

*Office of the Executive Mayor  
Kantoor van die Uitvoerende Burgemeester*

8 February 2022

**Attention: Mr Castro Leholo**  
Convener of the Protest March  
Gwaing Action Group  
GEORGE  
6530

Dear Mr Leholo

**PROTEST MARCH HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2022: RESPONSE TO THE MEMORANDUM OF GRIEVANCES**

Your memorandum of grievances handed over during a protest march held on Friday, 28 January 2022 refers.

George Municipality hereby responds *ad seriatim* to the matters raised by you in your memorandum:

**1. THAT THE MUNICIPALITY STOPS ITS ALLEGED RACIAL AGENDA AGAINST THE COMMUNITY.**

The George Municipal Spatial Development Framework (MSDF) was adopted in May 2019 and was confirmed by the Western Cape Ministry of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning to be credible and consistent with national and provincial policy frameworks. The express vision of the MSDF is to develop George as a resilient regional centre of excellence for inclusive, smart urban and rural prosperity.

The GAG comments relate specifically to spatial structure which must be transformed from historic patterns of use, and to enable access to public amenities (specifically coastal access) for all.

Spatial Transformation is one of the key development challenges identified during the development and review of the MSDF. The focus to redress the historic pattern of disparate areas, and induce inclusive, equitable development has informed the key strategic gears of the MSDF.

It was confirmed in the adopted MSDF2019 that attention will be given to George's transformation from separate urban areas, into an integrated city that is underpinned by a thriving service economy and offers all residents access to the benefits of city living. The MSDF2019 also noted that the transformation of apartheid urban form has been slow and the imperative to change is a priority. However, the George Municipality has



consistently applied the spatial transformation policies, contained in the MSDF, in its decision making.

Three spatial development strategies support the spatial planning approach to directing and managing development in the Greater George Area and the George city area:

- (1) Consolidate: Making what we have work better for our people
- (2) Strengthen: Build on George's foundations for growth and resilience
- (3) Smart Growth: Invest in catalysts for social and economic prosperity

All three of these strategies are linked to policies and policy guidelines which foster integration of all, whilst protecting our unique environment.

### **Policy Backbone: Transformation**

The National Development Plan (NDP) and the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF), as read with the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, 2013 (Act 16 of 2013) form the basis of MSDF approach to spatial development in George. These guiding documents all advocate integrated development geared towards transformation of historic patterns, whilst protecting the natural environment. Various statutory compliance monitoring systems are in place, including the MSDF Review and Amendment iterative process, which allows transformation enabling input from all relevant municipal-, district- and provincial authorities and agencies (MSDF Municipal Project Committee and the Intergovernmental Steering Committee) and the public/groups/interested and affected parties.

The **National Development Plan** sets certain transformational targets by, per example, facilitating measures to ensure that more people living closer to their places of work and/or locating work where people live; better quality public transport; and more jobs in proximity to previously disadvantaged areas. Actions to be taken, include desisting from further housing development in marginal places, increasing urban densities and improving the location of housing, improving public transport, incentivising economic opportunities in highly populated townships, upgrading informal settlements, and fixing the gap housing market.

The Integrated **Urban Development Framework** (IUDF) is a policy initiative of the Government of South Africa, coordinated by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) aimed at transforming and restructuring South Africa's urban spaces. The IUDF is guided by the vision of creating 'liveable, safe, resource efficient cities and towns that are socially integrated, economically inclusive and globally competitive, where residents actively participate in urban life' (the "New Deal"). The IUDF's premise is that jobs, housing and transport should be used to promote urban restructuring as outlined in the NDP.

The IUDF advocates the effective management of urbanisation so that the increasing concentration of an economically active population translates into higher levels of economic activity, greater productivity and higher rates of growth, thereby transforming our South African cities into engines of growth. Appropriate/planned densification and intensification of use within the urban structure is advocated.

