

COJ : MAYORAL COMMITTEE 2005-02-10
 COJ : HOUSING COMMITTEE 2005-01-18

HOUSING

28 LEHAE (VLAKFONTEIN WEST) HOUSING PROJECT : BENEFICIARY SELECTION

1 STRATEGIC THRUST

Service Delivery Excellence.

2 OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to obtain the Mayoral Committee approval for:

- (1) the rescinding of Resolution (1) taken by the Southern Metropolitan Local Council at its meeting on 14 December 2001 (Item 14) and
- (2) the selection of the communities that are to be relocated to the Lehae Housing Project.

3 SUMMARY

Lehae is a "greenfield" housing project located in the south western quadrant of the intersection of the Golden Highway and the R564 road to Lenasia. A locality plan of the project area is attached as Annexure A.

The project was awarded to Nu-way Housing by the Southern Metropolitan Local Council ("the SMLC") in terms of a resolution taken at its meeting on 28 May 1998 (Item 3).

The initial phasing of the project, in line with the Mayibuye funding that the Gauteng Department of Housing ("the GDH") was able to make available at that time, was for 2 000 stands in Phase 1 and 4 000 stands in Phase 2. Because of technical reasons, this was amended to Phase 1 being 3134 stands and Phase 2 being the remaining stands.

Initial funding for a Mayibuye project of 2 000 stands was approved by the GDH in 1999/2000.

The geotechnical study of the area revealed the presence of highly sensitive dolomitic conditions. In recognition of this, the environmental Record of Decision from the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Land Affairs required that all services be installed to a high standard, with most of the collector roads needing to be surfaced and that beneficiaries be moved into a completed top structure on a fully serviced site with electricity.

As a result of this decision, the project was converted into a special "turnkey" project covering 6 352 stands and a revised funding agreement was signed between the Council and the GDH in December 2003.

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The development of the project was split into two: Vlakfontein West Extension 1 and Vlakfontein West Extension 2. The development of the 3 134 erven in Vlakfontein West Extension 1 has commenced. The installation of bulk and internal services is well under way and a start has been made on the construction of foundation rafts for top structures. A tender has been advertised for the construction of top structures for which a contract should be awarded early in 2005.

It is envisaged that the first houses will become available during March 2005 for occupation.

Possibilities of developing at higher densities in Vlakfontein West Extension 2 are being investigated. It is therefore possible that the yield may exceed the 3 218 subsidies currently approved for this portion of the project. While this may result in more units being developed, it will result in Vlakfontein West Extension 2 being available for occupation some time after Vlakfontein West Extension 1.

Council confirmation of which communities from the surrounding informal settlements will benefit from the project is therefore now required. Although there have been previous resolutions in this regard, circumstances have changed somewhat. This requires a re-examination of the Council's relocation priorities as they apply to this project.

(1) Allocation Process.

The SMLC, at its meeting on 14 December 2001 (Item 14) resolved, *inter alia*, that the households residing in Eikenhof, Dlamini Camp, and Transport House be approved as the targeted beneficiaries for the Vlakfontein West development project.

The SMLC had already approved the development of Vlakfontein Extensions 1, 2 and 3 in 1998 to largely cater for the relocation of the Thembelihle community near Lenasia.

Only a portion of the Thembelihle community was relocated in Vlakfontein Extensions 1, and 3 before objections from that community that they rather be moved to Vlakfontein West forced a halt to the relocation exercise. The Transport House community was housed in Vlakfontein Extensions 1, 2 and 3 instead.

The land occupied by the Eikenhof community has been identified for redevelopment as a new regional cemetery. However, pronouncements by various community leaders and public figures that the community should remain in Eikenhof have given rise to some uncertainty as to the intension of the Council in this regard.

The Housing Master Plan of the Council, approved by the Council at its meeting on 9 December 2004, lists Thembelihle together with a number of other smaller informal settlements for relocation to Vlakfontein West.

