



SERVICE DELIVERY PARTY  
POLICY DOCUMENT • PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

# Water Dignity & Resilience Policy

*Safe Water and Dignified Sanitation for Every Informal Settlement by 2030*

This is what we will deliver.

## PREFACE

# The Number That Matters

Cape Town is investing billions of rand in water and sanitation infrastructure. Only a small fraction of that investment expands basic water and sanitation infrastructure in informal settlements.

The City's 2026/27 draft budget allocates R5.39 billion to water and sanitation infrastructure. Within that programme, R44 million is allocated to new taps and toilets in the informal settlements where approximately one in five Capetonians live.

That is not a budget constraint. That is a choice. The allocation reflects a political choice about priorities, not an inevitability imposed by engineering or law.

This document sets out how SDP will change that choice. It is not a wish list. It is a costed, measurable plan to deliver safe water, clean toilets and flood resilience to every recognised informal settlement in Cape Town by 2030. It is also a plan to finish the water security programme the City promised in 2019 but has not yet completed.

We are publishing the numbers, the land constraints, the procurement reforms and the accountability mechanisms. We believe residents deserve to know exactly what they are voting for. A promise without a plan is not a promise at all.

### A NOTE ON METHOD

*Every figure in this document is drawn from published City budget, strategy or annual-report data, cited at the year stated. Municipal data is updated on a rolling basis, so SDP will confirm the precise source and publication date for each statistic cited here ahead of final release. Every costed range in this document is a preliminary planning estimate, not a tender price. It will be refined through settlement-level engineering surveys, asset-condition assessments, land audits and lifecycle-cost analysis before construction begins. The R44 million above is the ISBS branch's dedicated tap and toilet budget. It is separate from the City's wider R3.3 billion informal settlement upgrading and state-subsidised housing budget referenced in Part Nine, which combines two different categories of spending. SDP will publish the disaggregated split between those categories, with the precise budget line and year, before this policy's final publication.*

## PART ONE

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# Finish the Promise

## *The 2019 to 2026 Delivery Audit*

### What was promised

The City's 2019 Water Strategy committed to approximately 300 million litres per day of additional water capacity over ten years at an estimated R5.4 billion in 2018 terms. The programme included groundwater abstraction, water reuse, desalination and demand management savings of approximately 70 ML/day.

### What was delivered

As of 2026:

- The delivery timetable for elements of the New Water Programme has moved beyond the original 2030 ambition. Recent City reporting describes full programme delivery extending toward 2036 for some components. SDP will require the City to specify, project by project, which components are delayed and to what date, as part of the audit set out below.
- The Paarden Eiland desalination project has faced delays and inter-agency constraints, including its interaction with Transnet's port expansion plans.
- Demand management savings against the 70 ML/day target remain difficult for the public to verify.

### SDP commitment

1. **Publish a full 2019–2026 delivery audit** within 100 days of taking office. Every project in the 2019 committed programme will be listed with its original promise, promised date, promised capacity, actual status, actual cost and reason for any delay.
2. **Restore the ambition** of securing approximately 300 ML/day of additional water capacity on the earliest technically and financially achievable timetable, by identifying which delayed projects can be accelerated and which require procurement reform, including the standardised inter-agency access agreements with Transnet and PRASA set out in Part Seven. Where projects can be accelerated, we will accelerate them.
3. **Establish a quarterly public dashboard** showing the status of every new water source project.

The City itself has acknowledged that the current strategy is "largely centred on the response to the drought" and that a comprehensive review is planned for 2026/27. SDP will not wait for that review. We will publish the delivery record immediately.

## PART TWO

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# Water for Every Home

## *From Infrastructure Targets to Lived-Experience Targets*

### **The gap between installation and experience**

According to the City's most recently published ISBS branch figures, its ISBS branch provides 10,188 taps and 71,909 toilets across 726 informal settlements. SDP will confirm the exact publication date of this dataset before final release, since municipal infrastructure counts change continuously. The stated standard is one tap per 25 households within 200 metres and one shared toilet per five households.