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The key outcome of the IUDF is spatial transformation. The identified policy levers and priorities are crucial for maximising the potential of urban areas, by integrating and aligning investments in a way that improves the urban form. The intention is to retrofit existing city footprints to produce compact, coordinated and connected cities, using transit-oriented and other urban planning strategies to yield desirable social, economic, and environmental outcomes, as envisioned in the National Development Plan. The IUDF consists of strategic goals with related priority development levers for change, including:

- a) Inclusion and Access: To ensure people have access to social and economic services, opportunities, and choices
- b) Growth: To harness urban dynamism for inclusive, sustainable economic growth and development
- c) Governance: To enhance the capacity of the state and its citizens to work together to achieve social integration.
- d) Spatial Integration & Transformation: To forge new spatial forms in settlement, transport, social and economic areas.

The IUDF's spatial transformation outcome is anchored around three elements – **jobs, housing and appropriate transport** – that should be used to achieve the urban restructuring as outlined in the NDP.

The IUDF policy levers should, therefore, help restructure urban space by, at least:

- a) Reducing travel costs and distances.
- b) Preventing further development of housing in marginal places.
- c) Increasing urban densities to reduce sprawl.
- d) Improving public transport and the coordination between transport modes.
- e) Shifting jobs and investment towards dense peripheral townships.
- f) Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and
- g) Developing and implementing holistic disaster risk management at all levels

Protection of sensitive environmental areas is also a focal policy of the MSDP and various national and provincial guidelines are incorporated to ensure sustainable, protected natural areas in the George area.

### **What is the Municipality doing to facilitate spatial transformation?**

The following initiatives/approaches, amongst others, reflect the Municipality's endeavours to bring spatial transformation intent, as noted in the spatial development policies, to ground:

- a) The majority of infrastructure projects are focused on upgrade areas and areas where growth and intensification are expected, like Pacaltsdorp. Transformation is supported in public investment in targeted areas and serves to induce confidence and investment by private sector entities as well. The consolidation of investment in the targeted areas, benefits the local communities as the value of their property assets improve and localise employment opportunities are supported.
- b) The MSDP Review includes transformation as a key driver and projects to be included in the Capital Infrastructure Framework will be weighted to ensure that projects which reach the most people in the poorest areas are prioritized.



- c) The public transport corridors and well located publicly owned vacant and underutilised land were noted as the primary spatial levers for transformation as these present opportunities to improve access and integration through intensification and diversity.
- d) The MSDF shows a clear structure of corridors where residential densification is supported and high intensity use nodes are demarcated/placed, in all functional areas of George. Unfortunately, the uptake of development in some of the nodal areas has been slow as most of the properties in these areas are privately owned. State funded grant initiative are being applied to facilitate economic activity in these nodes and introduce affordable housing along the main corridors close to the centre of employment.
- e) It is the responsibility of the Municipality to use its available development property (excluding sensitive environmental areas/corridors/disaster risk areas and areas identified for community supportive functions) for catalytic projects. As such the following initiatives are underway:
  - o Social Housing project in conjunction with SHRA to bring social housing into the CBD/inner city corridor area,
  - o Reservation of land for follow-up phases of the SHRA investment projects – all within an area demarcated and proclaimed as a Restructuring zone (greatest part of the CBD) – to draw government funding and leverage public-private partnership (PPP),
  - o PPP to support FLISP (Finance Linked Subsidy Program- gap housing) in King George Park area,
  - o Working with the Housing Development Agency (HDA) to specifically identify transformation projects.
  - o Application was made to National Treasury to develop nodal areas in Thembalthu.
  - o The approach is thus to facilitate the accommodation of people in the historically advantaged/established areas and to not only bring development to the historically disadvantaged areas, with public transport and connectivity to support all but also to improve inclusivity by creating affordable development closer to nodal areas.

