



People's Choice Manifesto

For Local Government Elections 2026

Slogan: *People First Always!*

1. Vision

We believe local government must work for people first not for politicians, tenders or private interests. The People's Choice stands for municipalities that deliver reliable basic services, create decent work, protect our environment and listen to residents every day not only at election time.

Crucially, we recognise that **services only work when municipalities have the right technical and scientific capacity**: engineers, technicians, artisans, planners and scientists who can design, maintain and oversee infrastructure and systems.

2. Core Principles

- **People first:** Every decision must improve ordinary households' lives.
- **Technical competence:** Engineers, technicians, artisans and scientists must lead infrastructure planning, implementation and oversight not political appointees.
- **Accountability:** Leaders must answer to residents; corruption and cadre deployment will not be tolerated.

- **Participation:** Communities must shape budgets, plans and priorities through real, ongoing participation.
- **Sustainability:** Services and development must be financially sound and environmentally responsible.
- **Inclusivity:** Women, youth, older persons and people with disabilities must benefit equally from municipal programmes.

3. Priority 1 – One Functional Clinic per Ward, Accessible to All

Problem: Many wards have no nearby clinic, or clinics are understaffed, under-resourced and overcrowded.

Our commitments:

- **Clinic access in every ward:**
 - Ensure that every ward has at least one fully functional primary health care clinic or mobile clinic point within reasonable walking distance or a short, affordable trip.
 - Where building a new clinic is not immediately feasible, establish **weekly mobile clinic days** with nurses, medication and basic diagnostics in each ward.
- **Reliable services at clinics:**
 - Guarantee consistent opening hours, with weekend and after-hours services where needed.
 - Ensure clinics have reliable water, electricity, sanitation and internet connectivity.
 - Maintain adequate stocks of essential medicines and basic equipment (BP machines, glucometers, nebulisers, etc.).
- **Staffing and community involvement:**
 - Work with the provincial health department to recruit and retain nurses, community health workers and support staff in underserved wards.
 - Establish **ward health forums** (including youth, women, older persons, and people with disabilities) to monitor clinic performance and report problems.

- **Integrated services:**

- Use clinics as hubs for HIV/TB care, maternal and child health, NCD screening (hypertension, diabetes), mental health support, and health education.
- Link clinics to social development services (grants, counselling, GBV support) and to local economic programmes (e.g. training for community health workers, local procurement of cleaning and maintenance services).

4. Priority 2 – Affordable, Safe and Reliable Public Transport

Problem: Residents face high transport costs, unsafe taxis, unreliable buses, and poor integration between modes.

Our commitments:

- **Affordable fares and fair regulation:**

- Work with taxi associations, bus operators, and the province to keep fares affordable and transparent, with clear routes and timetables.
- Enforce safety standards for taxis and buses (roadworthy vehicles, trained drivers, seatbelts where applicable).

- **Better routes and coverage:**

- Review and redesign routes to ensure all wards including rural and peripheral areas have regular, scheduled transport to clinics, schools, markets and industrial areas.
- Introduce or expand feeder services (minibus or shuttle links) from deep residential areas to main transport hubs.

- **Integrated transport systems:**

- Promote integration between taxis, buses, BRT (where available) and rail to reduce waiting times and make transfers easier.
- Develop simple, printed and digital route maps and timetables accessible via WhatsApp, SMS and community radio.

- **Safe transport infrastructure:**

- Build and maintain safe taxi ranks, bus stops, and shelters with lighting, seating, and refuse bins.
- Ensure safe pedestrian access to transport nodes (paved walkways, crossings, lighting).
- **Transport for work and opportunity:**
 - Coordinate with employers and LED programmes to align transport schedules with shift times in industrial areas, farms and business hubs.
 - Explore subsidised or discounted transport passes for scholars, students, and low-income workers.

5. Priority 3 – Reliable, Safe and Affordable Water for Every Household

Problem: Many households face daily water cuts, contaminated water and long distances to collect water.

