

GREATER LETABA MUNICIPALITY



UNAUTHORISED, IRREGULAR, FRUITLESS & WASTEFUL EXPENDITURE POLICY

2026/2027

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1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The Unauthorized, Irregular, Fruitless & Wasteful Expenditure Policy, compiled and adopted by Council is to ensure compliance with Section 32 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003 and MFMA Circular 68 specifically dealing with unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure issued by National Treasury on 10 May 2013.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The main objectives of the policy are:

1. To state the regulatory and legislative requirements surrounding unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful and expenditure.
2. To provide the definitions of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
3. To provide examples of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
4. To outline procedures to manage such expenditures and the implementation of consequence management to ensure strong ethical, accountable and transparent financial governance and institutional arrangements.
5. To inform officials of the consequences of not complying with the relevant regulatory and legislative requirements.
6. To comply with the relevant legislative requirements.
7. To strengthen the enforcement provisions enabled in the MFMA to respond to various challenges.
8. To ensure Council's resources are used effectively, efficiently and economically.
9. To prevent unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
10. To implement stronger monitoring, supporting, reporting and enforcement measures to reduce incidents of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

3. DEFINITIONS

"municipality/Council"

Greater Local Municipality (GLM)

"the Act"

Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003

"the POBA"

Public Office-Bearers Act, Act 20 of 1998

"official"

Any person employed by Greater Local Municipality, be it in the capacity as a permanent official, temporary official, intern or contracted employee (in terms of Section 57 of the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000 or any other form of employment contract)

"department"

Any internal department of Greater Local Municipality as per the latest approved Organisational Structure of Council.

"overspending"

- (a) In relation to the budget of the municipality, means causing the operational or capital expenditure incurred during the financial year to exceed the total amount appropriated in that year's budget for its operational or capital expenditure as the case may be;
- (b) In relation to a vote, means causing expenditure under the vote to exceed the amount appropriated for that vote; or
- (c) In relation to expenditure under Section 26, means causing expenditure under that section to exceed the limits allowed in subsection (5) of that section

"Vote"

- (a) One of the main segments into which the budget of the municipality is divided for the appropriation of money for the different department or functional areas of the municipality; and
- (b) which specifies the total amount that is appropriated for the purposes of the department or functional area concerned.

The definitions of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure as per the MFMA are as follows:

"irregular expenditure"

- (a) expenditure incurred by a municipality or municipal entity in contravention of, or that is not in accordance with, a requirement of this Act, and which has not been condoned in terms of Section 170;
- (b) expenditure incurred by a municipality or municipal entity or in contravention of, or that is not in accordance with, a requirement of the Municipal Systems Act, and which has not been condoned in terms of that Act;

- (c) expenditure incurred by a municipality in contravention of, or that is not in accordance with, a requirement of the Public Office-Bearers Act, Act 20 of 1998; or
- (d) expenditure incurred by a municipality or municipal entity in contravention of, or that is not in accordance with, a requirement of the supply chain management policy of the municipality or any of the municipality's by-laws giving effect to such policy, and which has not been condoned in terms of such policy or by-law, but excludes expenditure by a municipality which falls within the definition of "unauthorised expenditure".

"unauthorised expenditure",

In relation to a municipality, means any expenditure incurred by a municipality otherwise than in accordance with Section 15 or 11(3), and includes:

- (a) overspending of the total amount appropriated in the municipality's approved budget;
- (b) overspending of the total amount appropriated for a vote in the approved budget;
- (c) expenditure from a vote unrelated to the department or functional area covered by the vote;
- (d) expenditure of money appropriated for a specific purpose, otherwise than for that specific purpose;
- (e) spending of an allocation referred to in Paragraph (b), (c) or (d) of the definition of "allocation" otherwise than in accordance with any conditions of the allocation; or
- (f) a grant by the municipality otherwise than in accordance with the Act.

