



## **MEDIA STATEMENT – OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR**

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For immediate release

### **PROTECTING THE PUBLIC PURSE**

**Wednesday, 7 February 2024:** The council and administration of Cederberg Municipality is aware of a range of ongoing spurious social media posts which are intended to portray the municipality and some of its councillors in a bad light. In many instances these posts deliberately spread misinformation, half-truths and fake news designed to confuse the residents and undermine the municipality.

It is true that a certain service provider has taken legal action against the municipality for the non-payment of invoices for services rendered. It is also true that on 31 January 2024, council reconfirmed a decision taken in 2023, which it will challenge the legal action taken by that service provider against the municipality. “Service providers who breach provisions of contracts with impunity cannot expect the municipality to waste the tax payers’ money by paying for services which were not rendered,” said the Municipal Manager, Gerrit Matthyse. The Municipal Manager emphasised that “any service provider must submit proper invoicing according to the contract of agreement entered into on all services rendered. There cannot be any exception to this supply chain process.”

Importantly, through his recent Open Report to the residents of the Cederberg, the Mayor informed all citizens of the decisions taken by council made on 31 January 2024. This included the decision by council to appeal to the courts for an intervention against the legal actions taken against the municipality by this service provider which included a visit from the Sheriff of the Court and also representatives of the service provider who wanted to intimidate our finance department to pay the invoices on demand. Council has taken an in-principle decision to oppose this kind of bullying and threats.

“The law must now be allowed to take its course, and we will respect the outcome of the court process. The matter is now before the courts and is therefore sub-judice,” said the Mayor.

The Mayor emphasised that council has a responsibility to protect the public purse (i.e. tax payer’s money). “Council agrees with the Municipal Manager and therefore cannot support, or condone the payment of invoices for services that were not rendered satisfactorily,” said the Mayor. And this is the dispute currently between the municipality and the service provider.

The vision of the municipality is to be the home of good governance. This means that it is a priority to, among others, take extra good care of the finances (i.e. public purse) of the Cederberg municipality and ensure that all public money is used wisely and managed prudently and transparently.

“We recognise that there are forces out there determined to undermine the good work and financial recovery of the municipality. But we believe that the truth shall prevail. The Cederberg municipality will overcome these threats,” said the Mayor.

The Municipal Manager went on to say: “The Cederberg administration is here to serve all our communities without fear, favor or prejudice in pursuit of a better future for all. This goal we shall pursue unapologetically. We are working hard to redress the damages and backlogs of the past and finalizing old outstanding matters, which directly or indirectly impacts on Cederberg’s reputation and risk.” The Executive Mayor, Dr Ruben Richards, added saying, “Nothing is going to distract us from our focus to regain our citizens trust in Cederberg municipality and to ignite civil society to collaborate again with us as partners.”

For any enquiries contact:

Anthony Vusumzi Mlata: Media and Communications

Telephone: 027 482 8000

Email: [anthonym@cederbergraad.co.za](mailto:anthonym@cederbergraad.co.za)