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Localising SDG 11 and focusing on sustainable service delivery practices: a case study of eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality.

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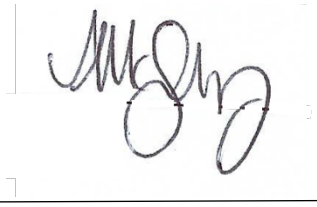
Research report submitted to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a degree in Master of Urban Studies

2022

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Masters of Urban Studies in the field of Urban Management to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other University.



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Date

Abstract

Long term development goals have been a feature of global development discourse for decades. In the last seven years or so, there has been a shift to acknowledging the role that urban areas play in the achievement of such grand global targets. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 was one of the first global policy commitments that provide a clear goal and targets for urban areas, with SDG 11 focusing on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (UN, 2015).

However, while these goals are set and reported on at a national and international level, the importance of localising global goals into municipal planning, budgeting and operations is critical. This research examines how eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality (EMM) has localised SDG 11 in its planning processes. It focuses on one of the core aspects of this SDG (SDG 11.1), the extent to which there has been realisation of basic service delivery as a primary element of sustainable human settlements.

This research assesses how EMM is translating the 2030 goals of sustainable development into its constitutional mandate of delivering basic services (water, sanitation, electricity and waste services) to its citizens. In this way, the contribution made by an urban area to achieving broader national and international goals of sustainability is analysed.

The research examined municipal planning documentation, analysed performance data, and reviewed municipal case studies intended to achieve the goal of sustainable human settlements. In addition, interviews with key experts provide insight into the localisation of global goals.

The paper reviews the City's work in three key areas: the extent to which the municipality has aligned its plans with other national and international plans; how it has integrated these goals across the municipality; and finally the extent to which it synchronises its work with other spheres of government and stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society and community partnerships. The research concludes with reflections on eThekwini's localisation process to date, and a set of clear processes used in the localisation of global goals.

Dedication

This is dedicated to Gareth – your encouragement and support even in the darkest of days has kept me going. I am eternally grateful. And to Cara and Emily – you have made me a stronger, better, happier person. I love you all.

Acknowledgements

Firstly a thank you to my family for their support – my husband and children, and my parents. I could not have completed this without you all and I am so grateful to have had your constant strength and comfort.

Secondly to my supervisor, Dr Tsepang Leuta, thank you for all of your guidance and input.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFUS	Africa Forum for Urban Safety
AU	African Union
BEPP	Built Environment Performance Plan
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CAB	Community Ablution Block
CBP	Community Based Planning
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CMDA	Cato Manor Development Association
COGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
COJ	City of Johannesburg
COP	Conference of Parties
CPC	City Planning Commission
DCCS	Durban Climate Change Strategy
DDM	District Development Model
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
EMM	eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality
EPCPD	Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOLD	Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization
GTF	Global Task Force
HOST	Hawaii Ocean Science & Technology Park
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
ISIMS	Informal Settlements Information Management Solution
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
IUDF	Integrated Urban Development Framework
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LED	Local Economic Development
LRG	Local and regional governments
MCPP	Municipal Climate Protection Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act

MILE	Municipal Institute of Learning and Exchange
MOSS	Metropolitan open space system
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NSDF	National Spatial Development Framework
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NYC	New York City
OSS	Operation *Sukuma Sakhe*
PGDP	Provincial Growth and Development Plan
PGDS	Provincial Growth and Development Strategy
SA	South Africa
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SASDI	South African Shack Dwellers International Alliance
SDBIP	Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPLUMA	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act
UCLG	United Cities and Local Government
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VLR	Voluntary Local Review

Chapter 1: Introducing the Research

Given the effect of growing urbanisation worldwide, with an anticipated three quarters of the world's population expected to live in cities in 2050 (Evans, Elisei, Rosenfeld, Roll, Figueiredo and Keiner, 2016), cities play a major role in responding to issues of climate change, unsustainable development, poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. These issues have increasingly become the primary item on the global development agenda, in that, together with the Covid-19 pandemic, they have had and will continue to have a major impact on global and local economies, societies and environments.

Grand goals have been set by countries and international bodies to achieve a more inclusive, sustainable future. In 2015 and 2016, world leaders "came together to set a historic milestone in multilateral cooperation with the adoption of global agreements towards sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development all showcased a global will to respond to today's global challenges through the adoption of a firm rights-based approach" (UCLG, 2019:18).

However, the extent to which, and how, these sustainability goals translate into local and regional plans and implementation remains unclear. This is partly because such processes depend on a myriad of global, regional, national and sub-national legislation, policies and practices. The commitment by local and regional governments (LRGs) to addressing global challenges is clear though, with elaboration, adoption and implementation processes apparent worldwide. Indeed, LRGs are cognisant of the interlinkages of global agendas which "cannot be achieved in isolation: all sustainability actions to address the highly interrelated challenges affecting our territories and cities must be fully integrated and comprehensive" (UCLG, 2019:12). Cities are critical stakeholders in the achievement of sustainable, resilient futures, however, how they translate national and international commitments into their local strategy and planning documents is not always apparent.

Local government is the closest sphere of government generally to communities and, particularly in a South African context, responsible for the direct delivery of services to improve people's livelihoods. In addition, given that issues such as economic and social development are not distributed evenly across space, municipalities have a differential impact on the broader environment. The need for a specific focus on sustainable development, in its broader definition focused on the economy, human settlements and social development, therefore also varies across space. As such it is critical to ensure that services are sustainably delivered, there is continued improvement of the quality of life of

residents, and there is ongoing focus on ensuring that future planning and development is inclusive and sustainable.

eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality (EMM) has been selected as the focus for this research. It has a long history of focus on sustainability and has been lauded in several fora for its approach to climate change, sustainability and greening practices. In 1994, it was the first city in South Africa to adopt the Local Agenda 21 mandate as its corporate responsibility and use it to frame the city's overarching environmental management system (EMM, undated). It was also the first city in Africa to convert methane gas emissions from waste landfills into electricity and the first city in Africa to develop a Climate Action Plan (EMM website, 2019). It hosted the 17th session of the Conference of Parties (COP17) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2011 and implemented a number of greening and sustainability programmes linked to this conference.

This research uses a qualitative case study approach in examining the extent to which eThekwini has been able to localise and institutionalise international and national goals of sustainability and resilience. This includes examining the intent behind localisation, and to what extent it covers the actual operationalisation and institutionalisation of programmes at a local government level, in order to realise substantive global and continental goals.

1.1 Background

The concept of sustainable development, and discussions around sustainability, have influenced global development thinking and policy since the 1970s (Harrison, Bobbins, Culwick, Humby, La Mantia, Todes, Weakley, 2014). However, definitions and plans are continually evolving, as our understanding and knowledge grow. Perhaps the most widely recognised definition of sustainable development is that of the Brundtland Commission in 1987: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland, 1987:39). While this research examines changes in thinking around this specific definition, the basic tenet remains relevant – that society exists within limited space and resources, and a balance in development is critical to meet both current and future needs (Harrison *et al*., 2014).

Most recently, the global 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted, expanding on the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and intending to realise more sustainable development across the world. This emphasis on development principles that leave no one behind signifies a shift in global values to one of integrated, interdependent aspirations that intend to achieve a more sustainable future (Parnell, 2016).

However, it has been noted that the achievement of these goals will only be realised if they are included in local, as well as national, plans and programmes. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development resulted from the recognition that to be effective, implementation of global sustainable goals needed to be done using a bottom-up approach, instead of the more traditional top-down method (Wright, 2018). In this, the role of local stakeholders including local government, civil society organisations, local business and the private sector, and local community organisations is critical (*ibid*.).

In addition to the challenge of ensuring that global goals of sustainability are effectively localised into local development planning and implementation, there is a need for clear and precise goal setting and application. Concepts such as sustainability and resilience are increasingly used in a vague manner, without clear programmes and impacts. Such concepts need sharp and effective application in urban planning (Harrison *et al*., 2014).

SDG 11 focuses specifically on urban areas:

> "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (United Nations, 2021).

This goal includes ten identified targets, ranging from ensuring access for all to adequate housing, basic services and sustainable transport systems, to inclusive and sustainable urbanisation, the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage and managing the environmental impact of cities. Currently, 14 indicators provide an indication of progress against these targets (United Nations, 2021).

South Africa has adopted all of the major global charters that address the need for sustainable development, including being active participants in climate change processes and agreements, MDGs and SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and Africa 2063. Issues of sustainability are articulated in the country's long-term National Development Plan (NDP). The current 2019-2024 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), reflecting government policy for the 6th administration, also asserts the need for all spheres of government to be actively involved in the process of localising sustainable development processes and goals.

In South Africa, there is also increasing focus nationally on clean and participative governance, in order to effectively and transparently manage the affairs of government. Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) are one mechanism used for aligning municipal strategies and plans with national and international commitments and objectives.

While there is some focus on sustainability, there needs to be increased upscaling of these programmes to achieve tangible results and avoid so-called 'weak' sustainability practices (Simon, 2016). Other challenges in achieving sustainable and resilient planning are noted such as the "internal organisation of bureaucracies, the exercise of hierarchical authority, compliance with legislative and policy frameworks, and skills development within individual components of government" (Harrison *et al*., 2014:27).

In South Africa, local government is specifically responsible for the delivery of basic services. The Constitution of 1996 mandates local government to ensure the sustainable provision of services, "promote social and economic development" and create "a safe and healthy environment" (SA Government, 1996). The four basic network services to be provided by local government include water, electricity, sewerage and sanitation. In essence, local government is responsible for delivering on the aspirations of the SDGs to communities, households and individuals, ensuring that they become a reality particularly for vulnerable members of society who are at risk of falling behind (Stats SA, 2019).

Of the ten targets falling under SDG 11, the following is directly relevant to the basic service delivery mandate of local government in South Africa, and forms the key focus for this research:

- By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

This target is used as the basis for this research, assessing how, and the extent to which, EMM is translating the 2030 goals of sustainable development into its constitutional mandate of delivering basic services to its citizens. Specifically, this research focuses on the way in which EMM has localised the goals of providing basic service delivery (water, sanitation, electricity and waste services) in its work. In this way, the contribution made by an urban area to achieving broader national and international goals of sustainability is analysed.

1.2 Problem statement and rationale

While sustainability is a clear commitment and goal in several national and municipal broad medium- and long-term plans, the extent to which municipalities are focusing on the achievement of sustainable development goals in their actual implementation of programmes is unclear. Whilst sustainability may be mentioned in such plans, it does not always appear to have been mainstreamed in the implementation of governance and service delivery programmes. In addition, the impact of

some programmes touted as green, sustainable practices, has not always had such an effect. In this regard, this research assesses the delivery of basic services including water, sanitation, electricity and waste removal, as far as their achievement against broader goals of sustainable service delivery are to be realised.

This research examines strategic planning and delivery in EMM and assesses the extent to which these have been influenced by international and national sustainability goals, and the degree to which they have been realised. This focuses specifically on SDG 11's target of ensuring access to all to adequate basic services.

1.3 Objectives

This research intends to assess broad sustainability goals internationally and nationally, specifically around the provision of basic services, and review to what extent these have been mainstreamed and realised in eThekwini's municipal planning and governance.

1.4 Research questions

The research question for this report is stated as follows:

How has eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality localised SDG 11 in its mandate to deliver basic services?

A set of three sub-questions have been identified to support the research conducted:

1. How has EMM incorporated sustainable development objectives into its strategic planning?
2. To what extent has the municipality implemented sustainable projects in the course of fulfilling its basic service delivery mandate (i.e. access to water, sanitation, electricity and waste removal)?
3. Are there clear processes utilised in the localisation of global goals that can translate into a broader framework?

1.5 The Study Area

A contextual map of the study area is contained in the figure below. eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality is one of South Africa's major metropolitan areas, located on the east coast of the country in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Further information on the municipal area is contained in Chapter 4.3 of this report.

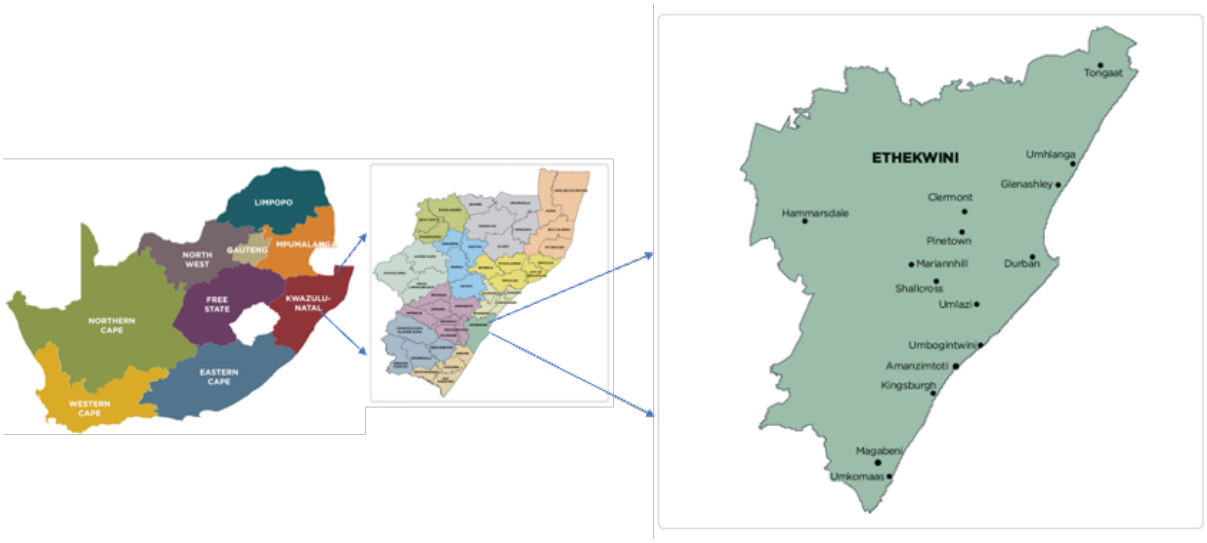

Figure 1: A contextual map of the study area (redrawn from maps obtained from www.municipalities.co.za)

1.6 Key definitions

It is important to provide clear definitions of key concepts that are used throughout this study. Firstly, in this research, **sustainable development** and the concept of sustainability, embraces a broader definition focusing on sustainable lives and livelihoods (Pieterse, 2011), as discussed earlier.

