

**MINISTRY FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER PQ2017/871**

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**Mr M Waters (DA) to ask the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs:**

(1) Whether the Council of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality conducted any (a) environmental impact assessment studies and/or (b) geographical studies prior to its decision to move residents from the Angelo informal settlement to Farm 87 Portion 230 Driefontein; if not, in each case, why not; if so, (i) on which dates were the specified studies concluded and (ii) what were the outcomes in each case;

(2) on what date(s) did the council become aware of (a) an open mineshaft and (b) the beginning of a sinkhole on the specified property;

(3) why did the council not (a) stop the construction of foundations and (b) conduct the necessary studies when it became aware of the mineshaft and sinkhole;

(4) whether the council will reassure the residents that neither the (a) mineshaft nor (b) sinkhole pose no threat to them? NW937E

**Reply:**

It is important to indicate that the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs referred the questions to the Human Settlements, as the sector is responsible for the matters indicated in the questions. The Provincial Department of Human Settlements through the National Department of Human Settlements provided the information in response to the questions.

(1) According to the report received from the Gauteng Provincial Department of Human Settlement, it is indicated that, the studies were undertaken to determine the suitability of the land for human habitation. The studies conducted are the following: (a) Environmental Impact Assessment, (b) Geotechnical Studies and Township Establishment application to determine the suitability of the land for human habitation in farm 87 Portion 230 Driefontein.

1. The specified studies were concluded on the following dates: Geotechnical studies were concluded and a final report compiled in August 2012, the Environmental Impact Assessment was concluded in May 2016, the assessment has not been approved and the Township Establishment Application was concluded in October 2014, the application has not been approved.

(ii) The outcomes of the studies were as follows:

Geotechnical Studies - the land was categorised into three portions for analysis of its development prospects. Zone A-has a mining depth less than 30m, this is excluded from the developable area. Zone B characterised by shallow undermining where the depth rise is more than 30m, the land is developable with restrictions. Zone C has no undermining at all.

Township Establishment application – the application took the development constraints into cognisance, the Town Planning Layout of the site provides for the following land uses: 12.7h of land constitutes 57.71% of the site to be used for residential development and 9.3h of land that constitutes 42.29% used for Public Open Spaces.

The Environmental Impact Assessment - the land is characterised as largely degraded and thus no objection was noted for housing development purposes.

(2) The department became aware of the (a) open mineshaft during 2012 (b) the date regarding

the beginning of a sinkhole on the specified property was not provided by Gauteng

Provincial Department of Human Settlements.

(3) The construction (a) was not stopped because it was done in a developable area; (b) the

land surveyor demarcated the developable and the undevelopable area. The area where the slabs are laid is the part that is developable according to the township layout plan and the geotechnical studies conducted.

(4) The Gauteng Department of Human Settlements indicated that the Council will:

(a) implement safety measures before relocating the community; and

(b) the area that is prone to sinkholes will be fenced off, and other sinkholes in the area will be filled prior to the relocation of the community..