of the school, instead, it conducted a walkabout of the facility.

Mr. Safers mentioned that they were grateful for the new school, however, what was presented to them on the building plans was not what was handed to them at the end of the project. The Committee was informed that the initial budget for the building of the new school was R63 Million, however, the total cost of the project was R80 Million. Mr. Safers reported that as soon as the contractor advised them to move to the new building, the community looted everything in the old building and nothing was left. The new school was built with no cupboards, storage space or any other utility space in the classrooms. The school was prohibited from taking any furniture from the old building. He mentioned that he called the contractor back to the school to fix some of the defects, however, poor quality was starting to show. The repair work that was conducted as part of the snag list was also of poor quality. The school roof leaks during rainy days, the cisterns in the toilets were broken and constantly running and there were defects on the brick and cement work.

3. Challenges reported during the visit to the Crestway High School in Retreat

- 3.1. The Committee noticed structural defects and cracks on the walls of the new facilities. Mr. Safers mentioned that from the rooftop of the school hall there was no adequate space to accommodate the water that came from the rooftop, this caused flooding during heavy rains.
- 3.2. Due to the structural issues, the school hall was leaking before the school was signed off.
- 3.3. Due to inadequate space, the multimedia room doubles up as a library.
- 3.4. There was no space for the CAT learners. The school had to convert part of the multimedia room to accommodate the CAT learners.
- 3.5. There was an urgent need for blinds and air-conditioner in the school library.

- 3.6 There was no water system in the two Laboratory Science classrooms and in the Consumer Studies classrooms. The school reported this to the contractor and the school was still waiting for a response.
- 3.7 The cabinet storage space inside the classrooms was reported as a challenge.
- 3.8 The school had poor ablution facilities. The Committee was informed that the ablution facilities blocked all the time and the school had to fix it from its own budget.
- 3.9 The sports facilities were substandard, proper sports facilities were needed. The previous plots of land owned by the school has been taken away.
- 3.10 Mr. Safers pointed out an empty ground that was next to the school and reported that they were told that the ground will form part of the school for a sports facility, however, the Department of Transport and Public Works changed the plans later.
- 3.11 Due to the shortage of space, the Committee observed that many desks were outside the classrooms and were getting damaged by the harsh weather conditions especially by the rain.
- 3.12 Steel gates in the school passage were rusty due to poor quality.
- 3.13 Inadequate space in the biology laboratory.
- 3.14 All the lights and plugs in the laboratories were not working. It was reported that the lights were intermittently.
- 3.15 All the lights outside the school and the plugs were not working.
- 3.16 In the rooms for consumer studies, the geyser was not connected, learners did not have access to warm water.
- 3.17 The electrical wiring and plugs appeared not to be working in some places.

4. Resolution

The Committee RESOLVED that:

- 4.1. To conduct a joint oversight visit with the Standing Committee on Transport and Public Works to the Crestway High School to inspect the quality of work done by the contractor. The invitation for the visit will also be extended to the Heads of the Departments of Education, Transport and Public Works, the Sub-councillor Chairperson and Councillor for the area.
- 4.2. The Standing Committee on Education to provide a list of previous oversight visits to schools that had experience similar issues. Whereby the contractors' had failed to complete the agreed maintenances at schools. This to form part of the briefing at Cresway High School's oversight visit.

5. Request for Information

The Committee requested the following:

- 5.1 Crestway High School to provide a detailed breakdown of the expenditure incurred by the school in fixing the contractors' incomplete work.
- 5.2 Crestway High School to provide a detailed information on the operational budget of the school for the 2020/21 financial year.
- 5.3 The Western Cape Education Department and the Department of Public Works to provide a copy of the tender value for the Crestway High School project, what was paid and whether the contractor had been paid in full.

6. Conclusion

The Committee successfully concluded its visit to the Crestway High School in Retreat.

3. The Annual Activity Report of the Petitions Committee for the 2020/2021 financial year is as follows:

Members

The Committee comprises of the following members:

Bosman, G (DA) (Chairperson)
 Allen, RI (DA)
 Makamba-Botya, N (EFF)
 Philander, WF (DA)
 Sayed, MK (ANC)

Alternate members:

America, D (DA)
 Botha, LJ (DA)
 Kama, M (ANC)
 Mackenzie, RD (DA))
 Xego, M (EFF)

1. Introduction

As part of its mandate, the Petitions Committee must take reasonable steps to inform the citizens of the Province of their rights; take reasonable steps to inform the citizens of the Province of the physical address, fax number, e-mail or postal address where a petition may be submitted; ensure that persons or categories of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination enjoy full participation in the process of governance; and exercise maximum accountability and transparency in the consideration of petitions in accordance with the Western Cape Petitions Act, 2006 (Act 3 of 2006).

2. Overview of committees activities

No of Committee meetings	2
No of Public Hearings	0
No of International Study Tours	0
No of Fact Finding Visits	0
No of Cluster Visits	0
No of Provincial Bills considered	0
No of NCOP Bills considered	0
Workshops/conferences attended	0

3. Oversight activities

- 3.1. The Committee commenced the 2020/21 financial year by deliberating on the new petition submitted by Mr B Jacobs on land restitution in Mossel Bay. The Committee discussed the petition referred and requested additional sessions to unpack the information received from the Petitioner.
- 3.2. During the financial year under review, the Committee invited Mr B Jacobs, the petitioner to brief the Committee on the petition received. The Committee also invited the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights in the Western Cape to brief it on the items pertaining to the petition submitted by Mr Barry Jacobs.

During that meeting the Committee requested additional information from the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights in the Western Cape.

4. Financial particulars

The Petitions Committee was allocated an amount of R110 000 for the Financial Year 2020/2021 financial year. The Adjusted Budget was R3 200. At the end of the 2020/2021 financial year, expenditure attributed to the activities of the Petitions Committee accumulated to an amount of R800.00.