TRACC

TSHWANE RESIDENTS' ALLIANCE FOR CIVIC COORDINATION

RECORD OF THE DISCUSSION WITH THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE: THE 2026 MANIFESTO AND TSHWANE

Wednesday 7 October 2026, 18:00 to 20:00 • Van den Berg Hall, Herfsblaar Retirement Village, 1244 Webb Road, Queenswood

1. Nature of the meeting

TRACC met the Democratic Alliance to discuss the party's municipal election manifesto and the questions that arise from it for Tshwane and the Moot. Each theme below begins with a commitment from the party's own manifesto, sets it against the position in Tshwane as TRACC understands it, puts the questions sent to the party in advance, and records the party's response.

This was a discussion, not a debate. TRACC is a non-political civic body and does not argue for or against any policy. It asks, records the answers, and publishes them. Every party contesting the Moot's wards is invited on the same terms and questioned on the same ten themes, each on the basis of its own manifesto, so that residents can compare the answers. The record of the session with the Freedom Front Plus, held on 30 September 2026, is published alongside this one, and the records of sessions with other parties will be added as those sessions take place.

How to read this record

Several of the questions put to the party contained more than one part. Each part is set out separately below and marked *Answered*, *Answered in part* or *Not explicitly answered*, according to what was said on the night. The marking is a record of coverage, not an assessment of the merits of any answer, and the same method is applied to every party. The party's response to the theme as a whole follows the questions.

The ten themes and the questions under them are identical for every party, so that the answers can be compared. The moderator put several of the questions in his own words on the night, and in some cases asked the parts in a different order. Where the wording used on the night differed materially from the question as sent to the party, the question as put is recorded beneath it, marked *As put on the night*.

The moderator set out at the start that an answer would be recorded in one of three ways: as a **commitment** where the party was able to give a firm undertaking, as a **position** where the party stated what it would strive for but could not commit, or as **no firm view**. He applied that classification during the session and read the commitments back at the close for the party to confirm or correct. The read-back is reproduced in section 6.

This record was compiled from notes taken on the night and from the recording and transcript of the session. It is a summary and not a verbatim transcript. The opening statement was delivered in Afrikaans and is given below both in Afrikaans and in English translation. The recording of the session is published alongside this record, and the full exchange on any point can be heard there. The record was provided to the Democratic Alliance for correction of fact before publication.

Manifesto quotations are from the Democratic Alliance Local Government Manifesto 2026, "Getting South Africa Working for All". The Tshwane figures are drawn from the City's 2024/25 Annual Report and 2026/27 tariff schedule; TRACC will gladly share the underlying analysis and welcomes correction of any figure. Figures and factual statements put forward by the party, which TRACC has not independently verified, are listed separately in section 7.

Corrections of fact submitted by the Democratic Alliance in writing on 15 October 2026, after the session and before publication, appear in square brackets and are marked as party corrections. The words spoken on the night are left in place and can be heard on the recording.

2. The session

Date and venue	Wednesday 7 October 2026, 18:00 to 20:00. Van den Berg Hall, Herfsblaar Retirement Village, 1244 Webb Road, Queenswood.
Party representatives	Cilliers Brink, mayoral candidate for Tshwane; Anru Meyer, councillor; and a third Democratic Alliance councillor serving on the Municipal Public Accounts Committee, who answered on theme G.
Moderator	Adrianus Coertze, Chairperson of TRACC, who put the questions and kept time. Follow-up questions were limited to: What is the amount? By which date? How will residents measure it? Who is accountable? Would your councillors vote for that?
Ground rules	The session was held under TRACC format: TRACC set the questions and ran the clock. It was not a debate and no one present was to argue with the party. Attendees were asked to keep the engagement non-political, with no applause, interjections or commentary on the answers. Questions from the floor were held until after the ten themes.
Proceedings	The Chairperson welcomed everyone, introduced TRACC and set out the ground rules. The party gave a 10-minute opening statement, after which the ten themes were put by the moderator, followed by an update on Melgisedek and questions from TRACC executive members. The moderator then read back the commitments recorded and the party confirmed them.
Audience	Delegates of TRACC's affiliated resident associations and sectoral bodies.
Record and publication	The session was recorded and transcribed. The record was compiled from notes and the recording, sent to the party for correction of fact, and published on www.tracc.org.za with the recording and alongside the records of sessions with other parties.

3. Opening statement by the Democratic Alliance

Delivered by Cilliers Brink in Afrikaans. The statement is summarised below in Afrikaans as delivered, and then in English translation. It is a summary and not a verbatim transcript; the full statement can be heard on the recording.

3.1 Openingsverklaring, soos gelewer (Afrikaans)

Dankie vir die geleentheid. Ek verwelkom dit in die gees waarin die uitnodiging gestuur is, want dit is nie gewoonlik hoe dit met politieke partye gepaard gaan nie.

Ons staan aan die einde van ’n dekade van koalisiechaos. Vir dekades voor dit het die ANC die administrasie in sy eie beeld herskep: kaders is geplaas, bekwame mense is uitgedryf en bekwame kontrakteurs is van werk ontneem. Wat oorgebly het, was tweede- en derderangse vermoë, en vandag wil goeie mense nie meer vir die stad werk nie.

In 2016 is die ANC-regering deur koalisies opgevolg. Dit is belangrik om te verstaan dat die Raad sekere take het wat hom nie ontneem kan word nie: die aanstelling van die munisipale bestuurder en van senior bestuurders, die goedkeuring van die begroting en die ontwikkelingsplan, en die goedkeuring van langtermynlenings en langtermynkontrakte met finansiële implikasies oor meer as drie finansiële jare. Kritieke personeelaanstellings en langtermynverbintenisse is in wese politieke besluite, en in ’n koalisie word elkeen van daardie besluite ’n kompromie. Daar was dus nooit ’n DA-regering in Tshwane nie. Daar was agt jaar se koalisie, en toe is ons uitgestem.

Wat moet ons dan doen as ons ’n mandaat kry? Ons het vyf kernprioriteite.

1. Die ontslag van korrupte amptenare en entrepreneurs, en die vervanging van hulle met eerlike, hardwerkende en professionele mense. Dit klink na moederliefde en appeltert, maar dit is ’n bepaalde keuse: om bekwame mense aan te stel en om korruptes te ontslaan. Die personeelstruktuur moet hersien en verplat word, want daar is sewe bestuurslae wat na minder herstruktureer moet word.
2. Die herstrukturering van die Metropolisie. Die probleem is nie ’n tekort aan mense met kentekens en wapens nie; die probleem is dat daar geen effektiewe bevel en beheer is nie. Daar is nie genoeg voertuie nie, en die personeelstruktuur moet uitgesorteer word. Tegnologie moet toegepas word om dinge beter te doen: ’n rekenaargesteunde versendingstelsel en basiese tegnologie in die beheerkamer, sodat die Metropolisie werklik in reële tyd gemonitor kan word. Toe ek burgemeester was, is addisionele bevelvoerders op ’n permanente basis aangestel.
3. Dienste, naamlik water, krag, vullis en openbare beligting, moet opgegradeer word met die hulp van privaat vennootskappe. Die vraag is hoe ons uit die gat kom. Die antwoord is om geleenthede te skep vir die privaatsektor om sy kapitaal te benut, met privaat operateurs wat op langtermynkontrakte aangestel word om die dienste te bestuur. Frankfort in die Vrystaat is ’n voorbeeld van ’n privaat bestuursooreenkoms waar beurtkrag voorkom is. Frankfort is ’n dorp en Pretoria is ’n stad, dus is dit hier meer kompleks, maar daar is reeds twee privaat waterkonsessies in die land, in Mbombela en in Ballito Bay in KwaDukuza, waar daar minder waterverlies is, die druk beter is en die water goedkoper is as in munisipale jurisdiksies. Dit is ’n beter model, en goeie bestuur gee ’n goeie uitkoms.
4. Die gebruik van die stad se onderbenutte bates om belegging en werkskepping te skep. Die kragstasies is ’n voorbeeld: Tshwane beskik nie oor die kundigheid om hulle te bedryf nie,

maar daar is onafhanklike kragvoorsieners, en kragvoorsiening moet gediversifiseer word sodat ons nie net van Eskom afhanklik is nie. Daar is ook ander bates, soos die Wonderboom-lughawe. Die stad moet op basiese dienste fokus en privaat operateurs inbring; die beleggings kan vrugte afwerp.

