



THE **GOOD** WAY FORWARD

**SOL PLAATJE:
OUR COMMUNITY, OUR DIAMOND.**



THE GOOD PARTY MANIFESTO:

**2026 SOL PLAATJE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

GOOD

A CITY NAMED AFTER A MAN WHO WROTE IT ALL DOWN

Sol Plaatje spent his life documenting, precisely and without flinching, exactly what was being done to his people and by whom. As founding secretary-general of the organisation that became the ANC, and as the author of Native Life in South Africa, he turned dispossession into a public record no one could pretend not to have read. The city that carries his name today - Kimberley, Galeshewe, Ritchie and Platfontein - does not need him to come back and document its own decline. The evidence is already sitting in the potholes, the water outages and the municipal accounts.

This is a city that was built on digging the ground out from under itself, the Big Hole is still there to prove it, the deepest hole ever dug by hand, diamonds pulled out of it that financed fortunes on the other side of the world. Generations later, the mines that built Kimberley have scaled back or closed, and the wealth they generated never quite made it to the households that live beside the hole it left behind.

Meanwhile the basics keep failing. The Riverton pumping station that supplies the city's water breaks down often

enough that residents have come to expect it, leaving parts of Kimberley and Galeshewe without a reliable supply for days at a time. Billing errors turn ordinary households into overnight debtors. Roads crumble faster than they're patched. And beneath parts of a city built on a century of underground mining, the ground itself cannot always be trusted to stay where it is.

A city that dug diamonds out of the ground for the world should not have to beg for water for itself.

This manifesto is GOOD's answer. Six pledges: a Trusted City, a Functional City, a Working City, an Affordable City, a Safe City, a Proud City. Each one names the failure plainly, says what we'll do about it, and says how - because a city this rich in history does not need another empty tribute. It needs a government that finally lives up to the name on the sign.

This is the GOOD way forward - for Kimberley, Galeshewe, Ritchie and Platfontein, on the same standard. No exceptions.



1.

A TRUSTED CITY

Residents of Sol Plaatje have had to fight their own municipality for an accurate bill, watched qualified audit findings pile up year after year without consequence, and lived with a council that manages a crisis by announcing a plan rather than finishing one. Trust is not rebuilt with another press statement. It is rebuilt when residents can see, in public, that the money is accounted for and the people responsible for a failure are actually held to something.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **A public financial recovery plan:**

Targets published and tracked against actual performance every quarter, addressing audit findings one by one instead of carrying the same ones forward year after year.

- **Protect senior administrative posts from political interference:**

Properly recruited municipal manager and CFO appointments, shielded from being pushed out every time the political mood in council shifts.

- **Open budget and supply chain meetings:**

SCM and budget committee decisions made in view of the public, not behind it.

- **An independent billing dispute panel:**

Oversight of the municipality's own billing disputes process, so residents aren't left arguing with the same department that made the error.

- **A working petitions channel:**

Residents across Kimberley, Galeshewe, Ritchie and Platfontein can raise an issue with their ward councillor and see it tracked to resolution.

- **Publish consequence management:**

Every audit finding and forensic report gets a public tracker showing what was found and what happened to those responsible.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

The recovery plan and open-meeting reforms require no new budget - only the will to make existing processes public, achievable within the first six months.

The billing dispute panel is established in the first year, drawing on the same data and staff already handling disputes, restructured for independence rather than rebuilt from scratch.

2.

A FUNCTIONAL CITY

When the Riverton pumping station fails, Kimberley and Galeshewe do not get a trickle - they get nothing, for days, in a city that has had more than a century to build redundancy into its own water supply and never has. Roads across the municipality carry potholes deep enough to damage a vehicle in a single trip. And beneath parts of a city undercut by generations of mining, ground subsidence is a live risk that residents are left to discover for themselves rather than a hazard the municipality maps and manages.

A functional city does not require reinventing Kimberley's infrastructure. It requires finally building the redundancy, maintenance and honesty that more than a hundred years of mining wealth should have paid for already.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Bulk water resilience:**

Invest in backup capacity and faster fault response at the Riverton pumping station, so a single mechanical failure no longer means days without water for entire suburbs.

- **Published repair timelines:**

Fixed, public turnaround times for water leaks, electricity faults and road repairs, tracked the same way in every ward.

- **A public ground-stability register:**

Map and monitor areas at risk of subsidence from historic mining works, with the results published, not discovered by a resident when the road gives way.

- **An infrastructure asset register:**

An honest account of the state of the city's water, electricity and road infrastructure, so capital budgets are set against real need.

- **A reliable refuse standard:**

Fixed collection days that are actually kept, with a public reporting line for missed collections.

- **A ward-level service dashboard:**

Residents can check whether the published standard for water, roads and refuse is being met in their own ward.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Riverton resilience investment is pursued through national bulk infrastructure grant funding, given the scale of the works, sequenced to start within the first eighteen months.

The ground-stability register uses existing mining survey records already held by provincial and national bodies, and can be compiled and published within the first year at minimal cost.

3.

A WORKING CITY

Kimberley was built by diamonds, and diamonds built somewhere else's fortune. As De Beers scaled back its operations over the decades, the city never fully replaced the jobs that went with them, leaving Sol Plaatje with unemployment that has outlasted the mining boom that once justified the city's existence. Meanwhile the province around it has become the centre of South Africa's solar and wind energy build-out - and Kimberley, as the Northern Cape's capital and logistics hub, is positioned to capture the jobs that industry needs and consistently fails to.

A working city does not wait for the next mine to reopen. It builds what comes after mining - logistics, manufacturing supply chains, agriculture, and the administrative and technical jobs a provincial capital should already be capturing.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Capture the renewable energy economy:**

Position Sol Plaatje as the logistics, skills-training and service base for the Northern Cape's solar and wind sector, rather than watching those jobs settle in surrounding districts.

- **Insourcing municipal jobs:**

Bring outsourced cleaning, security and maintenance functions back in-house with fair pay, ending the practice of the city driving down its own local wages.

- **Support agriculture and agro-processing:**

Back the Northern Cape's livestock, game and wool farmers with market access and local processing capacity, so more of that value stays in the district.

- **Back small-scale and informal traders:**

Invest in public trading infrastructure in Galeshewe and Kimberley's townships instead of enforcement action that shuts breadwinners down.

- **Local procurement:**

Municipal contracts prioritise Sol Plaatje-based cooperatives and small businesses wherever they can deliver.

- **Unlock idle municipal and provincial land:**

Audit and publish an inventory of vacant land suited to industrial and logistics use, instead of leaving it to sit undeveloped.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Positioning Sol Plaatje for the renewable energy economy is pursued through partnership with provincial economic development bodies and the independent power producers already active in the region, over the first two years.

Insourcing and local procurement changes are within the municipality's own power to implement in the first year, phased by contract as each comes up for renewal.

4.

AN AFFORDABLE CITY

Residents of Sol Plaatje have had to contend with municipal bills that bear little relationship to what they actually used, estimated readings, disputed charges, and accounts that reach debt collectors before the error behind them is ever corrected. In a city with unemployment this high, an inaccurate bill is not a paperwork problem. It is a household budget crisis that the municipality itself created.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

These reforms are largely self-funding, fewer billing disputes and less debt written off saves the municipality money it currently loses to its own errors.

Meter-reading reform and lifeline tariff protection are implemented within the first year; the billing ombud and full tariff-setting participation process are in place ahead of the next budget cycle.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Fix billing at the source:**

Prioritise accurate, regular meter reading over estimates, and correct disputed charges before they reach a debt collector, not after.

- **Income-linked relief:**

An expanded indigent register and means-tested rebates that reflect the reality of Sol Plaatje's unemployment rate.

- **Transparent tariff-setting:**

Increases go through genuine, published public participation before Council votes, not after.

- **Protect lifeline tariffs:**

Extend eligibility to backyarders and tenants in Galeshewe and Kimberley's townships, not only property owners.

- **A billing ombud:**

A dedicated, publicly-reported channel for residents to resolve billing disputes without needing a lawyer.

- **Plain-language billing:**

Municipal accounts residents can actually read and understand.

5.

A SAFE CITY

For families in Galeshewe and Kimberley's townships, safety is a daily calculation - which street to avoid, whether a child is home before dark. Under-resourced policing, poorly lit public space, and a generation offered little beyond what a gang or a shortcut into crime can provide have left these communities carrying a burden the rest of the city rarely has to think about.

