**MEDIA STATEMENT

WATER AND SANITATION COMMITTEE GIVESEKURHULENI 14 DAYS TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES IN BANAERO PARK**  **Parliament, Friday, 12 February 2021** – The Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation has instructed the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality to within 14 days find workable, immediate solutions to challenges of raw sewage spillages in Banaero Park in Kempton Park.

“The municipality has been directed to urgently seek immediate interim solutions to ensure that the health risks facing the people of the area are averted as all spheres of government work towards finding lasting solutions to the spillage challenge,” said Ms Machwene Semenya, the Chairperson of the committee.

The committee received a brief from the municipality and the Department of Human Settlements and Water and Sanitation on the sewage spillage at Banaero Park. Of major concern for the committee is lack of foresight and planning on behalf of the municipality in anticipation of the increased pressures caused by in-migration into the city.

“Also, we don’t understand how the city didn’t foresee that building a sewage line in a wetland will lead to water infiltration, impacting on the system’s ability to function optimally. Also, the committee questioned the authorisation through the Environmental Impact Assessment report, of the construction of the pipeline on a wetland,” Ms Semenya emphasised.

While the committee acknowledged the municipality’s funding gap and infrastructure backlog, it has urged the Department of Human Settlements and the Department of Water and Sanitation to find workable solutions to the challenges at Banaero Park. The urgent action plan will be tabled to the committee for consideration and approval. “We want to ensure that the lives of the people of Banaero Park are impacted positively in the short and long term. Firstly, in the short term the Metro’s maintenance team must clear any blockages in the network to prevent spillages. And secondly, as a long term solution, the municipality must work with departments to remedy the infrastructure backlog in the area.

The committee is also concerned that the Municipality accusesindustry of discharging water with fats into the line which further exacerbate the already existing water infiltration problem. The committee’s concerns stem from the fact that there are in place regulatory and statutory prescripts that ensure that the polluter must pay for effects of their pollution. Also, municipalities are custodians of by-laws, which they must enforce. It is in this context that the committee has urged the municipality and the department to enforce regulatory and statutory prescripts against polluters.

Meanwhile, the committee has resolved that the City of Ekurhuleni must furnish the committee with a report on the public participation process undertaken by the City of Ekurhuleni on the matter of rental tariff charged to residents of Actonville in Benoni.  The committee will upon receipt of the report analyse if there is a need to call the municipality to appear before it again.

ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION, MS MACHWENE SEMENYA.