*Cognizance must be taken that planning processes are time consuming and compliance with various legislation needs to be ensured as well as collaboration with other spheres of government to harness the maximum benefit and achieve optimal outcomes to the advantage of the communities and recipients.*

- f) Maintaining an urban edge or urban development boundary stops urban sprawl – i.e., hinders the creation of low density, exclusive estates and forces the development of higher density infill land. I.e., transformation of urban spaces to a denser urban form as required in the IUDF is enabled. Market response has seen the submission of land use applications for building of flats in the CBD, higher density smaller unit town houses, subdivision and sale of residential erven, etc.
- g) The urban edge also compels the establishment of new, subsidized, housing development areas within the planned spatial structure so that communities are integrated into the existing/planned urban fabric (accessible, with supportive facilities – planned or existing).

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- h) The urban edge also urges communities themselves, to benefit from densification by dividing properties and obtaining higher density land use rights across the city of George. Settlement transformation linked to economic transformation.
- i) The spatial structure is commented on by all service providing authorities (such as health-, education-, economic- etc.) to ensure that facilities are located close to receiving communities, with the focus on poorer/marginalized areas. Facilities are prioritized based on maximum effect/reach and capacity – hence the more populous area will receive priority, as per the sector departments' available budget.
- j) Development applications are reviewed to ensure that integration with adjacent areas is provided and that areas for supportive urban facilities (retail/social) are reserved.
- k) The densification zones, together with the policy of the Municipality to allow second dwellings on residential erven not only supports a more compact city (infill/densification) but also aids the supply of units in the rental market.
- l) To avoid the complications experienced in other local authority areas, where FLISP/Gap housing have been created, but not taken up by the market, the Municipality is participating in a study by consultants, on behalf of the WC Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning to determine the market affordability levels in George. The study will provide input into the Integrated Human Settlements Plan (currently being updated) and the Spatial budget, which advises the MSDF Amendment. The findings of this investigation will also inform a strategy of provision of inclusionary housing in years to come.
- m) The development corridors identified in the MSDF, have been aligned with an extensive, planned Go-George public transport system. This system is rolled out in phases and is supported by a safety and security system which benefits the surrounding area. The roll-out of the bus system has been frustrated by opposition in some areas (in process of resolution), which hinders the benefit of the system to some communities.
- n) A system of Non-Motorised Transport (NMT: walking and cycling) has been included to support accessibility of areas, but funding to implement the system must be allocated, in line with all infrastructure project priorities as per the CEF.
- o) Transformation of the economy is a priority of the George Economic Growth and Development Strategy (GEGDS) and the findings (and spatial requirements) of the Strategy will feed into the MSDF Amendment process – the intent is to protect areas where economic growth can be accommodated – more nodes, catalytic mixed-use areas, people more access to public realm. Although nodal areas, to facilitate economic transformation at local level, have been identified in Local Spatial development areas, the market has been slow to develop these opportunities. The GEGDS has been workshopped with various private/ community/ government/ NGO/ SMME stakeholders, which may translate into alternative ways of looking at business.

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- p) The current urban form of George is such that near all functional areas include a mixed income community. This spatial transformation trend is further influenced by spatially targeting projects as mentioned. The areas identified as the existing, major places of work are located in the central area of George. Accessibility to these areas is continually reviewed (Integrated Public Transport Plan) to better the system. Transformation is about bringing people to work opportunities, inducing social and economic integration and improving the sense of community. Planning on Go-George support this transformative initiative (connectivity) with future lines in place, which relates to areas of lowest income and highest density. Go-George has developed plans up to detailed design level for most nodes – funding for implementation is sought.
- q) Land development applications are reviewed to protect the viable functioning of nodal areas. Transformation of all possible infill areas to low density, single residential use should be actively opposed as this hinders creation and accessible future facilities (socio-economic) and main road network. The MSDF aids to withstand such negative land use transformation in nodal/intensification areas. For instance, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform forms part of the ISC and land required for their job-creation initiatives are reserved in the spatial budget to allow them to plan and implement projects.
- r) Spatial planning and structuring, as applied in the George Municipality is not based on race, gender, culture or class, but considers the key drivers and outcomes that supports sustainable development and fiscal sustainability.
- s) Transformation is an ongoing agenda, although catalytic projects are introduced and monitored to facilitate implementation. The densification of the CBD area and corridors is promoted, funding is sourced to develop economic area in the absence of private investment, public transport routes are rolled out in planned, extended phases, housing roll-out programs target various groups and settle people on land located within the urban edge, etc.
- t) Equitable service delivery to all, formal and informal, within budget.
- u) SALGA has developed a monitoring program to keep track of Municipal transformation processes.
- v) Funding availability to speed up the implementation of specific transformation initiatives is problematic. Various avenues such as National Treasury Grants, budget allocations at provincial department level and the Capital Expenditure Framework Review are followed.

