IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PSDF IN THE CENTRAL KAROO

The Provincial Spatial Development Framework, 2014 (PSDF) is the common spatial reference framework for delivering on the Province’s strategic development priorities, individually and collectively. It guides the location and form of public investment of national and provincial departments as well as municipalities in the nature and built environment, ensuring that the returns on these investments are consistent with the Province’s development objectives.

Area wise the Central Karoo is the largest district in the Western Cape Province. This invariably means that distances between settlements are vast. The total area of the District covers approximately 30% of the total area of the Western Cape and is sparsely populated. The district comprises of Beaufort West, Prince Albert and Laingsburg Municipalities, with Beaufort West as the primary regional service centre.

The diagram below depicts the three spatial themes underlying the PSDF and their associated elements, supported by spatial governance. Although many of the policy statements are interrelated, statements reflected on this poster is deemed the most relevant to the Central Karoo District.

THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE PROVINCE’S ASSETS

The Western Cape’s cultural and scenic landscapes are significant assets that underpin the tourism economy but are being incrementally eroded and fragmented. This is no different for the Central Karoo.

Between the Swartberg Mountain range in the south of the Great Karoo and the Nuweveld Mountains, which form part of the ‘Great Escarpment’ to the north, lies an extensive plan known as ‘Die Vlakte’. Given the pre-historic nature of the Central Karoo, the area is of great palaeontological interest (fossils), as well as archaeological sites, such as at Nelspoort, near Beaufort West, Matjiesfontein and the isolated Gamkaskloof near Beaufort West as the primary regional service centre.

Mountain passes and ‘poorts’ of scenic and heritage significance include the Swartberg, Gamkaskloof Pass, Meiringspoort, Seweweekspoort and Molteno Pass in the Nuweveld Range. The Karoo National Park near Beaufort West is a Provincial Heritage Site status.

The Province has a small emergent sustainable energy sector in the form of wind and solar generation facilities located in the more rural, sparsely populated areas.

ENERGY

- Support emergent Independent Power Producers and sustainable energy producers (wind, solar, biomass and waste conversion initiatives) in suitable rural locations.

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

- Encourage and support renewable energy generation at scale.

SAFEGUARD CULTURAL AND SCENIC ASSETS

- Priority focus areas proposed for conservation or protection include landscapes under pressure for large-scale infrastructural developments such as wind farms, solar energy facilities, transmission lines and shale gas development in the Central Karoo.

DEVELOPING INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE SETTLEMENTS

There are many isolated and declining settlements in the Central Karoo and these continue to be marginalised by distance and transportation costs.

- Roll-out The Western Cape Government’s Green Economy and broadband programmes as new technologies offer the prospects of making living in and working out of rural towns and villages more attractive.

- Use ICT and periodic social services to reduce the need for rural dwellers to travel to services.

BALANCE AND COORDINATE THE DELIVERY OF FACILITIES AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- Invest in regional service centres to support and integrate with the rural hinterlands, prioritising investment in housing, health and education in these towns rather than dispersing investment to villages and hamlets.

OPENING UP OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SPACE ECONOMY

Agriculture is going through a difficult transition period with a traditional export market in recession, escalating pressure on operating margins, more stringent international and national compliance requirements, and instability in the labour market.

The equal distribution of services across an extensive area such as the Central Karoo is not achievable, especially in areas with low density, scattered settlements.

DETERMINE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

- Promote the upgrading of existing rail infrastructure.

USE REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TO LEVERAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Use off-grid technologies when the upgrading of infrastructure is required in small towns with no apparent growth potential.

- Prioritise remote rural areas, small towns and low income urban areas for the roll-out of broadband.

IMPROVE INTER AND INTRA-REGIONAL ACCESSIBILITY

- Strengthen functional linkages between settlements and larger towns, with specific attention given to introducing rural transport systems such as an Integrated Public Transport Network in the rural areas. Promote the upgrading of existing rail infrastructure.

DIVERSIFY AND STRENGTHEN THE RURAL ECONOMY

- Extend current rural livelihood support programmes to cover a wider range of activities and build a broader rural skills base. Target future support to settlements that are stagnating or situated in a remote area. Use broadband technology to extend the programme’s coverage and align with Thungo Centres.

Western Cape Government

For more information and tips visit www.westerncape.gov.za/eadp

Better Together.