"fruitless and wasteful expenditure"

Expenditure that was made in vain and would have been avoided had reasonable care been exercised.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The following legislation and regulations, amongst others, inform this policy:

1. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Section 32 (Unauthorised, Irregular or Fruitless and Wasteful Expenditure)

(1) Without limiting liability in terms of the common law or other legislation:

- (a) a political office-bearer of a municipality is liable for unauthorised expenditure if that office-bearer knowingly or after having been advised by the accounting officer of the municipality that the expenditure is likely

to result in unauthorised expenditure, instructed an official of the municipality to incur the expenditure;

- (b) the accounting officer is liable for unauthorised expenditure deliberately or negligently incurred by the accounting officer, subject to Sub-section (3);
 - (c) any political office-bearer or official of a municipality who deliberately or negligently committed, made or authorised an irregular expenditure, is liable for that expenditure; or
 - (d) any political office-bearer or official of a municipality who deliberately or negligently made or authorised a fruitless and wasteful expenditure is liable for that expenditure.
- (2) A municipality must recover unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure from the person liable for that expenditure unless the expenditure—
- (a) in the case of unauthorised expenditure, is
 - (i) authorised in an adjustments budget; or

- (ii) certified by the municipal council, after investigation by a council committee, as irrecoverable and written off by the council; and
- (b) in the case of irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure, is, after investigation by a council committee, certified by the council as irrecoverable and written off by the council.
- (3) If the accounting officer becomes aware that the council, the mayor or the executive committee of the municipality, as the case may be, has taken a decision which, if implemented, is likely to result in unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure, the accounting officer is not liable for any ensuing unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure provided that the accounting officer has informed the council, the mayor or the executive committee, in writing, that the expenditure is likely to be unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

2. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Section 176 (Liability of functionaries exercising powers and functions in terms of this Act)

- (1) No municipality or any of its political structures, political office-bearers or officials, no municipal entity or its board of directors or any of its directors or officials, and no other organ of state or person exercising a power or performing a function in terms of this Act, is liable in respect of any loss or damage resulting from the exercise of that power or the performance of that function in good faith.
- (2) Without limiting liability in terms of the common law or other legislation, a municipality may recover from a political office-bearer or official of the municipality, and a municipal entity may recover from a director or official of the entity, any loss or damage suffered by it because of the deliberate or negligent unlawful actions of that political office-bearer or official when performing a function of office.

3. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Section 170 (Departures from Treasury Regulations or Conditions)

- (1) The National Treasury may on good grounds approve a departure from a treasury regulation or from any condition imposed in terms of this Act.
- (2) Non-compliance with a regulation made in terms of Section 168, or with a condition imposed by the National Treasury in terms of this Act, may on good grounds shown be condoned by the Treasury.

4. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Section 173 (Offences)

Offences committed by the accounting officer, senior manager, councillor and an official are addressed under this section.

5. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Section 62 (General Financial Management Functions)

The accounting officer of a municipality is responsible for managing the financial administration of the municipality and must for this purpose take all reasonable steps to ensure resources are used effectively, efficiently and economically.

6. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Section 79 (Delegations)

The accounting officer of a municipality must for the proper application of this Act in the municipality's administration, develop an appropriate system of delegation that will both maximise administrative and operational efficiency and provide adequate checks and balances in the municipality's financial administration.

7. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Section 60 (Municipal Managers to be Accounting Officers)

The Municipal Manager of a municipality is the Accounting Officer of the municipality for the purposes of this Act, and, as Accounting Officer, must-

- (a) Exercise the functions and powers assigned to an accounting officer in terms of this Act; and
- (b) Provide guidance and advice on compliance with this Act to:
 - (i) the political structures, political office-bearers and officials of the municipality; and
 - (ii) any municipal entity under the sole or shared control of the municipality.

8. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Regulations on Municipal Budget & Reporting Regulations

Regulations 23 and 74 of the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations.

5. ROLE OF THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER

The Accounting Officer is responsible, amongst others, for the following:

1. Exercise all reasonable care to prevent and detect unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure and must for this purpose implement effective, efficient and transparent processes of financial and risk management;

2. Inform the Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee and Council (in writing), as the case may be, if a decision is taken which, if implemented, is likely to result in unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure;
3. On discovery of any unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure to report promptly (in writing), the particulars of the expenditure to the Executive Mayor;
4. Follow the prescribed processes to deal with unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

6. EXAMPLES OF UNAUTHORISED, IRREGULAR, FRUITLESS AND WASTEFUL EXPENDITURE

The following examples are only guides and are not exhaustive:

6.1 Unauthorised expenditure

Unauthorised expenditure in GLM is expenditure that has not been budgeted for. Expenditure that is not in terms of the conditions of an allocation received from another sphere of government, entity or organ of state and expenditure in the form of a grant that is not permitted in terms of the MFMA. Unauthorised expenditure is accounted for as an expense in the Statement of Financial Performance and where recovered, it is subsequently accounted for as revenue in the Statement of Financial Performance.