Our commitments:

- **Water for all, every day:**
 - Ensure that every household has access to safe, affordable water through yard taps, communal standpipes, or other appropriate means.
 - Prioritise fixing leaks, burst pipes, and pump-station failures within 72 hours of reporting.
- **Infrastructure and maintenance:**
 - Ring-fence at least 30% of the water infrastructure budget for preventative maintenance and replacement of ageing pipes and pumps.
 - Publish a public asset register of water infrastructure (reservoirs, pipelines, pump stations) with maintenance schedules.
- **Water quality and accountability:**
 - Test water quality regularly and publish results per ward, with immediate action where contamination is detected.
 - Set up a dedicated water complaints line (phone, WhatsApp, and walk-in) with tracking numbers and response-time targets.

- Protect indigent households through properly implemented free basic water policies and easy-to-access indigent registers.
- **Fair billing and support for the business use:**
 - Ensure accurate metering and billing, with clear, accessible explanations of charges.
- **Sustainable water management:**
 - Promote water-saving measures in municipal buildings, schools, and clinics.
 - Invest in rainwater harvesting, groundwater protection, and rehabilitation of degraded catchment areas, especially in mining-affected and drought-prone areas.

6. Priority 4 – Local Economic Development (LED) That Creates Real Jobs

Problem: Unemployment remains unacceptably high, especially among youth and women, while local economies are underdeveloped.

Our commitments:

- **Municipality as an economic enabler:**
 - Reposition the municipality as an “economic enabler” that cuts red tape, speeds up licensing and supports small businesses and cooperatives.
 - Establish **one-stop business service centres** (physical and online) to help residents register businesses, obtain permits and access support.
- **Ward-based LED plans:**
 - Develop **ward-level LED plans** with communities, identifying local strengths (agriculture, tourism, recycling, construction, services, etc.).
 - Use municipal land and buildings for community food gardens, trading hubs, incubators and affordable workshops not speculative deals.
- **Support for SMMEs, spaza shops, and informal traders:**
 - Designate safe, serviced trading spaces with water, sanitation, electricity, and refuse removal.

- Simplify by-laws and reduce licensing fees and delays for micro and small enterprises, including spaza shops, salons and home-based businesses.
- Provide training in basic business skills, financial management and digital tools, leveraging municipal Wi-Fi where available.
- **Local procurement and jobs:**
 - Target at least 60% of municipal jobs and procurement for local residents, with targets for youth , women and people with disabilities .
 - Prioritise local SMMEs and cooperatives in municipal procurement for cleaning, maintenance, construction and services.
- **Skills, apprenticeships and internships:**
 - Create apprenticeships, learnerships and graduate internships in the municipality and with partner businesses, with transparent, merit-based selection.
 - Partner with TVET colleges, universities and sector education and training authorities (SETAs) for practical training in water, electricity, roads, health support and environmental work.
- **Financing and investment:**
 - Work with national and provincial programmes to expand access to finance for MSMEs through grants, loans and guarantee schemes.
 - Attract responsible investment in catalytic sectors identified in the LED strategy (agro-processing, tourism, renewable energy, recycling, etc.).

7. Priority 5 – Technicians, Artisans, Engineers and Scientists in Every Municipality

Problem: Many municipalities lack the technical and scientific capacity to plan, build, operate and maintain infrastructure, leading to repeated failures in water, electricity, roads, buildings and environmental management.

National and sector bodies have highlighted critical shortages of engineers, artisans, technicians and planners, and the need for professional oversight of infrastructure projects. Some parties already commit to directly employing municipal engineers, artisans and technicians rather than relying solely on contractors.

