



**CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD**

ANNEXURE 12

VIREMENT POLICY

2026/27 BUDGET (JUNE 2026)



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1. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

In this Policy, unless the context indicates otherwise –

“Accounting Officer”, means a person appointed in terms of section 54A of the Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000). The Municipal manager is the accounting officer within the municipal context.

“Activity”, means internal services/products provided by a directorate/department to other directorates/departments within the organization.

“Activity types”, means master data codes used to identify the type of activity (service/product) that will be performed internally.

“Approved budget” means an annual budget-

- (a) approved by a municipal council; or
- (b) approved by a provincial or the national executive following an intervention in terms of section 139 of the Constitution, and includes such an annual budget as revised by an adjustments budget in terms of section 28.

“Capital Approval Object” is the level at which a project or programme is approved by Council. Capital Approval Objects are linked to the following:

- (a) Major project - A project which consists of multiple coordinated, related, interdependent and controlled components undertaken to achieve an objective conforming to specific requirements.
- (b) Programme - Multiple independent projects of a similar nature managed in an overall coordinated approach and approved as part of a programme.
- (c) Routine Programme –
 - i. Routines programmes should not include individual items exceeding R10m except where it is a capital purchase and the unit price can exceed R10m;
 - ii. Items must be the same set of Asset Classes;
 - iii. Items that are similar in nature and are repeated routinely.
 - iv. Items that will not be implemented over more than 12 months.
- (d) Project - A project is undertaken to achieve a specific objective and conforms to specific requirements.

“Chief Financial Officer (CFO)” means a person designated in terms of section 80(2)(a) of the Municipal Finance Management Act (Act No. 56 of 2003).

“City of Cape Town” or **“City”** means the City of Cape Town, a municipality established by the City of Cape Town Establishment Notice No 479 of 22 September 2000 issued in terms of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998) or any structure or employee of the City acting in terms of delegated authority.



“Cost Centre” is a cost collector which represents a logical point at which cost (expenditure) is collected and managed by a responsible cost centre owner.

“Cost element” is the nature of cost e.g. salary, rent and is split into primary- and secondary cost elements. Primary cost elements are expenditure items where costs are mainly generated as a result of transactions with external service providers. Secondary cost elements are utilised to reallocate cost by means of assessments, internal billing or activity based recoveries.

“Cost object” is the object on which budget is provided or assigned to e.g. WBS element (capital/operating) and cost element/centre (operating).

“Council” means the municipal council of the City of Cape Town.

“Delegated Authority” means any person or committee delegated with authority in terms of legislation, regulatory framework and/or the City’s System of Delegations.

“Delegation” in relation to a duty, includes instruction or request to perform or assist in performing the duty, and “delegate” has a corresponding meaning.

“Expenditure and Revenue Categories” is the prescribed uniform classifications and formats for revenue and expenditure items in compliance with the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, mSCOA Regulations and any relevant MFMA Circular issued by National Treasury.

“Finance manager” means the official in a directorate who is responsible for the financial management and administration of the directorate.

“Financial year” is the 12-month period between 1 July and 30 June.

“GL” is the General Ledger account.

“MAYCO” means the Mayoral Committee established in terms of Part 1 of Chapter 4 of the Municipal Structures Act which performs the roles and functions of an Executive Committee.

“Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (MBRR)” means the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations made in terms of section 168 of the MFMA (Act No. 56 of 2003);

“Municipal Cost Containment Regulations (MCCR)” means the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003): Municipal Cost Containment Regulations, 2019.



“Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA)” means Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003).

“Municipal Systems Act” means the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000).

“MTREF” means Medium Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework, as prescribed by the MFMA. It sets out indicative revenue and projected expenditure for the budget year, plus two outer financial years.

“Official” means:

- (a) an employee of a municipality or municipal entity;
- (b) a person seconded to a municipality or municipal entity to work as a member of the staff of the municipality or municipal entity; or
- (c) a person contracted by a municipality or municipal entity to work as a member of the staff of the municipality or municipal entity otherwise than as an employee; and
- (d) excludes an Accounting Officer as defined in the MFMA.