During 2024/25, the City installed 709 taps and 5,873 toilets across more than 75 informal settlements, investing just over R35 million. SDP is not claiming the City does nothing. The argument is narrower and harder to answer: the City is doing work, and the system needs to measure whether that work translates into functioning services residents can rely on.

These are not insignificant numbers. They measure installation, not experience.

A tap that exists is not the same as a tap that works. A toilet that is counted is not the same as a toilet a woman can safely use at night.

### **The Dignity Standard**

Every informal-settlement household should have access to:

#### **Water**

- A safe potable water source within a 100m access target and a 200m maximum planning threshold, wherever physically and legally practicable. Any location exceeding the threshold requires a documented reason and mitigation plan
- Reliable supply, not merely an installed tap
- Functioning drainage around communal taps
- Emergency water arrangements when the normal system fails

#### **Sanitation**

- A clean toilet
- A safe toilet, with lighting and visibility around communal facilities
- A functioning toilet, not merely one that has been installed
- A toilet within a reasonable walking distance
- Handwashing facilities
- Regular cleaning and rapid repair
- Safe access at night

### **Progressive targets**

These are SDP's 2030 planning targets, subject to settlement-specific engineering assessment. They are policy commitments, not implied universal engineering standards.

| Current standard          | SDP 2030 target                                       |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 tap per 25 households   | 1 tap per 15 households                               |
| 1 toilet per 5 households | 1 toilet per 3 households                             |
| 200m maximum distance     | 100m target, 200m ceiling, with documented exceptions |

Where settlement conditions permit, the objective is ultimately 1:1 sanitation.

## The Dignity Standard applies to basic sanitation

The City provides 15 kL of free basic water and 10.5 kL of free basic sanitation per month to indigent households. This rebate currently extends to properties valued up to R620,000. No indigent household will lose access to the City's basic sanitation service solely because it cannot afford the applicable basic-service charge.

## PART THREE

# Toilets with Dignity

## Technology-Neutral Sanitation

### The problem with one-size-fits-all

water supply → toilet → sewer network → pump stations → bulk sewer infrastructure → wastewater treatment works → effluent disposal

In many informal settlements, this chain cannot be completed in the short or medium term because of density, terrain, land ownership or bulk-capacity constraints.

A toilet without access for maintenance is not a sanitation system. A tap without drainage is not a water system.

### What Cape Town is already testing

The City, in partnership with the Water Research Commission and the Gates Foundation, is piloting off-grid, self-sustaining full-flush sanitation systems in informal settlements. The system at OR Tambo in Khayelitsha consists of 36 toilets in three refurbished shipping containers, each with nine full-flush toilets, wash basins, accessible options for people with disabilities and a modular treatment plant that recycles wastewater to flush-water standards. It is powered by solar and wind energy and requires no bulk sewer connection.

All five pilot sites have now been handed over, including Rasta Camp in Ocean View. The City will now evaluate the pilot's technical, environmental, economic and social performance.

eThekweni is also piloting non-sewered "reinvented toilets" using on-site treatment and water recycling.

### SDP commitment: a Sanitation Innovation Programme

Rather than locking into a single technology, SDP will:

1. Complete and publish the evaluation of the current off-grid sanitation pilot, including cost per unit, maintenance requirements, user satisfaction and lifecycle costs.
2. Establish a competitive Sanitation Innovation Programme that invites proven technologies, including off-grid flush systems, urine-diverting dry toilets, container-based systems and decentralised treatment, to compete against published criteria: capital cost, operating cost, water consumption, reliability, hygiene, odour, vandalism resistance, maintenance requirements, user acceptance, safety for women and children, accessibility for disabled people, flood resilience and lifespan.
3. Match technology to conditions:
  - Where sewerage is practical: conventional flush toilets
  - Where sewerage is difficult: decentralised or non-sewered systems
  - Where water is scarce: dry or urine-diverting systems
  - Where settlements are temporary: dignified interim systems
  - Where density is extreme: engineered communal blocks with professional cleaning

## Why lifecycle costing matters

Historical analysis has found substantial cost differences between temporary chemical sanitation and permanent sanitation. SDP will require lifecycle-cost comparisons, rather than comparisons of initial construction price alone, before selecting a sanitation technology for any settlement.