Unauthorised expenditure in GLM includes the following:

1. Procuring of goods and services that are not budgeted for;
2. Expenditure not in terms of the conditions of an allocation (grant) received from another sphere of government, entity or organ of state;
3. Expenditure in the form of a grant that is not permitted in terms of the MFMA.

6.2 Irregular expenditure

Irregular expenditure in GLM is expenditure that is contrary to the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003, the Municipal Systems Act, Act 2 of 2000 and the Public Office Bearers Act, Act 20 of 1998 or is in contravention of the entity's Supply Chain Management Policy. Irregular expenditure excludes unauthorised expenditure. Irregular expenditure is accounted for as expenditure in the Statement of Financial Performance and where recovered, it is subsequently accounted for as revenue in the Statement of Financial Performance.

Irregular expenditure in GLM includes the following:

1. Irregular expenditure incurred as a result of procuring goods or services by means other than through competitive bids and where reasons for deviating from inviting competitive bids have not been recorded and approved by the Accounting Officer;
2. Irregular expenditure incurred as a result of non-compliance with a requirement of the GLM's Delegations of Authority;
3. Irregular expenditure incurred due to it being in contravention of the GLM's Supply Chain Management Policy;

4. Expenditure paid out to service providers who are in the service of the state;
5. Irregular expenditure incurred as a result of non-compliance with a provision contained in any applicable legislation.

6.3 Fruitless and wasteful expenditure

Fruitless and wasteful expenditure is expenditure that was made in vain and would have been avoided had reasonable care been exercised. Fruitless and wasteful expenditure is accounted for as expenditure in the Statement of Financial Performance and where recovered, it is subsequently accounted for as revenue in the Statement of Financial Performance.

Fruitless and wasteful expenditure in GLM includes the following:

1. Procuring of goods and services that are not beneficial to the municipality;
2. Costs of goods and services are in excess of what would have been the case had proper procedures been followed (quotes);
3. Incurring penalty and interest costs on late payment of accounts;
4. Mismanagement of funds.
5. Stock loss

7. PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED IN CASES OF UNAUTHORISED, IRREGULAR, FRUITLESS AND WASTEFUL EXPENDITURE

1. Any unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure as defined above, must be promptly reported to the Chief Financial Officer and the Municipal Manager will initiate the process of dealing with the unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
2. Upon receiving a report of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, the Chief Financial Officer will advise, in writing, the Municipal Manager.

3. The Municipal Manager will oversee the initiation of the process to deal with the unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
4. The Budget and Treasury Office: SCM Unit will maintain the Register, in a prescribed format.
5. The end user departments shall be responsible for drafting of the report in an item format to report the instance of Unauthorized, Irregular, Fruitless and Wasteful expenditure to the next Council meeting.
6. The risk and compliance Section to convene a Financial Disciplinary Board (FDB) sitting once Council adopted the recommendations as per (5) above where necessary.
7. The instance of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure to be reported to the Manager internal audit by PMS Section
8. The Manager Internal audit will institute an investigation as contemplated in Section 32 of the MFMA, and in particular, determine the following:
 1. Nature of the non-compliance (non-compliance with MFMA, MSA, Remuneration of Public Officer Bearer's Act, etc.);
 2. Nature and reason for the unauthorised expenditure, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure ;
 3. Whether the unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure was as a result of an instruction given, and if so, by whom. In addition, whether the accounting officer of official involved advised that such a decision would result in unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure;
 4. Whether the irregular expenditure result from a minor breach in the procurement policy;
 5. Whether the municipality suffered a financial loss;
 6. Whether the accounting officer / official / public officer bearer acted deliberately, negligently, or grossly negligently;
 7. Grounds shown as to why the unauthorised expenditure should be authorised (such as interest of the municipality);
 8. Whether the accounting officer can condone the non-compliance with the SCM policy as a minor breach;
 9. Whether the non-compliance must be submitted to the National Treasury for condonation;