5. Om saam met goed georganiseerde strukture te werk. In my tyd as burgemeester is ’n samewerkingsooreenkoms met AfriForum gesluit, en soortgelyke ooreenkomste kan gesluit word. Ons wil Stadsverbeteringsdistrikte proaktief uitrol. Hatfield is ’n voorbeeld, waar dit goed werk met die Universiteit van Pretoria as ankerhuurder, en Lukas Luckhoff het daardie distrik bestuur. Ons wil dit ook op ander plekke uitrol. Mense betaal reeds genoeg belasting, dus moet die distrikte self inkomste kan genereer: ’n mate van buitelugadvertensies, parkeermeters en handelaarstalletjies, met die nodige wysiging van bywette. Die distrikte moet ook geformaliseer word.

Ten slotte: dit is vir ’n politikus moeilik om in hierdie omstandighede beloftes te maak, want interne kontrole en beheer is nie in plek nie. ’n Politikus wat hier staan en alles belowe, sal nooit verantwoordelikheid vir daardie beloftes kan vat nie. Ons wil eerder julle kundigheid benut.

3.2 Opening statement, in English translation

Thank you for the opportunity. I welcome it in the spirit in which the invitation was sent, because this is not usually how things go with political parties.

We stand at the end of a decade of coalition chaos. For decades before that, the ANC remade the administration in its own image: cadres were placed, capable people were driven out, and capable contractors were deprived of work. What remained was second- and third-rate capacity, and today good people no longer want to work for the City.

In 2016 the ANC government was succeeded by coalitions. It is important to understand that the council has certain functions that cannot be taken away from it: the appointment of the municipal manager and of senior managers, the approval of the budget and the development plan, and the approval of long-term loans and long-term contracts with financial implications beyond three financial years. Critical staff appointments and long-term commitments are in essence political decisions, and in a coalition every one of those decisions becomes a compromise. There was therefore never a DA government in Tshwane. There were eight years of coalition, and then we were voted out.

So what must we do if we are given a mandate? We have five core priorities.

1. Dismissing corrupt officials and contractors and replacing them with honest, hard-working, professional people. That may sound like motherhood and apple pie, but it is a deliberate choice: to appoint capable people and to dismiss the corrupt. The staff structure must be reviewed and flattened, because there are seven management layers that must be restructured down to fewer.
2. Restructuring the Metro Police. The problem is not a shortage of people with badges and firearms; the problem is that there is no effective command and control. There are not enough vehicles, and the staff structure must be sorted out. Technology must be applied to do things better: a computer-aided dispatch system and basic technology in the control room, so that the Metro Police can genuinely be monitored in real time. When I was mayor, additional commanders were appointed on a permanent basis.

3. Services, namely water, electricity, waste and public lighting, must be upgraded with the help of private partnerships. The question is how we get out of the hole. The answer is to create opportunities for the private sector to deploy its capital, with private operators appointed on long-term contracts to manage the services. Frankfort in the Free State is an example of a private management agreement under which load shedding was avoided. Frankfort is a town and Pretoria is a city, so it is more complex here, but there are already two private water concessions in the country, in Mbombela and in Ballito Bay in KwaDukuza, where there is less water loss, better pressure and cheaper water than in municipal jurisdictions. That is a better model, and good management produces a good outcome.
4. Using the City's under-utilised assets to create investment and jobs. The power stations are an example: Tshwane does not have the expertise to operate them, but there are independent power producers, and electricity supply must be diversified so that we are not dependent on Eskom alone. There are other assets too, such as Wonderboom airport. The City must focus on basic services and bring in private operators; the investments can bear fruit.
5. Working together with well-organised structures. In my time as mayor a cooperation agreement was concluded with AfriForum, and similar agreements can be concluded. We want to roll out City Improvement Districts proactively. Hatfield is an example, where it works well with the University of Pretoria as the anchor tenant, and Lukas Luckhoff managed that district. We want to roll it out in other places as well. People already pay enough in rates, so the districts must be able to generate income themselves: a measure of outdoor advertising, parking meters and trading stalls, with the necessary amendment of by-laws. The districts must also be formalised.

In closing: it is difficult for a politician to make promises in these circumstances, because internal control is not in place. A politician who stands here and promises everything will never be able to take responsibility for those promises. We would rather make use of your expertise.

4. Questions arising from the manifesto, and the party's responses

A. Rates and tariffs

Manifesto: *"The DA further commits to ensuring that councils approve cost-reflective tariffs and structurally funded budgets to secure long-term infrastructure investment."*

Tshwane: The 2026/27 increases are 8.8% for electricity, 10% for water, 5% for sanitation, 5% for property rates and 4.1% for refuse, against CPI of roughly 3 to 4%. The City's budget is reported as unfunded.

Q1. Is an inflation cap a commitment for every year of the term, including in a coalition? *[Answered]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *Your manifesto speaks of cost-reflective tariffs. Is there a maximum annual increase that your party will commit to? And does that position hold in a coalition?*

Q2. Will your councillors vote against a budget that breaches it? *[Answered]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *Say you were in a coalition and a budget was put up for a vote that breached this principle that costs must reflect the input costs. Would your councillors vote against it?*

Q3. If the City's revenue cannot sustain services at CPI increases, what gives way first: the increase, the service, or the cost base? *[Answered]*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

A cost-reflective tariff is not only DA policy, it is a requirement of the law. It means that the operating cost of delivering a service is what should inform the tariff, which is quite distinct from the increase from one year to the next. If you start from a faulty premise and only apply increases, it becomes irrelevant whether the tariff actually covers the cost. NERSA requires a municipality to do a cost-of-supply study, and what matters in that study is not only what the service actually costs, but what it should reasonably cost a municipality in those circumstances. If you take actual cost alone, you can build a great deal of corruption into it and still call it cost-reflective.

On an annual cap **(A-Q1.)**, the City is in many instances simply transferring a price. The electricity tariff charged to the City by Eskom is approved by NERSA and is carried over to the consumer. There is no NERSA for water, so what Rand Water and Magalies Water decide they need is passed along and the City has to pay it. Tshwane does not have money in the bank to absorb part of an increase. That was done a few times in the past under DA-led coalitions, but it cannot be done as a rule. Given that the City is a price taker on water and electricity, it is not possible to sit here and say the increase will be capped to inflation.

What the party does give is the acknowledgement that Tshwane is taxed out. Property rates are the only component that is genuinely within the City's control, and the last valuation roll led to some extreme increases. On a comparison the party conducted, a property valued at R1.8 million in Koedoespoort carries higher rates, tariffs and charges in total than a comparable property in Cape Town. The party asks that the escalation of the rate as a component of what a resident actually pays be kept as low as possible, and the saving must come from reducing the cost of delivering services and improving efficiency.