The intent is to enable the public through the MSDF to live and prosper in an **enabling environment**, which can be carried by the municipal fiscus. Spatial transformation, bringing people to work/ amenities and bringing job- and other opportunities to people, - as brought about by government and communities/ residents themselves.

## Participation

The success of the MSDF is reliant on participation by all, including all citizens/ groups and all government entities. The MSDF, 2019 was preceded by a of intensive public participation, including engagements with focus groups, engagement through IDP ward

meetings and several publications. The process of review of the MSDF process is currently underway. Inputs were invited and inter-governmental coordination is achieved through the Intergovernmental Steering Committee. The status quo report is being finalised and process to amend the MSDF, will take place between May2022 and May 2023, which will involve further public participation and opportunity for interested parties to deliver inputs on the strategic objective and policies of the MSDF.

## 2. CAMPING AT GWAING RIVER MOUTH

This municipality is aware of its responsibilities and the rights of the citizens of George, and enforces its mandate to ensure compliance with all applicable legislation. According to the Integrated Coastal Management Act (ICMA) the entire coast of South Africa must be accessible to all. Gwaiing is accessible to all members of the public and the law has been consistently upheld by the George Municipality regarding access to the coast as unfettered access is granted to all at Gwaiing River Mouth, without exception.

Gwaiing is not a Nature Reserve, nor is it under a stewardship agreement with CapeNature, therefore the municipality is the steward and must enforce rules that are aimed at the responsible management of natural ecosystems, including coastal areas, along with the natural landscape corridors that feed into it and preserving the ecological processes in these systems.

In the MSDF adopted in 2019, the municipality commits to facilitating inclusive and equitably managed public access to the coastline. In terms of the ICMA, the municipality must work with the Garden Route District Municipality and the Western Cape Provincial Government to achieve this objective to safeguard our coastal areas from degradation and prevent any form of exclusive use, as our coastline and other natural assets are part of the key informants to our local economy.

Please note that tents that are placed in areas not designated for camping are not allowed at any of the beaches in George. The only difference is that the beach goes at the other beaches complied by adhering to requests not to pitch tents in non-designated areas, whilst those at Gwaiing refused to comply and resorted to violence.

You have made various allegations which are simply not true. The illegal campers, after repeated requests for them to remove their tents, failed to comply with the by-law. Furthermore, three Law Enforcement Officers were assaulted during the execution of their duties. The ablution facilities were also vandalised. The Municipality has a legal obligation to protect its property and safeguard its staff.

Please note that crowd control is performed by the Public Order Police and not the municipality. There was no need for crowd control, as there were only two tents that were pitched in contravention of the by-law.

The municipal officials enforced the applicable by-law and acted within the powers conferred upon them in terms of legislation.

If the aggrieved party has placed this matter in the legal domain, their attorney on record must liaise with the municipality's attorney regarding this matter.



### 3. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

George Municipality's central goal is to create a strong, dynamic and inclusive economy which will address economic imbalances and uneven development within the George area. The Municipality has identified a number of challenges impacting on economic development and has embarked upon a process to develop a growth and development strategy. Municipalities are not creators of jobs, but rather must facilitate the needs of businesses, create infrastructure for businesses to prosper and use its assets to maximise economic development

The following sectors have been identified and prioritised and sector development strategies will be formulated. These sectors include:

- (1) Tourism and Hospitality
- (2) Finance and Business Services
- (3) Manufacturing
- (4) Agriculture and Agri Processing
- (5) Digital Economy
- (6) Wholesale and Retail

A particular weakness of the economy is the inability to maintain a dynamic small-scale and micro enterprise sector. Economic growth requires that we develop our SMME sector and the municipality is currently looking at several programmes to empower small companies.

