



THE **GOOD** WAY FORWARD

CAPE TOWN, ON THE SAME STANDARD



THE GOOD PARTY MANIFESTO:

**2026 CITY OF CAPE TOWN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

When the people who control every lever in this city use that power to bully and marginalise the people who hold none, they do not get to feign shock at what comes back.

Violence in all its forms; economic violence, social violence, the violence of neglect, incites more violence. This is not a threat, and it is not an endorsement. It is a description of consequence: distrust, anger, resistance, and the slow breakdown of a city's willingness to believe in its own government. It is the oldest, most predictable law of power there is.

You cannot spend thirty years telling more than half your residents that their time is worthless, their safety negotiable, their dignity a line item deferred to next year's budget, and then act surprised when the trust finally, and completely, breaks. Disorder is not a foreign virus infecting this city's order. It is that order's offspring. It is what the machine was built to produce, on schedule, ward after ward, generation after generation, the bill is finally arriving for a debt the powerful have been running up since before democracy, and pretending never existed since.

Cape Town's inequality is not an accident of geography. It was built on purpose.

The Group Areas Act decided who belonged where - and who didn't. Black and coloured communities were torn from the city centre, from the coast, the mountain, the economic core, and dumped on the sand, and the wind. District Six was bulldozed. Langa, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Mitchells Plain, and the rest of the Cape Flats were the answer to a single apartheid question: how do we keep people close enough to work for us, but far away enough to not matter?

The answer is still standing. Tar roads that stop dead at the highway. Storm-water systems that were never finished. Clinics and schools built smaller, and later, and cheaper. This was never neglect, it was a plan. And thirty years into democracy, it is still the plan, on autopilot. The communities apartheid planners pushed to the edge are still the ones waiting longest, for the ambulance, the home, the repaired pipe.

Cape Town works - only if you already have money, a car, and a view. For everyone else: the queue, the delay, the fine print, and a city that manages you as a ratepayer instead of serving you as a resident.

None of this was inevitable. It was a choice, made over and over, in every budget line, every complaint queue, every decision taken before residents were ever asked. GOOD has spent this term fighting that machine from inside it - supporting both the fight that dragged Cape Town to court over unlawful tariffs, and won; and the spatial justice fight that went all the way to the Constitutional Court; that held the line on accountability when it cost us to do so.

Government should not be something done to Capetonians. It should be something they build.

This manifesto is how we finish the job. Six pledges: an Affordable City, a Housed City, an Equitable City, a Safer City, a Trusted City, a Working City. Each one names the problem without flinching, says what we'll do, and says how we'll pay for it - because a promise with no mechanism is just noise. And Capetonians don't need more noise

None of this is abstract. It's a streetlight fixed in days, not months. A prepaid meter that isn't docked for a landlord's unpaid debt. A Sub-Council that can actually move money, not just minutes. A rates bill a household can actually afford, not what a formula says they should. It's free buses at off-peak hours that cut a household's costs and the city's emissions in the same stroke, and parks rebuilt as public space and urban food gardens at once, because every fix we're proposing for Cape Town 2026 is also a fix for the Cape Town of 2046.

This is the GOOD way forward - for Cape Town, in every ward, on the same standard. No exceptions.

1.

AN AFFORDABLE CITY

Too many households in Cape Town are one prepaid top-up away from crisis. Rates and tariffs are set with no regard for what a household actually earns, only for what a formula says a property is worth. Backyarders and tenants are cut off when a landlord falls behind, through no fault of their own. Billing errors take months to resolve, and by the time they are fixed, the debt has already been handed to debt collectors, with interest and legal fees stacked on top of a mistake the resident didn't make.

This is the legal challenge that GOOD strongly supported in court, and one that ultimately succeeded. The case exposed a tariff system designed around what was administratively convenient for the City, rather than what is lawful, transparent, and fair for the people paying the bill.

Cape Town's poorest residents have had to go to court to get what should have been theirs by right. A GOOD City won't let that happen, let alone do it twice.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

Income-linked relief: expand the indigent register and means-tested rebates so rates and tariffs track what a household can actually pay, not only a property valuation, with a simple, dignified application process rather than a bureaucratic obstacle course.

- **Connect and protect backyarders:**

People who have no direct municipal account, must be moved onto separately metered or sub-metered connections, giving them independent control over their own access and consumption.

- **Cap third-party electricity mark-ups:**

We will ensure tenants billed through a landlord's sub-metering or third-party electricity reseller pay no more than the equivalent municipal tariff for actual consumption, and prohibit landlords from using third-party electricity provision to recover arrears, cover other costs, or extract a margin above cost.

- **Stop landlord debt recovery through tenants' prepaid electricity:**

We will ensure landlord arrears owed to the City are recovered from the landlord directly, through ordinary debt channels, never by reducing units or diverting payments on a tenant's prepaid electricity purchase.

- **Fix account errors quickly:**

Account errors are corrected before, not after, they are handed to debt collectors.

- **Transparent tariff-setting:**

Tariff increases go through genuine public participation, published in plain language, with the underlying calculations open to scrutiny, before Council votes rather than after the fact.

- **Free off-peak public transport:**

Through modal integration and the devolution of rail and scheduled bus services to the City, free off-peak travel will extend across Metrorail, MyCiTi and Golden Arrow - not just one mode. This cuts the cost of getting to a clinic, a job interview, or school for households who need it most. This is a genuine, affordable alternative to a car, and decreases the number of cars on the road in a way that cuts congestion and the City's transport emissions in the same move.

- **Climate-smart tariff design:**

Price water and electricity in tiers that reward conservation and scale with household size and need, not usage alone, so a family of six isn't judged against the same threshold as a single pensioner.

- **Plain-language billing:**

Redesign municipal accounts so a resident can read their own bill and understand exactly what they are being charged for and why.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

These reforms are budget-neutral or in some cases even budget-positive: better billing accuracy reduces the cost of disputes, write-offs, and litigation the City currently carries.

Off-peak transport subsidies are funded from existing transport budgets, reallocating spending away from

underused peak-hour capacity expansion toward keeping the service affordable when people actually need to travel outside rush hour.

Implementation is phased over the first eighteen months: billing system fixes and the ring-fencing of tenant accounts in year one, since these require no new legislation, followed by the full tariff-setting partici-

pation process ahead of the following budget cycle so residents see the new process before the next round of increases, not after.

A dedicated billing ombud function, reporting publicly on resolution times, gives residents a route to escalate errors that doesn't require a court case to be heard

2.

A HOUSED CITY

The housing waiting list has become akin to waiting a lifetime. Backyarders and shack-dwellers are treated as a temporary problem the City can defer indefinitely, while well-located land sits unused, or sold to developers and then left to their timelines, or not released at all, while new developments push low-income residents further from jobs and transport. Families who have waited decades watch new complexes go up in the same suburbs they were told there was no space for them, while relocation sites keep landing on the urban edge, an hour or more from work.

This is the spatial apartheid map redrawn in the language of housing policy: distance from opportunity is not an accident, it is engineered by where land gets released, who it gets handed to, and what it gets used for. Publishing an inventory and waiting for a developer to act is not a housing plan, it is a hope. GOOD will not just sell land and hope - it will create a City that will develop on its own land directly, building public housing where private delivery has stalled or simply never arrived. GOOD supported the communities whose fight went all the way to the Constitutional Court, because the geography of Cape Town's housing crisis is not a planning technicality, it is a justice question.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Accelerated in-situ upgrading:**

Informal settlements get security of tenure, water, sanitation and electricity where people already live, with clear, published timelines, not only in far-off relocation sites people never asked to move to.

- **Release and develop well-located, transit-linked land:**

Audit and publish an inventory of City-, provincially-, and nationally owned land and underused buildings near transport nodes, and prioritise it for affordable and social housing, cutting commute distances and the emissions and cost that come with them, while reversing decades of pushing poverty to the periphery.

- **Inclusionary housing policy:**

In return for the additional development rights the City currently gives away for free, we will require new developments in well-located areas to include a genuine, enforceable share of affordable units, not a token gesture buried in a planning condition nobody follows up on.

- **Backyarder tenure protections:**

Formal recognition and basic service access for backyard dwellers while formal housing catches up, so security doesn't depend entirely on a landlord's goodwill.

- **Faster, fairer housing allocation:**

A transparent, audited waiting-list system that residents can check themselves, closing the loopholes that let allocations happen off the books.

- **Build densely, not outward:**

Prioritise density near existing infrastructure over green-field sprawl on the city's edge, protecting remaining natural land and water catchments while making better use of roads, pipes and transit already paid for.

- **Community land trusts:**

Pilot trust models that keep land in community hands permanently, protecting affordability and tenure against future speculation.

- **Regulate short-term rentals.**

We will place a cap on how many short-term rentals are allowed in an area, with registration requirements. This will ensure that entry-level housing stock, and long-term rental stock are protected. A string of one-week lets is not a home.

- **Ensure Rental Stabilisation:**

Establish the Rental Fairness compact, that protects tenants from unfair rent increases and offers landlords incentives in return for stabilisation.

Delivery is sequenced: publish the land audit within the first six months, gazette the inclusionary housing policy within the first year, and bring the first in-situ upgrading projects to construction-ready status within eighteen months, with progress reported publicly every quarter so the timeline itself is something residents can hold the City to.

Community land trust pilots start small, on two or three sites, with an independent evaluation before any wider roll-out, so the model is tested before it is scaled.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Land release is a policy choice, not just a budget item: much of the land involved is already publicly owned, so the constraint is political will, not available funds.

Where new bulk infrastructure is required, it is funded through the existing budget and blended finance partnerships with development finance institutions, prioritised for sites earmarked under this pledge rather than spread thinly across every application.

3.

AN EQUITABLE CITY

In some Cape Town suburbs, a pothole is fixed within days. In others, it sits for months, even years, growing wider with every rainy season until residents start filling it themselves with rubble and old paving stones, because no one else will. A streetlight failure is repaired the same week in one ward and ignored for a season in another, leaving mothers walking home from taxi ranks in the dark. Emergency services arrive with different urgency depending on the postcode they're dispatched to, and that's if they arrive at all, ask anyone in Nyanga how long an ambulance takes to reach a shooting scene, and compare it to the response time in Camps Bay.

This is not a story about capacity. The City has the trucks, the crews, the budget lines. It is a map of whose complaints get answered first, whose councillor takes their calls, whose suburb shows up in the maintenance schedule before the next election rather than after it. It is the City's

real answer to the question of who counts, written not in a policy document but in tar, in streetlight poles, in sirens that turn one way and not the other.

The same inequity is built into the tariffs meant to protect the poorest. The Lifeline tariff is not the flat 60 free kilowatt-hours it is assumed to be. Support tapers as a household's consumption rises, dropping to 25 units when usage rises to between 250 and 450 kWh a month, and disappearing entirely when usage goes above 450 kWh on a twelve-month average, which penalises exactly the households most likely to be indigent: large, multigenerational families sharing one meter, where consumption rises with the number of people, and not just simple usage.

Basic service delivery is not a favour the City extends to residents who ask nicely, who know the right official, who live in the right postcode. It is the bare minimum owed to every ratepayer and every resident, on the same standard, in every ward, not a reward for proximity to power, but a right that comes with paying rates and calling this city home.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **One standard, everywhere:**

A single, published service standard for streets, side-walks, parks, sports facilities and lighting, applied across every ward, so quality is no longer determined by suburb.

- **Fast, equal repair timelines:**

Binding turnaround times for potholes, streetlight outages, and basic maintenance, measured and reported the same way everywhere - no more month-long waits in some areas while others wait hours.

