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ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN REPORT

FOR

WEST RAND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (MERAUFONG CITY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY) – EXTERNAL HEARING: CARLETONVILLE CIVIC CENTRE

**Prepared by: Mr. Simphiwe Ngwane – Institutional Researcher
together with Mr. Jacky Letsoalo – Senior Information Officer**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Petitions Standing Committee (PSC), chaired by honourable Ezra Letsoalo, will convene a one-day external petition hearing at the Carltonville Civic centre, situated in Carltonville ward 18, located in the Merafong City Local Municipality which is part of West Rand District Municipality. The External Hearing will be on the 10th of March 2023.

In accordance with the petitions system, internal and external hearings are a form of escalation when authorities (after numerous extensions) do not submit reports, which are required to resolve petitions. The petitions that will be tabled during the external hearing are diverse in issue, including sewerage system issues, lack of basic services, lack of development and the disastrous effects of sinkholes, indicating the myriad nature of petitions. The 8 petitions which will be tabled were selected from the

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large pool of West Rand petitions that the PSC has in its backlog, most from the area of Khutsong.

2. AREA COMPOSITION¹

The West Rand District Municipality (category C) is in the western part of the Gauteng province and is comprised of three local municipalities: Merafong City Local Municipality, Mogale City Local Municipality and Rand West City Local Municipality. During the pre-colonial era, the area was occupied by the Ndebele chieftaincy. The West Rand grew out of the discovery of gold in the 1850s. The town of Carletonville was proclaimed in 1948 and was named after Guy Carleton Jones, an engineer from the Gold Fields Ltd mining company, who played a prominent role in the discovery of the West Wits gold field, of which Carletonville forms a part.

Merafong City, is the largest of the three municipalities in the district, making up almost half of the landmass. This is the mining core of the district with mining constituting over 50% of Gross Value Add (GVA). Formerly a cross-border municipality, the entire municipality was transferred to the North-West Province following the abolition of cross-border municipalities by an amendment to the South African Constitution in 2005. The municipality was part of the North-West Province from 2005 to 2009, when it was reincorporated into the Gauteng Province by another amendment to the Constitution, following often violent protests in the township of Khutsong.

Based on the 2011 census, the population of Carltonville Ward 18 (host ward) is 5 743. The area has a young population as the median age in ward 18 is 29 with 50% of the population being female. The most spoken home language in the ward is Afrikaans (21%), followed by isiXhosa (18%) and seSotho (12%). 39% of its population were born in Gauteng, whilst 14% were born in the Eastern Cape, 11% outside South Africa and 10% were born in the North-West. 70% of households are headed by men. The average annual household income in the area is R115 100. Only 60% of the population is employed, leave 40% that are either unemployed, not economically active or discouraged work-seekers. 52.5% of the residents have internet access from their mobile phones. 58.7% completed matric or higher.

Most of the petitions emanate from the township of Khutsong. The township was established in the late 1950s. According to a 2020 report by the Housing Development Agency (HDA), no geological surveys were conducted to determine the dolomite stability suitability of the area, before the establishment of the township.² The geological issues were further caused by deep level mining in the area.³ With the accelerated de-watering of the gold reefs by gold mines from 1940s, the dolomite underlaid areas in the Carletonville area became increasingly unstable and conducive

¹ Information is based on the following sources: [COGTA Profile and Analysis of West Rand District Municipality - 2020](#) (accessed on the 28th of February 2023) and online searches of the *Herald*, which is a Carltonville and Fochville community newspaper.

² [Review and further development of Implmentation Plan.pdf \(thehda.co.za\)](#) (accessed 1 March 2023)

³ Moshodi, Tshepo, 2014. Towards a strategy for sinkhole risk reduction: The case of the Merafong Local Municipality, Master of Arts Dissertation at the North-West University.

to the formation of sinkholes. This was detected in the 1960s. Numerous engineering surveys have been conducted in Khutsong since the dolomitic problem was discovered. In an endeavour to address this situation, the Carletonville Transitional Local Council adopted a Land and Land Use Policy on 24 November 1998. As part of this policy, it was expected of developers to sign indemnity clauses whereby the City Council would be indemnified against any legal claims resulting from sinkhole development. The indemnity clause was included into all agreements of sale of properties in Khutsong, as well as into all building plans irrespective of the declared geological stability zone in which the property was situated.

On 5 December 2000, the newly established Merafong City Local Municipality inherited the dolomite instability problem. Several new and serious sinkholes began to form in and around Khutsong since December 2000. The Merafong Local Municipality began to address the dolomite stability situation through the formation of disaster management team. However, the formation of sinkholes continues to the present. Some of the post year-2000 sinkhole formations have occurred in areas previously determined to be safe and other in areas occupied by informal settlements i.e. Zonderwater informal settlement which resulted in the resettlement of 50 - 100 informal structures to Khutsong South that began on 11 December 2002. From 2016, the situation has drastically deteriorated. New sinkholes Dolines formed at several locations in Khutsong which severely damaged internal water supply pipes to Khutsong extensions and sewer pipe networks that drains via outfall sewers to the Khutsong Wastewater Treatment Plant. The formation of these sinkholes affects normal service delivery as they cause severe damages to water pipes, sewer pipes, roads, and other private and public properties. In addition, the most recent sinkholes have created a threat to the safety of residents. This deteriorating situation places immense pressure on scarce resources to manage the risk, places lives and property in danger and negatively impacts on the social fabric and wellbeing of the community.⁴⁵

This Environmental Scan Report was conducted five working days before the external hearing to gauge general issues faced by the community around wards: 7, 10 and 18. The researcher and the senior Information Officer conducted three interviews. Two face-to-face interviews with councillor (Ms.) Dipuo Segakweng (Ward 7) and councillor (Mr.) Thabo Masiu (Ward 10), and a telephonic interview with councillor Thlaripe (Ward 18). Cllr Thlaripe will be the “host ward Cllr” since the venue is in his ward.

