**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 498DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 3 – 2022**

**498.Ms T Bodlani (DA) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

(1) What are the reasons for the long queues that the customers of the Alberton offices of his department have to endure to receive services;

(2) (a) What (i) are the (aa) names and (bb) positions of the officials employed at the office and (ii) is the vacancy rate at the office and (b) on what date does his department intend to fill the vacancies;

(3) Whether his department has any plans in place to bring its services closer to residents who have to travel from areas such as Thokoza, Palm Ridge and surrounding areas to Alberton to get services; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant timelines;

(4) What IT systems does the office in Alberton use as residents report that the common reason they are given for the long queues is that the IT systems are down on a regular basis? NW563E

**REPLY:**

1. One of the root causes of long queues in DHA office is the office space constraints which limits the capacity of the office to accommodate its infrastructure and clients thereby it is not fit for purpose. Currently the total office space occupied by the department in Alberton office is approximately 594 square metres which is significantly lower than the norms and standard required by the Department. The office space constraints lead to overcrowding and long queues in and outside the office. Clients prefer to visit the Alberton office as opposed to other Home Affairs offices in the vicinity probably as a result of access to public transport and accessibility of secured public parking facilities.

(2)(a)(i)(aa) The Department can not divulge the names of the officials and their respective positions. However, the name and contact details of the local office manager is displayed in the office.

(2)(a)(i)(bb) & 2(a)(ii) The positions held and vacancy rate is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **POSITIONS OF EMPLOYED OFFICIALS** | **SALARY LEVEL** | **NO OF OFFICIALS** | **VACANCY RATE** |
| CLEANERS | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| IMMIGRATION OFFICERS | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| ADMINISTRATION CLERKS | 6 | 16 | 0 |
| CHIEF ADMINISTRATION CLERKS | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| CIVIC SERVICES SUPERVISOR | 8 | 1 | 0 |
| LOCAL OFFICE MANAGER | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** |  | **23** | **0%** |

(2)(b) The department will be prioritising Alberton amongst the offices that need additional staff in order to cope with the demand. As explained above civic support will be added with two positions and one position for Immigration service and will be considered for the next level of recruitment.

The business case regarding filling in of vacancies has been approved. The Department will resume the recruitment process as of the new financial year 2022/23.

1. The department has conducted geographic accessibility study used to revise the DHA Access Model. This DHA Hybrid access model provides the optimal number and location of offices the department requires to meet the service delivery levels based on the service norms and standards, including population threshold and the distance norm. Accordingly, the maximum distance norm of the department is set at 25km in urban areas and 20 km in rural areas. This implies that clients are considered having access to the department’s services if they travel 25km or less to DHA service points. Thus, Alberton office is within 25 km radius of the following DHA functional offices in the surrounding areas.

* Germiston – 8 km
* Johannesburg – 12 km
* Edenvale – 15 km
* Boksburg – 15 km

However, the Department also is looking at extending its services as it has a strategy to expand its infrastructure and its footprint. In so doing the Department also delivers services at twenty eighty (28) bank branches which are operational and available to service clients requiring DHA services. As part of its outreach programmes, there is currently a fleet of hundred (100) Mobile Units across the country that are deployed to far flung areas to deliver services to the public. An additional ten (10) mobile units are being procured to increase the footprint in the Department.

1. Alberton office uses the Live Capture System to process and issue smart ID cards and Passports, it also uses National Population Register System for processing and issuing Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates. The Department experiences system unavailability due to various causes like power outages, hardware issues, network outages, and application failures. Frequent network downtimes are experienced and the matter is dealt with by State Information Technology Agency (SITA) and the Department in terms of the SITA Act.

**END**