

Notes from a Teams Meeting held on 13 June 2025 to discuss the Superblock concept in relation to Mandela Square

Present:

DoHS: D Alli (Director: HS); L Tshiashi; L Dzila

Langeberg Municipality: D Louwrens (Director: Eng Services), C Posthumus (Snr Manager: Civil Eng Services), M Brown (Manager: Housing), T Brunings (Manager: Town Planning)

ASLA: K Siebrits (Project Manager)

Urban Dynamics: M Papenfus (Town Planner)

Discussion:

1. The discussion focused on the superblock project, aiming to engage with the municipality and address operational systems for communal ablution blocks.
2. Livhuwani Tshiashi initiated the meeting by explaining its purpose, focusing on the superblock project and the municipality's inquiries regarding its execution.
3. Tracy Brunings highlighted the need to discuss the systems in place for communal ablution blocks, and the community needs for lighting and roads.
4. Karen Siebrits confirmed the community's priority for lighting and suggested installing one light at each toilet block but required clarification on the coverage area from electrical engineers. David Alli reassured that the project could proceed while exploring funding options, and if local government support is not secured, it could be included in their application to the DoHS.
5. David Alli emphasized the importance of a flexible approach to development, informed by local context and community engagement.
6. David Alli outlined the incremental approach to Superblock development, noting that municipalities are beginning to embrace this model to enhance service delivery in informal settlements. As an example he indicated that in a settlement with a dirt road, new shelters may be erected within these roads with areas becoming increasingly dense and haphazard; whereas where these roads are surfaced, new shelters are not erected on these surfaced roads, and the area becomes incrementally more ordered and easier to upgrade.
7. The challenges of managing foreign nationals in the area were also discussed as a potential threat to the success of the upgrading initiatives. Support from Authorities for the local community is needed in this regard.

8. The Mandela Square development proposal is for four families per toilet and six families per ablution block. The community request that the ablution blocks be fenced to control access and improve management and security. Fencing also to be submitted with the funding request; although it was noted that this should not lead to a system of abuse of control of access. The potential limitation of funding was noted.
9. Karen Siebrits indicated that the community gardens are a possible point of contention for DoHS but do not affect the overall residential layout significantly, as this area is in the floodline and not suitable for settlement. The community garden is a positive in terms of day-to-day food security
10. Concerns were raised regarding the SDPs compliance with flood line regulations, with David Alli advocating for visibility and accessibility of riverine areas in future projects. The design indicates the 100-year flood line as per Element Engineer's 2008 report (somewhat outdated).
11. Livhuwani Tshiashi discussed the necessity for the municipality to submit well-motivated applications for funding, considering community context and security concerns.
12. David Alli stressed the importance of not delaying the project while seeking funding. The urgency of completing the PIRR by the end of the month was emphasized, along with the necessity of tailoring the project to fit local scenarios.
13. Tracy Brunings mentioned that a meeting of the Langeberg Municipal Tribunal is scheduled for 19 June 2025 to finalize the LUP approval but confirmed that no agreement could be given for the construction of the ablution blocks until there is a clear management agreement between the municipality and community.
14. Deon Louwrens expressed the need for examples of successful superblock implementations to ensure effectiveness of management and maintenance of ablution blocks. David Alli shared insights on the implementation of superblocks in various locations, including Cape Town and Clan William, noting that each community has unique challenges. He explained that while some municipalities manage communal services directly, or through private service providers (janitorial services) others rely on community involvement. This makes sense in areas of high unemployment. The team was encouraged to learn from existing projects to enhance their approach e.g. Mossel Bay – contacts to be provided by Mr Alli and Ms Dzila.
15. The meeting concluded with a focus on the need for a management agreement with the municipality before constructing ablution blocks; and the need to finalise the LUP approval and submit the PIRR to secure much needed funding and begin with the long overdue upgrading of Mandela Square, Montagu.

It was agreed that the meeting was constructive and valuable in achieving the best outcome possible. Future meetings may be coordinated to see the project through.