- **Emergency response parity:**

Response-time targets for emergency services tracked by ward and published, with gaps closed as failures to fix, not managed as acceptable variance.

- **Increased indigent support:**

We will remove the conditional aspect of Lifeline tariffs, and increase the thresholds. Currently the Lifeline tariff only extends to property owners, we will change that so backyarders and tenants in social housing can also qualify for this necessity.

- **Accountability over announcements:**

Performance measured against the published standard, not against press-release moments; a facility opened once and left to decay counts as a failure, not a win.

- **Ensure accessibility:**

Many City-owned buildings and sports fields are not accessible to every resident, particularly the disabled community. We will ensure that disabled individuals can access public facilities and feel safe while using them.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

A single City-wide service standard is published within the first six months, covering streets, lighting, parks, sports facilities and emergency response, replacing the informal variation that currently lets some wards wait longer as a matter of course.

The standard is funded by reallocating existing maintenance and emergency-response budgets toward the wards currently furthest below it, rather than adding new budget lines - the money already exists in the system, it is the distribution that is unequal.

A GOOD-led City will remove the tapering thresholds so support is based on household size and need rather than aggregate consumption, and amend the Electricity By-law and Indigent Policy so eligibility attaches to the prepaid meter, not the account holder, letting backyarders and tenants register directly with proof of residence, no landlord sign-off required.

Ward-by-ward performance data is published quarterly, so residents do not have to take the City's word for whether the standard is being met. They can check it themselves.

4.

A SAFE CITY

For too many families in Cape Town, safety is not a background condition of life - it is the day's central negotiation. Which route to school avoids the corner. Whether a child is home before dark. Whether a funeral this month is for someone who chose a gang, or someone who simply lived on the

wrong street. Gang violence in Nyanga, Gugulethu, Manenberg, Khayelitsha, and Mitchells Plain is not a policing problem with a policing solution; it is what happens when a generation is offered no credible future to choose instead.

GOOD does not believe more boots on the ground fixes this. We've tried the army. We have LEAP. Murder and violence persist regardless. Violent crime is not random - it is concentrated where housing is inadequate, overcrowding is rife, and community amenities have been left to decay. Heavy-handed policing alone was never going to fix what poverty and inequality drive. We believe safety is built the same way it is broken: through what a young person, a woman, a neighbourhood is offered, or denied, before crisis arrives.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Sport and recreation as a gang exit strategy:**

A dedicated Youth Recreation & Cohesion Fund to refurbish and build sports fields, courts, and multi-purpose recreation centres in the highest-risk wards - not only as an amenity, but as core safety infrastructure, offering young people a structured, respected alternative identity to the one a gang offers.

- **Structured sport-and-mentorship leagues:**

Coaching paired with life-skills training, conflict mediation, and job-readiness support, run through partnerships with community sports organisations and gang-exit NGOs already doing this work without adequate funding.

- **Reclaim public space and design for safety:**

Target crime hotspots near schools, clinics, parks and transport hubs with lighting, traffic calming and supervised crossings, and open reclaimed spaces up for community use - including food gardens - turning space people avoid into space people use.

- **Professionalise and demilitarise law enforcement:**

Trained, community-centred, human-rights-driven policing, replacing the reflex to deploy the army or heavier enforcement that has not moved the murder rate in years of trying.

- **Prioritise GBV and femicide:**

Prompt investigation and survivor support, education programmes for young men, and more safe spaces for women and children, treating gender-based violence as a core safety failure, not a side issue.

- **Community-led violence interruption:**

Funding and formal standing for local peace-building and mediation structures already active in gang-affected communities, recognising that the people best placed to de-escalate a conflict are the people who live inside it.

- **Revive abandoned buildings:**

Turn derelict and disused buildings into mixed-use housing and community assets instead of leaving them as crime magnets and no-go zones.