### CASE STUDY

*A 2016 costing exercise commissioned in response to Social Justice Coalition litigation, reported by GroundUp, put the lifecycle cost of a chemical toilet at approximately R237,254, against approximately R65,964 for a portable toilet and approximately R27,746 for a full flush toilet. These figures illustrate the scale of the cost gap between temporary and permanent sanitation. They are historical and are not presented as current Cape Town lifecycle-cost estimates. SDP will commission updated lifecycle costings as part of the Sanitation Innovation Programme.*

## The sanitation service chain

SDP recognises that sanitation is not just a toilet. It is a complete system: containment, emptying, transport, treatment and safe end use or disposal. Every sanitation solution we deploy will have a funded, staffed and monitored service chain before construction begins.

## PART FOUR

# Stormwater and Flood Resilience

## No Orphan Infrastructure

### Why this cannot be an afterthought

A well designed sanitation facility still fails if the surrounding settlement floods, if access roads wash away or if stormwater enters the sanitation system. The 2019 strategy acknowledged that informal settlements on flood plains with inadequate drainage are exposed to flooding, erosion, loss of housing, water-quality deterioration and even death.

### What works: green-grey infrastructure

The World Bank's work in Beira, Mozambique demonstrates what integrated stormwater management can look like. The project combined conventional drainage works with nature-based solutions: restoring degraded mangroves, establishing a waste-collection programme for informal settlements and creating a 17-hectare multi-functional urban green park along the Chiveve River.

In Maputo, an urban transformation project combined drainage, retention ponds, green infrastructure, roads, sanitation and water connections in flood-prone informal neighbourhoods.

### SDP commitment: one system, not separate projects

Every water and sanitation project must include the infrastructure required to operate, maintain, protect and access it.

**Water + Sanitation + Stormwater + Maintenance and Emergency Access + Waste + Lighting + Maintenance = One Neighbourhood System**

**NO MORE ORPHAN INFRASTRUCTURE**

A toilet without a maintenance plan is an orphan. A tap without drainage is an orphan. A road without stormwater management is an orphan. A stormwater channel without maintenance is an orphan.

SDP will not count an infrastructure project as complete until the system required to operate and maintain it is funded, accessible and operational.

### Settlement Upgrade Package

When SDP enters a settlement, it designs the entire service environment together:

1. **Water:** potable water points, adequate pressure, drainage, storage where necessary, leak detection, emergency supply
2. **Sanitation:** technology-matched toilets, containment, treatment, cleaning, maintenance, safe access
3. **Stormwater:** capture, slow, direct and safely discharge rainwater before it becomes a disaster

4. **Maintenance and emergency access:** roads and footpaths allowing maintenance trucks, emergency vehicles, waste collection and repair crews to reach facilities
5. **Waste:** collection and pollution prevention integrated into the water system
6. **Lighting:** solar-powered lighting around communal facilities

# Maintenance

## *The Missing Link*

### **The maintenance vacuum**

The City's draft 2026/27 budget allocates R76.5 million for the maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure in informal settlements, alongside R455.6 million for container-based sanitation and R68.6 million for EPWP janitorial services to clean communal full-flush toilets.

Only 5% of the combined water and sanitation repairs and maintenance budget is allocated to informal settlements, despite the fact that approximately 19% of Cape Town residents live there. That is the maintenance gap.

### **What works: community caretakers**

eThekweni's community ablution block programme employs a caretaker appointed and paid by the municipality to manage each facility. Their responsibilities include cleaning, ensuring availability of toilet paper and cleaning products, reporting structural problems and supervising the facility during duty. The municipality provides cleaning materials and maintenance. Research shows that the major cost of operation, 44%, is paying for the caretaker's salary, with additional support from health practitioners and community education officers who monitor the facilities and liaise with users.