**The municipality has identified the following key interventions for 2022 to address gaps in the economy:**

- (1) Identification and prioritization of specific sectors, as above
- (2) Development of a Small Contractor Development Programme to maximise involvement of SMME and previously neglected groups and individuals
- (3) Upgrade of Trading Sites in the CBD
- (4) Ease of Doing Business Project
- (5) The establishment of a Red Tape Reduction Unit
- (6) The Construction of a Micro-Enterprise Facility in Pacaltsdorp
- (7) The establishment of a SMME/ New Enterprise node in Themba lethu
- (8) SMME strategy to increase participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in the local economy
- (9) Skills Development
- (10) SCM Training to SMMEs
- (11) Development of a virtual ones-stop shop with resources, funding opportunities and guidelines
- (12) Provision of market and industry knowledge





#### 4. LAW ENFORCEMENT

With reference to the following allegation, please take note that the arrest was made by SAPS:

*“Further note that trainee law enforcement officials, seasonal employees and officials who are not competent, authorised and trained were used to arrest campers and confiscate and damaged tents.”*

Law Enforcement Officers and members of the South African Police Services are mandated by law to execute their duties and do not need an instruction to uphold the law.

With reference to your allegation that Law Enforcement manhandled women and other campers, and your demand that a disciplinary process be initiated – action can only be taken if any evidence of wrongdoing is provided.

Officials performed their duties as mandated by law.

Please note that the illegal campers may collect the parts of their tents that were confiscated after making the necessary arrangements with the Manager responsible for Law Enforcement.

#### 5. TAXIS – CODETA

Public Transport legislation makes it clear that no public permit authorising minibus taxi services shall be granted unless the applicant is a member of an association that has been registered and the application is supported in writing by such association. The taxi group under discussion has not been officially registered by the Office of the Provincial Taxi Registrar. They therefore have no locus standi as an Association and no legal rights to provide minibus-taxi type services in the George area. Section 50 of the NLTA clearly stipulates that no person may operate a road-based public transport service without holding the required operating licence or permit.

A person is guilty of an offence if he or she operates a public transport service without holding the required operating licence or permit, or operates contrary to the terms and conditions thereof [section 90(1)(a) &(b) of the NLTA]. Public transport services without the required operating licences, may therefore not be provided. The normal application process must be followed as outlined in legislation. The PRE is the approval authority and must take the Integrated Transport Plan of the municipality into consideration when taking its decisions.

#### 6. TOURISM

It is our intent to grow and transform the Tourism Industry in George. An integral component of our strategy is on how to expand the industry in the townships and rural areas, such as Uniondale and Haarlem. It is incumbent upon us to address the spatial economic challenges. Spatial patterns such as networks, clusters and other opportunities should be reinforced. We believe that tourists can be moved where we want them to go through signage, information centres (Thembelethu, Pacaltsdorp, Uniondale and Wilderness) and by word of mouth.

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## Initiatives to address Tourism challenges:

- (1) Reopening of the Thembelathu and Pacaltsdorp Tourism Offices  
The growth potential of the tourism industry in George is huge and Thembelathu and Pacaltsdorp must be developed to their real potential. The following tourism segments will be explored in the areas;
- (2) Dine with the locals Project- Pacaltsdorp and Thembelathu
- (3) Culture site guides- 6 People identified to do training- currently busy with route development in Thembelathu
- (4) Busy developing a local township route and the Historical walking route in Pacaltsdorp
- (5) Indigenous garden linked to historical walk
- (6) Herold heritage route
- (7) Nature site guide training – 3 Beneficiaries identified in Hoekwil, Wilderniss, Kleinkranz and Touwsrante
- (8) Nature Site guide training for Uniondale for 2022/2023 financial year
- (9) Various training interventions on social media, accommodation marketing, etc
- (10) A budget for events is developed annually and a call for applications will be published shortly.

