

Council Meeting 30 May 2022: Mayor's IDP Speech

Good Morning Speaker, Aldermen, Councillors, Municipal Manager, Directors, Officials, Members of the Media and the Public

In March 2022 Council considered and decided to adopt its predecessor's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) without amendments

In terms of Section 25(1) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (MSA) each municipal council must, within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term, adopt a single, inclusive, and strategic plan for the development of the municipality, i.e. the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

The IDP adopted by a council is a five-year social compact between the council and community and stakeholders in the municipal area. It is therefore important to note that Section 29(b) of the MSA requires the newly elected council, in the process followed, to –

- • consult the local community on its development needs and priorities;
- • allow the local community to participate in the drafting of the IDP; and
- • consult organs of state and other role players on the drafting of the IDP.

During a Special Council Meeting on 28 March 2022 Council resolved that an abbreviated process of engagement be undertaken with ward committees, and advertisements in the media and social media calling for inputs would be undertaken between April and May 2022. The inputs from these engagements are included in Chapter 6 of the IDP as per Annexure A.

None of the inputs impact on the strategic direction of Council, nor do they require a change in strategic direction. Hence, upon consultation with the Provincial Department of Local Government, this predecessor's IDP may now be adopted without amendments.

The decision today will therefore herald the commencement of the new IDP process and timetable whereby a comprehensive consultative process will be followed. Besides the community engagement process, the municipality is in the process of developing an IDP electronic application which will also provide citizens with an opportunity to provide input for the new year IDP via their smart

phones. Ward Committee meetings, inter-governmental engagements and district engagements will also form an integral part of the development of the new IDP.

My colleagues will accordingly propose the recommendations to this item that the municipal manager be mandated to undertake the processes necessary for these tasks to be completed.

The task of Council is therefore to monitor that the services to be undertaken by the municipality are undertaken to the best of the resources and abilities available.

We need to constantly remind ourselves as Council of the complexities facing South African society, of the disadvantages and disparities that exist, of poverty, the lack of employment opportunities, shortcomings in education, health and welfare and other aspects.

Not only does the country suffer from a lack of economic growth, wisdom and vision in decision-making and poor policies, we have also suffered from droughts and floods, the Covid-19 pandemic and rampant corruption and maladministration. Local government deals directly as the delivery agent of services to the population and councils and administration have largely failed in fulfilling their responsibilities to provide the services needed.

We live in an environment where our infrastructure is ageing and in many cases have become unreliable. Our Council accordingly has the responsibility as well as the opportunity to ensure that service delivery as prescribed in the Constitution gets undertaken and that our infrastructure is both maintained and upgraded.

George has become a highly regarded and sought-after intermediate city. Within the Western Cape there is friendly, yet intense competition with two other leading intermediate cities, Drakenstein and Stellenbosch. These three cities show the highest “growth potential” in the country based on a 2018 study. George has shown substantial improvement in the measurement metrics over the past four years in how we are showing that we get things done.

In entering the IDP engagements each Ward councillor has the advantage of having been in office for almost seven months already. This experience should guide you in your community engagements in terms of explaining the role of

local authorities in providing water, electricity, sanitation, refuse collection, streets and stormwater, town planning, traffic, law enforcement, fire services, providing an enabling and facilitating environment for economic development, agriculture, tourism, other economic services to promote economic activity and employment. After these core services are provided for, the remaining 2-3% of the budget of a municipality is there to provide additional assistance where possible. In many cases, our communities have expectations beyond this that relate to services that are in the domain of national or possibly provincial government.

Councillors need to constantly remind our citizens of the role and responsibility that we as Municipality have to fulfil in terms of the core services provided.

It is important too to remember that George is attractive to semi-grants and the resultant in-migration has increased the pressure to make decisions and deliver services at speed as we compete with other towns and cities that have become attractive due to the decline of services being offered elsewhere in the country.

It is therefore a rapidly changing environment. We need to rapidly implement policies and improved service and operating practices to reduce red tape to ensure that our citizens have the best chances and opportunities for employment resulting from investment that could flow from good, reliable infrastructure. Competition means that these investors could easily be attracted elsewhere due to our sluggishness.

In recent times, we have seen how a school governing body has failed to recognise the importance to George of a tartan athletics track by withholding cooperation to conclude on the provision of a small strip of land that is needed. We also note the construction of a much-needed electrical substation has been delayed in Thembaletu. Within Council, internal discussions on policy and other matters get delayed and have to be repeated because councillors fail to comprehend that such time delays mean other important, often strategic matters are delayed and opportunities are lost.

This message of using the window of opportunity is also often missed by members of the private sector. Examples include business operators, developers or their advisors, who choose to ignore planning or building regulations. This results in additional work by the administration with delays then potentially impacting on projects that could provide employment for our citizens.

We need to rapid learn to collaborate with each other to seek solutions to grow our city. The improvement of lives and the creation of jobs is what is needed to take George into the future. This thought needs to be key in the IDP process.

Thank you Speaker.

Ald. L van Wyk

Executive Mayor: George Municipality