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22 June 2010

Dayalan Govender

INSTITUTING BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS FOR THE PROPOSED SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PHASE 3 IN BETHELSDORP, NMBM

Reference is made to the discussion, held at the Bilateral meeting of the 11 June 2010, relating to biodiversity offsets for the proposed Khayamnandi Extension Housing Development and the Mzingisi Development Trust Proposed Social Housing Development Phase 3 in Bethelsdorp, in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM).

In response to the above-mentioned query, the NMBM acknowledges the role that offsets play in both improving the legal status of the NMBMOSS and in terms of achieving biodiversity targets. However it was resolved at the bilateral that biodiversity offsets will not be instituted by the NMBM and should not be recommended by EAPs as a mitigatory measure against significant biodiversity loss, until such time that a biodiversity offset policy and implementation plan is in place to inform the implementation process of this tool. The NMBM is committed to commissioning a feasibility study to test the viability of implementing biodiversity offsets within the metro and will address this issue with environmental consultants.

Other mechanisms, such as Biodiversity Stewardship, are being implemented by the NMBM to achieve similar objectives however the primary objective of biodiversity stewardship is to develop custodianship of biodiversity amongst private landowners. The fact the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme will be prioritized within the NMB MOSS allows for legal status issues, pertaining to the NMB MOSS, to be addressed by this programme. The NMBM's

Rating Policy does offer a biodiversity rebate and exemption to support those landowners with an existing conservation ethic.

I trust that this has addressed any uncertainty related to the necessity of instituting biodiversity offsets in the above mentioned applications.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a final flourish.

JORAM MKOSANA
DIRECTOR: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTORATE