

Should the municipality go back to basics?

Madam -

The government has, over the years, introduced many different programmes and initiatives in an attempt to encourage effective and efficient governance of the country, delivery of services, poverty alleviation and job creation.

We have seen health programmes, expanded public works and community development programmes, the Integrated Development Plan and more. All of these were admirable in purpose, but have had seemingly mediocre success, hence service delivery protests and burgeoning costs of living. That is, provision of services to meet basic human essentials.

Of all these initiatives, the best, to my mind, was the 'B2B' programme (Back to Basics). The intention of this programme (as I understood) was to encourage local government to

implement its legislated responsibilities. Reporting formats and channels were launched for municipalities to regularly report to Provincial, and ultimately National Government, on performance with regard to basic maintenance of infrastructure, (potholes, grass cutting, refuse removal) and basic, sound financial management. Evidently, to no avail.

In the light of recent events, I believe the current leadership of all spheres of government would do well to do just that, get BACK TO BASICS. The Constitution clearly states that Local Government is responsible for creating an enabling environment for Economic Development, and investment. It is not happening.

Reports on incidents of fraud and corruption are well known and, on the face of it, well covered up. The lack of maintenance of existing infrastructure (never mind planning for future service delivery demands), is painfully

obvious.

We need leaders of integrity, a government that truly cares about its people and its future, not a group of self-serving politicians blatantly disregarding the fundamentals of their duties.

It is not too late. Let's get '**Back to Basics**', stop blaming the past, and each other, protecting criminals, and genuinely boost South Africa into a God-fearing, well governed and desirable place to live. To become the 'Jewel of Africa'.

At the very least, could local leadership elevate Newcastle to this at a provincial level?

Sue McAlister

The letter above was sent to Head of Communications for the Newcastle Municipality, Dr Dumisani Thabethe, for comment. He acknowledged the request and said: "The letters have been forwarded to the MM for his consideration." However, at the time of going to print, there has been no further communication from the Newcastle Municipality - Ed