### **SDP commitment: named caretakers, publicly accountable**

Every communal water and sanitation facility will have a named maintenance caretaker, employed by the City or by a community-based contractor, trained in basic plumbing, cleaning, and health and safety, and supervised by an area-based rapid response team.

Their contact details will be displayed at the facility. Their performance will be monitored through the Settlement Service Map.

#### **What the caretaker does**

- Daily cleaning and inspection
- Restocking of toilet paper and cleaning materials
- Reporting of faults and blockages
- Ensuring safe access for all users, including women and children at night
- Liaising with the area-based rapid response team on structural repairs

### **How it is funded and costed**

The cost of caretakers is not an afterthought. It is part of the project budget. We will shift funding from the EPWP janitorial line and container-based sanitation contracts towards a permanent, trained caretaker model. Over time, this reduces costs because permanent infrastructure requires less emergency repair than temporary systems.

Maintenance expenditure will be calculated from the City's asset register using lifecycle-costing principles, rising as new assets enter service. As a provisional planning envelope, SDP estimates this at R95 million to R120 million per year once the Settlement Upgrade Package is substantially rolled out. This is an annual operating cost, recurring beyond any five-year capital programme, and will be recalculated as the asset survey in Part Six is completed.

## PART SIX

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# Land

## *Mapping the Constraints*

### The obstacle nobody talks about

You cannot build permanent infrastructure on land you do not control. Many Cape Town informal settlements are located on land that is unsuitable for residential development: privately owned land, PRASA and Transnet rail reserves, wetlands, flood plains or contested title. The 2019 strategy acknowledged that "unplanned high densities make it impossible to construct and operate permanent infrastructure without relocating households."

### The three categories

**Category A: Buildable now.** Settlements where land tenure is resolved or resolvable, density permits infrastructure and services can be delivered without relocation. These get the full Settlement Upgrade Package immediately.

**Category B: Buildable with intervention.** Settlements where re-blocking, partial relocation or land acquisition is required to create a services frame. These get interim services now and a clear timeline for permanent upgrading.

**Category C: Not buildable.** Settlements on land that cannot be serviced permanently: flood plains, rail reserves, contaminated land. These get dignified interim services and a clear pathway to relocation, with no net loss of housing.

### The land access strategy

1. **Complete a settlement-by-settlement land audit** within 12 months. For each of Cape Town's informal settlements, we will publish land ownership status, tenure type, environmental constraints, density and the recommended upgrading pathway.
2. **Negotiate access agreements with private landowners** where acquisition is not feasible. This includes PRASA, Transnet and private title holders. The City cannot wait for land disputes to resolve before delivering services.
3. **Use in-situ re-blocking only with informed community consent.** Re-blocking means moving people temporarily, changing settlement layouts and disrupting social networks. Done well, it requires meticulous planning and a firm commitment to the relocation standard set out below.
4. **Secure tenure as a phased process.** Infrastructure delivery will be linked to tenure regularisation, so that residents who receive services also receive the security that comes with them.

### Consequence mechanisms

If a private landowner refuses access for service delivery, the City will use expropriation powers where legally justified. This power is aimed at securing land needed for infrastructure access. It is not a mechanism for relocating residents living in the settlement itself, which remains governed by the relocation standard below. If a state-owned entity blocks access, the City will escalate through the relevant intergovernmental dispute-resolution and ministerial processes and, where appropriate, to oversight institutions. If a settlement is genuinely unserviceable, the City will publish a clear relocation timeline and a commitment to no net loss of housing.

## **The relocation standard**

No household will be relocated outside its community without meaningful consultation, transparent justification, suitable alternative accommodation and an independent appeal mechanism, except where a lawful emergency or court order requires otherwise. In every case, there is no net loss of housing.