“Senior Managers” means managers directly accountable to the municipal manager as per Section 56 of the Municipal Systems.

“Service Provider” refers to the cost centre that provide an internal service.

“Service Requestor” refers to the cost centre that receive an internal service (Internal customer).

“Vote”

- (a) one of the main segments into which a budget of a municipality is divided for the appropriation of money for the different departments 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.

A vote in the City of Cape Town is set at directorate level, with the exception of tariff-funded services due to the closed account nature. In votes where there are rates and tariff funded components within a vote, virements are only allowed within the rates and tariff components respectively.

“Virement” is the process of transferring an approved budgetary provision from one operating cost element or capital approval object to another within a vote or tariff service during a municipal financial year.

“WBS” is the Work Breakdown Structure.



2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

- 2.1 Webster's New Millennium™ Dictionary of English defines "Virement" as *"a regulated transfer or re-allocation of money from one account to another, especially public funds."*
- 2.2 A virement represents a flexible mechanism to effect budgetary amendments within a municipal financial year.
- 2.3 Changing circumstances and priorities during a financial year may give rise to the need to virement funds within votes, as defined in the MFMA. The treatment of such instances may, however, be dependent on whether an adjustments budget is required or not.

3. DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 3.1 The aim of this Policy is to give senior managers greater flexibility in managing their budget, in order to ensure that they can effectively and efficiently deliver on the City's strategic objectives.
- 3.2 The CFO has a statutory duty to ensure that adequate policies and procedures are in place to ensure an effective system of financial control. A municipality's virement Policy and its underlying administrative process within the system of delegations is one of these controls.
- 3.3 Section 81(1)(d) of the MFMA states *inter alia* that *"The chief financial officer of a municipality-...must advise senior managers and other senior officials in the exercise of powers and duties assigned to them in terms of section 78 or delegated to them in terms of section 79;"*
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of each senior manager, to plan and conduct assigned operations in a manner that ensures that not more funds are spent than what was budgeted for and to ensure that funds are utilised effectively and efficiently.
- 3.5 Section 78(1)(b) of the MFMA states, *inter alia*, *"Each senior manager of a municipality and each official of a municipality exercising financial management responsibilities must take all reasonable steps within their respective areas of responsibility to ensure-...(b) that the financial and other resources of the municipality are utilised effectively, efficiently, economically and transparently..."*.
- 3.6 This policy aims to provide guidelines to senior management in the use of virements as a mechanism in their day-to-day management of their budgets. In addition, it specifically aims to empower senior managers with an efficient financial – and budgetary system to ensure optimum service delivery in accordance with the City's objectives and mandate and within the current legislative framework of the MFMA and the City's system of delegations.



4. STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

- 4.1 The City's Five Year IDP (2022-2027) identifies six priorities and three foundation areas, which support the vision of creating a City of Hope and provide a solid foundation for the articulation of service delivery. The priorities and foundation areas are:

Priority:

1. Economic Growth
2. Basic Services
3. Safety
4. Housing
5. Public Space, Environment and Amenities
6. Transport

Foundation:

1. A resilient City
2. A more spatially integrated and inclusive City
3. A capable and collaborative City government

The City has identified linked objectives and programmes within the above areas.

- 4.2 This policy supports the following priority/foundation area, objective and programme:

- 4.2.1 Foundation 3 – Objective 16: A capable and collaborative City government and
Programme 16.1: Operational sustainability Programme.