On voting against a budget (A-Q2.): if at that point we believe the budget does not accord with our mandate, not only will we vote against the budget, we will probably leave the coalition. If you cannot agree on a budget you do not have a government.

On what gives way first (A-Q3.): the cost base. You have to try to make it more affordable. Studies have found R500 paid for light bulbs and R50 for a roll of toilet paper, and that is the cost base. With a private management operating model for water, electricity and waste collection, efficiencies can be found through the private operator's supply chain, because a private operator is not bound by the procurement legislation that binds the municipality. Street lighting is a practical example: if you pay a street light contractor for the lights that work rather than for fixing the ones that do not, you create an incentive for the contractor to manage the purchasing of cables, boxes, switching equipment and storage. At present the incentive is simply to pay invoices, and very often the same invoice is paid repeatedly because of a fragmented procurement model and the absence of proper management.

On whether the position holds in a coalition (A-Q1b.), the party said that is a matter for its coalition partners, that there are coalitions one must be willing to walk away from, and that the best guarantee is a clear mandate so that difficult decisions can be taken without coalition pressure.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

An annual cap on increases was not committed to, and this was recorded as a position: that Tshwane is taxed out, that the City is a price taker on water and electricity, and that the escalation of the property rate must be kept as low as possible, with savings to come from the cost of delivery rather than from tariffs.

Where revenue cannot sustain services, the cost base gives way first. This was confirmed as a commitment and read back at the close of the session.

If a budget before a coalition-led council did not accord with the party's mandate, its councillors would vote against that budget and the party would probably leave the coalition.

B. Ward-based reinvestment

Manifesto: *"The DA will ringfence this revenue so that it can only be spent on maintaining and upgrading the infrastructure that keeps the taps running and the lights on."*

Tshwane: The Moot's wards have among the higher collection rates in the City and, on our analysis, receive a small fraction of the capital budget.

Q1. What portion of the rates collected in a ward should be reinvested in that ward, as a percentage, and how would it be shown in the budget? *[Answered in part]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *Would you support a principle that a share of a ward's rates is reinvested in that ward? Put second on the night, after the question on publication.*

Q2. Would you support publishing, per ward, the rates collected and the capital and maintenance spent? *[Answered]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *Your manifesto ring-fences service revenue for infrastructure. Would you support publishing, per ward, the rates collected and the capital and maintenance spent there? Put first on the night.*

Q3. What would the Moot's wards receive under this principle in your first budget? *[Answered in part]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *Be that as it may that the bigger infrastructure plants are outside the Moot, there is still an infrastructure maintenance and investment backlog in the Moot itself. What would these wards receive in your first budget?*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

On publication (B-Q2.): yes. The party has done it in the past, and people in Waterkloof were very angry about it because theirs was one of the highest non-payment rates.

On a percentage returned to the ward (B-Q1.): that is typically the kind of statement a politician makes who knows he will never have to govern. The Koedoespoort substation needs upgrades, and so does Blesbok, but they do not serve one ward, they serve several. Water purification and sewage reticulation are the major capital investments and they are shared across wards: no ward represented in the room has a water plant or a sewage plant in it. When you flush a toilet in this city, in about 70% of instances it ends up at Rooiwal. To chop up the entire budget and promise each ward a set amount because of the taxpayers this is impossible, and in many instances it would be irresponsible.

What can be said is that places where residents faithfully pay their rates and taxes ought at least to receive value for taxpayers' money. The conflict in Tshwane politics is not between poor areas and wealthier areas; it is between a programme of government that delivers value for taxpayers' money and one that enriches a few people at the taxpayers' expense. City Improvement Districts will in most instances be set up where there is strong economic activity and a strong rates base. The party gave the commitment that, as it fought against unaffordable salary increases, it will fight for value for taxpayers' money.

On the Moot in a first budget (B-Q3.): electricity would be a big priority. The installations in these wards, Blesbok and Koedoespoort, are in need of serious upgrades. The work at Blesbok is almost ready for handover, and it should not be handed over until security is in place, because once it is handed over the private contractor no longer carries responsibility for security. Basic service infrastructure, water pipes and the defects at some of the reservoirs would also be a major priority.

The reason is not only that the party wants votes in the Moot. The infrastructure is old, and if it is

not maintained the City degenerates its own income-earning assets: every power outage loses money and every water outage increases non-revenue water. Looking after infrastructure here reduces water and electricity distribution losses.

The party entered one caveat: it needs to know what the actual finances of the City look like before a budget can be put together, and that can only really be known from the position of office.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The party committed to publishing, per ward, the rates collected and the capital and maintenance spent there. This was confirmed as a commitment and read back at the close of the session.

No percentage of a ward's rates to be returned to that ward was committed to, and the reason given was that the major capital assets serve several wards at once. The commitment given instead was to fight for value for taxpayers' money in the areas that pay.

For the Moot in a first budget, the priorities named were the Blesbok and Koedoespoort electricity installations, water pipes and reservoir defects, subject to the caveat that no figures can be given before the party has seen the City's actual finances. Blesbok should not be taken over from the contractor until security is in place.

C. Maintenance floor

Manifesto: *"National Treasury has set a benchmark for municipalities to spend at least 8 percent of the value of their assets on repairs and maintenance — yet most fall well short of this. DA-run local governments will comply with this standard."*

Tshwane: Tshwane spent 2.1% in 2024/25 on our analysis, against a National Treasury norm of 8%. The gap since 2015 is estimated at R24.4 billion.

Q1. Over how many years would you move Tshwane from 2.1% to 8%, and what is the target for year one? *[Answered in part]*

As put on the night: *Asked as two questions on the night: over how many years would you move from 2.1% to 8%, and then, what is the target for year one?*

Q2. Would you support ring-fencing the maintenance budget so that it cannot be diverted in-year? *[Answered]*

Q3. Where does the money come from while the City cannot borrow? *[Answered]*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

With all due respect, 8% is unrealistic from the outset. It is an important benchmark to aim at, but there are other considerations. Capital refurbishment reduces the repairs and maintenance requirement, though not indefinitely, because every capital asset must be budgeted and planned for over its own lifetime. This is said in the context of a bankrupt municipality that cannot afford Rolls-Royce National Treasury standards.

Things can be done immediately that will get more spent on repairs and maintenance. If half the repairs and maintenance budget is depleted fixing damage caused by cable theft, technology solutions can be implemented and the City can cooperate with private security to reduce that

burden. The party also stated its view that a portion of infrastructure theft is facilitated from inside the City's own depots.

Rather than commit to a figure within a stated number of years, the party said an entire systems change is required first, and that as the financial position of the municipality gradually improves the portion can be increased.

On the target for year one (C-Q1b): it would be safe to say that if you are not gradually increasing the portion of your spend on repairs and maintenance over your five-year term, whether that increase is 1% or 0.5%, the question to look at is whether the institution is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction. If you want to hold us to something, it is this: as your financial position improves, are you gradually increasing your repairs and maintenance towards 8% of property, plant and equipment, instead of moving away from it.

On ring-fencing (C-Q2.): that is a very good commitment to make, especially as the City moves towards what Treasury calls a single point of management approach to utilities. Cape Town uses water revenue for water, electricity revenue for electricity, and the same for waste collection; that is ring-fencing, and it is a sound business principle. A single point of management in water, electricity and waste collection, with separate financial statements for each of the three services, is in the party's plans and is what National Treasury requires. Once you do that, it is a logical next step to say that the water repairs and maintenance budget cannot be taken mid-year and spent on something else.

