

Statement by the Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Alderman Patricia de Lille

The facts about public lighting in Khayelitsha

I will be attending the march due to be held tonight in Khayelitsha on the issue of public lighting. I have decided to do so in order to help explain to the participants what exactly the situation is and to ensure that there is a full understanding of the complexities at hand.

The City of Cape Town, apart from the usual repairs and maintenance undertaken in the Khayelitsha area; has, in response to complaints received, accelerated a pro-active repairs programme. By September 2012, all lights with a life span of 5 years were fitted. The net result of this work was the burning rate in major parts of Khayelitsha improved from 20-30% to that of 85-90%.

However, within six months, 35% of these lights were working. This is because in some areas illegal electricity connections overloaded the electricity supply system, and significant vandalism rendered many of these lights inoperable. In one instance alone, cables were stolen twice by vandals digging up tar.

Undeterred, the City is continuing to improve public lighting in the area. Repair crews have fixed the majority of public lighting from Mew Way to Oscar Mpetha. Another team has been working on Lansdowne Road towards Baden Powell. In summary, work has been undertaken in the following areas:

- Mew Way (between Lansdowne and Oscar Mpetha)
- Pama Road (between Mew and Lansdowne)
- Spine Road (between Mew and Lansdowne)

The City is currently working on:

- Lansdowne (between Mew and in the direction of Baden Powell)
- Steve Biko

It is very important to note that this work relates to maintaining and repairing existing street lights. There is a significant section of Lansdowne which does not have street lights, as it is not feasible to have high mast lighting or conventional street lighting.

This is because of the Eskom medium voltage overhead power lines on both sides of the road between Bunga Drive and Spine Road. The close

proximity of these supply lines makes it very difficult to safely install street lights without infringing on the required statutory safety clearance. The installation of street lights here would pose an unacceptable risk to the safety of personnel and to residents of the area.

The City is currently fast-tracking the development of options to enable the installation of street lighting that satisfies all the necessary criteria. There are two options in this regard,

- The installation of shorter poles
- The relocation of one of the Eskom supply lines

Initial investigations indicate that a 7,2m pole with 70W high pressure sodium vapour luminaries and poles spaced at 40m on both sides of the road would be required to meet the necessary technical requirements. The poles would be below the height of the power line conductors, but as close as 1,5m away from the power line over 80% of the distance. This would mean that Eskom would have to approve this special configuration, as well as agree to the installation of two new supply points.

It is also important to note that the installation of 7,2m poles will leave them more vulnerable to vandalism than the 13,5m poles currently used on the remainder of Lansdowne Road.

I will ensure that the City concludes as quickly as possible the discussions with Eskom on how to circumvent these technical considerations and that the City prioritises the over R2 million required to implement these measures.

I would ask that those groups protesting tonight understand the seriousness with which we view the situation, as well as the very real technical considerations that the City is working tirelessly to overcome.