



Submission on the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality's Draft 2024/25 Budget

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Submitted by: Common Cause¹ and the International Budget Partnership South Africa² as part of the Asivikelane Campaign³ representing informal settlements communities in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

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Introduction

The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality plans to address the lack of sanitation through installing new communal ablution facilities in informal settlements, as well as by installing Ventilated Improved Pit toilets in rural areas. While this is welcome, evidence collected by Asivikelane has indicated that there are many challenges with the provision of sanitation, ranging from residents not having sanitation at all, to toilets being broken and unusable.

¹ Common Cause is a human rights organisation, based in Mdantsane, East London, which focuses on addressing socio-economic challenges in Buffalo City Metro Municipality and aims to alleviate poverty.

² IBP South Africa is a non-profit organization whose goal is improved service delivery to poor communities through larger budget allocations and more effective and efficient budget implementation. IBP South Africa pursues this goal by supporting grassroots campaigns that strengthen and integrate the oversight and accountability system.

³ In March 2020, the International Budget Partnership South Africa (IBP South Africa) and its civil society partner organizations launched the Asivikelane Initiative. This initiative gives a voice to informal settlement residents in South Africa's major cities who face severe basic service shortages. It supports informal settlement communities to monitor the delivery of water, sanitation and refuse collection services and to engage with their municipality about these services.

<https://asivikelane.org/about/>

In light of these sanitation challenges, we submit the following recommendations based on an analysis of the draft 2024/25 Medium Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework, for consideration by the Metro's in its final budget:

- Increase the allocation for sanitation in informal settlements to ensure that all residents in these settlements have access to adequate sanitation, including ensuring that a toilet is not shared by more than 10 households. The Metro should also show which settlements will benefit from the project and show how many toilets will be delivered to each settlement.
- Increase the allocations for repairs and maintenance of sanitation and water infrastructure, as well as for overall repairs and maintenance in the Metro to bring it closer to 8% of the value of Property, Plant and Equipment, as proposed by the National Treasury.
- Ring-fence a budget allocation for repairs and maintenance of basic services infrastructure in informal settlements to ensure that residents in informal settlements have access to adequate water and sanitation.
- Ensure that informal settlements in rural areas are prioritized when delivering VIP toilets. The Metro should also show in its budget how much of the allocation for VIP toilets is set aside for installing new toilets, and how much is set aside for the desludging of VIPs.
- Publish the names of settlements who will benefit from the informal settlements water projects, as well as indicate how many taps will be delivered through these projects.
- Allocate a budget for refuse bags for informal settlements and designated waste dumping sites for alternative waste such as grass and rubble.
- The re-blocking of informal settlements project must be extended to the Midland Region of BCMM as it has a larger population size in the metro.

Detailed submission

1. Evidence shows a sanitation crisis in Buffalo City

Evidence collected by Asivikelane since the start of the campaign in the Metro has painted a dire picture of sanitation provision in informal settlements in Buffalo City.

Most recently in August 2023, 7% of residents surveyed did not have access to any toilet, while 18% of residents used self-dug pit toilets. This means that 25% of all residents surveyed did not have access to municipally provided sanitation and illustrates the critical need for new sanitation to be installed in the Metro. In its draft 2024/25 Integrated Development Plan, the Metro estimates a sanitation backlog of 17 800 households.

This lack of sanitation poses massive health and safety risks to the communities, especially women and children, who have no choice but to dig their own toilets in the absence of sanitation provided by the Metro.

A total of 63% of residents surveyed in August indicated that they used communal flush toilets provided by the Metro. However, residents consistently raised challenges with these toilets, including that up to 30 households must share one toilet, which is much higher than the Metro’s own target of 10 households per toilet. The lack of repairs and maintenance is another major challenge and in August 2023, 60% of residents who used communal toilets reported that their toilets were unusable. Specific issues included leaking toilets, broken or missing toilet seats and covers, toilets doors not locking from the inside and insufficient lighting inside.

Based on these issues raised, we have considered budget allocations for the installation of new sanitation in informal settlements, as well as the allocations for repairs and maintenance of sanitation and water supply infrastructure.

2. Budget allocations for sanitation in informal settlements

2.1 New sanitation in informal settlements

The Metro provides communal ablution facilities through the ‘Sanitation Facilities in informal settlements’ Programme which is funded from the Sanitation Department’s capital budget. The project provides communal ablution facilities to informal settlements which includes toilets and associated water points.