## **Community consent is not a single thing**

In every settlement, there are different interests. Community consent is not a single voice. The policy will require:

- Demonstrable majority support within the affected settlement, expressed through a transparent and independently monitored community vote
- The relocation standard above applied in full for any household affected
- Where agreement cannot be reached, interim services will continue while permanent upgrading is deferred until a community-supported plan is developed

# Procurement Reform

## Unblocking Delivery

### What is broken

1. **Engineers are excluded from procurement decisions.** Tender evaluation and bid adjudication committees are dominated by non-technical officials. Tenders are awarded on lowest price, not on whether the bidder can actually build what is needed. This leads directly to delays, cost over-runs and substandard work.
2. **Contractor performance is not tracked across projects.** A company that fails in one area can win tenders in another. There is no municipal database of non-performing contractors.
3. **Community disruption and extortion are not planned for.** Construction mafia activity is a reality in Cape Town. The City currently treats it as an operational surprise rather than a procurement risk to be managed.
4. **Procurement takes too long.** The 2019 Water Strategy's flagship projects have been delayed by years. The Paarden Eiland desalination plant was blocked by Transnet's port expansion plans.

### What SDP will do

1. **Mandatory engineering certification.** Every water and sanitation tender above R5 million must include a professional engineer's certification of technical feasibility, cost realism and contractor capability. Any material departure from that certification must be recorded with written reasons.
2. **A contractor performance database.** We will publish a public register of every contractor that works on City water and sanitation projects: contract value, completion date, performance rating and any penalties or blacklisting. Contractors whose performance meets the statutory threshold for exclusion will be referred through the applicable National Treasury processes, and performance history will inform future procurement within the legal framework. The database will be aligned with National Treasury's existing blacklisting framework rather than run as a parallel system, and will include a formal appeals process for contractors who dispute their rating.
3. **Community risk management.** Every informal settlement project will include a community liaison and risk mitigation plan before construction begins. This will include local labour recruitment, dispute resolution mechanisms and coordination with SAPS where extortion threats are identified. The cost of this is part of the project budget.
4. **Lawful accelerated procurement for emergencies.** We will use lawful emergency procurement mechanisms, where the statutory conditions for emergency procurement are met, to fast-track taps, toilets and stormwater interventions where service failure poses a public health risk.
5. **Standardised inter-agency access agreements.** We will pre-draft standardised service access agreements and servitude leases for state-owned land, so that negotiations with PRASA, Transnet and other entities do not begin from scratch each time.

## PART EIGHT

# Accountability

### *What Residents Can See and Verify*

## The Settlement Service Map

Every informal settlement will have a publicly available profile covering:

- Settlement name
- Best available household and population estimate, with methodology and date published
- Number of taps and households per tap
- Nearest tap distance
- Number of toilets and households per toilet
- Toilet type
- Water pressure and interruption data
- Drainage status
- Lighting status
- Refuse collection status
- Fire and road access
- Planned upgrading
- Responsible department
- Project budget and completion date
- Outstanding problems

Every quarter, each settlement will be rated Green, Amber or Red.

## Independent verification

The data will not be collected by the City alone. The policy will require:

- Quarterly data collection by an independent monitoring body such as an NGO, an academic institution or a community organisation, appointed through a transparent process and subject to published conflict-of-interest requirements
- Raw non-personal data published, not just summaries, subject to applicable privacy and security requirements
- The City has a right of reply but cannot veto the data
- Residents can submit complaints through a public portal or SMS line
- Discrepancies between City data and community data are investigated by an independent panel

## Community-generated mapping

There is already a precedent in Cape Town. Community members from K2 and Green Park in Khayelitsha have created digital maps of their neighbourhoods, recording every water tap and toilet with GPS coordinates and functional status. A broken toilet, for example, gets an "N" added to its code. This data provides a geographic profile of the settlement, showing not just how many facilities exist but where they are located. If all the toilets in a settlement are on one corner, the numbers alone are a poor indicator of the reality a woman at the other end of the settlement experiences. SDP will build on this model. Residents themselves will be trained and equipped to collect the data that holds the City accountable.