Localisation in the context of the 2030 SDG agenda, refers to the actions by local and regional governments in supporting the SDGs through action from the bottom up (SDG Helpdesk, 2021). It is defined by United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) as "the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national and sub-national sustainable development goals and targets" (UCLG, 2019:6). This includes subnational contexts for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, together with appropriate targets, goals and indicators to monitor progress (*ibid.*).

'Whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches refer to multilevel and collaborative governance frameworks. These emphasise integrated policy-making processes that include a number of stakeholders, such as all government bodies and members of society (*ibid.*).

In South Africa, **sustainable human settlements** are defined as access to adequate accommodation that is suitable, relevant, appropriately located, affordable and fiscally sustainable; has access to basic services, and social services and economic opportunities within a reasonable distance; and has security of tenure, irrespective of ownership status, formal or informal structures (SA Government, 2021).

Given the focus of this research on the provision of basic services, the **national standards for access to the four basic municipal services** are also provided here.

The National Water Act provides a progressive "water ladder" (Department of Water and Sanitation, 2017:101) whereby as development is achieved, households' levels of access to water should improve. The minimum level of service is access to 25 -50 L /c /d (litre per capita per day) at low to medium pressure, with use of more than 25 L /c /d to be paid for. However, the full minimum level of service consists of four sub-levels of service including:

- "Basic Plus provision: People access more than 25 L /c /d but less than 50 L /c /d of SANS241 quality water from an improved source at the boundary of the yard, metered and tariffed.
- Basic provision: People access a minimum of 25L /c /d of SANS241 quality water from an improved source at the boundary of the yard, metered and tariffed.
- Free basic provision: People access a minimum of 25L /c /d of SANS241 quality water from an improved source at the boundary of the yard, metered.
- Intermittent provision: People access a minimum of 1500L /household /week of acceptable quality water on a weekly basis within 100m, which is metered" (Government Gazette, 2017:101).

For the purposes of this research, and in line with data provided by Statistics South Africa, the minimum basic level of access to water therefore includes piped water directly to a household, water from a standpoint in the yard or from a standpoint close to the boundary (commonly noted as within 200 metres).

The National Sanitation Policy notes that the "minimum acceptable basic level of sanitation is: a) appropriate health and hygiene awareness and behaviour; b) the lowest cost, appropriate system for disposing of human excreta, household waste water, grey-water, which considers resource constraints, is acceptable and affordable to the users, safe including for children, hygienic and easily accessible and which does not have a detrimental impact on the environment; c) a toilet and hand

washing facility; d) to ensure clean living environment at a household and community level; and e) the consideration of defecation practices of small children and people with disabilities and special needs" (Department of Water and Sanitation, 2016).

Statistics South Africa measures household access to energy by assessing the main sources of energy used by households to satisfy basic human needs (cooking, lighting, heating water, space heating) (Stats SA, 2018).

Finally, a basic refuse removal service level is defined as the provision of waste removal by a municipality in an urban area through "organised transfer to central collection points and/or kerbside collection" (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2011). In this research, data is analysed based on the provision of at least a weekly refuse removal service to households, as is commonly used in publications by Statistics South Africa and National Treasury.

1.7 Structure of the report

This research report is made up of six chapters. The contents of these are detailed below:

Chapter 1: Introducing the Research

This first chapter introduces the research, providing an overview of the research question and sub-questions, and the methodology used in the research process.

Chapter 2: Reviewed Literature

Chapter 2 provides a more detailed literature review including key trends and debates in global thinking around sustainability, together with commitments internationally and nationally. In addition, some international good practice examples on other urban areas successfully implementing practices towards the achievement of SDG 11 are included. It concludes with the conceptual framework used in this research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The third chapter details the research methodology used in this study. It also provides an overview of ethical considerations and limitations.

Chapter 4: Setting the Context

The fourth chapter reviews the context within which the research is conducted. This includes examining the local environment of EMM, together with the broader South African governance and sustainability framework and goals.

Chapter 5: Research Findings and Analysis

In Chapter 5, the data analysed through this research is provided. This examines key findings from the literature review and each of the aspects of the conceptual framework as they relate to EMM. It also includes insights obtained through the interviews, and the relevant summarised municipal performance data and indicators.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

In the final chapter, a conclusion to the research is provided. This details a short synopsis of the research report, including recommendations and an overview of localisation processes.

Chapter 2: Reviewed Literature

This chapter provides a detailed literature review looking at key trends in global thinking around sustainability, together with commitments internationally and nationally. It also outlines international good practice examples on other urban areas successfully implementing practices towards the achievement of SDG 11 and provides the conceptual framework framing the research that follows.

2.1 Introduction

Sustainability, resilience, green and environmentally conscious planning are ever more present in urban planning and management. Given worldwide issues of urbanisation, increasing levels of poverty and inequality, and the challenges of climate change, addressing sustainability and ensuring that our cities are resilient is increasingly important. Indeed, Swilling and Annecke (2012) describe this as one of the biggest challenges faced by our generation. The UCLG further emphasises this point, noting the need for a significant step up in policy-making and a truly integrated approach to development (UCLG, 2019).

While sustainability, and a focus on ensuring development that does not threaten future generations, has been a prominent aspect of global thinking and policy for the last half a century, it has a far longer history dating as far back as ancient and precolonial cultures. Many preindustrial urban societies "endured for many centuries precisely because they 'designed nature in' and lived in environmentally relatively sustainable ways" (Simon, 2016:62). Cities are not isolated islands of concrete structures, brick and glass. They are part of a much wider natural region, with interdependencies for resources, waste disposal, the circulation of people and commodities. Simon (2016) notes that sustainability as it applies to urban areas, reflects the sustainability of society. This has been shown historically, through examining ancient urban areas on different continents (*ibid.*).

Sustainable development, as it is used in global development discourse today, recognises the constraints of limited space and resources of our natural environment, in the world's ongoing quest for economic growth and development (Harrison *et al*., 2014).

2.2 Key trends in sustainability

While sustainability has been used widely as a global principle in development policy since the 1970s, there have been clear trends in its development, usage and understanding. Shi, Han, Yang and Gao (2019) note a moulding period in the evolution of sustainable development theory, from 1972 to 1987. In this they state that two key events took place: the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, and the publication of "Our Common Future" in 1987.

Similarly, Akkiah (2019) provides a comprehensive overview of the trends in sustainable thinking, and the various events, frameworks and global policy development that have taken place over time. This is detailed in the figure below.

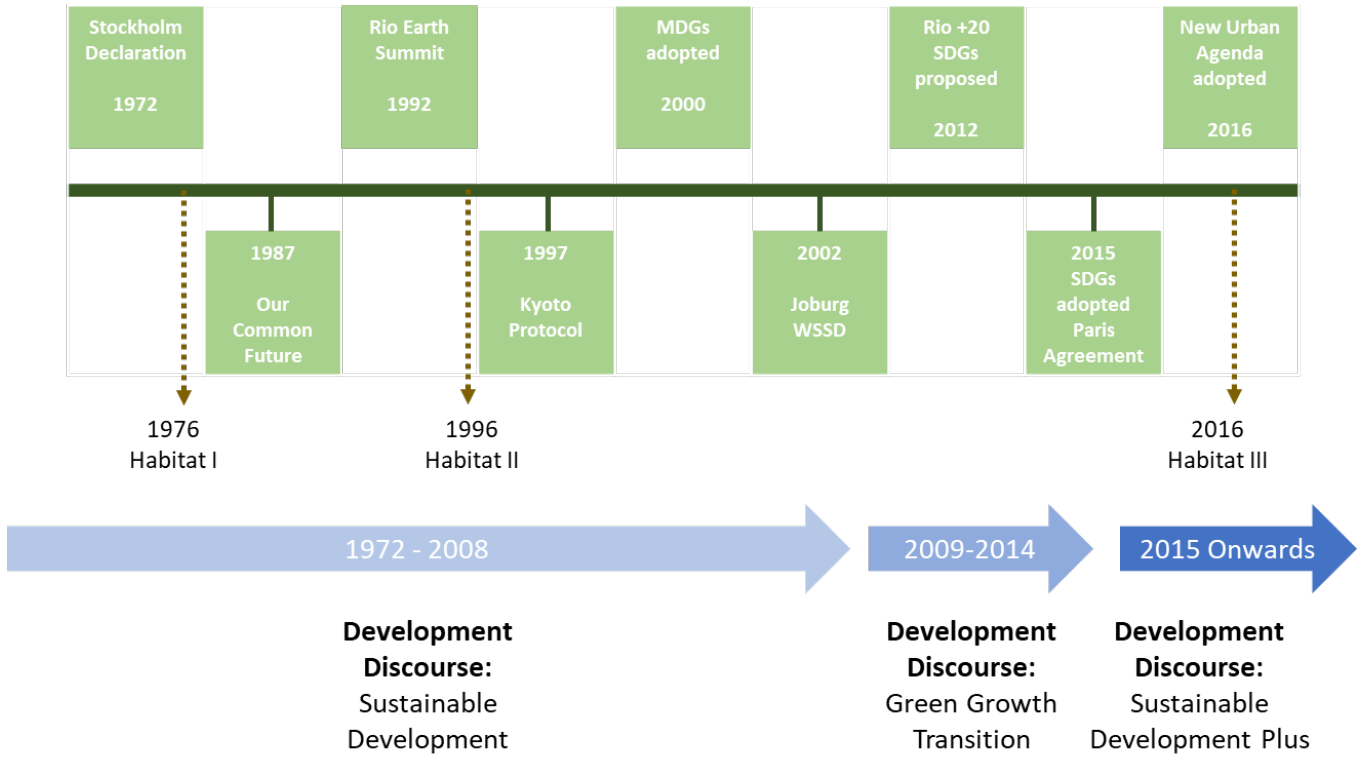

Figure 2: Sustainable development timeframes (redrawn from Akkiah, 2019)

In this, he notes three key phases in development discourse – firstly the prioritisation of sustainable development, between 1972 and 2008. This was followed by a green growth transition in 2009, and finally the third and current phase of development discourse, *Sustainable Development Plus*. This phase, from 2015 onwards, has seen the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals, major global conferences such as Habitat III and the development of the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

When examining trends in sustainable development, it is useful to start with the publication of the Brundtland Commission Report in 1987. This report, while providing perhaps the most widely

recognised definition of sustainability, also raises a number of questions. As Pieterse (2011) notes, it assumes that development can balance economic, social and ecological imperatives i.e. a triple bottom-line. However, most triple-bottom line approaches view the economy as the primary prerequisite for development in society, with reforms in the social and ecological spaces being "conceptualized within the current model of extractive capitalism" (Pieterse, 2011:2). This assumes that there is a single, specific development path that society should travel, and the only real consideration is how to do so in a way that is less damaging to the natural environment. Instead, a focus on sustainability as a core component of lives and livelihoods provides a way to envision multiple pathways that cover diverse contexts and have flexible, relevant solutions that can be applied in various local contexts (*ibid.*).

While the triple bottom-line concept advances previous perspectives on sustainability, it does not adequately cover the trade-offs required in such an approach, or address relationships between growth and development at an urban level (Allen, 2001). Instead, Allen (2001) proposes five dimensions of sustainability:

- Economic sustainability is defined as the ability of the local economy to sustain itself without causing irreversible damages to the natural resource base and without increasing the city's ecological footprint;
- Social sustainability is defined as a set of actions and policies aimed at the improvement of quality of life, and the fair access and distribution of rights over the use and appropriation of the natural and built environment;
- Natural sustainability looks at the management of natural resources and requires an integrated view of local, regional, national and international development and environmental trends;
- Physical sustainability refers to the capacity and aptitude of the urban built environment and techno-structures to support human life and productive activities; and
- Finally, political sustainability refers to governance systems involving the democratisation and participation of civil society in all areas of decision-making.

It is this latter aspect of sustainability that Pieterse (2011) notes as linking the other four dimensions. The power between local stakeholders and national interests, "infuses all domains of sustainable development which leads to the conceptual emphasis on rebalancing power through democratization, discursive contestation and participation by marginalized classes in decision-making processes about trade-offs in the other four domains of urban sustainability" (*ibid.*:3).

Sustainable urbanisation has become a key focus interest in research and policy agendas in the last decade or so. The "urgency of taking action [is] increasingly appreciated, even in poor cities and towns" (Simon, 2016:1).

Trends in this urban sustainability have seen increasing polarisation between the five aspects of sustainability identified by Allen (2001). Importantly in the context of this research, Allen (2001) notes that economic and natural sustainability trends have come to be increasingly dominated by external decisions, while social and physical sustainability is linked to decentralisation, BUT often without the appropriate resources. In the mid-90s, this was referred to as the 'decentralisation of the urban crisis' (Pirez, 1995, quoted in Allen, 2001).

More recently, concepts such as urban resilience have gained traction. In South African cities, resilience has featured in long term strategic plans and medium-term Integrated Development Plans. The concept was also used as the theme for the South African Cities Network's 2011 *State of South Africa's Cities Report*, and eThekwini is one of 33 cities worldwide participating in a resilient cities programme (Harrison *et al*., 2014). While resilience can encompass many aspects, including economic resilience, generally literature especially in urban areas is focused on environmental risks and vulnerabilities.

The rapid inclusion of resilience as a core principle in urban management is linked to the understanding of a place as a complex, interconnected system, with unpredictable processes and operating at multiple scales and timeframes (Davoudi, 2012). This provides an effective framework for understanding the complexities and interdependencies of an urban system. However, there remain a number of gaps in what the concept of resilience means in practice (Wilkinson, 2012).

A key challenge in the discussions around sustainability identified by Simon (2016) is that of the many levels of overuse of the concepts of sustainability, resilience, and green development. In some instances, he notes, these have even been used to provide validity for practices that are actually unsustainable (*ibid*.).