On where the money comes from (C-Q3.): there is no creditworthiness and the assets are falling apart, but what the City does have that is of value in the market is income streams, from water, from electricity and from waste collection. It also has Rietvlei Dam and Roodeplaat Dam, two dormant power stations and a substantial property portfolio. The question is how to leverage those diminished income streams, together with the property portfolio, to secure the relationships that will fund the capital shortfall. If water distribution losses can be reduced by 5% a year over five years, or 7.5% a year if you are more ambitious, and the same is done with electricity losses, you shore up your income, improve your creditworthiness and close part of the capital funding gap.

The route to that is private operating agreements with a long horizon. Give a private operator 15 years rather than three, and a 15-year agreement gives a private partner something to take to the bank; they may make their money in the last five years of the fifteen, which is usually how public-private partnerships work. That is the only solution the party sees: leverage private expertise, shore up the income streams, and build the capital base from better income.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

No number of years was committed to for reaching 8%, and the benchmark was described as unrealistic from the outset in a bankrupt municipality, though a valid target to aim at.

For year one, the undertaking the party offered to be held to is the direction of travel: that the portion of the budget spent on repairs and maintenance increases gradually each year towards 8% of the value of property, plant and equipment, rather than moving away from it.

The party committed to ring-fencing the maintenance budget so that it cannot be diverted in-year, as part of a single point of management model with separate financial statements for water, electricity and waste. This was confirmed as a commitment and read back at the close of

the session.

The funding route given is to leverage the City's water, electricity and waste income streams together with its property portfolio and dormant assets, and to reduce water and electricity distribution losses by 5% to 7.5% a year over five years, through long-term private operating agreements of about 15 years.

D. Conditional grants and capital

Manifesto: *"The DA will advocate for incentive-based grants from Treasury, associated with the existing municipal infrastructure grant (MIG). This ensures that where municipalities are governed well, more funds will be released to further improve water services."*

Tshwane: Capital expenditure is 4.5% of the budget against a norm of 10 to 20%.

Q1. What capital share of the budget would you target by the end of the term? *[Answered]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *What capital share of the budget would you target by the end of your term? The party answered in rand rather than as a share.*

Q2. Would your councillors vote against any capital budget that funds non-critical projects while the water, sewer and electricity backlog remains? *[Answered in part]*

Q3. Would you support publishing every grant's allocation, spend and underspend quarterly? *[Answered]*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

On the capital target (D-Q1.): by 2031 the City should at least have a R7 billion capital budget, probably R8 billion. That frame of reference is Cape Town, which has 20 years of solid government and good financial management, against 15 years of ANC mismanagement and 10 years of coalition chaos in Tshwane. Asked whether that was a position or a commitment, the party first said a position, on the basis that another event like the pandemic cannot be planned for, but then accepted it as a commitment: a capital budget of R8 billion by 2031 would be success, and the party was willing to be bold about it.

On what must be fixed to qualify for Treasury incentive grants (Manifesto): many of the policy decisions required by National Treasury were already implemented in the party's term of office, including a trading services reform policy and water and electricity as business units. If that is done properly, each of water, electricity and waste will be a self-contained business unit with its own basic tools of trade, so that cherry pickers are not shared between parks and electricity, or yellow plant between water and electricity, and each will have separate financial statements. Tshwane is already receiving grants because of those reforms and could get more, but living for grant funding is a fool's errand because national government may run out of money. The real test of the reforms comes with actual ring-fencing, which may have to be phased in, starting with 60% or 70% of electricity revenue.

On voting against a capital budget that funds non-critical projects (D-Q2.): the party asked what counts as non-critical, and gave its own view: a municipality should not be in the business of running airports, nor of keeping power stations under maintenance, and commitments made in previous administrations to things such as free Wi-Fi fall into the same category. There are just enough resources for water, electricity and sewerage. Some projects already begun will

have to be completed so as not to leave assets under construction, of which Tshwane has many because of its loss of access to the financial markets. The focus will be on the core services, but the party said it might differ with TRACC on what a non-core project is. The moderator recorded this as a position rather than a commitment.

On quarterly publication of grants (D-Q3.): yes. It is in any event a requirement of the Municipal Finance Management Act. The problem in Tshwane is not whether the reports are delivered, but that accounting entries are done by Excel spreadsheet as a workaround instead of directly into SAP, so that there is no single coherent data string. The city has a serious lack of ICT expertise, which means it pays SAP consultants a king's ransom to sort out small problems. If what you want is data with integrity, investment in the IT system will be required, which raises the party's own question of what counts as critical: if it means credible financials and reports, it may well be critical.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The party committed to a capital budget of R7 billion to R8 billion by 2031. This was confirmed as a commitment and read back at the close of the session. The figure was given in rand; no percentage share of the budget was given.

The party committed to publishing every grant's allocation, spend and underspend quarterly, noting that this is already required by the Municipal Finance Management Act, and that data integrity will require investment in the City's ICT systems. This was confirmed as a commitment and read back at the close of the session.

On voting against a capital budget that funds non-critical projects, the position recorded is that the focus will be on water, electricity and sewerage, that a municipality should not run airports or maintain power stations, and that projects already under construction will be completed. The party did not commit to a vote because the definition of non-critical is not settled.

E. Water losses, electricity losses and billing

Manifesto: *"Installing smart meters as water-monitoring devices so that residents can track their own usage in real time… Publishing accessible reports of where water leaks are located — along with response times to faults, maintenance spending, reliability by area, and progress against performance targets."*

Tshwane: Non-revenue water is 39% against a norm of 15 to 30%, about R1.3 billion a year. Electricity losses are 21.46% against a norm of 7 to 10%. Meters are widely estimated rather than read.

Q1. What non-revenue-water and electricity-loss percentages would you set as end-of-term targets? *[Not explicitly answered]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *Asked as two questions on the night, first for non-revenue water and then for electricity losses.*

Q2. By when would every functioning meter be read monthly? *[Not explicitly answered]*

Q3. What is your plan for the Moot's ageing substations, which the City has not published a condition assessment of? *[Answered]*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

On end-of-term loss targets (E-Q1.): after five years the City ought to make significant progress towards the norms, but giving precise figures would be unwise. The party corrected TRACC's figure, stating that non-revenue water is currently 41% rather than 39%, and that it was 32% when Cilliers Brink was mayor, which makes the most important indicator a rapidly deteriorating situation. What the party would say is that it will be an abysmal failure, which will also show up in the City's cash flow, if water and electricity distribution losses are not significantly reduced. The same answer was given for electricity losses.

Performance-based contracting will carry targets for private operators to reduce losses gradually, but before those targets can be set an engineering condition assessment is needed: you have to walk the lines and see what things actually look like, and that will inform the targets.

On monthly meter reading (E-Q2.): the party said it could not give an exact date, and that it would be easy to do so but it has a real prospect of governing and will have to look residents in the eye again before the end of the term. Its theory of the case is that a large part of the City's losses comes from defective metering, and that meters are not only sometimes overestimated but sometimes underestimated. The party also holds a strong view that third-party metering companies *[Party correction, 15 October 2026: and vendors]* are taking advantage of the municipality. A full-scale audit of the meters will be a very important part of the electricity operator's work, because that is where the party suspects the large losses on electricity arise. There is also fraud being perpetrated through dummy meters and fake vouchers, which needs to be got to the bottom of.

On the Moot's substations (E-Q3.): the first step is to commission an independent condition assessment. Tshwane's electricity department, like water, has been destroyed from the inside when it comes to expertise. In the Rooiwal matter, disciplinary action was taken against five officials including the head of water, the deputy head of electricity and the head of supply chain management; the party supports their removal and wants them dismissed as soon as possible, but the effect has been to hollow out expertise, compounded by retirements such as Martin Londt. Asking the existing managers to assess their own assets would invite them to cover their own tracks. One of the first decisions, within months of taking office, will therefore be to commission an independent engineering assessment of the entire city, not only the Moot.