## The Water & Toilet Fault Clock

| Fault type                   | Target response                          |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Critical water failure       | 2 hours                                  |
| Toilet blockage              | 12 hours                                 |
| Broken tap                   | 24 hours                                 |
| Major infrastructure failure | Emergency alternative supply immediately |

Exact times will be set after engineering and operational costing. The clock starts when a verified report is logged and stops when temporary or permanent service is restored. SDP will publish, for every fault type, the median response time, the 90th percentile response time and the percentage of faults resolved within target. The principle is simple: every fault has a clock.

### Area-based rapid response teams

The Fault Clock targets are undeliverable without dedicated capacity stationed in each of the City's planning districts. We will establish area-based rapid-response capacity proportionate to settlement density and fault volumes, equipped for narrow-access terrain, with the authority to call in specialist support when required. Team numbers, staffing levels and depot locations will be specified following the baseline audit, and their cost will be included in operational budget projections.

## PART NINE

# Financing

## Where the Money Comes From

### The capital requirement

| Commitment                                       | Estimated additional capital over five years |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Taps (1 per 15 households)                       | R185m–R250m                                  |
| Toilets (1 per 3 households, progressive to 1:1) | R420m–R580m                                  |
| Stormwater (integrated settlement drainage)      | R310m–R450m                                  |
| Lighting (solar at communal facilities)          | R45m–R65m                                    |
| Maintenance and emergency access infrastructure  | R180m–R260m                                  |
| <b>Total additional capital over five years</b>  | <b>R1.14bn–R1.61bn</b>                       |

Maintenance of these assets is an operating cost, not a capital cost, and is set out separately in Part Five: a provisional R95m–R120m per year, recurring beyond this five-year capital programme and recalculated annually from the asset register.

#### METHODOLOGY NOTE

*All cost estimates in this document are preliminary 2026/27 planning ranges. They are not tender prices. Estimates will be refined following settlement-level engineering surveys, asset-condition assessments, land audits and lifecycle-cost analysis.*

### How it is funded

SDP's first funding priority is to reprioritise existing capital and operating expenditure. Any genuinely additional expenditure will be identified explicitly in the annual budget and subjected to public scrutiny.

The City is already spending R3.3 billion on informal settlement upgrading and state-subsidised housing, a combined figure in current City reporting that sits separately from the R44 million dedicated water and sanitation figure referenced in the Preface. SDP will publish the disaggregated split between informal settlement upgrading and state-subsidised housing before this policy's final publication, and will ring-fence the water, sanitation and stormwater components of this budget so that they cannot be raided to cover shortfalls in other programmes.

Additional funding will come first from redirecting the R68.6 million EPWP janitorial contract and a share of the R455.6 million container-based sanitation budget toward the permanent caretaker and infrastructure model set out in Part Five, since permanent systems cost less to maintain than temporary ones over time. Where a residual gap remains, informal settlement services will be prioritised above lower-priority capital projects elsewhere in the City's budget, with the specific projects affected identified and published in the first Medium-Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework after SDP takes office.

R16.7bn of the City's water and sanitation investment sits within an approximately R40bn three-year capital programme, representing over 40% of total capital expenditure, the largest share of any directorate. The capital gap for informal settlements is not a question of available resources. It is a question of priority.

## **Per household cost**

eThekweni's experience provides a benchmark, not a Cape Town cost assumption. Based on eThekweni's incremental upgrading model, the median capital cost for a communal ablution block serving 50 to 75 households was between R9,400 and R14,000 per household in that context.

Our per-household figure for a complete Settlement Upgrade Package in Cape Town, covering water, sanitation, stormwater, access, lighting and waste, is a preliminary planning envelope of R18,000 to R25,000, to be validated through settlement-level engineering designs. The final cost will vary materially according to density, terrain, land constraints, bulk-service availability and the required technology.

The Settlement Upgrade Package provides basic municipal services at a fraction of the capital cost of constructing a complete subsidised house, currently around R261,364 for a single BNG house. These are not equivalent investments: a BNG house includes land, a housing structure and full internal services, while the Settlement Upgrade Package delivers dignity to every household in a settlement, not only those who eventually receive a house.