Table 2.1.1: Sanitation facilities in informal settlements

Wastewater department Programme [R']	2023/24 adopted budget	2023/24 adjusted budget	2024/25 draft budget	% increase from adjusted budget 2023/24 to draft 2024/25 budget.
Sanitation Facilities in informal settlements	10 000 000	8 000 000	10 000 000	25%

Source: Page 7 of the 2023/24 Mid-Year Adjustment Budget Annexure 2.1 Detailed Capital Projects and page 10 of the Draft 2024/25 MTREF Budget- Capital Projects detailed schedule.

While we welcome that the Metro has increased the draft 2024/25 allocation compared to the adjusted 2023/24 budget, we are concerned that this allocation might not be enough to make a significant contribution to address the sanitation backlog in the Metro. We also question whether this allocation will improve the households per toilet ratio in Buffalo City’s informal settlements.

We are also worried that the Metro reduced its 2023/24 allocation for this project by R2 million in its adjustment budget. Does this mean that the Metro is not able to spend the available funding for sanitation services to informal settlement communities?

The Metro should also indicate which settlements will benefit from this Programme in 2024/25, as well as say how many toilets will be installed. This information will help residents to hold the municipality accountable for the delivery of sanitation to informal settlements

2.2 Addressing the rural sanitation backlog

The Metro also aims to address the sanitation backlog in its rural areas which surrounds the urban areas. Its main intervention here is the installation of Ventilated Improved Pit toilets.

The draft 2024/25 budget allocation for this project has increased marginally from the adjusted 2023/24 estimate.

Table 2.2.1 Budget for VIP toilets to eradicate sanitation backlog

Infrastructure services	2023/24 adopted budget	2023/24 adjusted budget	2024/25 draft budget	% increase from adjusted budget 2023/24 to draft 2024/25 budget.
Rural Sanitation Backlog	30 000 000	30 000 000	30 800 000	3%

Source: Page 3 of the 2023/24 Mid-year adjustment budget - operating projects per programme/project and Page 4 of the draft 2024/25 MTREF Budget - Operating projects per programme/project

It is not clear from the allocation how much of the budget is set aside for the installation of new VIPs and how much is set aside for the desludging of these toilets. The Metro also does not indicate how much of this is allocated towards providing VIP toilets to informal settlements in rural areas.

2.3 Water provision in informal settlements

Access to adequate water goes hand in hand with access to adequate and dignified sanitation and we therefore consider the allocation for water in the Metro's informal settlements. The Metro has almost doubled the total allocation for water in informal settlements from the adjusted 2023/24 budget to the 2024/25 draft budget.

2.3.1 Informal settlements water

Water department programme [R']	2023/24 adopted budget	2023/24 adjusted budget	2024/25 draft budget	% increase from adjusted budget 2023/24 to draft 2024/25 budget.
Water mains- informal settlements inland	2 000 000	2 000 000	7 000 000	250%
Water supply - informal settlements coastal	6 400 000	6 400 000	8 000 000	25%
Distribution mains -informal settlements midlands	4 000 000	4 000 000	9 000 000	125%
TOTAL Informal settlements water	12 400 000	12 400 000	24 000 000	94%

Source: Page 8 of the 2023/24 Mid-Year Adjustment Budget Annexure 2.1 Detailed Capital Projects and Page 11 and 12 of the MTREF 2024/25 Annexure C MTREF Budget Capital Projects

Three different projects are part of the provision of water to informal settlements. The inland urban region refers to Qonce, while the coastal urban region is East London and the midland urban region is Mdantsane. While the increase in the budget allocations for all three regions is welcome, it is not clear how many taps will actually be installed as part of these projects. It is important that the municipality provides this information, as well as share the list of settlements that will benefit from these allocations in all three urban regions.

2.4 Repairs and maintenance of sanitation and water supply infrastructure

It is concerning that the Metro has not increased its allocation for repairs and maintenance of sanitation and water supply infrastructure from the adjusted 2023/24 budget to the draft 2024/25 budget. While there is a slight increase in the overall budget for repairs and maintenance, the Metro plans to spend only 2,8% of the value of its Property, Plants and Equipment (PPE) on repairs and maintenance, which is well below the National Treasury Guideline of 8%.

2.4.1 Repairs and maintenance by asset class

Repairs and maintenance by asset class [R'000]	2023/24 adopted budget	2023/24 adjusted budget	2024/25 draft budget	% change from 2023/24 adjusted budget to 2024/25 draft budget
Water supply infrastructure	3 541	3 541	3 541	0%
Sanitation infrastructure	34 139	44 137	44 137	0%
Total repairs and maintenance budget for Metro	497 630	506 352	522 252	3%
R & M as % of PPE			2.80%	

Source: Table SA34c page 42 of the draft 2024/25 annual budget

Given the major challenges posed by broken taps, toilets and pipes in informal settlements, we are deeply concerned that the Metro has not set aside any dedicated funding for the repair and maintenance of this infrastructure in informal settlements.