2.3 Sustainability: International policy and commitments

International commitments and frameworks including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) intend to ensure that development is sustainable, and balances the needs of people, economies and the environment. The principle underpinning the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is continued in these more recent commitments: that "no one or no

country should be left behind", and that everyone has a responsibility to ensure that we deliver on the global vision of being a just, safe and sustainable space for all inhabitants (EMM, 2019).

MDGs were adopted in 2000 and intended to realise a concrete set of eight goals by the year 2015. These included goals focused on poverty, hunger, gender inequality and environmental degradation. The MDGs achieved unprecedented results, with the number of people living in extreme poverty more than halving, the enrolment in primary school education increasing to over 90%, and the increase in access to safe drinking water also increasing from 76% to 91% (Shi, Han, Yang and Gao, 2019). While these global goals did achieve significant success, there was highly variable progress across goals, countries and regions. East Asia and South America made significantly more progress in achieving these goals than did Africa (Shi *et al*., 2019). In addition, there were criticisms around issues such as the lack of development assistance that was provided, the need for higher profile of environmental goals and other operational failures (Sachs, Traub-Schmidt, Kroll, Lafortune and Fuller, 2012).

As a result, in 2012, a global sustainability panel recommended the adoption of a set of sustainable development goals (Sachs *et al*., 2012). These goals intended to achieve a broader set of principles based on dignity, human beings, the planet, prosperity, justice and partnership (Shi *et al*., 2019).

In 2015, the full set of 17 SDGs was adopted by the United Nations. These were developed through a consultative process, including representations and input from government and non-government agencies, private sector, civil society, community organisations and other stakeholders in every country across the world (Simon, 2016). These goals apply to all countries, irrespective of their unique challenges or developmental progress, and reflect an acknowledgement of the shared fate of humankind, and the impact of every country on the entire world's development (*ibid.*).

Almost three quarters of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas by 2050 (Evans *et al*., 2016). Given these massive levels of urbanisation globally, cities and urban areas are increasingly focus areas for ensuring that global commitments of sustainability are met. The 11th Sustainable Development Goal specifically focuses on building '*Sustainable Cities and Communities – Making Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable*' (United Nations, 2021). However, the role of local government and particularly large urban cities is more than just one goal – essentially these cities should localise all goals and targets of the full set of SDGs (EMM, 2019). These goals are detailed in the image below (SDG Tracker, 2021).



Figure 3: Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2021)

This set of 17 goals represents a broader range and focus of global development goals, when compared with the eight MDGs. The main differences between the two sets of goals include: more universality of the SDGs, as MDGs were mainly targeted at developing countries; SDGs are more comprehensive, covering a wider range of issues, but in a much more specific, goal-focused manner than were the MDGs; SDGs have higher standards than the MDGs (for example, MDGs focused on ending extreme poverty and hunger, while SDGs target the ending of poverty in all its forms); SDGs emphasise the importance of high-quality and timely data; and finally, the SDGs emphasise the importance of living with dignity (Shi *et al.*, 2019). UCLG in their 2019 GOLD V report note that the 2030 Agenda "represents a significant step forward in terms of ambition, universality and complexity with respect to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)" (UCLG, 2019:12).

In Africa, the African Union (AU) adopted Agenda 2063 in 2013, entitled The Africa We Want. This plan is intended as Africa's long-term commitment towards unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity (AU website, 2021). Agenda 2063 notes seven key aspirations towards which the continent strives:

- Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- Aspiration 2: An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance
- Aspiration 3: An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa

- Aspiration 5: An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics
- Aspiration 6: An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
- Aspiration 7*:* Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner *(*AU website, 2021).

These aspirations have been aligned to the SDGs, with SDG 11 directly linking to Agenda 2063's first goal of "A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all citizens" (AU website, 2021). Priority areas under this goal include incomes, jobs and decent work; poverty, inequality and hunger; social security and protection, including persons with disabilities; and modern, affordable and liveable habitats and quality basic services (*ibid.*). It is this latter priority area that is of direct relevance in this research report – the focus on ensuring quality basic services in a sustainable, inclusive environment.

A review of the localisation of global commitments noted that in both Canada and the United States, the lack of a formal national framework for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, meant that there is no clear role for local and regional governments in localisation of the global agenda. In addition, "a national-level conversation regarding the SDGs is lacking, which limits local governments' exposure to and awareness of the SDGs and is hindering progress towards the explicit implementation and monitoring of the Global Goals" (UCLG, 2019:299).

One of the key elements that came through in interviews completed for this research echoes this issue of awareness. Respondent 2 (2022) notes that education on the SDGs for citizens and communities is critical in advancing a more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable city. She also suggests using specific local challenges, for example those of housing, to connect to and publicise other SDGs (*ibid*.).

While these global aspirations are laudable, ongoing critique of the MDGs, and concerns at the initial implementation of the SDGs, are worth noting. Funding across countries and regions is vastly different, as are the development challenges faced by countries. Insecurity, inadequate data, and poor governance have also impacted on countries' abilities to achieve global goals (Abubakar and Aina, 2017). Weak coordination between spheres of government is also highlighted as a key challenge (*ibid*.).

A final sobering reflection in discussing sustainability goals particularly in Africa, is the work done by the Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa, which completed an Africa SDG Index and Dashboards report in 2018. It also launched a three-year 'Reality Check' and in this concluded that it is likely that only three goals in Africa will be realised by 2030: SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 13 on

climate action and SDG 15 on life on land. “Of the 13 goals that have sufficient data (after 2015), it is considered likely that ten goals will not be achieved by 2030. In relation to these goals, countries are not just underperforming; the reality is that achieving them appears virtually impossible” (UCLG, 2019:31).

2.4 A focus on urban areas

Cities have historically had a chequered reputation. Large urban concentrations were often regarded with suspicion, and seen as concentrations of poverty, crime, and necessary, but polluting and filthy, industrial development (Simon, 2016). Migrants moving to cities were often regarded as undesirable, and urbanisation was a cause of major concern. However, in the last decade, this approach has shifted to recognising the valuable role that cities and urban areas can play in a national economy. Cities instead can be seen as “places embodying individual freedom, collective creativity, and high productivity” (*ibid*.:xiv). SDGs have the potential to play a major role in harnessing this creativity, through using innovation to solve some of the challenges faced by cities and major urban areas.

The acknowledgement that cities are key role players in growing national economies, and providing space for productive and improved quality of life for significant numbers of people, is a major step forward. However, there are still several significant challenges in managing ever-increasing urban spaces.

Importantly for this research, is the statement contained in the New Urban Agenda: “we have reached a critical point in understanding that cities can be the source of solutions to, rather than the cause of, the challenges that our world is facing today. If well-planned and well-managed, urbanization can be a powerful tool for sustainable development for both developing and developed countries” (United Nations, 2017:iv). It is clear that there is widespread acknowledgement that fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda requires the full engagement and commitment of all levels of governance. This includes local and regional government, civil society and local stakeholders such as the private sector, social partners, academia and grassroots organisations. It is within local communities that implementation is taking place, and where the ultimate success of global sustainability commitments will be realised.

The focus in recent years has therefore moved to one of ensuring sustainable urbanisation, that counters the unsustainable, and resource-intensive patterns of urbanisation that have characterised high-income countries (Simon, 2016). Urban concerns are higher on the global development agenda than ever before, with a targeted urban 2030 goal (SDG 11), and the adoption of the New Urban Agenda at Habitat III in 2016.

Multilevel governance, and whole-of-society or whole-of-government approaches, are increasingly used to emphasise the need to bring together all government bodies and members of society in a single, integrated way (UCLG, 2019). This has recently been re-emphasised in South Africa, through the District Development Model (DDM) that is currently being implemented.

SDG 11, for the first time, provides a single global urban policy position and goal (Parnell, 2016). Previously, the closest global goal addressing urban areas was the MDG focused on the eradication of slums. SDG 11 instead provides a comprehensive global policy agenda to: *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. This 2030 goal has ten identified targets and 14 indicators currently. The targets for SDG 11 are as follows:

> 11.1. By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.
>
> 11.2. By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.
>
> 11.3. By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.
>
> 11.4. Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.
>
> 11.5. By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.
>
> 11.6. By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.
>
> 11.7. By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.
>
> 11.a. Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.
>
> 11.b. By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and

implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels.

11.c. Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilising local materials.

It is apparent that achieving a safe, inclusive society requires efforts from a range of sectors and stakeholders - affordable housing and basic services, accessible and sustainable transport, sustainable urbanisation and ensuring participation in planning, disaster management and the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage, and focusing on the mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Each of these aspects has a critical role to play in the overall goal of inclusive and sustainable urban areas.

Parnell (2016) notes that the identification of SDG 11 signifies the UN's acceptance of devolution in governance, the need for an integrated vision of sustainable urban development, and a collective acknowledgment that cities have a particular role to play in the spatial concentration of resources and flows.

The 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris, 2015, also recognised the role that urban areas play in mitigating the challenges of climate change. Over 400 mayors, together with heads of states, were directly involved in negotiations towards the conclusion and adopting of the treaty. This is a clear acknowledgment "that cities can play a central and fundamental role in defining and implementing innovative solutions to reduce the causes and the effects of climate change both locally and globally" (Tollin, undated:46).

The NUA echoes the role that cities play in achieving global commitments to ending poverty and promoting sustainability. It says that "by readdressing the way cities and human settlements are planned, designed, financed, developed, governed and managed, the New Urban Agenda will help to end poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions; reduce inequalities; promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in order to fully harness their vital contribution to sustainable development; improve human health and wellbeing; foster resilience; and protect the environment" (United Nations, 2017:3).

This NUA notes a paradigm shift in the approach to urban management, advocating for all levels of government, civil society, private sector and other constituents to use it as a resource in improving urbanisation and development. It emphasises livelihood opportunities, improved quality of life, good urbanisation, providing clear linkages with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and especially Goal 11 focused on sustainable cities and communities.

The NUA is critical in addressing development issues such as increased levels of urbanisation and catalysing change in developing countries. One of the specific commitments identified in the NUA, linked to the SDG that forms the focus of this research, is the provision of basic services for all citizens (EMM, 2020).

In the most recent Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralisation (the GOLD V report), cities are acknowledged as the space where labour, skills, knowledge and capital can be effectively combined, in order to realise economic growth and development in Africa (UCLG, 2019). However, issues around the lack of decentralisation in some countries mean that local commitments and plans may be overtaken by national plans. It is therefore critical that different spheres of government are partners in achieving the SDGs (Abubaker *et al*., 2017).

While global commitments and goals are clear, there is a need to ensure that these are effectively implemented in national and local level planning and service delivery. Pieterse (2011) notes that there are three key areas to focus on, in the urban transition to sustainable human settlements. These include sustainable infrastructure, the inclusive economy and efficient spatial form, with a base of democratic political decision-making. The first of these, sustainable infrastructure, is made up of social infrastructure (education, health, public space, the arts and housing) and bio-physical infrastructure (transport, basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and waste removal, communication technology and food system services) (*ibid*.). There are numerous areas of potential implementation in ensuring strong sustainability initiatives in specific local contexts. Bridging the brown and green agendas needs focused attention in order to ensure upgrading of low-income areas and equal and fair provision of resources. For example, the implementation of city wide metropolitan open space systems, as opposed to individual parks, provide a number of additional benefits to local communities and should form a key component of sustainability initiatives in urban development planning (Simon, 2016).

SDGs can also be used by local leadership and management as a roadmap in bringing about a more sustainable, equal and inclusive urban society. The intention of the SDGs captures the essence of the political agenda of almost every city around the world: to increase prosperity, promote social inclusion and improve resilience and environmental sustainability (Kanuri, Revi, Espey and Kuhle, 2016).

However, the localisation of SDGs is not without challenges. Issues of decentralisation are raised throughout literature, where local government may not necessarily have the mandate or power to actively implement programmes intended to achieve the SDGs. This includes limitations of both political and fiscal power. Issues of low levels of resources in the form of institutional capacity and a lack of access to development finance, are also raised. Partnerships, or the lack thereof, are another

major constraint faced by local government in its efforts to drive action on sustainable development (Kanuri *et al*., 2016).

Other criticisms levelled at the SDGs note that they are not urgent enough – "the SDG targets move bit by bit, slowly looking for progress towards 2030. But a lot of people can't wait until then. As they are living now, they might not survive to see that date" (FutureLearn, undated). In addition, SDGs do not necessarily address the current inequalities that exist internationally, which critics note will require a drastic reform of current systems. Finally, the goals do not take the local context into account, with a one size fits all approach not being relevant in various local sustainable development initiatives (*ibid*.).

In concluding the discussion on the role that urban areas play in achieving the SDGs, Tollin (undated) notes that the efforts of cities and local governments need to be harmonised, at both a national and international level, in order to share knowledge and promote mutual learning. Cities have "the creative capacity and the innovation potential to start radical transformative processes" (*ibid*.:50). Many are already leading the way in sustainable development and climate action initiatives and are therefore well able to implement the SDGs (Kanuri *et al*., 2016).

2.5 Localising SDG 11: global case studies

Before investigating the localisation of SDGs in eThekwini, it is useful to reflect on other case studies across the world, where cities have attempted to localise the SDGs in their strategies, plans and programmes. As discussed in the previous section, local government faces a number of constraints in its ability to implement the SDGs. Examples mentioned previously include that of the United States and Canada, where the lack of a formal national framework for implementation of the SDGs has meant that there is no clear role for local and regional governments in localisation of the global agenda.

However, the experience of local government across the world varies significantly. In Europe, a Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews was prepared by the European Union (EU), as an "inspirational framework to set up Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)" (Siragusa, Vizcaino, Proietti and Lavalle, 2020:4). The Brazilian Confederation of Municipalities developed a tool to support the monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs (Akkiah, 2019).

By 2021, a total of 76 VLRs from across the world had been submitted to the United Nations and are available on the SDG website: https://sdgs.un.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews. A selection of these, from both the Global North and Global South, are extracted below as case studies. In each of these, cities have generally reported on their actions across multiple SDGs. For the purposes of this

research, just actions relevant to SDG 11 or the conceptual framework of this research are discussed here.