- **Joint-use of existing facilities:**

Formal after-hours agreements to open school sports grounds and halls to the surrounding community, unlocking infrastructure that already exists instead of waiting years to build new.

- **Accountability on outcomes, not activity:**

A public dashboard tracking reductions in youth recruitment, repeat violence, and facility usage - so 'safety spending' is measured by what it prevents, not by what it merely occupies.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Facility upgrades and reclaimed public space are funded through the existing budget, blended with partnerships with sports development bodies and gang-exit NGOs already operating in these communities, prioritising sites in the wards carrying the highest burden of gang violence and GBV first. Joint-use agreements with schools require no new capital spend - only political will to formalise access that communities are often already informally negotiating for themselves.

Law enforcement professionalisation - training, oversight, a community-centred operating model - is budgeted as a redirection of existing enforcement spend away from militarised deployments that have not worked, rather than as a new spend on top of a failing approach.

Reviving abandoned buildings is sequenced alongside the land and housing audits under Pledge Two, so a derelict building becomes one pipeline decision - housing, community asset, or both - rather than a separate, uncoordinated process.

Recreation infrastructure is sequenced alongside the green space and park upgrades under our other pledges, so a single site can serve as sports field, cooling green space, and - where community demand exists - urban food-growing space, extending our climate lens into the safety pledge rather than treating it as a separate concern.

Implementation begins with a ward-level audit of existing but under-used sports infrastructure, crime hotspots, and derelict buildings within the first six months, followed by the first refurbishments, joint-use agreements, and law enforcement reforms within the first year - prioritised, transparently, by need rather than by ward political convenience.

5.

A TRUSTED CITY

For most Capetonians, government is something done to them, not with them. Sub-Councils cost money to run but hold no real power. Ward Committees exist largely on paper. Public participation has become a box-ticking exercise: residents show up, say their piece, and watch the decision get made exactly as it was always going to be.

A trusted city is not a slogan. It is Sub-Councils that can move a budget line, committees that residents can actually watch, and a petitions process that currently does not exist at all.

GOOD will not fix this by asking residents to trust the system more. We will fix it by making the system something worth trusting. That means structures with actual authority attached to actual budgets. Participation that doesn't change outcomes isn't participation. It's theatre, and Cape Town has had enough of it.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Real power for Sub-Councils:**

Devolve control over defined community budget lines to Sub-Councils, in consultation with residents, so decisions move closer to the people they affect.

- **Ward Committees become oversight committees:**

Strengthen Ward Committees into genuine Community Oversight Committees with direct reporting lines to Sub-Councils, watching for corruption at the point closest to where it happens.

- **Open the rooms where decisions get made:**

Open Municipal Public Accounts Committee and Bid Adjudication Committee proceedings to the public - sunlight remains the most reliable disinfectant against corruption.

- **A route for petitions:**

Establish a clear channel for residents to submit petitions directly to their Sub-Councils, since the City currently has no petitions process at all.

- **Ward-level participatory budgeting:**

Give residents a direct say over how a portion of their ward's budget is spent, not just a comment period on a decision already made.

- **End shadowy planning tribunals:**

Review and amend the Municipal Planning By-Law so Municipal Planning Tribunal proceedings and information are genuinely open to the public, not merely accessible in theory.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Sub-Council budget devolution is piloted in a small number of Sub-Councils within the first year, with an independent review before wider roll-out, so power is transferred deliberately rather than symbolically.

Opening MPAC and Bid Adjudication Committee proceedings, and establishing the petitions channel, require only changes to council rules and standing orders, not new legislation, and can be implemented within the first six months.

The Municipal Planning By-Law review is scoped in year one and brought to Council for amendment within eighteen months, run alongside - not instead of - the existing tribunal process, so reform does not stall the system it is fixing.

6.

A WORKING CITY

Cape Town's current job strategy leans on one thing: call-centre outsourcing, headsets and scripts. It is a jobs strategy that ensures people remain stuck on the downward leg of a K-shaped economy. A payslip is not the same as a way up.