A safe city is not built by enforcement alone. It is built by what a young person is offered before crisis arrives - recreation, mentorship, and public space worth reclaiming.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Sport and recreation as a safety investment:**
Refurbish and build sports fields and recreation centres in Galeshewe and other high-risk areas, treated as core safety infrastructure.
- **Structured mentorship programmes:**
Coaching paired with life-skills training and job-readiness support, delivered through partnerships with community organisations already doing this work without adequate funding.
- **Reclaim public space:**
Lighting and visible safety infrastructure targeted at crime hotspots near schools, clinics and transport routes.
- **Prioritise GBV response:**
Prompt investigation, survivor support points, and education programmes for young men.
- **Community-led safety structures:**
Formal standing and funding for local mediation and neighbourhood watch structures already active in Sol Plaatje's communities.
- **Professionalise law enforcement:**
Trained, community-centred policing focused on the areas and hours where violence is concentrated.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Facility upgrades and reclaimed public space are funded through the existing budget, blended with partnerships with sports development bodies and NGOs, prioritising the highest-risk areas first.

Implementation begins with a ward-level audit of crime hotspots and under-used infrastructure within the first six months, followed by the first upgrades within the first year.

6.

A PROUD CITY

Sol Plaatje was a writer and a translator as much as he was a founding father of South African liberation politics, he rendered Shakespeare into Setswana, and turned journalism into a weapon against dispossession. That legacy deserves more than a name on a municipal letterhead. It deserves a city that invests in its own libraries, archives and public institutions the way he invested in the written word.

The Big Hole still draws visitors from around the world to see what a century of diamond mining left behind. But heritage tourism in Sol Plaatje has been left to run on momentum rather than investment, and the civic pride that comes with a well-kept public realm - parks, monuments, libraries, has been allowed to decay along with everything else.

THE GOOD WAY FORWARD

- **Invest in libraries and literacy:**

Restore and expand public library services across Sol Plaatje's wards, honouring the name the city carries with more than a statue.

- **Back Big Hole and heritage tourism:**

Fund the maintenance and marketing this heritage asset needs to become a genuine job creator, not just a postcard.

- **Restore public space:**

Maintain parks, monuments and civic buildings across Kimberley, Galeshewe, Ritchie and Platfontein to a single, published standard.

- **Support local arts and culture:**

Fund community arts programmes and public events that give young people in Galeshewe and beyond a stake in the city's cultural life.

- **Protect and expand archives:**

Properly resource the municipal and provincial archives and museums that hold the city's own history, including Sol Plaatje's.

- **A civic pride programme:**

Resident-led ward clean-up and beautification initiatives, funded and recognised by the municipality rather than left to volunteers alone.

HOW WE DELIVER IT

Library and public space investment is phased across wards over the first two years, prioritising facilities in the poorest state of repair first.

Heritage tourism funding is pursued through provincial tourism and national heritage grant programmes, paired with a municipal marketing push within the first year.

**GOOD**

THE GOOD SOL PLAATJE, 2046

Sol Plaatje, 2046. The taps run in Kimberley and Galeshewe alike, because the Riverton pumping station was finally given the redundancy a hundred years of mining wealth should have paid for long ago. The roads are roads, and the ground beneath the oldest parts of the city is mapped and monitored, not a mystery residents discover the hard way.

At the Big Hole, visitors queue for a city that has learned to value what it has - the diamonds are long gone, but the story, and the jobs that come from telling it well, remain. In Galeshewe, a library named for a man who translated Shakespeare into Setswana is full of children doing their own reading, in a building the municipality actually maintains.

A council pays its bills on time, bills its residents accurately, and answers its petitions - not because the politics got easier, but because the people running it decided that living up to the name on the sign mattered more than surviving the next audit.

What you are picturing is not a fantasy. It is what a city that dug diamonds out of the ground for the world was always capable of being for the people who live around the hole it left behind.

**2046**

**IS A SOL PLAATJE BUILT BY RESIDENTS,
FOR RESIDENTS - A CITY FINALLY
WORTHY OF THE NAME IT CARRIES.**