In **New York City**, officials mapped the SDGs, including all 169 targets, to the city's programme of action. A VLR was also completed, and then mapped into the city's OneNYC 2050 long term strategy, which was adopted in 2019. This strategy is directly aligned to the achievement of the SDGs. One of the key learnings from this work, was the conducting of an initial assessment of the work of individual city agencies, in order not to swamp them with a list of goals and targets (Hiniker, 2021).

The city also established a Global Vision Urban Action programme, located in the Mayor's Office, that intends to share innovative lessons in sustainability with cities around the world (NYC VLR, 2019). In 2019, the city hosted a number of UN site visits to demonstrate how a city's work helps in the achievement of the SDGs. Interestingly, it should be noted that while the city identified climate change, affordable housing and the racial wealth gap as its major challenges, it does not appear to directly report on SDG 11. However, issues of human settlements do appear in its reporting on other SDGs, for example, "in 2018 alone, nearly 100,000 residents in 34 of New York City's 51 Council Districts voted to allocate more than $36 million to more than 120 projects at schools, parks, libraries, public housing, and other public spaces in their communities" (*ibid.*, 2019:92).

In **Bristol**, a partnership-based approach to governance has been implemented to assist with the achievement of the SDGs. The City has adopted a One City Approach that arranges bi-annual stakeholder gatherings and regular citizen consultations in order to involve representation from all sectors of society, its key institutions, and community groups. These sessions collectively identify priorities and challenges and have resulted in the development of a One City Plan vision for 2050. Although there have been some successes, the city notes that there are a number of challenges, especially in a city that has high levels of inequality. "Currently, the leadership of Bristol's anchor institutions does not reflect our city's desire to leave no one behind" (Macleod, 2020:2). As a result, the city has implemented programmes such as Stepping Up and Green and Black Ambassadors, in order to develop leaders in all areas of society (*ibid*.).

In 2020, the state of **Hawaii** produced a VLR of progress against the SDGs. In this, it reflects on data gathered through an open-data dashboard, the *Aloha+ Challenge*, which tracks 37 targets and over 200 indicators, that allow residents to track their individual household's impact on the SDGs. While several initiatives are detailed, for this research it is pertinent to reflect on some of the best practice service delivery programmes. In addressing the goal of smart, sustainable communities, a bikeshare system has been introduced, which has seen massive uptake by residents. Over 1300 Biki bicycles, at 130 self-service bike stops, provide an affordable and zero-transmission transportation for residents

(Hawaii Green Growth Local 2030 Hub, 2020). A waste programme at schools was also introduced, to turn food waste into compost. This has reduced waste from schools by over 90%. The Hawaii Ocean Science and Technology Park (HOST) provides outdoor demonstration sites for emerging renewable energy, aquaculture, ocean science and sustainability technologies. A final example of the state's initiatives is a carbon offset project, that will generate carbon offset credits to be sold on the global market. This project allows "businesses, residents and visitors to offset their carbon emissions by investing in the protection of Hawaii's koa forests and improving groundwater recharge" (*ibid.*, 2020:24). Progress against SDG 11 is varied. The state notes that it has significant challenges, such as extremely high housing costs, and second highest levels of homelessness per capita in the United States (*ibid*.).

In **Johannesburg**, an extensive Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system has been developed, intending to deliver improved public transport to marginalised urban communities. The advantages of this system are to put public transport into closer reach of homes, connect people to more destinations and extend the range of destinations that can be reached. In an early study on the efficacy and success of this initiative, it was found that the BRT did indeed provide a greater range of destinations and provided an effective varied transport option. However, cost savings were not significant, with benefits skewed towards middle income residents and therefore not providing the intended poverty relief (Vaz and Venter, 2011).

Indeed, throughout the world examples of both weak and strong extremes of sustainable development can be found. In South Africa, municipalities laud themselves for the installation of energy efficient LED light bulbs however, there is limited upscaling of such programmes. The environmentally friendly bus rapid transit systems implemented in major cities across the country often do not reach the intended target group, leaving the question as to whether programmes are achieving their intention of 'leaving no one behind.'

2.6 Decentralisation in South Africa

One of the key elements of success of localisation is the degree to which powers and functions are devolved to local and regional governments. In South Africa, the Constitution provides a broad framework for such functions in two Schedules (Schedule 4 Part B and Schedule 5 Part B). The figure below provides examples of the split in function between provincial and municipal authorities, according to the two relevant Schedules to the Constitution.

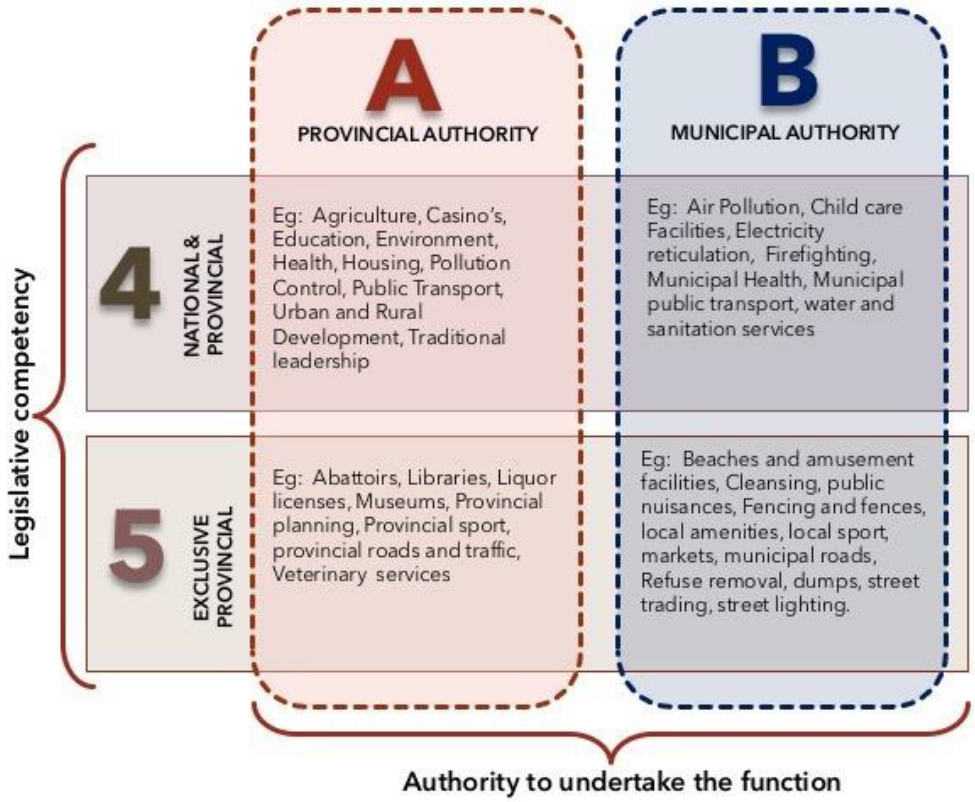

Figure 4: Constitutional allocation of powers and functions

Housing is a concurrent provincial and national responsibility; however, local government plays a major role in providing the necessary bulk infrastructure, planning and other key functions in the delivery of human settlements. The following are some of the key developmental powers of local government, as outlined in the 1998 Municipal Structures Act, which are necessary for the provision of sustainable human settlements in terms of SDG 11:

(a) Integrated development planning

(b) Potable water supply systems.

(c) Supply of electricity,

(d) Domestic waste-water and sewage disposal systems.

(e) Solid waste disposal sites

(f) Municipal roads

(g) Regulation of passenger transport services.

(i) Municipal health services.

(j) Fire fighting services

These powers and functions are critical components of the delivery of sustainable human settlements. Given the decentralisation processes in South Africa, local government has relatively clear control and management of basic service delivery in its area. Linked to SDG 11.1, and the target to provide sustainable human settlements and basic service delivery, the four basic services of water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal therefore form the main areas of focus for the research.

2.7 Conceptual framework

Through the literature review, a number of key elements can be extracted. As a first step in localisation, it is critical that local government aligns its plans with global and national goals. Secondly, there is a need for local government to ensure that such goals and targets are integrated effectively across all municipal planning, budgeting and operations. And finally, the issue of partnerships is referenced often – local government does not operate in isolation; there is a need for municipalities to ensure that there is synchronisation of programmes, with ones delivered by other spheres of government, or other role players such as the private sector or civil society.

The conceptual framework for this research therefore focuses on these three key elements in achieving sustainable urban settlements. These include the alignment, integration and synchronisation of plans and programmes.

2.7.1 Alignment of planning and development

The localisation of international commitments such as the SDGs provide clear goals and targets for national and local governments around the world. These are translated into national visioning and plans, such as the NDP and Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) which further need to be aligned with local policies, programmes and competencies. Therefore, when taken collectively, the localisation of sustainability is about the alignment of global, regional, national and sub-national plans with those of the local municipality.

2.7.2 Integration of planning and development

In addition to the distribution of developmental powers and functions, and alignment with plans, integrated planning and delivery must be located in a single Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for each municipal area. The IDP is the base integrated planning document for local government in South Africa that defines how localisation should operate: “The planning undertaken by a municipality must

be aligned with, and complement, the development plans and strategies of other affected municipalities and other organs of state so as to give effect to the principles of co-operative government contained in section 41 of the Constitution" (Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

Key elements of the IDP are detailed in the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, which notes that the IDP must integrate all governmental plans in a specific municipal area and must:

- Ensure a long-term and strategic approach; and
- Include a Spatial Development Framework *(*Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

2.7.3 Synchronisation of planning and development

The third key aspect of the conceptual framework is the focus on synchronisation. At a municipal level the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) details the implementation of service delivery and the municipal budget for a financial year (MFMA, 2003). However, SDBIPs do not include planning for how municipal delivery is synchronised with other developmental programmes, particularly that of other spheres of government.

In 2019, the DDM was introduced, to improve the coordination of plans, budgets and implementation of metropolitan and district municipalities across South Africa. The synchronisation of implementation and particularly budgets in the municipal areas will improve planning between spheres of government, including better working relations and coordination. This would then give effect to statutory provisions contained in the Municipal Systems Act and the Municipal Planning and Performance Regulations detailing:

- any development initiatives in the municipality, including infrastructure, physical, social, economic and institutional development;
- all known projects, plans and programmes to be implemented within the municipality by any organ of state.

A diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework for this study is contained in the figure below.

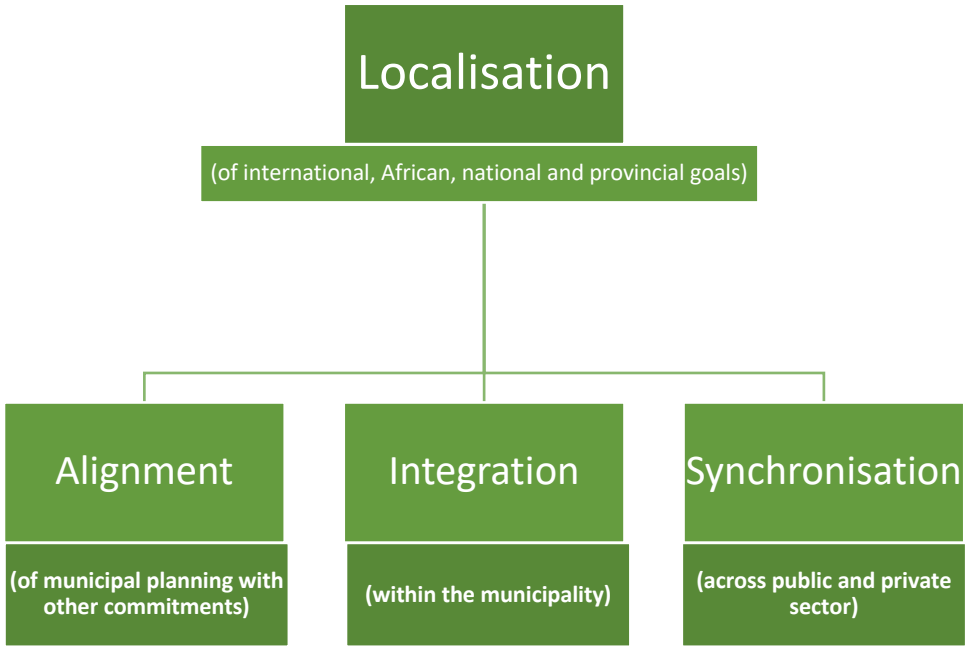

Figure 5: Conceptual framework

In the case study of EMM, the current programmes and performance of the delivery of human settlements will be evaluated with regard to greener and more sustainable service delivery, planning and governance as these will provide input as to the extent to which the desired goal of a sustainable, just and safe future, will be realised.

Whilst perhaps seen as "housing" goals, SDG 11 goals go beyond just housing as built structures towards a focus instead on human settlements. In this regard, and as noted by Fox and Goodfellow (2016), the essential foundations of urban development and planning are identified as including land, housing, infrastructure and urban services. Therefore, in this research these key aspects as they relate to part of the first SDG 11 target (*11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums*), will be further assessed from the perspective of EMM. This includes specifically the delivery of basic services including water, sanitation, electricity and waste removal.

In order to measure the municipality's success in the localisation of SDGs, key indicators identified to measure the success of eThekwini's localisation process to date have been identified, as follows:

- Alignment
    - Do municipal plans align with SDGs and other national or provincial plans?
    - Have these goals been operationalised in municipal plans and budgets?

    - Do governance processes including monitoring and evaluation, and performance management, reflect continual assessment of this alignment?
- Integration
    - Has the municipality integrated SDGs into short- and medium-term planning across municipal departments?
    - Has the municipality delivered against these goals – is there measurable progress in this delivery?
- Synchronisation
    - Has the municipality partnered with other stakeholders in the delivery of basic services?
    - Does the municipality acknowledge and measure the work done by other stakeholders?

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A qualitative research approach was used in this study, using a case study of EMM as an illustrative example. There are also some quantitative elements in the research, in the form of data analysis of key indicators relevant to the research.

3.2 Research methodology

The research methodology consisted of a number of key steps. Firstly, a detailed literature review was conducted, that examined other research in this field, and global commitments around sustainability and resilience. This included a review of recent assessments of progress against sustainability indicators, and a review of municipal documentation such as eThekwini's IDPs and SDBIPs. This intended to understand the municipality's commitments and programmes as well as municipal policies and frameworks relating to basic service delivery, human settlements, climate change, environmental sustainability, long term planning and visioning.