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This report will therefore examine various alternative combinations of beneficiary communities for relocation to Vlakfontein West, together with the advantages and disadvantages of each combination, before recommending one for adoption by the Council.

(2) Alternative Beneficiary Groupings:

(a) Dhlamini and Eikenhof:

These two communities are two of the original communities targeted for relocation to Vlakfontein West in terms of the SMLC's resolution of 14 December 2001. The Dhlamini and Eikenhof communities consist of approximately 1 600 to 1 800 families each, making a total of between 3 200 and 3 600.

These two communities can adequately be accommodated in Vlakfontein West. In addition, the geo-technical conditions of the land where they are located is unsuitable for residential development. The location of the Eikenhof land would also make it difficult to link to existing services.

The Council has also supported the communities' relocation to Vlakfontein West as evidenced in the resolution adopted on 14 December 2001 (Item 14).

(b) Thembelihle:

The Thembelihle community originally numbered some 4 603 families. Of these approximately 1 500 relocated to Vlakfontein Extensions 1, 2 and 3, leaving approximately 3 103 families in Thembelihle. Subsidies have been approved for 537 of these families while an additional 2 319 applications for subsidies have been submitted for approval. The remaining families either hold Provincial Waiting List Forms or have no housing status. The original remaining 3 103 families have been supplemented by new arrivals into the community with the result that the community now numbers some 6 500 families.

It is accepted that it is desirable to relocate the Thembelihle community as the land they occupy is extremely dolomitic. The relocation of the community will strengthen previous stands taken by the Council and Provincial Government that Thembelihle is undevelopable. The longer Thembelihle remains in the area, the more reason the community will feel they should not be relocated as they have (already) been residing in the area for years.

While it is also desirable to relocate the entire community at once, this is not possible as Vlakfontein West cannot accommodate the entire 6 500 families together with those from Dhlamini and Eikenhof; and those who have recently arrived in the area would be seen to be "queue jumping" ahead of families from other long standing informal settlements.

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Another alternative would be to only relocate a portion of the community with priority being given to those families from the 3 103 original families still in the area who have approved subsidies, supplemented with those who have already submitted applications and who should receive their approvals shortly. The 3 103 families could be accommodated in Vlakfontein West together with the Dhlamini and Eikenhof communities once Vlakfontein West Extension 2 is developed. However, the development of Vlakfontein West Extension 2 has not commenced yet and the relocation of these groups from Thembelihle can therefore only be achieved over a protracted period. Such an exercise will not clear the area in one go, and history has shown that it has been impossible to prevent additional families from invading the spaces vacated by families moving to other housing projects.

It must also be realized that discussions have already been held with the Thembelihle community on their possible relocation to Vlakfontein West as a result of the opposition by portions of the community to their relocation to Vlakfontein Extensions 1, 2 and 3. Expectations have been created that between 3 000 and 3 700 subsidies will be made available for the community, and should these not be met, the community, or portions of it, may choose to invade Vlakfontein West as it is in close proximity to Thembelihle.

(c) The inclusion of sundry small communities:

As stated above, the Housing Master Plan, recently approved by the Council, identified several other smaller communities, in addition to those of Dhlamini, Eikenhof and Thembelihle, for relocation to Vlakfontein West. The communities concerned are those of Old Vista in Region 9 (approximately 100 families); Mshenguville (approximately 480 families) Orlando East (approximately 32 families) Orlando Park (approximately 133 families) and St. Mary's (approximately 105 families) in Region 10; and Kapok (approximately 397 families) in Region 11. These communities together total approximately 1252 families.

The advantage of including these communities in the relocation exercise is that the areas presently occupied by each of them could be cleared in one go. This makes ongoing control of further invasion of these areas easier. Another advantage is that smaller communities can be relocated as and when stands become available, and as subsidies are approved, with the result that the demand for, and the supply of, stands can be better managed.

