

LA/C/55/2023- Anonymous complaint from a citizen against the District Council of Savanne

On 09th June 2023, this Office received an anonymous complaint against the District Council of Savanne containing several allegations. The comments of the said Council were sought and the following were submitted:

Sn	Allegations made	Comments received
1	Street lanterns installed along private road of a place of worship	The road will be declared public and no objection form signed by future owners of the morcellement. Three temporary lanterns have also been fixed for the convenience of devotees in the context of Cavadee and Maha Shivratri.
2	Fixing of lights in private access	Same were fixed on a humanitarian ground upon requests from sick and disabled persons.
3	The cost of the bulbs being procured by the Council was above the market value, i.e. Rs 800 instead of Rs 200- Rs300	Due to numerous complaints about repeated defective bulbs, the product specification was reviewed and the contract was awarded to the lowest bidder.
4	Crusher run spread along private roads and also in a private property against sponsorship of inauguration of a Village Hall	The road was a shortcut used by pilgrims during Maha Shivratri and is public. No sponsorship was sought or received.
5	Crusher run spread on parking of cemetery	Tarring works were undertaken by the Ministry of Environment not the Council.
6	Payments made to the CEB for the installation of street lanterns in inhabited regions or for works never done.	Requests for extension of street lanterns emanates from Village Councils
7	Allocation of contracts to contractors of specific faiths only	Tenders are floated through the E-Procurement system and the lowest bidder is awarded the contract.
8	Scrap metals in the Council's yard being sold by employees for their personal gain.	Scrap metals were disposed of by tender and the camera installed in the yard did not detect any illegal activity.
9	A car is being rented for the Chairman and his previous official car has been left rotting. All repairs are done at only one	The official car broke down and it was decided to dispose the car as the repair costs were too high. A Board of Survey was done for the disposal. On 19 May 2023, it was decided that the Council will stop the rental of the car and funds have been

	garage against payment of commission to Officers.	provided in the budget for the acquisition of a new car. The said garage is the only known specialised garage for this make of car in the south.
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The complaint, being anonymous, additional clarifications (such as exact locations) could not be sought to substantiate the allegations made. However, the Council was also required to report whether it was legally in order to provide for street lightning in a private road/ gated access. The Council stated that Section 52 of the Local Government Act empowers a Local Authority to “do such acts as it considers conducive to the exercise of its powers and duties”. As such, in the interests of the inhabitants, a policy decision was taken to repair all existing lightning within the Council’s purview where there were hardship cases - even in gated access. It has also been noted that as far as requests for placing of new street lanterns are concerned, such accesses had to be declared public prior to lamps being fixed.