Meanwhile the City's own cleaning, security, and maintenance functions are outsourced to contractors who compete by paying less, not by delivering more, the City itself driving down wages through its own contracts, on the very services residents depend on every day.

Industrial land sits underused, or worse, sold off. Between October 2024 and February 2026, the City auctioned off 107 land parcels, including commercial and industrial-zoned sites in Atlantis Industrial, Parow and Goodwood: land that could instead have anchored small-scale manufacturing, workshop space, and a route out of the call centre.

And while that land goes under the hammer, cooperatives and small-scale traders are met with enforcement raids instead of support. In May 2026, Hanover Park residents selling home-baked koeksisters and vetkoek were issued notices warning of a fine of up to R800,000 or imprisonment of up to 20 years for a zoning contravention. Thirteen years after the City's own Informal Trading Policy promised business support, mentorship and market access for traders, none of it has been meaningfully delivered.

Jobs should come from Cape Town's own economy, built by its own people, not rented out to someone else.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Insourcing City jobs:**

Bring outsourced City functions - cleaning, security, maintenance - back in-house, with fair pay, stable conditions and proper labour protections, ending the practice of the City itself driving down wages through its own contracts.

- **Reinstate and expand the Women's Road Repair Teams:**

Revive this proven jobs-and-service-delivery programme, giving women a direct route into skilled work usually reserved for men.

- **Beyond the call centre:**

Reduce reliance on business process outsourcing as the default jobs strategy, and develop idle industrial land for genuine manufacturing & production, not just headsets.

- **Build the city that builds itself:**

Direct the City's own infrastructure and capital budget; roads, water, housing, public buildings, toward local firms and local labour, using every rand the City spends on bricks and pipes to grow Cape Town's construction, materials and artisan trades sector, instead of importing contractors and components while local industrial capacity sits idle.

- **Back cooperatives, not just corporates:**

Fast-track cooperative registration, connect cooperatives to City tenders, and open access to start-up finance and mentorship.

- **Support, don't raid, small-scale traders:**

Invest in public workspace and real partnership for survivalist businesses and street traders, instead of enforcement action that shuts breadwinners down.

- **Local, worker-focused procurement:**

Set targets for hiring from surrounding communities and require fair wages on every contract that receives City money, so City spending builds the local economy rather than ticking a compliance box.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Insourcing is phased by function, starting with the largest and most precarious contracts - cleaning and security - within the first eighteen months, with savings from cutting out contractor mark-ups redirected in part toward fair wage floors.

The cooperative fast-track and local procurement targets require an update to supply chain management policy, achievable within the first year without new legislation, and are largely self-funding since they redirect existing procurement spend rather than add new spend.

An industrial land audit runs alongside the housing land audit under Pledge Two, so land-use decisions are made once, coherently, rather than pledge by pledge.

GOOD

THE GOOD 2046

Cape Town, 2046. Everyone has a home, not just four walls, but a home. Getting around means the bus or the train; cars are no longer the default, and with them gone, so is the smog. The air is clean enough that you forget it was ever a concern.

And in a park, a child is playing. It's 5pm, that golden hour when the heat breaks and parents let their kids run loose for one more hour before dinner. There's a water fountain, and the water is drinkable. There's a public toilet nearby, clean and working. The ground beneath the swings is rubberised, because when it comes to children falling, it was never a question of if, only when, and someone

thought ahead. There's no litter drifting across the grass. There are no major safety concerns. A parent can look away for a minute without their stomach dropping.

What you are picturing is the future of BM Section, Khayelitsha, Sea Point and every community within our city, under a GOOD Cape Town.

This is not an aspiration. This is a promise. This is what a Tuesday, in 2046 could look like, because a GOOD city refused to sit idly by.



2046

**IS A CAPE TOWN
BUILT BY RESIDENTS,
FOR RESIDENTS**