

Honourable Speaker, Fellow Councillors, Members of the Mayoral Committee, Municipal Manager and Senior Officials, Representatives of Government, Stakeholders, Members of the Public, and Media Representatives, It is with a deep sense of responsibility and commitment that I rise today to table the final reviewed Integrated Development Plan and Budget of George Municipality for the 2026/2027 financial year. This IDP remains our Municipality's principal strategic planning instrument and serves as the framework that guides development, budgeting, governance and service delivery across our municipal area. This reviewed IDP reflects Council's commitment to sustainable development, responsive governance and sound financial management. More importantly, it reflects our commitment to the people of George, to listen to their needs, to act responsibly and to deliver services and infrastructure that improve quality of life across all wards. As Council, we acknowledge that the year under review was not without significant challenges. Municipalities throughout South Africa continue to operate in a difficult economic climate characterised by rising operational costs, increasing service delivery pressures and growing demands on municipal infrastructure. International developments and fuel price increases have further impacted municipal operations and placed additional pressure on service delivery costs. At the same time, the recent severe weather events experienced in the Western Cape, including the impact on George, have once again highlighted the importance of resilient infrastructure, disaster preparedness and proactive planning. Despite these challenges, George Municipality continues to demonstrate institutional stability and responsible governance. Through careful planning and prudent financial management, we have remained focused on protecting service delivery while maintaining the long-term financial sustainability of the Municipality. The IDP before Council today is the outcome of extensive public participation and stakeholder engagements. Ward committees, community organisations, sector departments and residents all contributed to shaping the priorities reflected in this document. This process reinforces our commitment to participatory democracy, transparency and accountable governance. Our strategic priorities remain clear. We continue to focus on:

- Stimulating local economic growth and investment;
- Expanding and maintaining critical infrastructure;
- Improving access to affordable and quality municipal services;
- Promoting environmental sustainability and climate resilience;
- Enhancing community safety and social wellbeing; and
- Strengthening institutional efficiency and good governance.

These priorities are fully aligned with the Municipality's strategic objectives of building a growing economy, maintaining a safe, clean and green environment, ensuring affordable quality services, strengthening good governance and promoting participative partnerships. The reviewed IDP further demonstrates alignment with national and provincial development

frameworks and ensures that municipal planning, budgeting and performance management remain integrated and accountable. This document is not merely a legislative requirement. It is a practical roadmap for development. It represents our collective vision for a resilient, inclusive and opportunity-driven George. A municipality where residents can live, work and thrive in a safe, clean and sustainable environment. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all councillors, municipal officials, ward committees, stakeholders and residents who participated in the IDP review process. Your contributions continue to strengthen our Municipality and our shared vision for the future. As we table this final reviewed IDP and Budget for adoption, let us remain united in our commitment to responsible leadership, ethical governance and sustainable development for all the people of George. I hereby respectfully table the 2026/2027 Final Reviewed Integrated Development Plan and Budget before Council for consideration and adoption.

I so move.