10. Whether the non-compliance must be submitted to the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs for condonation.
9. The findings of the Manager internal audit will be submitted to the Municipal Manager for consideration of the following:
 1. Introduction of an adjustments budget to authorise the un-authorised expenditure (if unforeseen and unavoidable and the process outlined in paragraph 3 of this policy could not be followed);
 2. Recommendation to recover funds;
 3. Recommendation to write the funds off as irrecoverable;
 4. Disciplinary / Criminal action to be instituted.
10. The Manger Internal audit must, in considering (h) above, take due cognisance of Section 176 of the MFMA.
11. The Municipal Manager must advise the Executive Mayor of the unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure and the recommendations that will be made to the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC).
12. The Municipal Manager will be responsible to institute criminal charges where applicable.
13. The findings of the Manager internal audit and the recommendations of the Municipal Manager will be submitted to the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) after consideration by the Financial Disciplinary Board (FDB) for consideration of the following:
 1. Introduction of an adjustments budget to authorise the unauthorised expenditure (if unforeseen and unavoidable and the process outlined in paragraph 3 of this policy could not be followed);
 2. Recommendation to recover funds;
 3. Recommendation to write the funds off as irrecoverable.
14. The recommendations of MPAC will be submitted, in committee, to the next Mayoral Committee and Council meetings for final decision.
15. Upon conclusion of the Council process, the SCM unit must promptly advise the MEC for Local Government and the Auditor-General of the unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure and the decision taken by Council.

16. If the unauthorised expenditure is not authorised by Council, the process to recover the funds from the liable official or political officer bearer must be initiated by the Legal Section, within a period not exceeding 30 days.
17. The Register of Unauthorised, Irregular, Fruitless and Wasteful Expenditure will form part of the Municipal Manager's management meeting agenda to ensure the reported items are dealt with in a prompt manner.
18. All instances of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure must be disclosed in the Annual Report.
19. The Chief Financial Officer must initiate a special adjustments budget (if applicable) to deal with the authorisation of unauthorised expenditure.

8. INVESTIGATIONS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

8.1 In terms Sections 172 and 173 of the MFMA, an Accounting Officer is guilty of financial misconduct and an offence respectively if he or she:

- (a) Will fully or negligently fails to take effective and appropriate steps to prevent unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure as required by the MFMA;
- (b) fails to take effective and appropriate disciplinary steps against an official in the department who makes or permits unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure;
- (c) fails to report unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure in terms of the MFMA.

8.2 As soon as the Accounting Officer becomes aware of an allegation of financial misconduct against an official, the Accounting Officer has a responsibility to ensure that the Executive Mayor (Council) initiates an investigation into the matter and if the allegations are confirmed, holds a disciplinary hearing in accordance with the prescripts of the applicable legislation.

8.3 In terms of Section 172 of the MFMA, an official of a department to whom a duty or power has been assigned commits an act of financial misconduct if that official will fully or negligently fails to perform that duty or exercise that power in line with applicable legislation.

8.4 In terms of the MFMA, the Accounting Officer must take appropriate and effective disciplinary steps against an official who makes or permits unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

8.5 When the Accounting Officer determines the appropriateness of disciplinary steps against an official in terms of applicable legislation, he or she must take into account the following:

- (a) circumstances of the transgression;
- (b) extent of the expenditure involved;
- (c) nature and seriousness of the transgression.

Reference to the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003: Financial Misconduct Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings

All alleged financial misconduct must be reported according to the Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings.

All financial misconduct in terms of Section 171 of the MFMA must be investigated in terms of the Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings.

9. REPORTING

9.1 The Accounting Officer must comply with the following reporting requirements:

1. Immediately upon discovery of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, the Accounting Officer must report the details of the unauthorised, irregular or fruitless, and wasteful expenditure to the Executive Mayor.

The report must include the following details:

- 1. Amount of the unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure;
- 2. Name of the vote from which the expenditure was made;
- 3. Reason why the unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure could not be avoided;
- 4. Name and title of the responsible official;
- 5. Details of any recovery steps taken or to be taken by the municipality;
- 6. Details of any disciplinary steps taken or to be taken by the municipality,

2. The Accounting Officer must also include the expenditure in the department's monthly revenue and expenditure report submitted to the Council in terms of the MFMA.

3. All unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure must be reported as a note to the Annual Financial Statements.