5. ROLE PLAYERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Directorates and departments

- Responsible to initiate and submit completed virement to the Budgets department with required approval in terms of the Council System of Delegations.
- Remain accountable for the delivery of project/programme benefits through their respective Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIPs)
- To process virements for the approval by Director: Budgets, within the upper limit of virements for the operational votes of executive directors/directors and authorised cost centre managers within a single vote.
- To process virements for the approval by Director: Budgets, within the upper limit of virements within capital votes of executive directors/directors.
- Line finance managers to verify financial correctness and ensure that motivations are sound.
- Line finance managers to ensure that all the relevant supporting documentation is attached to all virements prior to proposing virements.
- Virements exceeding the upper limit of approval requires line finance managers to submit the virement application in compliance with the System of Delegations to the Director: Budgets/Executive Mayor together with the members of the Mayoral Committee for approval, where applicable.



5.2 Director: Budgets

- To approve for processing all virements in terms of the System of Delegations.
- To approve or reject the request for the virements in categories where limitations are set to ensure responsiveness to operational requirements.

5.3 Executive Mayor together with the members of the Mayoral Committee in terms of System of Delegations

- To determine the maximum amount that the City Manager may authorise in respect of the operational and capital expenditure virements (within a single vote).
- To approve the operational and capital expenditure virements (within a single vote) over and above the maximum amount determined above.

5.4 Budgets department

- Responsible to check and verify financial correctness and submit virement application to the Director: Budgets for approval.
- The relevant section within the budget department will be responsible for the processing of the virement application after approval in terms of the Council System of Delegations.

6. REGULATORY CONTEXT

6.1 This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

- 6.1.1 Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003);
- 6.1.2 The Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) – Municipal Cost Containment Regulations, 2019; and
- 6.1.3 Other Budget related policies.

7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 7.1 The virement process represents the major mechanism to align and take corrective (financial/budgetary) action within a directorate (vote) during a financial year.
- 7.2 In terms of Section 17.2 of the MFMA, a municipality's budget is divided into an operating- and capital budget and consequently no virements are permitted between the operating- and capital budget.
- 7.3 Virements across directorates (votes) are not permissible and will only be effected via an adjustments budget.
- 7.4 Virements between Tariff- and Rate-funded functions are not allowed as Rates and Tariff-funded services are balanced separately and transfers across these services will result in an unbalanced budget between Rate- and Tariff-funded services. Such transfers can only be adopted via an adjustments budget (per MFMA Section 28).
- 7.5 In order for a directorate (vote) to transfer funds from one cost element or capital approval object to another cost element or capital approval object, an underspent has to be identified within the monetary limitations of the approved sender cost element or capital approval object allocations.



- 7.6 Sufficient, (non-committed) budgetary provision should be available within the “sender vote’s cost element or capital approval object concerned to give effect to the budgetary transfer (virement). The transferring function must clearly indicate to which cost element or capital approval object the budget provision will be transferred to and provide a clear motivation why an underspent exists on the sending element or capital approval object and the reason for the additional requirement on the receiving element or project.
- 7.7 A proposed budgetary amendment, which will result in a change to the approved total budget quantum or any other budgetary amendments not covered in this policy, must be considered for adoption via an adjustments budget (per MFMA Section 28).
- 7.8 The City’s Cost Containment Policy must be considered when proposing a virement.
- 7.9 The strategic intent behind the budget must not be undermined by the implementation of virements.
- 7.10 To ensure that virements have a strategic priority/implication motivation and should not be a mechanism to undermine Strategic Management Framework (SMF).

8. OPERATING BUDGET VIREMENTS

- 8.1 Budgetary allocations, adopted by Council for special purposes to which specific Council recommendations apply and which result from specific resolutions adopted, are not allowed to be used as a source of virementation subject to the approval by Director: Budgets. Sound motivations should be provided for all virements.
- 8.2 Specific virement limitations
 - 8.2.1 Employee related costs
 - (a) Virements are allowed between cost elements within this expenditure category.
 - (b) Virements to/from this expenditure category are subject to the approval of the Director: Budgets as set out in 5.2
 - (c) Virements are not allowed on the following cost elements but budgetary alignments within the same cost elements are allowed:
 - (i) Unemployment Insurance Fund, Group life, Leave Pay, Long service awards.
 - 8.2.2 Remuneration of Councillors
 - (a) Virements within this expenditure category are allowed.
 - (b) No virements to/from items within this expenditure category are allowed.
 - 8.2.3 Contracted Services, Operational Costs, Losses on Disposal of Assets, and Inventory Consumed
 - (a) Virements within/across these expenditure categories are allowed.
 - (b) Virements are allowed within expenditure items below and cannot be used as source of funding:



- (i) Training related expenditure;
- (ii) Bargaining Council levy;
- (iii) Skills development levy;
- (iv) Insurance related provisions;
- (v) Contributions to Pensioners (Ex Gratia);
- (vi) Provision for post-retirement medical aid Continued Members.
- (vii) Scrapping of Assets/Stock and Loss on Sale of Assets;
- (c) Virements are not allowed on the following elements:
 - (i) City Improvement Districts (CIDS/MIDS), Capital Expenditure-relate, Value Added Tax (VAT), Transfers to and from Insurance Fund, Transfers to and from Housing Fund;
 - (ii) Depreciation & Asset impairment, Debt Impairment;
 - (iii) Bulk Purchases Electricity;
 - (iv) Water Inventory;
 - (v) Finance Charges;
 - (vi) Indigent Relief;
 - (vii) Income Forgone; or
 - (viii) Appropriation Accounts.
- (d) Specific limitations applicable to repairs and maintenance provisions
 - (i) Virements are allowed within repairs and maintenance provisions.
 - (ii) Virements to increase repairs and maintenance provisions are allowed from cost elements within and across Contracted Services, Operational Costs and Inventory consumed.

8.2.4 Transfers and Grants (Grants and Sponsorships paid)

- (a) Virements to and from Grants-in-Aid (GL 457100) is subject to the support of the relevant projects by the Grants-in-Aid Committee, supported and recommended by Mayco and approved by Council.
- (b) Virements on Grants/Sponsorships (GL 457200) are permitted only if supported by Mayco and approved by Council or the relevant delegated authority.
- (c) Virements to Sponsorships – Events (GL 457300) are permitted subject to the total amount being limited to the recommended amount per event as supported and recommended by the relevant delegated authority and approved by council.
- (d) Virements from Sponsorships – Events (GL 457300) are permitted where:
 - (i) Events are cancelled or scaled down;
 - (ii) Savings on approved events are realised or;
 - (iii) For the reallocation of budgetary provision related to direct event expenditure and internal service charges; and
 - (iv) supported and recommended by the relevant delegated authority.



- (e) Virements to/from Relief and Charitable contributions 457400 (Sec 12 of MFMA) are permitted only if approved by Council resolution or the relevant delegated authority.

8.3 Revenue

- 8.3.1 No virements allowed on Revenue elements from own revenue sources (internal revenue sources).
- 8.3.2 Amendment to revenue provisions, must be adopted via an adjustments budget.
- 8.3.3 Virements on revenue elements funded from external grants are allowed, within the same funding source and Vote, subject to the conditions of the grant.

8.4 Secondary Operating Cost Elements

- 8.4.1 No virements are permitted between Primary- and Secondary cost elements.
- 8.4.2 Virements are allowed within the same secondary cost elements and same activity types. The service requestor and service provider must both endorse such virements.
- 8.4.3 Virements on Internal Utilities and Bulk Internal Utilities are permissible, on condition that both revenue and expenditure element are amended simultaneously and the period budgets are in alignment.
- 8.4.4 Virements are only permitted within the same cost element in the following categories, provided that total approved budget on the cost element is not increased:
 - (a) Activity Based Recoveries
 - (b) Internal Utilities
 - (c) Bulk Internal Utilities
- 8.4.5 Virements are not permissible on Support Service Charges elements.
- 8.4.6 No virements permitted on departmental insurance premiums, Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COID), Act 130 of 1993 or Internal Capital Charges.