These documents provided insight to the extent to which the municipality is localising global commitments to sustainability and resilience.

Data analysis of municipal performance indicators, budgets and delivery was completed. These were completed against the SDG target and indicators identified through the case study research.

Finally, semi-structured interviews took place with four targeted stakeholders identified through a purposeful sampling process following the above review of relevant literature and municipal documentation. The purpose of these interviews was to assess the extent to which the municipal governance process mainstreams issues of sustainability, as well as provide insight into key challenges and recommendations.

The purposeful sampling process ensured that interviews were completed with experts in the local, provincial and national spheres of government. In this regard, the first interviewee is a member of the National Planning Commission, who has experience working in both the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, and with national issues of policy coordination, development and planning. The second interviewee identified was from provincial government, working in the Office of the Premier, and involved in an oversight and coordinating capacity in the provincial space. The third interviewee was

a former municipal official who managed the introduction of the SDGs in eThekwini in 2015 and was centrally involved in the municipality's long term planning and strategy processes. Finally, in order to obtain comparative insights into the localisation of SDGs in South Africa, a senior official at another metropolitan municipality was identified. This official is involved in the municipality's SDG planning and tracking processes and therefore was able to provide comparative details relevant for this project. The purposeful sampling process therefore identified and covered relevant insights from national, provincial and local spheres of government, as well as from another metro in order for more informed and relevant comparisons to be made.

Finally, analysis of municipal reporting on performance and key indicators will provide more quantitative assessment of the actual progress and delivery on sustainable programmes and projects. This analysis was completed against the existing SDG 11 indicators of the identified target in order to provide a factual, data-driven assessment of the municipality's progress against this SDG. It should be noted that the target identified for this research is:

> *SDG 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums*

The corresponding indicator for measurement of this target is:

> *Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing*

While at a very high level this is assessed under the research findings, more detailed indicators are also used, such as the number of households provided with access to basic services, the capital budget allocated to programmes etc. This intended to provide an independent, factual assessment of the municipality's performance with regard to the localisation of SDG 11.1, and the indicators outlined in the conceptual framework.

3.3 Sources of data

This research assessed a number of secondary data sources, together with empirical quantitative data linked to the municipality's service delivery record. The primary sources of secondary data for this research include:

- Municipal documentation such as:
  - 2021/22 IDP and SDBIP (indicators and qualitative background)
  - 2021/22 Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP)
  - Cities Support Programme – Metro Level Report

    - 2019/20 Biodiversity Report
    - 2019 Climate Action Plan
    - Durban Climate Change Strategy
    - Climate Change Adaptation Planning
- National documentation such as:
    - NDP
    - National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF)
    - Stats SA SDGs 2019 Country Report
    - MFMA Circular 88 qualitative background

Empirical evidence in the form of quantitative performance data was also assessed. This included:

- MFMA Circular 88 indicators
- Annual municipal performance data in the form of audited annual reports, budgets and revised Integrated Development Plans.
- National performance data from National Treasury and Stats SA, in the form of the non-financial census and quarterly Treasury reports.

Given that the indicator for this research focuses specifically on the proportion of the population living in informal housing, key data relevant in this assessment was investigated. For example, data around the improved delivery of services to informal settlements, or an increase in the provision of basic sanitation, was researched and analysed. In addition, in light of the SDGs commitment to sustainable development, innovative methods of sustainable service delivery practices were also highlighted.

3.4 Ethical limitations

In terms of ethical considerations, given that this was primarily a desktop study of existing publicly available sources, there were no issues of a sensitive nature discussed. There were therefore limited ethical considerations. The targeted experts identified for interviews were given the option of providing confidential responses, where information from respondents would not be given to others or used for anything other than the research. Interviewees were also able to request anonymity, in which case they were given the option to not have their name linked to any information, when discussed in this report. In all cases for this research, respondents agreed to waive issues of anonymity or confidentiality.

Chapter 4: Setting the Context

This chapter reviews the context within which the research is conducted. This includes examining the local environment of EMM, together with the broader South African governance and sustainability framework and goals. The chapter covers an overview of the South African sustainable policy and legislative framework and provides an introduction to the context of basic service delivery in EMM.

4.1 The national context

In the approach to urban sustainability, especially from the perspective of a developing country, one of the primary considerations is to ensure that power and resources are adequately distributed and mediated at a local level (Pieterse, 2011). In South Africa, the Constitution provides the broad framework for powers and functions, indicating responsibilities by sphere of government and providing some guidance on assignment and definitions of functions. Schedule 4B and 5B list all of local government's constitutionally derived powers and functions. The Municipal Structures Act, No. 117 of 1998, together with a number of pieces of sectoral legislation, also provides more detail on the division of powers and functions.

The country's National Development Plan (NDP) prioritises job creation, the elimination of poverty, reduction of inequality and growing an inclusive economy in its roadmap to achieving a better future by 2030. It also supports the decentralisation of built environment functions to larger cities. Housing, public transport and roads should be fully assigned to metropolitan municipalities and secondary cities. The NDP (2012:432) notes that "The Constitution allows for differentiation in the assignment of powers and functions to municipalities...but the opportunities this provides [have not been] used effectively."

The NDP, although adopted in 2012 before the development of the SDGs, includes clear principles of sustainability. These are evident across sectors. For example, the NDP discusses the importance of sustainable livelihoods, where individuals can access a range of services. Sustainable agricultural growth is discussed, as is sustainable management of the environment. Economic growth should be sustainable and inclusive, while the NDP also notes the need for sustainable energy solutions, sustainable water management and the development of sustainable green products and services (NPC, 2012). The country's NDP therefore shows significance convergence with the SDGs. An unpublished analysis, conducted by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), showed that 74% of the SDG targets were directly

addressed by the NDP, while a further 19% of targets were addressed by sectoral programmes (DPME, 2019 in Stats SA, 2019).

However, while the intention of ensuring sustainable development is apparent, the degree to which these are incorporated into actual urban management and service delivery is questionable. Given the South Africa urbanised population, currently over 66 percent, and likely to reach 80 percent by 2050, actual implementation of strong and effective sustainable practices in cities is critical (UNDESA, 2018).

The interrelationship between global, national and local plans and frameworks is detailed in the figure below.

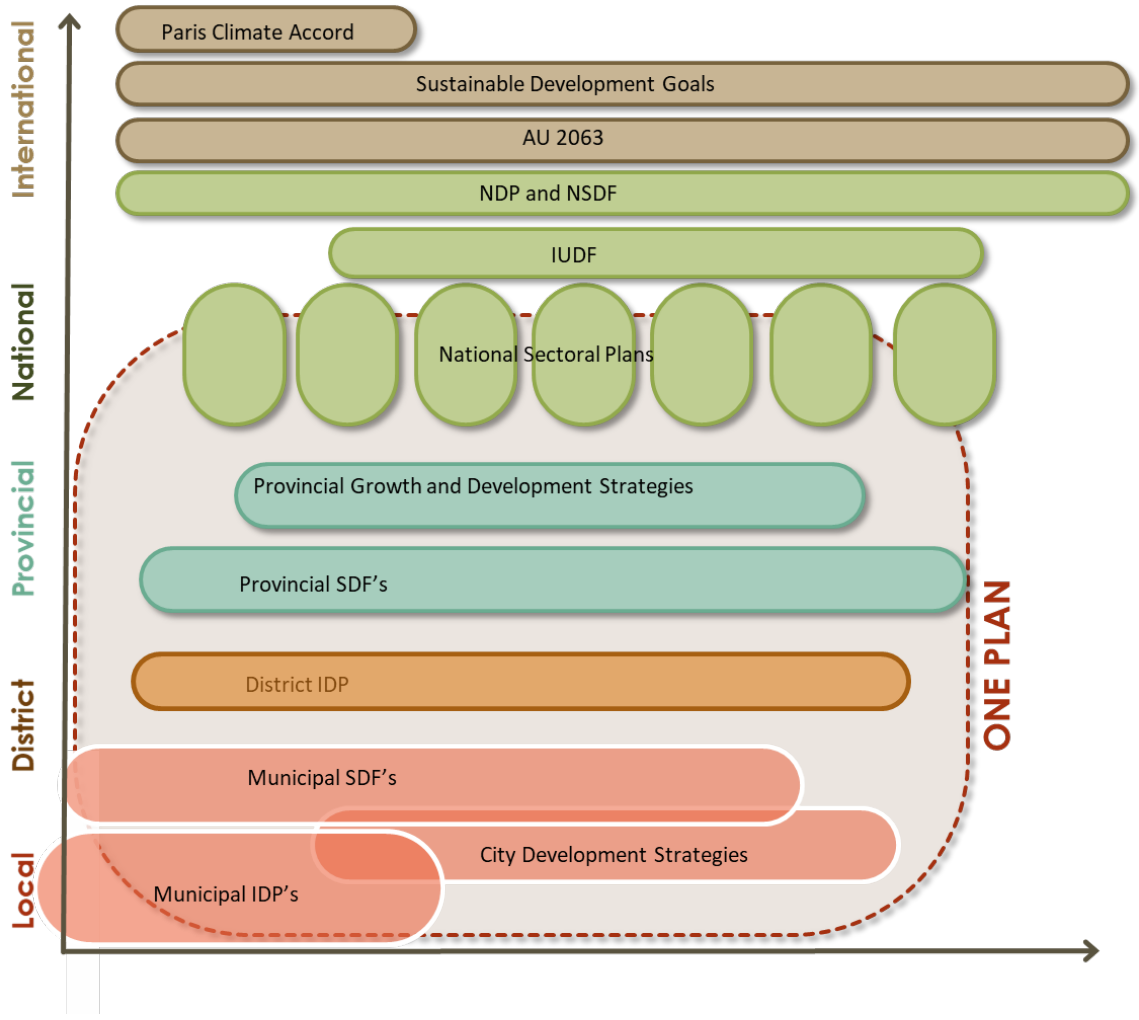

Figure 6: Planning in South Africa (Bannister, 2022)

This figure highlights the role that various plans and goals play, in ensuring the localisation of global commitments to municipal plans and documentation. In South Africa, the recent introduction of a municipal One Plan, intends to provide a comprehensive overview of government planning, budgeting and delivery in a specific municipal area. In this way it is intended that a whole-of-government approach is taken to development, whereby the projects of national, provincial and local government,

together with other organs of state, civil society, business and any other relevant stakeholders, are integrated in a single plan for that specific municipality.

4.2 SDG implementation – South Africa's institutional arrangement

In 2015, a National Steering Committee was established to organise and report on the delivery of the SDGs and explore data and policy alignment to implement the SDGs (Croese, 2019). The steering committee includes the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) who are responsible for international reporting, Statistics South Africa who are responsible for data and information collation, and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) who are responsible for national reporting (*ibid.*, 2019).

Although SDG 11 is often seen as the key focus for local government, given its emphasis on cities and human settlements, local government plays a role in the realisation of all SDGs. Also, given that local spaces are ultimately the key site of delivery and development, they are critical to the success of any sustainable development initiative (SALGA, quoted in UCLG, 2019).

Municipal associations such as the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) have also assisted in the localisation of SDGs. In 2019, SALGA and ICLEI signed a Memorandum of Understanding, together with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (Croese, 2019; ICLEI, 2019). Civil society organisations such as African Monitor are also working on the coordination of South African civil society around the SDGs (Croese, 2019).

4.3 eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality (EMM)

In 2020, EMM had a population of almost four million people (EMM, 2021). eThekwini is a fairly unique metro in the South African context, with 67% of the municipal area being classified as rural falling "beyond the 'urban edge' or sustainability line" (EMM website, 2021). This has significant implications for the provision of services to all households in the municipality.

The city's harbour is the largest and busiest port on the east coast of Africa. It is also the second-largest hub after Gauteng. The municipality has a high level of biodiversity, containing four of South Africa's seven biomes, seven broad vegetation types and over 2000 plant species (EMM, undated). However, it notes that it is a "green city under threat" (EMM, 2019:7) with one third of the city's area falling into

its metropolitan open space system (MOSS), but only 9.4% of this being formally conserved. EMM also has 98km of coastline, 18 major rivers and 16 estuaries (*ibid.*).

4.3.1 Climate change, resilience and sustainable development in EMM

The municipality's climate change, resilience and sustainable development work is guided by international agreements (EMM, 2021). The municipality has a Durban Climate Change Strategy (DCCS) in place, approved in 2015 and integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation responses across city operations. The metro also has a Climate Action Plan outlining climate actions grouped into nine thematic areas. These include: Biodiversity, Water, Health, Food security, Sea-Level Rise, Energy, Waste and Pollution, Transport, and Vulnerable Communities (*ibid*.). The city was selected to participate as one of the Rockefeller Foundation Programme's 100 Resilient Cities Centennial Challenge, to build urban resilience and translate global ideas around resilience into the local urban context (EMM website, 2021).

The municipality has conducted a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which it notes is a "widely used tool for proactively integrating environmental sustainability issues into the formulation of policies, plans and programmes" (EMM website, 2021). As part of this assessment, a Status Quo report was prepared, to understand the state of the municipal environment. To this end, a number of key points can be noted. The municipality has experienced a rapid reduction in its natural asset base, with sustainability limits having been exceeded, or almost exceeded, in a number of environmental systems. The report notes that in many of these, the trend needs to be reversed if the municipality wants to achieve a sustainable future.

Another concerning element of the Status Quo report is the landcover change caused by urbanisation, with much of this growth being informal or unregulated, and taking place beyond the Urban Development Line. The municipality's strategic spatial planning is identified as a critical tool in managing this (EMM website, 2021).

In 2017, the municipality adopted its first Resilience Strategy. This focuses on building urban resilience and has four key components. The first two form the foundation of the strategy: 'Collaborative informal settlement action' and 'Integrated and innovative planning at the interface between municipal and traditional governance systems.' The third component looks at 'Exploring potential "bridging links"', while the final aspect of the strategy is focused on the institutionalisation of resilience in the municipality. This includes the proposal for the establishment of a 'Sustainable and Resilient City Initiatives Unit' in the Office of Strategic Management. The municipality's IDP notes that

the rationale used throughout the Resilience Strategy is to focus in on specific aspects where challenges are most apparent, in order to have a catalytic impact across the broader local government system (EMM, 2021).