Beyond capital upgrades, a number of things can be fixed more directly: changing components on the overhead lines and cutting trees would probably eliminate half of the power outages, but that needs a serious tree-cutting operation rather than two hours a day of a street light cherry picker, and the party would be willing to put it out to tender to get it done quickly.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

No end-of-term percentage target was given for either non-revenue water or electricity losses, by choice. The undertaking given instead is that significant progress towards the norms over five years is required, and that failure to reduce losses significantly would be an abysmal failure that would show in the City's cash flow.

No date was given by which every functioning meter would be read monthly. The plan recorded instead is a full-scale audit of the City's meters by the electricity operator, on the party's view that defective metering and third-party metering companies *[Party correction, 15 October 2026: and vendors]* are a principal source of loss, together with action on dummy meters and fake

vouchers.

The party committed to commissioning an independent engineering condition assessment of the City's electricity infrastructure, covering the entire city and not only the Moot, within months of taking office, and to a dedicated tree-cutting and overhead-line programme.

Loss-reduction targets are to be written into performance-based contracts with private operators, once the condition assessment is complete.

F. Government debt and collection

Manifesto: *"Ensuring municipalities collect what they are owed. Too many municipalities allow debt to accumulate until it becomes unrecoverable. The DA will enforce credit control firmly and consistently."*

Tshwane: The collection rate fell from 90% to 85.6% against a norm of 95%; R2.18 billion was not collected in 2024/25.

Q1. What collection rate would you target and by when? *[Answered]*

Q2. What specifically would your councillors do about government departments in arrears, which the City has been unable to compel for years? *[Answered]*

Q3. What is your position on councillors and officials who are themselves in arrears? *[Answered]*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

On the collection rate (F-Q1.): 95% within a year. The City was at 93% at one point. That figure does not mean as much as it appears to, because with a debtors book of that size the City should arguably be collecting 105%, in other words collecting on historical debt as well; the 95% refers to current debt. Asked whether 95% within a year was a commitment or a position, the party said it is closer to a position because it depends on a great deal of reform, but added that if the City is not clocking 93%, 94% or 95%, something is very wrong.

Reaching it requires fixing five components of the financial system: first, making sure the City is not overcharged by Eskom and Rand Water as the services enter its system; second, metering what is actually consumed; third, accurately billing what has been metered, which is not the same thing; fourth, collecting what has been billed; and fifth, credit action. In too many instances debts are journalled away, deals are made by people with inside influence to make debt disappear, and residents pay bribes to make that happen and then will not sign an affidavit about it because of the bribe.

On government departments in arrears (F-Q2.): cut them off, but responsibly. You cannot cut off schools, so you would have to cut off the Department of Education itself, and you cannot cut off mental hospitals; sometimes the provincial department is not in your city to cut off because it sits in Johannesburg. Credit action must happen: in the party's leadership time and that of Randall Williams before it, substantial sums were recovered simply by cutting off state-owned entities. But it has to be done without putting school children, older people and vulnerable people at risk. The party noted that the City itself has cut off electricity to a reservoir more than once, which is cutting off your nose to spite your face.

A second route is the hijacked and abandoned properties in the city, where what is owed to the

City in rates often exceeds the value of the property. During the party's 18 months in the mayoralty it tried to have some of these properties sold in execution of judgment debt and met massive resistance. Different components of the City have to work together: proper attorneys to obtain judgment, the debtor placed on terms, and then the judgment actually executed. Releasing those properties back into the market would address urban blight as well, and with a proper law firm given that contract the City could recover hundreds of millions rather than tens of millions. The party described this as one debt collection avenue that has not even been touched.

On councillors and officials in arrears (F-Q3.): they must pay or they must go.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

A collection rate of 95% within one year was recorded as a position rather than a commitment, because it depends on reform of the City's billing and credit control systems. The party's stated test is that anything below 93% to 95% means something is very wrong.

On government departments in arrears, the party committed to credit action including disconnection, carried out responsibly so that schools, hospitals and vulnerable people are not harmed.

The party committed to pursuing hijacked and abandoned properties whose arrears exceed their value through summons, judgment and sale in execution, using an appointed law firm, as a debt collection avenue the City has not used.

On councillors and officials who are themselves in arrears, the party's stated position is that they must pay or they must go.

G. Financial accountability and MPAC

Manifesto: *"Every DA-run municipality will establish fully functioning public accounts and audit committees — comprised of properly trained members who know how to read a budget, scrutinise spending, and hold officials to account… DA-governed municipalities will be required to disclose details of all goods and services procured, including award details, contract prices, and any premiums paid above the lowest qualifying price."*

Tshwane: Only 56% of targets were met; the Auditor-General could not verify some results; two oversight committees held no meetings; MPAC has recorded resistance to consequence management.

Q1. What three actions would your councillors take in the first 12 months to make oversight work, and how would residents see that they happened? *[Answered]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *Asked as two questions on the night: name three actions your councillors would take in the first 12 months to make council oversight work, and then, for each of those, how will residents be able to see that it happened?*

Q2. Would you support splitting the Utilities oversight portfolio into dedicated committees with independent technical support? *[Answered]*

Q3. Would you support a published quarterly register of Auditor-General and MPAC findings showing who is responsible and whether the deadline was met? *[Answered]*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

This theme was answered first by the party's councillor serving on the Municipal Public Accounts Committee, and then by Cilliers Brink.

By the party's MPAC councillor: we take this seriously. Both I and Anru Meyer serve on MPAC and we took training courses to empower ourselves. We have changed the whole climate within MPAC, from writing debt off and not opening cases and not following the money, to recovery, including recovery against an official's pension. That shift in MPAC since the beginning of the year has been acknowledged by the City Manager and by the audit committee. We brought in a new team with expertise and specifically targeted councillors with the skills, experience and knowledge to serve on a given portfolio, rather than allocating portfolios arbitrarily. We have whips in our portfolios who give a monthly report, up to our executive, on which councillors participated, asked questions and called for reports, with an overview of what happened that month. Where we find a chairperson or an MMC who is simply absent, there is no quorum and the portfolio cannot proceed, so items, sometimes critical ones, have to stand over to the next month. The commitment given on the party's behalf is that its councillors are held accountable, with a line of control running up to the executive, and that a DA councillor can face disciplinary action.

By Cilliers Brink, three specific actions (G-Q1a.): first, we will appoint competent people onto the portfolio committees and match their skill set to the portfolios on which they serve. Second, I will require members of the mayoral committee to attend oversight committees; in many instances they do not, and that is what makes it difficult for councillors on those committees to obtain information, because if the MMC is present the officials are more likely to account or to share meaningful information. Third, I will adopt any outstanding National Treasury directives that specifically have to be adopted by the council and MPAC in order for them to do their work more effectively.

On how residents will see it (G-Q1b.): they will see it if it does not happen. The minutes are the record, and the civic bodies that study these documents and tell the rest what is going on will have access to them. But the Tshwane website is an absolute mess and does not meet the statutory minimum. The reports are there, but a resident has to crawl through the documents of one council meeting after another, whereas Cape Town's website is an excellent resource and the reports could simply be uploaded under distinct headings. The party will update the website, after which the minutes of those meetings can be studied and attendance seen.