## **The Rainless Day Fund**

We will investigate a Rainless Day Fund, a municipal reserve designed to smooth the tariff impact of drought so that water security does not become household financial insecurity, subject to National Treasury, municipal-finance and tariff implications. The 2019 Water Strategy itself floated this idea, noting that the City has better access to credit and is better able to save than most residents.

## **The affordability question**

We will not pretend that new water sources are free. Recent planning estimates have placed desalination costs in the broad range of R15 to R25 per kilolitre, depending on project and financing assumptions. We will publish the cost curve, showing what each new source costs, what it adds to the tariff and what it saves in avoided restrictions, so that residents can see the trade-offs.

We will protect the free basic water allocation for indigent households: 15 kL of water and 10.5 kL of sanitation per month at no cost. This rebate currently extends to properties valued up to R620,000. SDP will protect and strengthen this commitment.

## PART TEN

# Implementation

### *The First 100 Days*

| Action                                                                 | Timeline    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Publish full 2019–2026 Water Strategy delivery audit                   | Day 1–100   |
| Launch Settlement Service Map for all recognised informal settlements  | Day 1–100   |
| Establish Water & Toilet Fault Clock, with defined start/stop points   | Day 1–100   |
| Publish off-grid sanitation pilot evaluation                           | Day 1–100   |
| Announce Sanitation Innovation Programme                               | Day 100–180 |
| Publish first quarterly settlement ratings                             | Day 180     |
| Complete settlement-by-settlement land audit                           | Month 1–12  |
| Appoint first cohort of community caretakers                           | Month 1–6   |
| Establish area-based rapid response teams, sized to the baseline audit | Month 1–12  |

All costed items in this timeline are subject to the methodology note in Part Nine.

## CONCLUSION

# The SDP Philosophy

## *Eight Principles, One Standard*

1. **Finish what was promised.** Complete and independently audit the City's existing water strategy commitments.
2. **Water dignity first.** Prioritise safe drinking water and sanitation for the poorest communities.
3. **No household waits for a perfect solution.** Provide interim services while permanent infrastructure is planned.
4. **Infrastructure must include maintenance.** A tap or toilet is only delivered when it can be operated, cleaned, repaired and serviced.
5. **Upgrade settlements incrementally.** Water, toilets, drainage, roads, lighting, electricity and waste services should improve together.
6. **Measure what residents experience.** The KPI is not "toilets installed." It is functional, clean, safe toilets available to residents.
7. **Community partnership is not optional.** Residents are partners in designing, monitoring and maintaining their services.
8. **Independent verification matters.** If the City says a settlement is Green and residents say it is Red, the residents' evidence will be published alongside the City's.

## The bottom line

Cape Town's water and sanitation system for informal settlements is not failing because of a lack of engineering knowledge. It is failing because of a lack of political will to prioritise the poorest residents, a lack of accountability for delivery and a procurement system that rewards the lowest bid rather than the best outcome.

SDP will change that. Where the City reports that it has installed a facility, SDP will ask whether it functions. Where the City reports expenditure, SDP will ask what it achieved per functioning facility. That is a harder standard to meet, and a harder one to fake.

We will not promise that every settlement will have flush toilets connected to the sewer network by 2030. That is not technically or financially feasible. What we will promise is this:

*By 2030, every recognised informal settlement will have reliable access to safe drinking water and dignified sanitation, either through permanent infrastructure or, where permanent upgrading is not technically or legally possible, through safe, properly maintained interim services while an agreed upgrading or relocation pathway is implemented. We will measure our success not by how many taps we install but by whether the water flows, whether the toilets are clean and whether a mother can safely take her child to the toilet at night.*

That is the standard. That is what we will be judged on. That is what we will deliver.

Published for public comment. Costings are indicative planning ranges and subject to final engineering assessment and budget allocation. SDP invites written submissions from residents, community organisations, engineers, public health specialists and all Capetonians who believe that a city's greatness is measured by how it treats its poorest residents.