In a published portfolio of sustainability initiatives in the municipality, the city noted four key sustainable development principles for determining a sustainability rating of specific projects. These principles include social, ecological, economic and institutional sustainability. Social sustainability measured community participation, focusing on improved quality of life and the meeting of basic needs without environmental degradation. The principle of ecological sustainability referred to limiting the use of natural resources and minimising the use of non-renewable resources. Economic sustainability focused on viable and fair economic growth, that does not occur at the expenses of natural and social systems supporting it. Finally, governance and partnerships were noted as key components of institutional sustainability (EMM, undated).

A number of projects have been highlighted as best practice in achieving the four principles of sustainability (*ibid.*). For the purposes of this research report, innovative sustainable service delivery projects including Open Space Planning, Landfill Conservancy, wastewater education programme, and the South Durban Air Quality Monitoring projects, are relevant in the provision of basic services in the municipality.

The EMM plays a major role in various international fora in terms of sustainable development and the localisation of SDGs. Municipal officials serve on the technical secretariat of UCLG's Committee on Urban Strategic Planning (and previously chaired this committee), participate in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Leaders and have been centrally involved in the development of international training material linked to SDG localisation. In this regard, senior officials and leadership at the municipality are well informed in aligning the city's own planning to international and national goals of sustainable development.

4.3.2 Planning for service delivery

The municipal IDP notes that a number of key plans of the municipality contribute to achieving SDG 11 (EMM, 2021). These include Plan 1, Plan 3 and Plan 4, and are further detailed below:

Plan 1: Develop and sustain our spatial, natural and built environment

The goal of this plan is to lead, direct and manage the spatial, built and natural environment to ensure the sustainable, resilient and integrated growth and development of eThekwini for the benefit of all its citizens.

Key aspects of this plan include the spatial planning and land use management system, which is focused on spatial transformation of the municipality. The Resources Plan is another key element of Plan 1:

> "In line with national legislation and international agreements, the Municipality is committed to a sustainable development path that strives to balance social, ecological, and economic priorities. As far as possible, all development must function in harmony with the natural resource base upon which human wellbeing and the economy depends" (EMM, 2021:383).

Within Plan 1, there are four key programmes that aim to achieve SDG 11.

Programme 1.1: Develop and implement a sustainable and integrated spatial planning system

Programme 1.2: Ensure the long term sustainability of the natural resource base

Programme 1.3: Manage and regulate the built environment

Programme 1.4: Develop and implement a Municipal Climate Response Programme

Plan 3: Creating a quality living environment

The goal of Plan 3 is to promote access to equitable, appropriate and sustainable levels of household infrastructure and community services and facilitate access to housing. The key programmes identified as contributing to SDG 11 include:

Programme 3.1: New Integrated Housing Development

Programme 3.4: Provision of Incremental Services to informal settlements – roads, footpaths, storm water control

Plan 4: Fostering a socially equitable environment

Plan 4's goal is to promote and create a safe, healthy and secure environment. In this regard, nine sub-programmes are identified:

Programme 4.1. Promoting crime prevention strategies within the eThekwini Municipal Area

Programme 4.2. Compliance with the National Road Traffic Act

Programme 4.3. Efficient and effective bylaw enforcement

Programme 4.4: Implement the social, situational, crime prevention strategies and urban safety management of the built environment throughout eThekwini Municipal Area

Programme 4.5: Implementation of the social development strategy

Programme 4.6: Promoting safety of communities within the eThekwini Municipal Area in support of emergency and essential services

Programme 4.7: To reduce the incidence and severity of fire and other emergencies

Programme 4.8: Ensure the safety and security of municipal councillors, officials and municipal assets

Programme 4.10: Provide services of high quality towards achieving the National Core Standards through the Ideal Clinic Status

While EMM has identified these three plans, and 15 sub-programmes, as the key municipal response to SDG 11, given the focus of this research specifically on basic service delivery, Plan 3 and its relevant sub-programmes forms the primary focus in the assessment contained in the following chapter.

4.3.3 Institutional arrangements for service delivery

eThekwini's organisational structure is divided into eight administrative clusters, each responsible for their own planning and budget in providing their relevant support and services to the municipality. For the purposes of this research, two clusters are particularly relevant: Human Settlements, Engineering and Transportation; and Trading Services. In addition, a Chief Strategy Officer oversees Sustainable City Initiatives, Programme Management and the City's Regional Growth and Development Strategy (EMM website, 2021).

From a governance perspective, climate change action and progress is managed by the eThekwini Municipality Climate Change Committee, chaired by the Mayor of the municipality. A Technical Task Team drives implementation of the strategy, in order to coordinate actions across municipal departments (*ibid*.).

eThekwini's environmental management function falls under the ambit of the Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department (EPCPD). The municipal website notes that there have been a number of challenges and changes since the establishment of this function in 1994. The staffing

capacity has grown from one person, to over 30 currently, while the municipal area grew from 300 square kilometres to 2290 square kilometres. This is turn had additional challenges in the form of a highly urbanised city centre, together with a vast rural periphery (EMM website, 2021).

The department notes that the priorities of local government have also changed, since its establishment. “Local governance structures have realigned themselves to respond to the necessity of building a new and democratic South Africa. As a result, poverty reduction and meeting basic needs became key local government objectives, paralleling growing global awareness that environmental management and protection are not possible in a world of inequality and poverty” (EMM website, 2021). In response, the department’s role has changed over time, with the original sustainable development mandate of the department now being mainstreamed through the municipality’s entire IDP process (*ibid*.). As will be analysed in the research conducted through this report, this emphasis on sustainability as a municipal-wide consideration, forms a good base for ensuring the realisation of the SDGs.

eThekwini has recently appointed the second term of commissioners on its City Planning Commission (CPC) – “an advisory body appointed by Council to propel the Municipality’s long term vision and strategic plan” (EMM, 2020:372). This is also part of the City’s institutional transformation, aimed at building an efficient administration. The CPC’s role is to guide EMM on its long term growth and strategy, as aligned to the NDP and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS). One of the key approaches that the CPC will use to deliver on its mandate is the development of a stakeholder engagement strategy to galvanise support around a consensus plan. It also intends to internalise and identify the role of the City in responding to the NDP, PGDS and other national and provincial priorities (EMM, 2020).

In a statement released by EMM in 2019, it notes that the long-term planning of the municipality must ensure high economic growth, the creation of decent and sustainable jobs, and a reduction in poverty and inequity (Infrastructure News, 2019). While not directly focused on basic service delivery, the reduction of poverty and ensuring a more equal society, cannot happen in the absence of the provision of basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation.

4.3.4 Sustainable human settlements and service delivery in EMM

eThekwini has identified a key performance area focused on basic service delivery. This intends to “ensure provision of efficient infrastructure (Human Settlements, Roads, Water, Sanitation and energy

supply) that will contribute to the improvement of quality of life for all citizens in eThekwini Municipal Area" (EMM, 2021:513).

The City's basic service delivery levels are high – in 2019, 96% of the population had access to water, 74% had access to electricity and 84% had access to sanitation. Free basic services are also provided, with 42% of the population receiving free basic water, and 37% receiving free basic sanitation (EMM, 2019).

However, EMM notes a challenge of unsustainable development practices such as urban sprawl, which "results in increased informal settlements, overcrowded schools, ill health, marked spatial disparities, higher cost of providing infrastructure and services, disturbed ecosystems, biodiversity and environmental resources, changes in air quality, change in aesthetics and urban form, as well as loss of land for economic and agricultural services" (EMM, 2020:325). The delivery of basic services will be impacted by such unsustainable development – urban sprawl and increased informal settlements create high and often unsustainable, or costly, demand for basic services; issues of ill health are directly attributable to improving the delivery of services such as water, sanitation and waste removal; and the higher cost of providing infrastructure and services will impact the total delivery possible in a financially constrained environment.

Unsustainable resource use, in the form of energy and water provision, is also raised as a challenge that will eventually compromise the security of supply. In this vein, EMM notes the need to focus on demand side management in ensuring a more sustainable use of resources. In addressing the energy crisis the municipality's focus is on the reduction of demand together with investigation of alternative renewable energy sources (EMM, 2020).

An assessment of the municipality's 2016 housing breakdown is detailed in the figure below.

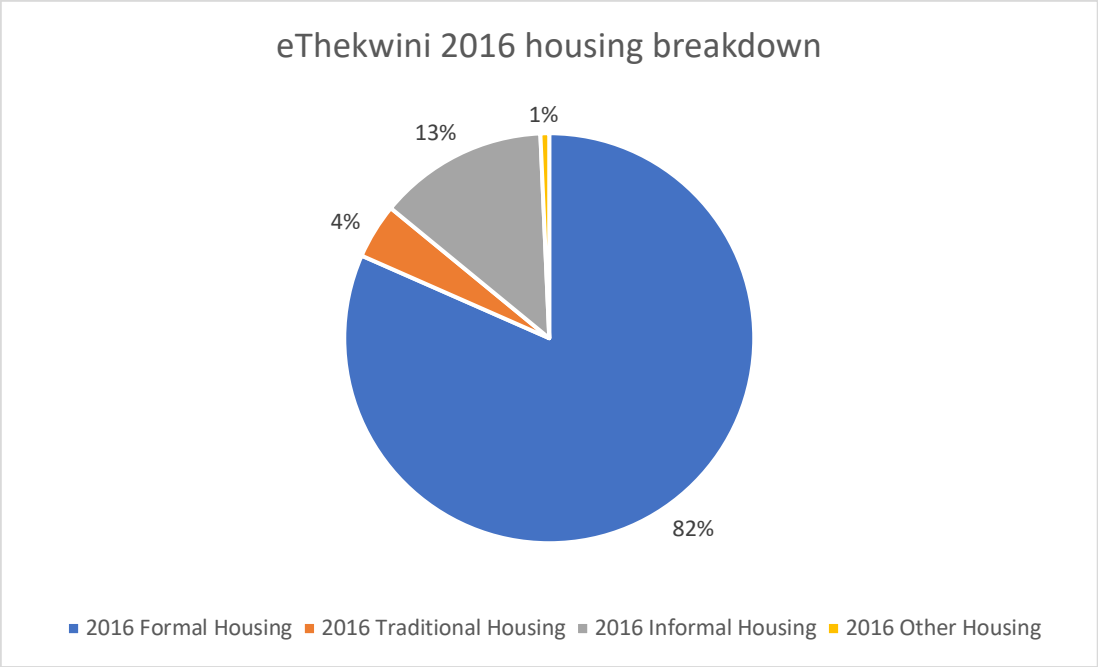

Figure 7: 2016 housing breakdown (Stats SA 2016 Community Survey)

While formal housing is still the primary housing type available in the municipality, traditional and informal housing makes up a significant proportion of the housing breakdown in eThekwini. This impacts the delivery of basic services to almost 20% of the households of the municipality.

Access to basic services in eThekwini has steadily improved, based on data extracted from the 2001 and 2011 Census, and the 2016 Community Survey.

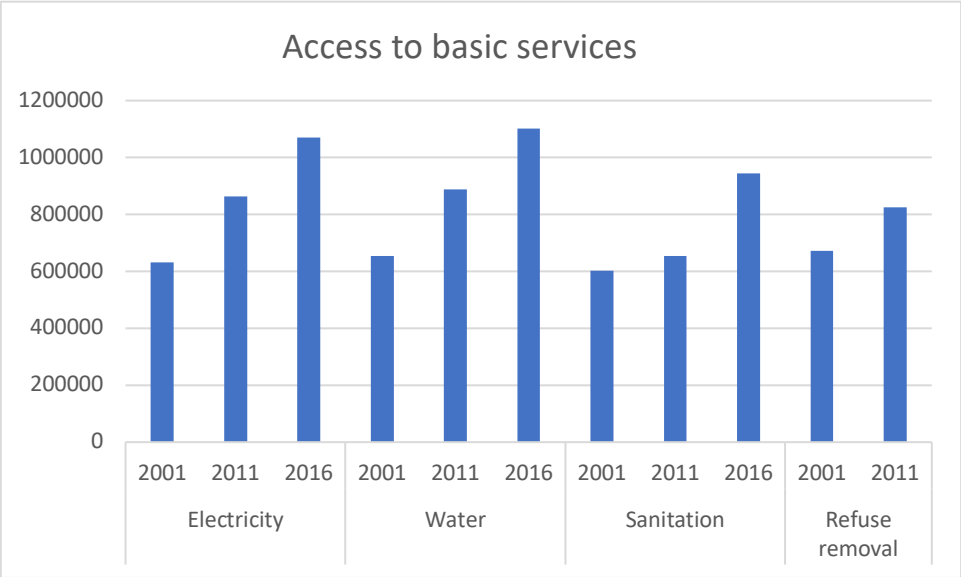

Figure 8: Access to basic services in eThekwini (Stats SA Census data)

As can be seen in the figure, access to basic electricity and water remains highest in the municipality. There has also however been a significant increase in access to basic sanitation between 2011 and 2016.

A review of municipal service delivery coverage for each of the four basic services was also completed. In EMM:

- Water and sanitation – EMM has a water network of over 14 500 km and a sewer network of over 8 500 km. There are 361 water storage facilities and 33 water pump stations in the municipality.
    - Informal settlements are served by 1 633 toilet blocks. The toilet blocks or Community Ablution Blocks (CABs) include hand washing, clothes washing, toilet, urinal and shower facilities.
- Electricity – the municipality provides electricity to over 740 000 customers in an area covering nearly 2000 square kilometres.
- Refuse removal – A once a week refuse removal service is provided to 1 039 757 households, 411 468 being formal households and 628 289 informal. EMM identifies new dwellings or informal settlements on a continual basis. All major streets are cleaned daily, while the CBD is cleared three times a day. High pressure washing of streets and pavements is carried out at night particularly in all hot spot areas (EMM, 2020).

