



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

We welcome the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality's plans to install new communal ablution facilities in informal settlements and Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets in rural areas to address the lack of sanitation. However, evidence collected by Asivikelane indicates many more challenges with the provision of sanitation in the Metro, ranging from residents having no sanitation at all, to broken and unusable toilets.

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 organisation 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, 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 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. This includes ensuring that the Metro's target ratio of households sharing a toilet is no more than 10 per toilet. The Metro should also show which settlements will benefit from the project and 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 the 8% of the value of Property, Plant and Equipment proposed by the National Treasury.
- Ring-fence a budget allocation for repairs and maintenance of basic services infrastructure in informal settlements. This will ensure that residents in informal settlements have access to adequate water and sanitation.
- Prioritise informal settlements in rural areas 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 that 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, as well as for designated waste dumping sites for alternative waste such as grass and rubble.
- Extend the re-blocking of informal settlements project to the Midland Region of BCMM, as it has a larger population size than in the metro.

Detailed submission

1. Evidence shows a sanitation crisis in Buffalo City

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

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. This illustrates the critical need to install new sanitation 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 communities, especially to women and children who, in the absence of sanitation provided by the Metro, have no choice but to dig their own toilets.

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; this is much higher than the Metro’s own target of 10 households per toilet. Lack of repairs and maintenance is another major challenge. 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, which include toilets and associated water points, to informal settlements.

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 MTRF Budget: Capital Projects detailed schedule.

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

Of further concern is the Metro’s reduction of its 2023/24 allocation by R2 million for this project in its adjustment budget. Does this mean that the Metro is unable 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, and state the number of toilets that 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 surround 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 how much of the budget allocation is set aside for the installation of new VIPs and how much is set aside for desludging these toilets. The Metro also does not indicate how much is allocated towards providing VIP toilets to informal settlements in rural areas.

2.3 Water provision in informal settlements

Access to adequate water and access to adequate and dignified sanitation go hand in hand. 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, the coastal urban region to East London and the midland urban region to Mdantsane. While the increase in the budget allocations for all three regions is welcome, it is not clear how many taps will be installed as part of these projects. The municipality must provide this information, as well as share the list of settlements that will benefit from these allocations in all three 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. This 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 dedicated any funding for the repair and maintenance of this infrastructure.