On splitting the Utilities portfolio (G-Q2.): yes. The party will first seek a majority so as not to be in coalition, but if there is a coalition it will go into the negotiations seeking two separate portfolios, one for water and sanitation and one for energy and electricity. There is too much work for one MMC under a single Utilities committee; it sets that person up for failure and overloads the committee. The party added that waste management should also be a separate portfolio with its own MMC. In a coalition this has to be negotiated, because each portfolio carries an MMC position.

On a published quarterly register of Auditor-General and MPAC findings (G-Q3.): yes.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The party committed to three actions on oversight in the first 12 months: appointing competent people to portfolio committees and matching their skill sets to those portfolios; requiring members of the mayoral committee to attend oversight committees; and adopting any outstanding National Treasury directives that council and MPAC must adopt to do their work.

The party committed to rebuilding the City's website so that it meets the statutory minimum and reports and minutes are accessible under distinct headings, which is how residents will be able to see whether the three actions happened.

The party committed to seeking two separate oversight portfolios in place of the single Utilities portfolio, one for water and sanitation and one for energy and electricity, and to a separate portfolio and MMC for waste management, and to taking this into coalition negotiations.

The party committed to a published quarterly register of Auditor-General and MPAC findings showing who is responsible and whether the deadline was met. This was confirmed as a commitment and read back at the close of the session.

The party stated that its own councillors are held accountable through a line of control up to its executive, and that a DA councillor can face disciplinary action.

H. Accountable officers

Manifesto: *"Poor audit findings will no longer be ignored; they will carry consequences for the individuals concerned. The DA will ensure that municipal accounting officers personally repay losses caused by their actions or, in some cases, their failure to act."*

Tshwane: Council appoints the City Manager, holds him accountable, and can suspend or replace him. The MFMA makes the accounting officer personally liable for specified failures.

Q1. Short of prosecution, what would your councillors do when the City Manager or an MMC does not answer an oversight committee, does not implement a council resolution, or does not act on an audit finding? *[Answered]*

As put on the night: *Put as three separate questions on the night, one for each of the three failures.*

Q2. What is the sequence, and who initiates it? *[Answered]*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

Where an oversight committee is not answered (H-Q1a): the starting point is that the performance agreement with the City Manager must require these inputs. Too often it is a pro forma document, when in fact the MFMA requires a performance agreement with the City Manager to be concluded annually. That agreement must contain governance outcomes alongside service delivery and programme outcomes. But it must then be supported by a system of delegation that devolves responsibility, because in an organisation of 20,000 employees one person cannot be held to account for everything. A devolved system of accountability also protects the process: if you dismiss someone for not doing their job, you do not want them to defend themselves at a disciplinary hearing by saying they lacked the delegated power to do what was required.

The party would also rationalise how the portfolios are put together. Tshwane currently has a City Manager with seven senior managers reporting to him *[Party correction, 15 October 2026: seven levels of management from the City Manager downwards]*, including a Chief Operations Officer whose cluster covers health, social development, roads and transport, water, electricity, and environment and agriculture: a completely unrelated package of portfolios for which no single person can take proper accountability. The management structure must be reviewed so that there is a City Manager, a head of public safety, someone responsible for planning, and separate responsibility for water, for electricity and for corporate services, rather than super managers who create another layer of bureaucracy. That matters to audit outcomes, because it is incredibly difficult to hold to account somebody with such a large collection of responsibilities. In a coalition this too has to be negotiated.

Where a council resolution is not implemented (H-Q1b.): the party gave a recent example. The council found the current Deputy Mayor, who is also in charge of the City's finances, guilty of not disclosing his interest in a security company doing business with the municipality and of not divesting that interest, contrary to the code of conduct for councillors, and resolved that his pay be docked for two months rather than that he be removed. The two months' pay was never docked, and when questions were asked the explanation given was that the chief whip of council had never informed the head of corporate services, who is responsible for salaries, that it had to happen.

The remedy the party proposes is a simple requirement in the system of delegations: that the secretary of the municipal council, who in the party's view should be an official and not a political

appointee as at present, be held responsible for communicating to the City Manager and the responsible departments what has to be implemented, and be required to show evidence that this was done.

Where an audit finding is not acted on (H-Q1c.): that is the City Manager's responsibility, within the devolved system of accountability. After an Auditor-General report there is a register of findings, and what was set up in the party's term was an audit tracking committee at mayoral committee level that met every month to ask how far each item had progressed. Those meetings were minuted and the minutes were handed over to the Auditor-General. Alongside that, if a head of a directorate does not meet the commitments in their performance agreement, that must be a breach of contract carrying disciplinary consequences, up to dismissal.

On the sequence and who initiates it (H-Q2.): after the election a new administration must bring a set of governance arrangements to the council for approval, one of which is the system of delegations. The Executive Mayor takes responsibility for recommending an organisational model, and that, along with the delegations, would be one of the first reports brought to council. Separately, the employment agreement of the City Manager and the annual review of the performance agreement are dealt with as the legislation requires. Some of the responsibility therefore lies with the Mayor and some with council as a whole, but the Mayor is the leader of council and must advise it.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The party committed to concluding a substantive annual performance agreement with the City Manager, containing governance outcomes as well as service delivery outcomes, supported by a system of delegations that devolves accountability through the administration.

The party committed to bringing a system of delegations and a recommended organisational model to council as among the first reports of a new administration, and to reviewing the management structure so that the Chief Operations Officer cluster is broken up into portfolios for which individuals can be held accountable.

On council resolutions, the party committed to making the secretary of the municipal council, who should be an official rather than a political appointee, responsible for communicating council resolutions to the City Manager and the responsible departments and for producing evidence that this was done.

On audit findings, the party committed to a register of findings and a monthly audit tracking committee at mayoral committee level, minuted and handed to the Auditor-General, and to disciplinary consequences, including dismissal, where a directorate head breaches the commitments in their performance agreement.

I. Communities delivering where the City cannot

Manifesto: *"Where we govern, the DA will initiate our "Adopt-a-Public Space" programme to revitalise neglected and underutilised public spaces… municipalities will partner with responsible private sector organisations to maintain, upgrade, and improve public spaces such as municipal clinics, libraries, parks, beaches, pools, and sporting facilities."*

Tshwane: The Moot's resident associations and Die Moot Projek already maintain parks and verges the City does not. TRACC is a federation of the kinds of bodies the manifesto names.

Q1. What would this look like in practice: a formal agreement with a resident association, a budget contribution, or something else? *[Answered]*

> ***As put on the night:*** *Your manifesto has an Adopt-a-Public-Space programme. What does it mean for a resident association that already maintains a City park: is it a formal agreement, a budget contribution, or something else?*

Q2. Would you support a mechanism by which a community that maintains a City asset is credited for it? *[Answered]*

Q3. Would your councillors meet TRACC twice a year, in public, to report on the commitments made tonight? *[Answered]*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

On what it looks like in practice (I-Q1.): during the party's time in the mayoralty several cooperation agreements were concluded with associations, including AfriForum. The point of such an agreement is not necessarily that the municipality shares money, but that it manages certain risks to the public: what happens if a pothole is not repaired properly and a tyre is damaged, or grass is cut and a stone breaks a windscreen. Those risks have to be managed, which is why an agreement is required. The party regards those cooperation agreements as working very well, and they have outlasted its term of office, with City officials still approaching AfriForum for help.

The party said it wondered, looking back, why it had not asked Die Moot Projek to conclude something similar, and that there is no reason the City cannot have a direct agreement with Die Moot Projek. It noted that a great deal can be achieved with a formal agreement, and that the approach of non-hostility on the part of such bodies, which do not get involved in the politics, is part of why it works.