4.4 Conclusion

EMM is one of South Africa's largest municipalities with extensive service delivery requirements and demands. It is also cognisant of the demands of national and global goals in the form of NDP indicators and SDGs, to which it should align its planning and service delivery. The extent to which this is done will be discussed further in the following chapter detailing the research findings and analysis.

Chapter 5: Research Findings and Analysis

In Chapter 5, the data analysed through this research is detailed. This analysis is aligned to each of the aspects of the conceptual framework as they relate to EMM. The chapter also includes insights obtained through the interviews, and the relevant summarised municipal performance data and indicators.

This research explored the implementation of the various dimensions of localisation in the case of eThekwini, examining how alignment is achieved, how the municipality ensures integration, and finally how the synchronisation of planning and implementation takes place. These are assessed against the indicators detailed in the conceptual framework. In each of these three areas, data is analysed where possible and qualitative case studies are included if relevant. Insights from the expert interviews conducted are also referenced throughout the chapter.

5.1 Alignment (of municipal planning with other commitments)

In order to understand the extent to which the municipality aligns with other global, national and provincial commitments, a review of various municipal documentation was undertaken. As discussed previously, the legislated instrument used in South Africa to encourage and ensure alignment of planning, is the IDP. This document should ultimately translate global and national commitments into local plans and actions. The IDP informs additional municipal plans such as the annual SDBIP, the Spatial Development Framework (SDF) which should locate a municipality's plans in accordance with their intended spatial transformation goals, and annual performance plans. In Section 23 of the Municipal Systems Act, the following is stated:

> "*The planning undertaken by a municipality must be aligned with, and complement, the development plans and strategies of other affected municipalities and other organs of state so as to give effect to the principles of co-operative government contained in section 41 of the Constitution*."

IDPs should improve the implementation of national plans, policies and legislation. The 2001 Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations note that the IDPs should detail any development initiatives in the municipality, including infrastructure, physical, social, economic and institutional development; and all known plans and programmes to be implemented

within the municipality by any organ of state. IDPs should therefore be an integrated all-of-government approach.

eThekwini notes that its strategic planning is informed by various policy directives and legislative frameworks. “Strategic planning for the municipality fundamentally follows a top down approach which includes policy directives at a global scale all the way down to a municipal scale” (EMM, 2020:328). The figure below, extracted from the municipal IDP, notes how the municipality aligns its strategic direction to pertinent frameworks. These include the SDGs, the NUA, Service Delivery Agreement Outcome 9, the MTSF and SPLUMA.

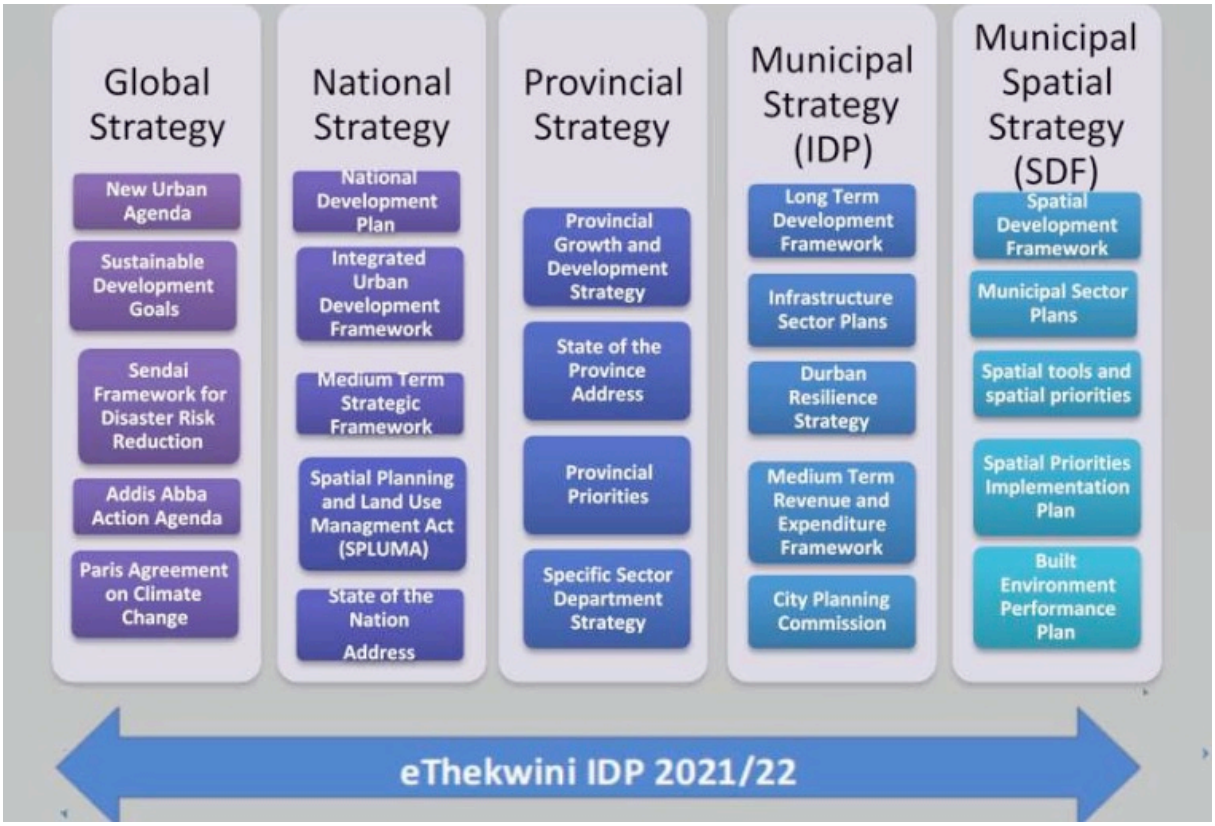

Figure 9: Policy Framework (EMM, 2020:329)

The municipal policy framework, detailed above, provides a clear visual representation of how global strategy informs local plans. Akkiah (2019) also discusses the role of municipal alignment with SDGs. In this, he notes that EMM uses a bottom-up approach using capital projects as the foundation, with each capital project being aligned to an SDG and SDG target. In this way, all SDBIP projects have been aligned to the SDGs and their targets. In addition, the municipality’s Municipal Institute of Learning and Exchange (MILE) has reviewed its masterclasses in order to focus on the localisation of SDGs. This localisation has to date been the only one to feature in the county’s Voluntary National Report to the United Nations, completed in 2019 (Akkiah, 2019).

EMM identifies its role in the context of the SDGs as the localisation of all associated goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. Specifically, associated SDG targets should influence the development of programmes and projects that the city aims to implement through its IDP (EMM, 2020). The most recent municipal IDP (2021/22), details the relevant municipal programmes and plans that align to each SDG. In this way, it provides a linkage between its service delivery work, and the high-level aspirations of the SDGs.

In the case of SDG 11, it notes three key plans and 15 programmes, that directly impact on the SDGs. As has been discussed, Plan 3 promotes access to equitable, appropriate and sustainable levels of household infrastructure and community services and facilitates access to housing. The specific programmes intended to realise this include integrated housing development and the provision of incremental services to informal settlements.

In 2019, a new focus on aligning development in specific municipal spaces was announced. The DDM "aims to improve the coherence and impact of government service delivery with focus on 44 Districts and eight Metros around the country as development spaces that can be used as centres of service delivery and economic development, including job creation" (EMM, 2020:351). eThekwini was selected as the pilot metropolitan municipality for this programme. The first primary focus area for the DDM is the development of One Plans for each district and metropolitan municipality. These plans intend to align plans of various government entities working within a specific space. Each plan outlines the role of every sphere of government, with prioritisation based on:

- Managing urbanisation, growth and development;
- Supporting local economic drivers;
- Accelerating land release and land development;
- Investing in infrastructure for integrated human settlement, economic activity and the provision of basic services; and
- Addressing service delivery in municipalities

The call to action for this process focuses on the need for accelerated service delivery and the realisation of cooperative governance in the country. EMM has hosted internal and intergovernmental workshops in the finalisation of its Diagnostics and draft One Plan.

The strategic goals of the city's One Plan are outlined in the figure below, together with the interrelationships with other plans, spheres of government and frameworks. Six goals are outlined through the focus on transformation:

i. People Development: To fundamentally and radically improve the Quality of Life and overall well-being of people living in eThekwini currently and in the future with emphasis on supporting upliftment of vulnerable and marginalised groups;

ii. Economic Positioning: To strategically position eThekwini in the national economy and to build a resilient and transformed metropolitan economy;

iii. Spatial Restructuring and Environmental Sustainability: To develop a transformed, efficient and sustainable spatial form and environment as a dynamic platform for the economy and for integrated human settlements;

iv. Infrastructure Engineering: To mobilise, target, align and manage investment in infrastructure in a sustainable way supporting the economic positioning and transformed spatial structure of eThekwini;

v. Integrated Service Provisioning: To enable the residents of eThekwini to experience reliable, cost effective, viable, sustainable and seamless provisioning of services within functioning places; and

vi. Governance: To improve the performance of all three spheres of government in relation to developmental impact in eThekwini.

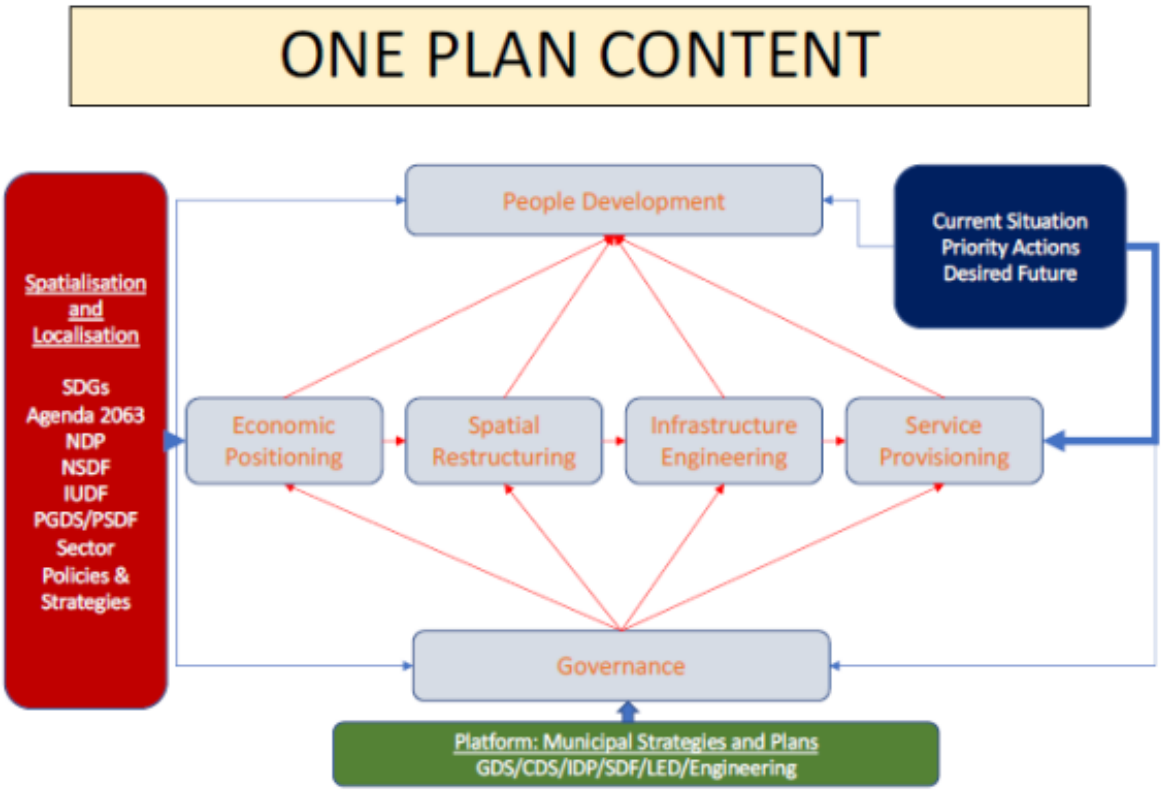

Figure 10: One Plan Content (EMM, 2020)

The municipality also notes that it has aligned itself with the KZN PGDS and the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP). These documents are however currently under review, with eThekwini noting that it will be actively involved in providing input as to the repositioning of the city in the PGDS, based on the outcomes of the municipal One Plan (EMM, 2021). The current municipal alignment with provincial priorities includes a number of programmes falling under Plan 3 of the EMM IDP, and are linked to the provincial priority of ensuring decent living conditions and sustainable human settlements (EMM, 2021).

Another area of alignment focused specifically on basic service delivery, is that of the Back to Basics programme introduced by the national Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in 2014. EMM reports to CoGTA (nationally and provincially) on a monthly and quarterly basis on the various Back to Basics indicators. This programme was intended to assist municipalities in achieving their service delivery mandate. A performance management system linked to this programme is in place, to reward good governance, based on putting people first, delivering basic services, good governance, sound financial management, and building capacity. It is unclear however, from both recent municipal reporting such as Annual Reports, and national CoGTA documentation, as to whether the programme is continuing in light of the introduction of the DDM.

Although outside the scope of this research report, it is important to note that South Africa's constitutionally-derived set of powers and functions for each sphere of government, leads to some challenges in the localisation of SDGs, especially where some aspects of a particular SDG may fall outside the competency of local government. In this regard, Bannister and McGahey (2021) note that an increased role for local government requires a more rational allocation of powers and functions, to ensure that municipalities can undertake service delivery in a coherent and effective manner. One Plans, although still relatively recent, may go some way towards ensuring that service delivery and other programmes in a specific municipal area, are delivered in a coordinated and integrated way.

Assessing municipal alignment

As discussed in the conceptual framework, a number of indicators have been identified to assess whether the municipality has effectively aligned its localisation of SDGs. These indicators include:

- Do municipal plans align with SDGs and other national or provincial plans?
- Have these goals been operationalised in municipal plans and budgets?
- Do governance processes including monitoring and evaluation, and performance management, reflect continual assessment of this alignment?

Each of these is further analysed below.

