**COGTA COMMITTEE WILL HAVE ONGOING ENGAGEMENTS WITH AMATHOLE AND OR TAMBO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES ON INVESTIGATIONS**

**Parliament, Friday, 21 May 2021** – The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) had an engagement with the Amathole District Municipality on their awarding of the tender for the supply, delivery and installation of ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrine top structures.

This matter has been the subject of forensic investigations, including investigation by the Public Protector, and is before the East London Circuit Court.

It is common cause that there were irregularities in the awarding of the tender in question, as the municipality failed to procure the services in accordance with a system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective, as envisaged in Section 217 of the Constitution.

Among the Public Protector’s proposed remedial actions on this issue was that by September 2019, the municipality should have taken appropriate disciplinary action against all members of the bid adjudication committee involved in the award of the VIP toilet tender and who were therefore responsible for exposing the municipality to acts of maladministration and financial risk.

The Public Protector also ordered that, by October 2019, the municipality should have ensured that it recovered, through a civil litigation claim, any irregular expenditure identified in the report on the part of the former municipal manager in his personal capacity.

Committee Chairperson Ms Faith Muthambi said: “We all know that the Public Protector’s remedial action is binding and compliance is not optional. This means that remedial action taken against those under investigation cannot be ignored without any legal consequences. We understand from the municipality’s presentation that it will be challenging some of the Public Protector’s remedial actions in the High Court.”

The committee also received a briefing from the OR Tambo District Municipality on alleged irregular payments it made to the Amatola Water Board. These payments were the subject of a Section 106 investigation by the MEC.

After the district municipalities presented and answered all the committee’s questions on these matters, the committee will now follow up on the investigations into both matters and will have ongoing discussions in this regard with both district municipalities.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MS FATH MUTHAMBI.**