## 7. SERVICE DELIVERY

### Grant Funding:

The following information is provided in response to your request for a breakdown of the allocation of grant funding:

MIG (2021/22):

MIG Project ID	Project Name	MIG Budget Remaining	MIG Budget 2021/22	Expenditure to date (2021/22)
405009	Upgrade of Stormwater: Borchers	R5 132 288,15	R4 894 522,30	R1 289 378,19
413256	Upgrade of Stormwater: Conville	R2 549 375,79	R2 427 142,75	R2 030 402,31
413171	Upgrade of Stormwater: Thembalethu: Zn 9: Bob Street Area	R8 780 724,79	R8 780 724,12	R3 887 396,42
413283	Upgrade of Stormwater: Lawaakamp	R7 834 099,83	R7 407 656,02	R1 505 868,74
216084	Thembalethu Sport Facility: New Sport Hall	R1 552 799,77	R95 000,00	R0,00
338917	Upgrade of Stormwater: New Dawn Park	R505 259,61	R505 259,61	R0,00
	PMU 2021/22	R750 000,00	R750 000,00	R187 500,00
432149	Upgrade of Stormwater: Thembalethu: Zn 9: Dick Street Area	R15 990 573,30	R5 820 000,05	R0,00
432219	Upgrade of Stormwater: New Dawn Park: Phase 4	R11 350 197,62	R5 820 000,05	R0,00
432849	Upgrade of Stormwater: Thembalethu: Zn 9: Spetose Street Area	R5 370 422,78	R4 234 802,90	R0,00
433039	Upgrade of Stormwater: Thembalethu: Zn 9: Mbewu Street Area	R1 926 738,22	R1 526 892,20	R0,00

Total: R42 262 000,00 R8 900 545,66

WSIG Grant (2021/22):

DESCRIPTION	FUNDING	2021/22
UPGRADING OF ASBESTOS PIPES - GREATER GEORGE - GRANT - Parkdene DWS WYSIG Grant funding	GRANTS	2 680 000

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## The Touw River:

This is the first year that the Municipality has embarked on a regular sampling programme to monitor the quality of the water in all the rivers that impact on bathing areas. The reason is twofold: to measure compliance with Blue Flag water quality standard requirements, and for health and safety to protect bathers and water users. Sewer spillages do occur for various reasons and impact on water quality and safety for recreational use. An example is the overflow of the Proefplaas sewer pumpstation due to a power outage caused by electrical cable theft. The Proefplaas discharges into the Gwaiing River and the quality of water at the Gwaiing River Mouth (GRM) was monitored. If the quality did not comply with the required standards for recreational use, an immediate warning would have been issued to all visitors to the GRM, similar to the reporting on the safety of the Touw River for recreational use during periods of quality non-compliance.

A spillage occurred at the Ebb and Flow sewer pumpstation due to a pump failure. This was as a result of the floods of 22 November 2021 and 6 December 2021, when the pump sump was flooded, and rocks and debris were washed into the pump sump. These rocks caused severe damage to the pumps that had to be replaced. The spillage was contained as far as possible to minimise pollution of the river, however due to the effluent spill the river was closed for recreational purposes on 24 December 2021.

Our Civil Engineering Services (CES) Department embarked on a water quality testing programme for the Touw River, monitoring and testing the water quality from 24 December 2021 till the end of January 2022. The river was closed on numerous occasions as the cause for the high E-Coli levels could not be pinpointed by the CES Department. The town of Wilderness and Touwsrante above the Touw River are served by a combination of water borne sewerage, conservancy tank and septic tank configurations.

The reporting of water quality in the Touw River, Wilderness prompted the instruction to report on the causes of pollution in the river and possible solutions to mitigate and prevent the pollution in the short term, as well as permanent solutions.