Our commitments:

7.1 Build In-House Technical Capacity

- **Minimum technical teams per municipality:**
 - Ensure every municipality has in-house, permanently employed:
 - At least one **professional civil engineer** and one **electrical/mechanical engineer** (or engineering technologist), depending on size and complexity.
 - A team of **technicians and technologists** in water, electricity, roads, buildings, and environmental services.
 - Qualified **artisans** (plumbers, electricians, welders, bricklayers, diesel mechanics, instrumentation technicians, etc.) employed directly by the municipality.
 - Comply with the spirit of the Municipal Staff Regulations' call for a strong bias towards technical service-delivery staff over purely administrative staff.
- **Insourcing core technical functions:**
 - Reduce over-reliance on external contractors and consultants for routine maintenance and basic repairs.
 - Directly employ teams responsible for preventative maintenance of water, electricity, roads, and public buildings.
- **Scientists and environmental specialists:**
 - Employ or second **environmental scientists, hydrologists, and GIS specialists** to support water-quality monitoring, pollution control, land-use planning, and rehabilitation of degraded areas (including mining-impacted zones).
 - Use scientific data to guide decisions on water sources, waste management, air quality, and climate resilience.

7.2 Professional Oversight and Quality Assurance

- **Engineers must manage infrastructure:**

- Ensure that all major infrastructure projects (water, sanitation, roads, electricity, buildings) are planned, designed, and supervised by registered professionals (engineers, technologists, technicians).
- Make professional registration with bodies such as ECSA a non-negotiable requirement for senior technical leadership roles overseeing infrastructure and water services.
- **Project readiness and technical certification:**
 - No infrastructure project should proceed to procurement until registered professionals have certified that it is technically sound, properly planned, and aligned with community needs.
 - Publish technical reports (in accessible language) for major projects, including designs, cost estimates, and maintenance plans.

7.3 Training, Apprenticeships and Career Paths

- **Grow our own artisans and technicians:**
 - Expand participation in programmes like MISA's apprenticeship and young graduates schemes to train local youth as plumbers, electricians, diesel mechanics, bricklayers, instrumentation technicians, and civil/electrical technologists.
 - Partner with TVET colleges and universities to offer structured workplace learning, internships, and bursaries tied to municipal employment.
- **Clear career paths:**
 - Create transparent career paths from learner/artisan to technician, technologist and engineer within the municipality.
 - Support continuous professional development (CPD) and professional registration for technical staff.
- **Local hiring and equity:**
 - Prioritise local candidates, especially youth and women, for technical training and employment opportunities.
 - Ensure equitable representation in technical teams while maintaining merit-based selection.

7.4 Accountability and Performance

- **Technical performance indicators:**
 - Set and publish clear performance targets for technical departments (e.g. response times for leaks, power faults, road repairs; percentage of preventative maintenance completed).
 - Link performance assessments of technical managers to service reliability and infrastructure condition, not just spending.
- **Consequences for neglect and malpractice:**
 - Hold technical managers and political office-bearers accountable for repeated infrastructure failures due to negligence, poor planning or corruption.
 - Protect and support whistleblowers (including engineers and technicians) who report unsafe practices, substandard work, or corruption.

8. Priority 6 – Safe, Clean and Healthy Communities

Problem: Crime, poor lighting, dumping, and environmental degradation undermine quality of life.

Our commitments:

- **Safer streets:**
 - Install and maintain functional street lighting in all residential areas, especially around clinics, schools and transport nodes.
 - Support community policing forums and visible, accountable policing.
- **Clean neighbourhoods:**
 - Regular cleaning of public spaces, parks, taxi ranks, and trading areas.
 - Crack down on illegal dumping with fines and provide legal dumping sites close to communities.
- **Health and environment:**
 - Ensure clinics and community health centres have reliable water, power, and medicines.

- Integrate environmental protection into all municipal plans, including rehabilitation of degraded land and protection of water sources.
- Promote recycling, waste separation, and community clean-up campaigns, linked to LED opportunities (recycling cooperatives, buy-back centres).

8.1 Satellite Police Stations in High-Need Wards

- **Closer police presence:**

- Work with SAPS and local departments to establish **satellite police stations** in large, high-crime, or remote wards where residents are far from main police stations.
- Prioritise wards with high rates of contact crime, murder, GBV, gang violence, or persistent vandalism of municipal infrastructure.

- **Basic but functional facilities:**

- Provide safe, accessible premises for satellite stations (in municipal buildings, containerised units, or shared community safety hubs) with:
 - Space for reporting crimes, taking statements and basic investigations.
 - Reliable electricity, water, sanitation and communications (phone, radio, internet).
 - Secure holding areas where appropriate, in line with SAPS standards.

