



Statement by the Executive Mayor of Buffalo City on the 21 Day Lockdown on COVID-19 Announced by the President

20 March 2020

Fellow Residents of our City,

Buffalo City Municipality notes and welcomes the measures announced by the President which are aimed at containing the further spread of the COVID-19 Virus.

Using the provisions of the National Disaster Management Act, President Ramaphosa has announced a National Lockdown with effect from midnight Thursday the 26th of March 2020. These will be tough days for the people of our country, but we appeal for calm and understanding from all residents of Buffalo City.

It is important to indicate that despite the lockdown essential services will be operational in the City. Firstly, our traffic and law enforcement services will continue to assist the efforts that are aimed at bringing law and order during this period. They will continue to ensure that the restrictions on stay at home and public gatherings are respected fully. They will also be implementing our own bylaws including the enforcement of the closures that we announced last week.

We will secondly ensure that our refuse removal service is operating optimally during this period in accordance with the normal schedule. We will ensure that regular grass cutting and maintenance of parks.

The municipality will thirdly work to ensure that there is consistent water, sewerage and electricity services provision during this period. Our engineering officials will therefore be working hard to ensure that there are no service disruptions during this 21-day period. Water provision at Buffalo City currently stands at 98 percent and we are only having 2 percent of our population with no access to water. We will ensure that we provide water to those areas with no water using water tankers. A detailed schedule of distribution will be publicised adequately using mass media at our disposal, we urge the affected communities to listen regularly to the community radio stations.

We however encourage residents to pay their bills at supermarkets and on online platforms.

We will ensure that our workers are protected during this period through the provision of sanitisers, gloves and other necessities.

It should be noted that what is emphasised during this period is working from home and it is therefore not a holiday for municipal employees. The municipal employees whose work can be done whilst home will continue to do so in order to support the consistent provision of the essential services as declared by the President.

We all know the importance of having this lockdown. Already there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the City, with the other case just here in Chintsa. This means that the virus is here in our city as results are still waited after contact tracking was done by the Department of Health.

Whilst these are shocking news to the city, they were to be expected due to the rapid manner in which the Corona Virus spreads. Last week we made a point that the spread and the devastation of this virus will be determined by the actions and inactions that we take together.

In the City we have prepared for this eventuality and this is why we announced a number of measures which are in addition to the regulations that were issued by the National Government. We will maintain closure in eBuhlanti, all Beaches, Public Libraries, the East London Zoo and the Aquarium in order to contain the spread of the virus.

Residents are advised to refrain from trying to go to beaches, eBuhlanti and other picnic spots during this period. We must advise that those who do not heed this message will be met by the multi-stakeholder law enforcement teams that have been deployed.

During the 21-day lockdown, we are closing our public transport system. All halls and public amenities will be closed during this period. At the cemeteries only family members will be allowed for burials.

We have increased communication to the people of the Metro, emphasising basic hygiene and the keeping of a social distance. We urge you to stay at home and respect the authorities.

This is a time for all the people of Buffalo City to work together and fight the further spread of this virus. We should therefore not panic but remain calm and continue to respect the regulations that have been issued. We can only beat this virus together.

I Thank You!

Issued by the Executive Mayor of Buffalo City Metro

Cllr Xola Pakati

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