Community Upliftment Precincts, set up in the party's term, are another example: in the neighbourhood where Cilliers Brink lives, the residents' association holds a CUP to maintain the street lights. But at some point these arrangements have to be formalised, because otherwise there will be one CUP after another with no common framework. The party's preferred future model is therefore to roll out City Improvement Districts across the city, with income-earning opportunities attached. In practice that means a new by-law, an amendment to the outdoor advertising by-law and probably an amendment to the informal trading by-law. The party stated that it has discussed this with officials in the City and that it is not thumb-suckery.

On crediting a community that maintains a City asset (I-Q2.): giving City Improvement Districts income-earning opportunities is the win-win route, because it takes no money away from anything and does not deepen the City's cash flow crisis. The City's cash cost coverage is at about 0.2, which is a day or two of cash in the bank, so a mechanism that repays a community for cutting the grass would be a quick route to closing the municipality's doors. The party said it

would proactively and aggressively fight for income-earning opportunities for City Improvement Districts instead. It also raised, as a separate conversation, rates rebates for developments that will in future generate income for the municipality.

On meeting TRACC twice a year (I-Q3.): yes, provided TRACC does not turn into a political party; if it stays apolitical, the party will come.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The party committed to formal cooperation agreements with resident associations as the practical form of the Adopt-a-Public-Space programme, on the model of the agreements it concluded with AfriForum, whose purpose is to manage public liability risk, and stated that there is no reason the City cannot conclude such an agreement directly with Die Moot Projek.

The party committed to rolling out City Improvement Districts across the city as the longer-term model, formalising the existing Community Upliftment Precincts, which requires a new by-law and amendments to the outdoor advertising and informal trading by-laws.

On crediting a community that maintains a City asset, no cash credit was committed to, and the reason given was the City's cash position of about 0.2 cash cost coverage. The commitment given instead is to fight for income-earning opportunities for City Improvement Districts.

The party committed to its councillors meeting TRACC twice a year, in public, to report on the commitments made at this session, on condition that TRACC remains non-political. This was confirmed as a commitment and read back at the close of the session.

J. Coalitions

Manifesto: *"The manifesto does not address coalitions or coalition agreements."*

Tshwane: Tshwane has been governed by coalitions since 2016.

Q1. Would you commit to publishing the coalition agreement in full? *[Answered]*

Q2. Which of tonight's commitments would you make non-negotiable in coalition talks? *[Answered in part]*

Q3. If a coalition partner tabled a budget that breached your inflation cap or the maintenance floor, how would your councillors vote? *[Answered]*

As put on the night: *If a coalition partner tabled a budget that breached the commitments you have given, how would your councillors vote?*

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

On publishing the coalition agreement (J-Q1.): yes, as the party did the last time it was in government.

On what is non-negotiable (J-Q2.): the party said the difficulty is that the moment the DA and the word non-negotiable appear in the same sentence it is called arrogant, and the more items placed under that heading, the more smaller parties will treat it as a refusal to govern. What the party has said is non-negotiable are its core principles: non-racialism, the rule of law, a free-market economy and a capable state. ***A fifth principle was referred to but not recalled on the night, and the party undertook to come back to TRACC on it.*** Asked to be held to the four, the party said those are not abstract: they determine who it will be in government with and

what it will not do in government. On its own account, it cannot be in government with a party that does not subscribe to non-racialism, and it cannot be in a government with a partner that openly seeks to exchange tenders and administrative positions politically, which it gave as the reason the Johannesburg coalition failed.

The party was therefore clear that the specific commitments given at this session assume it will be in government, and that at a coalition negotiating table the only things it can describe as non-negotiable are those core principles.

On how its councillors would vote (J-Q3.): the budget is a statement of the coherence and the confidence of a government in itself. If there is no agreement on the budget, there is no coalition; that is what makes or breaks it, and any coalition that has not agreed on a budget has fallen apart.

The party gave a practical example. When Cilliers Brink was mayor, a revived city cleansing levy was brought to him as a separate charge for cleaning public spaces. Research showed that a cleansing levy is already incorporated into the bin lifting charge, and the party refused it. The year after he was voted out, officials succeeded in having a cleansing levy approved, AfriForum took it to court and won, and the levy was reversed. If a coalition partner sought to impose an additional charge that is already covered in existing charges, that would bring the coalition effectively to an end.

The party added that coalitions are not legislated and a coalition agreement cannot be enforced by a court, so much of this comes down to judgment on whether a disagreement is worth breaking a coalition for. That is why a party must be very clear about what it stands for, and why bodies such as TRACC holding parties to account matter.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The party committed to publishing any coalition agreement in full, as it did when last in government. This was confirmed as a commitment and read back at the close of the session.

None of the specific commitments given at this session were made non-negotiable in coalition talks. What was recorded as non-negotiable are the party's four stated core principles: non-racialism, the rule of law, a free-market economy and a capable state. A fifth principle was referred to but not recalled, and the party undertook to come back to TRACC on it. This was read back at the close of the session.

If a coalition partner tabled a budget that breached the commitments given, the party's councillors would vote against it, on the stated basis that no agreement on a budget means no coalition.

5. Additional questions and the executive members' segment

The ten themes above are put to every party on identical terms. The questions in this section arise from this party's own manifesto and from the City's record, and were provided to the party in advance in section 4 of the discussion document. Not all of them were reached in the time available. The exchanges below are those that took place.

5.1 Melgisedek

The moderator noted that the party is not in government at present and limited the question to whether there was any update or information the party could give.

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

Lawyers for Human Rights have obtained an order preventing the municipality from implementing the eviction until the matter has been heard by the Constitutional Court. There is a good deal of confusion about the judgment, including whether the occupants may move into the tents or not, and the party may exercise the option of re-approaching the court for clarity.

The party stated that it does not recall the City proposing the bowling club in Capital Park, and that this was never put before the court. It opposed the tents at the corner of Nico Smit and Johan Heyns because the site is not large enough to house all of the people concerned and would become a second Melgisedek.

On a solution, the party's view is that the only approach likely to work is for the City to find a commercial partner willing to develop Melgisedek, which is in close proximity to the medical campus of the University of Pretoria. If that commercial development is profitable enough, the entity can fund alternative accommodation on a facility identified by the municipality, and then partner with a non-profit organisation to manage that facility as a halfway station rather than as permanent accommodation. The City does not have the capacity, the resources or the knowledge to run homeless shelters, whereas a number of churches and non-profit organisations in the city do work with homelessness. The party considers that the University of Pretoria would probably be a critical party, that it has no appetite for providing alternative accommodation itself, and that Lawyers for Human Rights might be amenable to an arrangement of this kind.

5.2 Consultation with affected residents

A TRACC executive member raised the absence of consultation with the residents of Riviera and Prinshof, noting that the party, Lawyers for Human Rights, AfriForum and the council each acted, while the surrounding affected residents were not consulted or engaged at all.

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

That was the party's own complaint against the City in the first instance, when it discovered that the City planned to relocate the occupants to that open piece of land. None of its councillors were asked or informed, there was no public participation and no council decision, and part of the complication the City now faces is a result of its failure to consult.

Having been caught unaware, the party considered it important to approach the court urgently to stop the relocation and did not have time to consult widely. Its view was that the eviction must

happen, but that relocating people onto a public space inadequate to house them would have turned the neighbourhood into a disaster zone and caused an overspill of groups squatting on other patches of land. The party accepted that consultation and communication were absolutely inadequate.

5.3 Enforceability of coalition agreements

A TRACC executive member asked what the use of a coalition agreement is if it cannot be enforced, since agreements are written precisely to deal with the situation where the parties do not agree.

