**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMEMNTARY QUESTION NO: 2468**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 23 OCTOBER 2020**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 13 NOVEMBER 2020**

**Ms S J Graham (DA to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

1. Whether, with reference to the Humansdorp Magistrates Court which has been scheduled for an upgrade since 2006 and for which the plans were signed off in 2007 but where there has been no progress to date, a new set of plans has been adopted; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what is the proposed date for commencement of the upgrade;
2. What immediate actions are being taken to address the huge security problems following the promises made last year of a fence around the precinct and access control at the entrance;
3. what actions are being taken to improve the (a) access control and (b) proper training of the security guards to ensure that the safety of all people in the building is addressed;
4. What are the time frames for addressing the immediate security problems;
5. What immediate actions are being taken to address the lack of toilet facilities for women members of the public and that the urinals in the male toilets are repaired?

**NW3076E**

Reply:

1. (a) Although there were discussions to revamp the Humansdorp Magistrates Court as early as 2006 there were no formal designs and plans which were finalised at that stage. The initial plans were formally endorsed in 2013 with the submission on the needs assessment to the Department of Public Works (now Department of Public Works and Infrastructure) (DPWI). Following several interactions and consultations with various stakeholders, the revised Needs Assessment was officially signed off by the Accounting Officer on the 19th November 2019 and forwarded to DPWI to conduct a feasibility study and to prepare a detailed estimate for consideration by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. It appears that the project was delayed by challenges encountered by DPWI regarding the consolidation of the ERFs and rezoning of the property, which has now been resolved.

(b) Several meetings and interactions with consultants and various stakeholders were held to consider the revised needs and concept designs in through a Zoom meeting held on 14 July 2020. It was unanimously agreed that the Concept 3 (demolition and rebuild) be adopted and this has since been formalised in writing for official signing off by all stakeholders for approval by National Office before the end of December 2020. This will then result in finalisation of sketch plans for approval and for cost estimates to be determined. Construction will commence immediately after the approval of the sketch plans and it is anticipated that the project will get underway during the second half of the 2021/2022 financial year.

(2) (a) The Project is currently registered for additional accommodation and is currently in stage 4, i.e. planning stage. A decision was taken to adopt a phased approach where the project will be split into two phases to address the urgent security measures and shortage of ablutions at the facility in the first phase as follows:

1. Phase 1: Security measures i.e. installation of a perimeter fence and security gates only, minor repairs to existing ablutions and provision of a temporary ablution park home.
2. Phase 2: Demolition of the existing single storey magistrate office and construction of new court house in accordance to the approved designs. The new designs will also provide adequate undercover parking for court officials.

(b) The fence and gates will be placed within the boundary to avoid having to demolish the low boundary wall and trees on the perimeter will be cut down and removed. A temporary mobile unit accommodating additional ablutions, storage facilities, and consultation offices for prosecutors, will be placed in a position where the court can still operate when construction commences on the second phase.

(3) (a) As part of the current capital works project, the fencing and gates will be addresses as phase one of this project and the other access control measures will be addressed in the second phase of the project.

(b) The department has appointed the services from a departmental appointed security service provider to conduct security functions at the court daily. Recruitment is done by this service provider in line with the Departmental specifications and required security grading who then further receive on the job training by the employer during the induction phase and is monitored in line with the service level agreement on an on-going basis.

(4) Security problems at the court are infrastructural instead of physical in nature and therefore the concerns will be addressed under the registered Capital Works Project but done in Phases. Since the site clearance was issued and submitted to the department on 19 November 2020, the department will start making arrangements to attend to the fence and the ablutions by March 2021.

(5) (a) Based on municipal approval and site clearance, the ablution facilities will require electrical, sewerage and water connections to be fully operational. Chemical toilets cannot be considered as this is not an economically viable solution, sustainable, or hygienically suitable for this type of environment in the absence of running water. Current ablutions are maintained when the need arises through day to day maintenance on an on-going basis, but challenges are often experienced with breakages as a result of vandalism by end users.

(b) The Department is working closely with DPWI to ensure the project phase 2 is under implementation in the next financial year 2021/22.

**END**