A group of seven opposition councillors met George Herald for a meeting on Tuesday, where they highlighted their points of concern regarding Covid-19. Herewith their comments and the reply **(in red)** from Municipal Spokesperson Chantel Edwards-Klose:

1. **Khumbulelo Mkhondo (AIC):** We are not playing politics we are just doing our jobs. George Municipality have to bring the message of Covid-19 to the communities. We also have to think about AFTER the lockdown. Are there any plans in place? **As this is a national disaster, a comprehensive media campaign is being worked from by National and provincial government in response to this pandemic. The campaign is being rolled out at great pace and George Municipality has ensured that all communications received from both national and provincial government is being disseminated to the public, media and Council. George Municipality is focusing on information around the essential services the administration needs to keep in place for our residents, as well as informing our greater communities of the COVID-19 pandemic with all of the communication channels available to us. The George Covid Committee will factor in planning around what should happen after lockdown has been complied with.**

1. **Virgill Gericke (PBI):** Cars are overloaded, taxis are overloaded. We don’t have a Traffic Chief. He is still suspended, fully paid, and the charges is not dismissible offences.  There is no leadership. The call is that the municipal manager needs to conclude and report to Council on our cell phone groups on the issue of the Traffic Chief. Why is this taking 5 months? The Acting Mayor Charlotte Clarke must step up to the crisis. She must listen to and support all the councillors.  
   **Mr Saptoe was suspended pending a disciplinary hearing. He subsequently challenged the suspension and disciplinary proceedings in the Labour Court. The matter has not been finalised and is therefore sub-judice.**

**Services are being rendered and an Acting Traffic Manager is in place.**

1. **Nomawethu Jantjies-Gushman (ANC Chief Whip):** I foresee trouble. The municipality does not have a plan. There is no disaster management plan. The opposition had to force them to meeting to map out a plan on how to handle this pandemic and the outcome is that people’s power will not be blocked, there will be extra toilets and water points at the informal settlements. There is no social distancing at Shoprite in town or Thembalethu.  
   **The George Municipal Disaster Management plan as approved by Council is in place and is being implemented in conjunction with that of the District and Provincial Disaster Centres. The George Municipal Covid Committee established on 16 March in response to this crisis has ensured that business continuity plans are in place for each directorate and which included planning for our most vulnerable communities.**

1. **Charlie Williams (ANC):** They don’t see the dangers in the townships. While the regulations are clear that people should be clean, sanitise, wash their hands every twenty minutes, there is not enough water points. Load hailing is not enough.

They did not budget for this. We need a budget for implementation, because this is an emergency.  
**George Municipality is reprioritising our budget in terms of the applicable MFMA amendments, as devised by National Treasury (name of amended doc please). The municipality has made provision, albeit it limited for dedicated funding for disaster situations.**

1. **Langa Langa (ANC):** You can’t treat areas such as Rosemoor, Thembalethu and Pacaltsdorp the same as others in town. Townships are being treated as “by the way”. I do believe the people in townships don’t take this seriously because the pressure of Law Enforcement is not so high.

We are not grandstanding, we are worried. There is no time to play politics. This is the time for leadership.

They are moving away from their responsibilities, hiding behind regulations. There is no prohibition on holding a meeting. We will abide the rules, but we need a plan.  
**The administration will welcome any political party to meet with them, but it must be noted that such meetings can only take place in terms of the Covid-19 regulations. All George Councillors have been issued with the necessary IT technology   
and support to enable electronic meetings.  
Councillors and the public are urged to adhere to the lockdown regulations and note that George Municipality will not entertain any requests for gatherings or meetings in line with the State of Emergency and lockdown amended Regulations 6.7.1, 6.7.2 and 6.7.3 [specifically 6.7.3(b) which determines that municipalities may not convene, nor  allow, any meeting to take place on its premises, other than those allowed by law, such as Command Centre Meetings, as issued by the President of South Africa. The regulations cannot be applied selectively and George Municipality will abide by the law.**

1. **Wilbur Harris (Icosa)**: We thank the businesses for taking hands with George Municipality and flooding with donations. We call on the municipality to urgently collect and distribute to the needy communities. We also appeal to the community to adhere to the rules and assist local authorities.  
   **Protocols are currently in place for the collection of donations.**  **We have issued a registration form for private individuals, NGO’s and businesses to register** [**http://bit.ly/CAW\_Relief\_Assistance**](https://protect-za.mimecast.com/s/W5QsCvgJz0hWA828sQjGA8?domain=bit.ly) **their desire to supply donations.**

1. **Vuyolwethu Kama (EFF):** We urgently need to increase water points and distribute equally among communities.  
   **The current water points as applied by George Municipality in our informal settlements, far exceed the required ratio as prescribed by the national department. Despite the high standard applied by George Municipality, our Human Settlements directorate is working to improving this ratio as quickly as possible.**