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

The principle is pacta sunt servanda: promises must be kept. Certain promises can be enforced by a court of law and others have to be policed and monitored by the voting public. There is no judicial enforcement of coalition agreements in coalition countries such as Germany or Denmark either. Whether a partner's conduct justifies leaving a coalition is a judgment no court can make; only informed citizens can make it, and the more that is known publicly about coalitions, the better able the public is to decide.

The party noted that South Africa is a young coalition country, that in Germany a coalition agreement is negotiated over months whereas South Africa allows 14 days, and said electoral reform could improve matters, which time did not allow it to set out.

5.4 Unfunded budgets and the eight years of coalition

A TRACC executive member put it to the party that it had stated its willingness to walk away from a coalition where there is no agreement on the budget, yet over eight years of coalition it was in agreement with its coalition partners on budgets that were approved by council, some of which were unfunded, did not comply with Treasury guidelines on repairs and maintenance, and left the City unable to pay suppliers; and that even if such a budget were executed in full the City would still fail. The member asked what will be done differently this time, and noted the party's expressed support for the current City Manager, who compiles and presents the budget.

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RESPONSE

The compilation of a budget does not by itself fix the city. On day one of a budget steering committee, 80% to 85% of the budget is already committed, in salaries and in signed contracts, many of them irregular, from which the City can only be released by approaching a court. The R777 million spent on water tanker invoices was not a budget choice; it was a choice made by the current ANC-led coalition in spite of a budget that did not provide for it.

In 2016 the coalition walked into a city whose financial statements said everything was in order, and found a massive deficit, and a smart meter contract from which it had to ask a court for permission to disentangle the City; outstanding VAT penalties and interest from that same contract were still being paid in instalments when Cilliers Brink left the mayoralty. In 2020 the City was placed under provincial administration for seven months with no oversight, and the problem that followed was not bad budget decisions but that the City could not collect revenue,

leaving a R2.6 billion hole in the finances.

On the criticism that the party adopted an unfunded budget, the party's answer is that National Treasury approved that budget in all respects, on condition that the City put together a funding plan with specific measures to reach a funded position within the medium term. The first measure in that funding plan was that no salary increases would be paid in 2023, which is what forced the choice and led to a strike that had to be broken; other measures included making the power stations available to the private sector and commercialising some of the City's reserves. The funding plan and the measures taken under it enabled the City to reach a favourable payment agreement with Eskom and to begin clearing debt.

The party accepted that a very plausible and fair argument can be made that instead of adopting that budget with a funding plan it should have cut everything to the bone, and said it took a different route. Its position is that whatever approach is taken, a new administration will still have to adopt a funding plan. Tshwane's budget is on paper funded as approved by Treasury, but the party's view is that the under-collection probably points to an unfunded budget. Success will be determined less by the perfection of the budget than by whether the right personnel and contractors can be appointed and whether people doing wrong can be dismissed, which is what coalition gridlock between 2016 and 2021 prevented.

The following additional questions provided to the party in advance were not reached in the time available: cadre deployment; accountability of senior management between 2016 and 2024; oversight capacity between 2016 and 2024; procurement transparency, and why the manifesto limits the removal of corruption to infrastructure procurement; whether more than 8% a year is required given a combined capital and maintenance shortfall of approximately R57 billion since 2015; and why the City's asset register and annual asset verification under the Municipal Finance Management Act were not achieved between 2016 and 2024. The question on unfunded budgets and expenditure reduction was reached and is recorded at 5.4 above.

6. Commitments read back and confirmed at the close of the session

In accordance with the ground rules, the moderator read the recorded commitments back to the party at the close of the session so that the party could confirm or correct them. The party confirmed them. They are reproduced here as read back, with the theme and question reference used on the night.

Ref	Question	Commitment as read back
A	If revenue cannot sustain services at that level, what gives way first: the increase, the service or the cost base?	The cost base.
B	The manifesto ring-fences service revenue for infrastructure. Would you support publishing, per ward, the rates collected and the capital and maintenance spent there?	Yes.
C	Would you ring-fence the maintenance budget so that it cannot be diverted in-year?	Yes, described as a good commitment to make.
D	What capital share of the budget would you target by the end of the term?	A capital budget of R7 billion to R8 billion by 2031.
D	Would you publish every grant's allocation, spend and underspend quarterly?	Yes.
G	Would you support a published quarterly register of Auditor-General and MPAC findings showing who is responsible and whether the deadline was met?	Yes.
I	Would your councillors meet TRACC twice a year, in public, to report on the commitments made tonight?	Yes, on condition that TRACC remains non-political.
J	Would you commit to publishing any coalition agreement in full?	Yes.
J	Which of tonight's commitments would you make non-negotiable?	The party's core principles, rather than any of the evening's specific commitments. Four were named on the night: non-racialism, the rule of law, a free-market economy and a capable state. ***A fifth was referred to but not recalled, and the party undertook to come back to TRACC on it.***

Where the record in section 4 above sets out an undertaking that was not read back at the close, it is recorded because the party gave it in terms during the session. The read-back above is the list the party itself confirmed on the night.

7. Figures and statements recorded but not verified by TRACC

The party put forward the following figures and factual statements during the session. TRACC records them because they were given in answer to its questions, but has not independently verified them and does not adopt them. The party invited TRACC to check several of them.

- Non-revenue water is currently 41%, not the 39% in TRACC's analysis, and was 32% during Cilliers Brink's term as mayor.

- In 2006 the City of Cape Town had a capital budget of about R2.6 billion and Tshwane about R2.1 billion. Twenty years on, Cape Town's capital budget is about R13 billion and Tshwane's about R2.5 billion. The party expressly invited TRACC to fact-check these figures.
- The City's cash cost coverage is at about 0.2, which is a day or two of cash in the bank.
- All of the City's security contracts were allowed to lapse without replacement, and there is currently not a single security guard anywhere in the City.
- A property valued at R1.8 million in Koedoespoort carries more in rates, tariffs and charges in total than a comparable property in Cape Town, on a comparison the party conducted.
- The City's collection rate reached 93% during Cilliers Brink's term as mayor.
- The City's accounting entries are done by Excel spreadsheet as a workaround rather than directly into SAP, so that there is no single coherent data string.
- R777 million was spent on water tanker invoices without provision in the budget.
- In 2020 the City was placed under provincial administration for seven months, leaving a R2.6 billion shortfall in revenue.
- There are private water concessions in Mbombela and in Ballito Bay, KwaDukuza, with lower water losses, better pressure and lower tariffs than comparable municipal jurisdictions, and a private management agreement in Frankfort in the Free State under which load shedding was avoided.
- Tshwane's management structure comprises the City Manager and seven senior managers *[Party correction, 15 October 2026: seven levels of management from the City Manager downwards]*, with a Chief Operations Officer cluster covering health, social development, roads and transport, water, electricity, and environment and agriculture.

Statements made by the party about the conduct of named individuals, and about other political parties and their representatives, are not reproduced in this record. TRACC is not a party to those matters, takes no position on them, and the full exchange is available on the recording published alongside this record.

8. Confirmation by the Democratic Alliance

The Democratic Alliance confirms that this record is a fair and accurate summary of the party's responses at the TRACC session held on 7 October 2026, subject to any corrections of fact submitted to TRACC in writing, and consents to its publication by TRACC on www.tracc.org.za, together with the recording of the session and alongside the records of sessions with other parties.

	For the Democratic Alliance	For TRACC
Full name		
Position		
Signature		
Date		

Enquiries: secretariat@tracc.org.za.