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(d) Recommendation:

In considering all the alternatives presented above, it is recommended that the following communities benefit from the Vlakfontein West Extensions 1 and 2 housing project:

Dhlamini Camps 1, 2 and 3:	approximately	1 600 families
Eikenhof:	approximately	1 600 families
Sundry smaller communities:	between 500 &	1 252 families
Thembelihle (approved subsidies):	up to a max. of	3 103 families
Total:	between 6 803 and	7 555 families

While it is acknowledged that the total figures given exceed the currently approved 6 352 subsidies for the project, the figures presented above are approximate and will be subject to change due to:

- (i) the actual number of families in each settlement that qualify for subsidies; and
- (ii) the actual additional units that will become available in Vlakfontein West Extension 2.

The following principles should apply to the relocation exercise:-

- (i) Each community should be relocated *in toto* (at one time).
- (ii) Attempts should be made to integrate each community with the others in the project within the confines of the project programme.
- (iii) The inclusion of all of the sundry small communities identified will be dependent on sufficient stands/units being available.

The inclusion of the Thembelihle community is dependent on the region, in conjunction with the Central Housing Department, developing a clear plan to

- (i) prevent further influx into Thembelihle;
- (ii) devise alternative uses for the area presently occupied by Thembelihle; and
- (iii) identify alternative land and/or projects for the eventual relocation of the balance of the Thembelihle community.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Lehae Housing Project is being implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Code.

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5 LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Lehæ Housing project is being developed using Provincial Housing Subsidies. The relocation exercise will be for the account of the Council. Funds in the amount of R3,116 million exist on the Council's capital budget for this purpose (Vote No.: 498 0154 350 1027).

7 COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

Communication has already been initiated with the Dhlamini, Thembelihle, and to a lesser extent, the Eikenhof communities on the relocation programme. It is recognised that further extensive communication will have to be undertaken with the affected communities should the recommendation be adopted.

8 OTHER DEPARTMENTS CONSULTED

The regions in which the current communities are located were consulted. The following comments were received:-

Region 6:

"The Region 6 Housing Department supports the recommendation on the report. However it would be appreciated if at least one sundry small community from the three regions could benefit from the project."

Region 10:

"Due to the inability of JMPD to take immediate action, the informal settlement of Mshenguville has increased by 181 families and attorneys have been instructed to obtain a court order for the evlction of the "swellers".

At this stage, it is uncertain whether the courts will grant such an order in view of the time lapse and the requirements in terms of The Prevention of Illegal Eviction and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, 19 of 1998, (PIE).

The total number of families to be relocated from Mshenguville may change."

Region 11:

Region 11 submitted detailed comments on the report. Certain of these comments have been incorporated in the section relating to Thembelihle above. The region also submitted the following alternative recommendation:

- (1) *"That Thembelihle be allocated at least 3 103 subsidies as this is the balance of the initial 4 603 households registered in Thembelihle.*

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- (2) *An alternative project be identified to accommodate the sundry smaller communities from Soweto should they not be accommodated in Vlakfontein, or rather be potential beneficiaries of Phase 2, that is, the higher density development, as more units are likely to be available if this route is followed.*
- (3) *Drieziek Extension 5 and Orange Farm Extension 10 are "Greenfield" developments that could be considered as alternative projects to accommodate the sundry smaller communities."*

With the exclusion of the reference to Drieziek Extension 5 and Orange Farm Extension 10 (which projects are not the subject of this report) the regions' comments have been incorporated into the recommendation.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED

- [1 That resolution (1) taken by the Southern Metropolitan Local Council at its meeting on 14 December 2001 (Item 14) be rescinded.
- 2 That the following communities be approved as the targeted beneficiaries for the Vlakfontein West Housing Project:
 - (1) Dhlamini Camps 1, 2 and 3;
 - (2) Eikenhof;
 - (3) Sundry smaller communities : Old Vista, Mshenguville, Orlando East, Orlando Park, St. Mary's, and Kapok ; and
 - (4) Thembelihle (individuals with approved subsidies).]

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THE NEXT ITEM FOLLOWS THE ANNEXURE TO THIS ITEM