3. Key findings from the interviews:

Service Delivery

In ward 18, the Cllr shared that, service delivery in the area has been declining over the years. The ward is situated in a suburban area of Carletonville, just adjacent to the CBD. The municipality is frustrating the citizens, councilor, and the ward committee. There is inconsistency with refuse collection. The collection is not done as per the allocated days. With regards to

⁴ [Review and further development of Implimentation Plan.pdf \(thehda.co.za\)](#) (accessed 28 February 2023)

⁵ [Title of paper \(researchgate.net\)](#) (accessed 28 February 2023)

electricity and Streets lights in ward 18, most of the lights are not working in the area. The area is very dark at night and because of the long uncut grass, the crime level is increasing. Despite the streetlights not working, the municipality is charging money for streetlights on the utility bills. The state of the roads is also deplorable. There are potholes all over the area, especially on the road from the Civic centre, Beryl Street. The road just needs to be redone because patching the potholes is not assisting. With regards to water and sanitation, since the area is in a suburb, there are no issues with water and sanitation services.

In Wards 7 and 10, which are right next to each other, the Cllrs shared that, refuse collection is also inconsistent, due to trucks needing repairs and refuse is collected erratically. Moreover, the storm drainage system and the sewerage systems are problematic, resulting to sewer overflows during heavy rains. The Cllrs shared that the sewer and drainage systems are not well maintained and their aged. This situation is made worst, because the area is dolomitic, so the broken water pipes also contribute to the weak ground.

<p>HOUSING THE AREA</p>	<p>IN</p> <p>The Khutsong ward councilors (Wards 7 & 10) shared that there is a Human Settlement mega project in the area, called Elijah Barayi, which has suffered some vandalism. The area has historically suffered from sinkholes, with many houses cracking and some imploding into the sinkholes. Many people are not privately insured and find themselves stranded. Some have been allocated housing in Khutsong Ext. 6 and in Elijah Barayi, but of cause the size of an RDP house is not the same size as the renovated homes they lost in sinkholes. Moreover, the municipality provided storage for families whose homes were damaged by the sinkholes, but some have reported that when they went to fetch their belongings, they had been stolen. The Cllrs shared that the neighbouring mines donated 10 houses to help some the families whose homes collapsed. Unfortunately, some of these houses have been used by political people as private properties, and they are renting these houses, instead of them being given to the affected families.</p>
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<p>HEALTH FACILITIES</p>	<p>The Khutsong ward Cllrs shared that there are four clinics in the area, with one being opened 24/7. Due to population growth, these are beginning to be overcrowded, but to help the situation, there are mobile clinics that service the area.</p>
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<p>Education facilities</p>	<p>Some schools have been affected by sinkholes, especially the ones that will be discussed at the Petitions Hearing. The Provincial Education Department does provide prefabricated "park-home" classrooms to help the situation.</p>
<p>Recreational facilities</p>	<p>With regards to ward 18, the parks are not taken care of, the grass is long and the recreational facilities such as swings are getting rusty. The councilor indicated that department of parks indicated that they would clean a park next to the civic centre and repaint those that needs to be painted. In wards 7 and 10 the situation is similar, the parks are not well maintained, and those that are, are tiny.</p>
<p>Crime</p>	<p>In Ward 18, cables are being stolen in the area and it affects the supply of electricity. The residents also requested the municipality to at least remove the underground cables and install the overhead cables especially those that supply power to the streetlights. The municipality is not cutting the grass and it has grown tall and that has led to the high rate of crime. The</p>

	<p>thugs hide in those grass and commit crimes such as rape and robbery. The residents have been complaining about this matter, however, the municipality is not assisting in this regard. Majority, if not all open spaces in the area have long grass and as stated above, this poses danger to the residents as criminals hides in those long grass, especially at night for those who walk to their houses.</p> <p>In wards 7 & 10: there is growing gangsterism, youth substance abuse and cable theft in the area. Moreover, there is illegal mining in the area (<i>ama'zama-zama</i>)</p>
<p>Unemployment</p>	<p>Unemployment is a big problem in Khutsong, with the youth feeling hopeless about their situation. This is a situation that needs to be turned around. The few opportunities that are available with CWP work, are taken up by older people, they too need opportunities as they're raising multiple grandchildren. But the youth is beginning to feel despondent.</p>

Report Limitations

Purposeful sampling was used as a methodology. Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases/individuals whose insights will illuminate the questions being pursued (Button 2016: 401). Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations. This environmental scan report is based on three interviews with cllr Segakweng (ward 7), and cllr Masiu (ward 10) and cllr Thlaripe (ward 18). Thus, it captures sentiment of these individuals, and it is not an exhaustive analysis of the entire community.

Key things to keep in mind which community members might raise at the External Hearing:

- The issue raised by Premier Lesufi in his SOPA address, of the province potentially declaring the area a State of Disaster, as there are Geological resolutions to the area, but they need lots of funding.
- The homes donated by the mining companies being used as rental stock, to benefit certain individuals.
- Stored belongings being stolen in municipal provided storages. The families are already traumatised, and the final blow are their belongings being stolen.

The deplorable state of maintenance of roads in the municipality.