8.5 Ward Allocations Projects

- 8.5.1 All conditions under section 8 above should be met, as well as the following when virementing between ward allocation projects:
 - (a) Only virements between existing projects approved by Council, within the same Sub-council and within the same directorate will be permitted.
 - (b) Virements will only be considered if supported by the relevant Sub-council (via Sub-council resolution), project managers and directorate/department finance managers.



9. CAPITAL BUDGET VIREMENTS

- 9.1 Only virements which relate to capital approval objects, previously approved or as part of annual (current financial year), or an adjustments budget, will be permitted.
- 9.2 No virements of which the affect will be to add 'new' capital approval objects onto the capital budget, will be allowed, with the exception of those associated with insurance claim settlements.
- 9.3 Should the total project cost (TPC) of an individual project be increased by a virement, the amended TPC must be included in the next available adjustments budget opportunity or draft budget process, unless section 9.4 applies.
- 9.4 No virement will be allowed on an individual or major project where the TPC is increased and the project will be completed in the current financial year, unless the amended TPC can be approved in a subsequent adjustments budget. If no further adjustments budget process is available, this amendment must be done via a report to Council.
- 9.5 Virements must be between capital approval objects of same funding sources.
- 9.6 Implementation of the capital project from which funds are viremented may not be prejudiced (i.e. must not hinder completion of the capital project).
- 9.7 Motivations for virements should clearly state why funds are available on the sending approval object and the reason why the additional funds are required on the receiving approval object. The sender motivation should clearly state how the project will be implemented or completed when any delays or issues are resolved. The receiver motivation should also clearly state the procurement method (e.g. tender, Request for Quotation (RFQ) etc.), as well as the full tender number in question.
- 9.8 Virements will only be approved if the receiver projects are implementation and tender ready.
- 9.9 Secondary Capital Cost Elements
 - (a) Virements are permissible only within the same cost elements of different projects. The service requestor and service provider must endorse such virements.
 - (b) Proposed secondary capital expenditure virements must be approved by the Director: Budgets. No virement will be approved which negatively impacts on secondary cost plans i.e. no virement will be approved from a sender WBS element where the remaining overall budgetary provision on the sender WBS element is insufficient to cover the approved secondary cost plan.
- 9.10 Ward Allocations Projects
 - 9.10.1 Only virements between existing projects approved by Council, within the same Sub-council, and within the same directorate will be permitted.
 - 9.10.2 Virements will only be considered if supported by the relevant Sub-council (Sub-council resolution), project managers and directorate/department finance managers of the projects involved.



9.10.3 Motivations for virements should clearly state why funds are available on the sending approval object and the reason why the additional funds are required on the receiving approval object.

10. PROCESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 10.1 Accountability to ensure that virement applications are in accordance with Council's virement policy, system of delegations and are not in conflict with the directorate's strategic objectives and rests with the relevant directorate/department.
- 10.2 Duly completed virement applications are to be processed by the Budgets department.
- 10.3 Virements approved and processed will be reported for information to Mayco on a quarterly basis.
- 10.4 All change requests within programmes will be reported to subcouncils on a monthly basis as part of the Progressive Capital Expenditure Report (PCER).

11. MUNICIPAL COST CONTAINMENT REGULATION (MCCR)

- 11.1 Cost containment measures will be applicable on various items as indicated in the City's Cost Containment Policy.
 - 11.1.1 Virements to items as per the Cost Containment Policy and any cost elements aligned to cost savings initiatives identified by the Municipal Manager or Chief Financial Officer are subject to the support of the Municipal Manager or Senior Manager relevant to their respective functional area.

12. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 12.1 This policy will come into effect once it has been approved at Council.
- 12.2 In terms of section 17(3) (e) of the MFMA this policy must be reviewed on an annual basis and the reviewed policy must be tabled at Council for approval as part of the budget process.
- 12.3 The effectiveness of this policy in achieving the prescribed outcomes as well as any changes in legislation must be taken into account for future amendments to this policy.

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