- **Staffing and visibility:**

- Ensure each satellite station is staffed by dedicated SAPS members, supported where possible by metro police or municipal law enforcement officers.
- Guarantee visible patrols from satellite stations into surrounding neighbourhoods, especially at night and around clinics, schools, taxi ranks and trading areas.

- **Integrated safety hubs:**

- Co-locate satellite stations with other safety and support services where feasible:
 - Community policing forum (CPF) meeting rooms.
 - GBV support desks, social workers and victim-friendly rooms.

- Municipal law enforcement, traffic officers and emergency services coordination points.
- **Safety planning per ward:**
 - Develop **ward safety plans** with residents, CPFs, SAPS, and identifying crime hotspots, lighting gaps, unsafe routes and priority interventions.
 - Publish simplified safety plans and crime trend summaries for each ward, updated at least twice a year

9. Priority 7 – Sound and Transparent Municipal Finances

Problem: Many municipalities are in financial distress due to mismanagement, corruption, and unpaid bills.

Our commitments:

- **Budgets that reflect people's priorities:**
 - Publish simplified, ward-level budget summaries in plain language, showing spending on clinics, transport, water, LED, and technical capacity (engineers, artisans, scientists).
 - Hold pre-budget community meetings so residents can influence spending priorities.
- **Fight corruption and waste:**
 - Zero tolerance for corruption, fraud and tender abuse; support investigations and prosecutions.
 - Publish all tenders, contracts and beneficiaries online and at municipal offices.
- **Sustainable finances:**
 - Improve revenue collection through fair, transparent billing and support for indigent households.
 - Avoid reckless borrowing; prioritise spending on services, maintenance and technical capacity over prestige projects.

10. Priority 8 – Capable, Ethical and Accountable Local Government

Problem: Residents often experience unresponsive officials, political interference and weak administration.

Our commitments:

- **Skills-based appointments:**
 - Appoint municipal managers, technical directors and senior officials based on competence and relevant qualifications, not political connections.
 - Insist on performance agreements with clear, measurable targets for service delivery and infrastructure performance.
- **Responsive administration:**
 - Set and publish service standards (e.g. timeframes to fix water leaks, respond to transport complaints, issue business licenses).
 - Introduce a single, accessible complaints system (hotline, WhatsApp, and walk-in) with tracking numbers.
- **Consequences for failure:**
 - Remove or discipline officials and councillors who consistently fail to deliver or engage in misconduct.
 - Protect whistleblowers who expose corruption and maladministration.

11. Priority 9 – Real Community Participation and Communication

Problem: Many residents feel ignored between elections; participation is often tokenistic.

Our commitments:

- **Ongoing participation, not just voting:**
 - Strengthen ward committees, community forums and traditional leadership structures as genuine decision-making spaces.
 - Ensure women, youth and marginalised groups have meaningful representation in these structures.
- **Transparent communication:**
 - Regular ward meetings with mayors, councillors, engineers and technical managers, with minutes publicly available.

- Use SMS, WhatsApp groups, radio and social media to share updates on projects, budgets and performance.
- **People's scorecards:**
 - Introduce annual "People's Report Cards" where residents rate clinics, transport, water, LED initiatives, and technical responsiveness in their ward.
 - Use these scores to adjust priorities and hold leaders accountable.

12. Our Promise to Voters

If elected under the People's Choice banner, we will:

- Publish a **100-day action plan** for each ward and the municipality, with clear, measurable targets for clinics, transport, water, LED, and technical capacity.
- Report **quarterly** to residents on progress, setbacks, and spending, including the status of engineering, artisan, and scientific posts.
- Put **community needs above party interests**, and recall or replace representatives who betray this mandate.

We do not promise miracles; we promise honesty, hard work and a municipality that finally works for the people who live here – backed by **skilled technicians, artisans, engineers and scientists** who can keep the lights on, the water flowing, the roads safe and the environment protected.