Due to the fluctuating levels of E-Coli in the Touw River the Directorate: CES conducted an onsite audit for:

- (1) Ebb and Flow Sewer Pump Station;
- (2) Investigation into Freesia Avenue as reports were received about possible illegal sewer connections and discharge into the Touw River;
- (3) all conservancy tanks in the Wilderness area including water usage of properties; suction records, tank condition assessments and illegal overflows;
- (4) illegal sewer connections discharging into the Touw River and;
- (5) illegal sewer connections to the stormwater systems discharging into the Touw River.

While there are numerous possible sources of pollution, there was no conclusive evidence of a single root cause of the fluctuating E-Coli levels. The report makes various recommendations, including various infrastructure upgrades and improvements, particularly to sewer pump stations, amending the Water and Sanitation By-Laws to

introduce fines for contraventions of the by-law (e.g. property owners who do not have conservancy tanks emptied as frequently as required), improved co-operation with Garden Route District Municipality, SANPARKS and the Breede Gouritz Catchment Management Agency (the custodian of water resources).

In an attempt to further limit the pollution to our surrounding river streams the George Municipality, Garden Route District Municipality, SANPARKS and BGCMA are investigating the causes of the pollution as a collective. The Garden Route District Municipality will embark on a water quality sampling programme for the Touw River, while the George Municipality will focus on improving the reliability and sustainability of our sewer infrastructure along our river streams. SANPARKS are also issuing fines when effluent is illegally discharged into our river streams.

### **Water Demand Management:**

The Garden Route Dam is a source of raw water that is pumped to the Water Treatment Works (WTW) for purification to potable/drinking water standards. The floods of 22 November 2021 and 6 December 2021 caused significant damage to all infrastructure, including water networks – this after the water supply system was just beginning to recover after major pipe bursts on the bulk eastern and western pipelines, as well as a pipe failure on the main raw water supply pipeline. Due to flood damage to the main drinking water pipelines and the raw water pipeline that supplies the WTW, the main storage reservoirs were nearly depleted. George experienced an exceptionally high-water demand due to the influx of visitors over the festive season and the volume of water in the main storage reservoirs that supply drinking water to the entire George could not recover. The exceptional festive season demand can be attributed to lesser COVID lockdown restrictions that had significantly reduced the number of visitors over the 2020/21 festive season. These main reservoirs must hold an adequate supply of water to be able to provide water during peak demand periods and have sufficient emergency storage capacity in the event of a major pipe burst or other interruption on water supply. The WTW currently just has sufficient capacity to meet the average peak demand, but could not meet the seasonal peak, and replenish the reservoirs. A 20MI extension of the water treatment capacity is now finally possible after the Municipality secured grant funding for this R400 Million project, that will take 3 years to complete. In the interim measures have to be put in place to manage consumption, and measures had to be implemented earlier as a result of the flood damage and the very high seasonal demand. Water consumption will have to be very carefully managed until the 20MI extension has been completed, especially as there will still be general growth over the next three years that will further increase demand.

Part of managing water demand will include reducing leakages and water losses in the system, identifying water abuse and water theft (bypassing of water meters), monitoring high water users (business, residential, industry), introducing water demand management practises, etc. While smart meters are perceived by some to be a punitive tool, smart meters can detect pipe leakages that can be repaired immediately, can alert to meter tampering (water theft or meter theft), provide improved reading of water meters – all of which form part of improved water demand management.





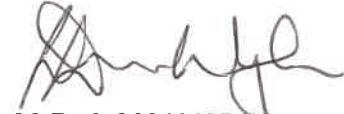
## 8. SAFETY AND SECURITY

The social ills and other challenges referred to require a multi-disciplinary approach and engagements must *inter alia* include the Department of Social Development, Civil Society, the National and Provincial Departments of Human Settlements, NGOs, SAPS etc.

Budgetary provision will have to be made for the appointment of additional Law Enforcement Officers.

I trust that the above feedback addresses the matters raised in your memorandum.

Yours faithfully



**ALD. L VAN WYK**  
**EXECUTIVE MAYOR**