



Publication: Mercury - Main

Title: eThekweni Municipality invests R46 million to extend vital public works programme

Publish date: 09 Jul 2026

Page: 6

Reach: 7593

AVE: R 17452.86

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eThekweni Municipality invests R46 million to extend vital public works programme

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THE eThekweni Municipality will spend R46 million on the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) for a further six months ending December 31, 2026.

The municipality will extend the current contracts of the beneficiaries in line with the EPWP guidelines and applicable programme provisions, after getting the go-ahead at council on Tuesday.

In a report before the council, the municipality stated that the contract extension will ensure continuity and stability of the EPWP projects and services, while the process of engaging new beneficiaries is under way.

The municipality stated that the participants currently deployed across various municipal programmes provide essential support services that directly contribute to community safety, service delivery, public health, social development, environmental management, and local governance.

Jane Naidoo, IFP eThekweni Ward 99 councillor, raised concerns at council about the municipality having to fund a national initiative and cautioned against manipulating the programme as a tool for party activism and campaigns in the upcoming elections.

The EPWP plays a role in administration support (32 participants), waste management directorate (440), area-based management (44), parks and recreation (92), the social sector (414 participants), community-based water agents (41), and Safer Cities (18).

The municipality detailed the jobs undertaken in each department as follows:

◆ Administration support

Participants provide critical administrative support across municipal EPWP operations, including payroll, data capture, and monitoring, as well as technical support for the Vukuphile Contractor Development Programme.

◆ Waste management directorate

Participants provide essential waste management services and operational tasks to keep communities and facilities clean. Their duties centre on refuse collection, street sweeping, equipment maintenance, and ensuring compliance with basic health and safety protocols across various municipal depots within eThekweni.

◆ Area-based management

Participants support fault logging and follow-up, service delivery monitoring, stakeholder coordination, by-law compliance, socio-economic programmes, and community awareness initiatives to improve customer experience and service delivery in precincts.

◆ Parks and recreation

Participants are responsible for the maintenance, cleaning, and upkeep of parks, sports fields, cemeteries, and other public open spaces across the municipality, contributing to environmental sustainability, community well-being, improved recreational facilities, and overall enhancement of public spaces and municipal assets.

◆ Social sector

Participants support the implementation of Operation Sukuma Sakhe, youth development, military veterans' programmes, library services, clinic support services, councillors' office support, HIV/Aids awareness campaigns, paralegal referrals, community outreach initiatives, and compliance support for community creches.

◆ Safer Cities

Participants support crime prevention initiatives, community awareness campaigns, peaceful marches, and anti-substance abuse programmes. They also assist in monitoring and reporting crime trends, participate in war rooms, and support law enforcement during peak seasons.

◆ Community-based water agents

Participants support water and sanitation service delivery through reporting sewer blockages, attending war rooms, participating in Operation Good Hope and clean-up campaigns, and verifying completed service delivery jobs.

In its motivation for the extension, the municipality stated that the discontinuation of these services at this stage would negatively impact communities and place additional strain on already limited municipal resources.

It emphasised that these programmes serve as poverty alleviation initiatives.

The municipality stated that sufficient funding is available to accommodate the costs associated with the proposed contract extension.

City Manager Musa Mbhele is expected to enter into a grant agreement with the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in respect of the 2026/27 EPWP grant funding estimated at R7.4 million.