

Media Statement

Thursday 6 October 2011

Statement by North West Premier Mme Thandi Modise on allegations of irregularity in the awarding of roads construction tender

Having received High Court application on Wednesday 28 September 2011 seeking to interdict construction work on the P34/2 Koster and Lichtenburg road and to review and set aside the awarding of tender PWRT71/11B valued at R93 539 317,53 to Down Touch Investments (Pty) Ltd.

Given the seriousness of the allegations, I briefed Exco of my intention to appoint an independent technical team to reevaluate the bid in question. We are doing this in order to determine as to whether there is merit in the allegations in the court papers and to satisfy ourselves that due process was followed in the appointment of the contractor awarded the tender for road construction.

We have opted for this particular route in order to minimise further delays as the project construction has inconvenienced communities over a long period.

Until I received court papers, I as Premier had no knowledge of matters complained of and or vested interest in the awarding of the said tender.

This matter was tabled at the Executive Council (Exco) meeting held yesterday 5 October 2011 and Exco resolved to support the process to be followed .

In the interest of clean governance, it is necessary that this investigation be carried out within the shortest time possible. The following therefore should happen forthwith:

- Project construction should be temporarily suspended pending the outcome of the reevaluation process to be conducted by an independent engineer .We expect the process to be finalised within a week's time.
- To maintain credibility of the investigation, the Acting Head of Department, Mr. Sandile Mbanjwa is with immediate effect placed on precautionary suspension. This I should emphasise does not constitute a finding of guilt against him

We therefore wish to appeal to parties involved and the public to exercise patience and allow investigation to continue without hindrance.

It pains us that a road that is taking more than three years to rehabilitate is embroiled in controversy to the inconvenience of the public that use it. We wish to reiterate our commitment to clean governance and reassure the public that we will endeavour to conclude the matter in the shortest possible time.

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ISSUED BY OFFICE OF THE PREMIER