Do municipal plans align with SDGs and other national or provincial plans?

eThekwini's acknowledgment of other plans and commitments is extensive throughout its planning documentation. In its IDP, it provides a detailed strategic context that highlights the municipal role in terms of a number of global policy directives (including the SDGs, NUA, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, AU 2063, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Sendai Framework), national policy frameworks (such as the NDP, the IUDF, MTSF, national outcomes delivery agreements, strategic integrated projects etc.), provincial policies and imperatives (including the PGDS and State of the Province Address), and finally municipal imperatives and interventions (including the long-term development framework, municipal priorities detailed in the local government manifesto, the SDF and catalytic projects).

One of the challenges noted by Respondent 3 (2022) is that of the varied terminology used across government planning documents. In this it is necessary to ensure that terminology and goals are standardised for ease of alignment, monitoring and reporting.

The municipality has also aligned delivery on the SDGs to its IDP cycles, noting that there are three cycles for the period to 2030: 2015 – 2020, 2020 –2025, and 2025 –2030 (Ngubane, undated).

Appendices to the IDP provide insight as to the exact programmes that deliver on various 'external' goals and policy direction. The EMM's acknowledgment of the role it plays as a major local stakeholder in the achievement of broader global, national and provincial policy goals is therefore extensive.

However, in two interviews conducted for this research, the extent to which alignment is translated into operationalisation was questioned. Respondent 2 (2022) noted that there is often clear high level conceptual alignment of goals, from global to local level. Municipal IDPs generally include detail on the context within which they operate and this often mentions SDGs. In addition, municipal aspirations and strategic direction generally supports the SDGs, and especially SDG 11, "but it's not clear or obvious that the SDBIP includes SDG indicators or targets although there is obvious alignment and overlap" (Respondent 2, 2022). Respondent 4 (2022) echoed this, noting that while SDGs may be aligned to the IDP, this does not necessarily filter to department and unit level. EMM has had "an excellent start, but needs more work to drill down into line departments" (*ibid.*).

Have these goals been operationalised in municipal plans and budgets?

Given the IDP's identification of individual plans and programmes that achieve each of the SDGs and their high-level goals, it is evident that operationalisation of global and national goals has taken place. The municipality has also linked the Circular 88 indicators to the relevant specific programme in its SDBIP. In this way, there are clear plans of action and budget for each high-level indicator and goal.

The operationalisation of global goals is also further discussed under the integration analysis that follows.

Do governance processes including monitoring and evaluation, and performance management, reflect continual assessment of this alignment?

Ngubane (undated) notes that review of progress against the SDGs is aligned to several processes. These include annual performance plans and the IDPs, a midterm review in each term of office, quarterly review meetings, and regular reports at operations meetings. However, with the exception of annual reporting against IDPs and SDBIPs, there is limited evidence that this has taken place.

A review of municipal Annual Reports notes that the trend of reporting against plans, which are in turn aligned to SDGs, has continued. In this regard, the municipality reports annually on the number of KPIs achieved against each of the IDP plans, together with the audited achievement rate for that plan.

However, Respondent 2 (2022) notes that if local government were required to report directly on relevant SDG indicators, it would "improve awareness and clarify and cement commitments."

5.2 Integration (within the municipality)

The second aspect of the conceptual framework, that intends to assess the municipality's ability to localise the SDGs, is that of integration. Local government in South Africa is required by legislation to prepare five-year and annual IDPs, that should integrate planning and delivery in the municipality. Key here, is that alignment with SDGs is not merely a talk shop or process mentioned only in the municipality's high-level planning, but that there is integration of these goals and intentions across all municipal departments and entities.

In order to review the integration of SDGs within the municipality, this section analyses some of the key data extracted from performance reports including Annual Reports, National Treasury indicators

and Stats SA data. In addition, reflections obtained through interviews with municipal personnel provide some insight as to the challenges around integration within the municipality.

While this research does not intend to assess municipal performance around housing delivery, given that housing is not a local government mandate in South Africa, it is worth noting that some larger, and especially metropolitan, municipalities, have provided housing to communities for over 20 years. This has taken various forms: new construction, the building of rental units, renovation of hostels and short-term housing solutions, and the provision of services to informal settlements, and formalisation thereof. The indicator for SDG 11.1 focuses specifically on decreasing the proportion of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing. As such, there is some relevance in reviewing EMM's ability to provide houses or housing solutions to its communities. The city's performance with regard to the number of subsidised houses built since 2016 is detailed in the figure below.

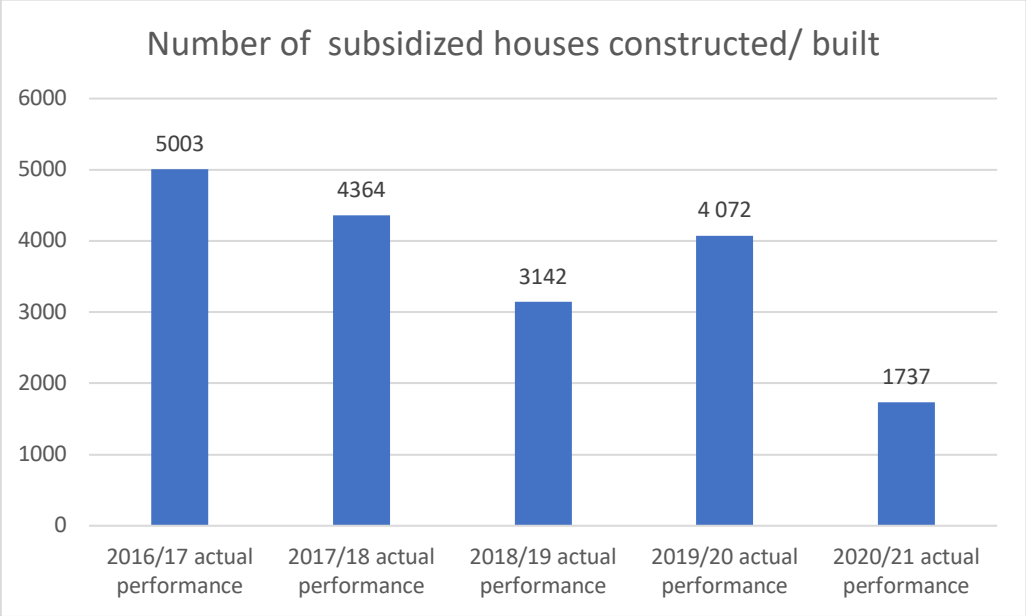

Figure 11: Number of subsidised houses built 2016/17 – 2020/21 (EMM SDBIPs 2016/17 – 2020/21)

EMM has, since 2000, consistently built subsidised housing units in the municipality. A review of housing delivery since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 notes that this trend has continued. Over 18 000 subsidised housing units were built between 2016 and 2021, as detailed in the figure above. This focus on new integrated housing development is one of the municipality's priorities in delivering on SDG 11. Other programmes include the rental housing strategy, addressing infrastructure backlogs, implementing effective public transport, and the provision of incremental services to informal settlements.

In 2021, approximately one quarter (one million) of the municipal population lived in informal settlements. Key to the SDG 11.1 indicator, focused on informal settlements and inadequate housing, EMM notes that:

> "The **upgrading and development of informal settlements is a priority within this programme**. Informal settlements are, in most instances, being upgraded in-situ to avoid the social dislocation which occurs when these settlements are uprooted and relocated to more distant locales" (EMM, 2021:503).

A total of 581 informal settlements have been identified in the municipality, with an estimated 287 000 structures. These are classified as indicated in the figure below.

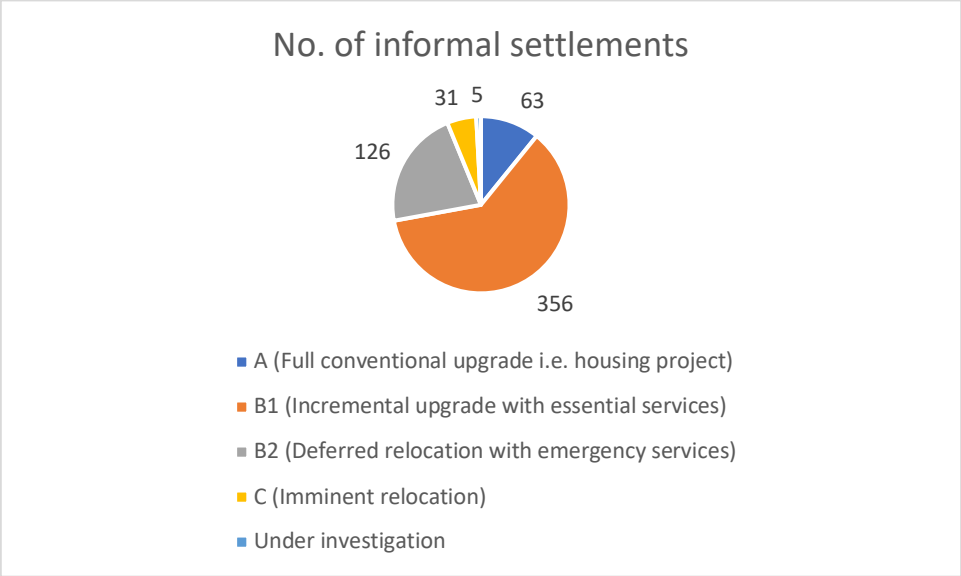

Figure 12: Number of informal settlements in eThekwini (EMM, 2020)

As can be seen in the figure, the majority of informal settlements will receive incremental upgrade with essential services (356 settlements). Just over 10% of settlements have been identified for a full upgrade as one of the municipality's housing projects.

The package of incremental services for informal settlements includes communal ablution blocks providing water and sanitation, drainage, essential access infrastructure, electricity, refuse removal services, interventions for fire prevention, and the use of a labour-based infrastructure maintenance programme that draws labour from the local community (EMM, 2021). However, funding constraints mean that the municipality will not be able to provide the full package of services to all informal settlements. A basic incremental services package in also in place, which includes communal ablution blocks with access to water supply, a basic road network and footpaths with associated storm water controls, and electricity connections (EMM, 2021). In providing a basic package of services, the municipality notes that it hopes to deliver rapidly to as many informal settlements as possible,

reaching as many as 10 000 households per annum over the next five years (*ibid.*). The municipality notes that "there is general acceptance that the new approach to upgrading needs to be inclusive of all informal settlements, incremental, participative and partnership-orientated. This is consistent with both National Policy as well as international practice" (*ibid.*:504). This is further discussed in the section on synchronisation below.

Assessing municipal integration

The indicators identified in the conceptual framework, to assess the success of municipal integration, include:

- Has the municipality integrated SDGs into short- and medium-term planning across municipal departments?
- Has the municipality delivered against these goals – is there measurable progress in this delivery?

Each of these is discussed below.

Has the municipality integrated SDGs into short- and medium-term planning across municipal departments?

EMM's most recent IDP details the role players in the provision of essential municipal infrastructure (basic services including water, sanitation, electricity, roads and footpaths). These include municipal departments together with local communities. Departments responsible for the achievement of incremental services for informal settlements include eThekwini Water and Sanitation, eThekwini Electricity, Cleansing and Solid Waste, Human Settlements, Engineering and Real Estate.

The municipal institutional structure, made up of clusters each headed by a Deputy Municipal Manager, intends to bring together related departments in a single cluster in order to ensure integration of planning and budgeting. The head of each cluster (a Deputy Municipal Manager reporting bi-monthly to the Strategic Management Team and Municipal Manager) is expected to drive and integrate programmes across functional areas within the cluster (EMM, 2021). In this way, progress against the IDP is coordinated and reviewed on a regular basis. For the purposes of this research, two clusters are of relevance: human settlements and trading services.

Strong coordination skills are critical in ensuring that global and national goals are incorporated into local level plans (Respondent 3, 2022). This extends to the management of such goals within municipal spaces, ensuring all stakeholders work in an integrated manner in the achievement thereof (*ibid*.)

Although outside the scope of this case study, in an interview with a City of Johannesburg (CoJ) senior official, it was noted that while there is an implicit alignment with SDGs in CoJ departmental annual plans, only one department clearly mentions the SDGs in their annual business plan (Respondent 2, 2022). In an unofficial comparison of metropolitan municipalities then, it would appear that eThekwini, at least at a high level, provides substantially more detail and operationalisation of the SDGs in its plans.

Has the municipality delivered against these goals – is there measurable progress in this delivery?

By 2020, the municipality had provided 1600 water and sanitation blocks in 370 settlements, electrified 226 settlements fully, and installed partial electrification at 45 settlements. However, challenges around the limited resources, lack of well-located and affordable land, protracted supply chain processes and an increase in extreme weather events, have been identified by the municipality. In addition, the invasion of privately-owned land and buildings has been raised as a challenge, with the City "compelled by Courts to accommodate invaders, thereby jeopardising the housing programme by disrupting budgets and encouraging queue jumping" (EMM, 2020:97).

One of the case studies identified in this area of municipal integration is that of the Landfill Gas to Electricity Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project. This was Africa's first landfill CDM project and has contributed to the city's electricity supply. The project operates at two sites: Bisasar Road and the Marianhill Landfill Sites. Methane (a potent greenhouse gas, approximately 25 times more damaging than carbon dioxide) is "captured and channelled for safe destruction in spark ignition engines for electricity generation. The landfill gas project has destroyed some 2.9 million tons of carbon equivalent to date" (EMM, 2020:88). This project, while improving air quality and protecting the climate, has also seen successful revenue generation for the City. The Marianhill CDM project has been through eight verifications with successful issuance of certified emission reductions (CERs), while the Bisasar CDM project has had five verifications with successful issuance of CERs to various buyers including Eco Metrix/BP. The value of electricity generated by these project exceeds R230 million (EMM, 2020).

In an interview with Respondent 1 (a member of the National Planning Commission), she noted that an additional challenge in the integration of SDGs in municipal plans is the ever-increasing demand for

services. In this, it is “difficult for municipalities to meet SDGs as the level of demand is increasing at a greater rate than the municipality can deliver” (Respondent 1, 2022).

Finally, a review of municipal budgeting and prioritisation also provides an indication as to the extent to which the municipality is operationalising its localisation. The capital budget allocated to each SDG is detailed in the figure below.

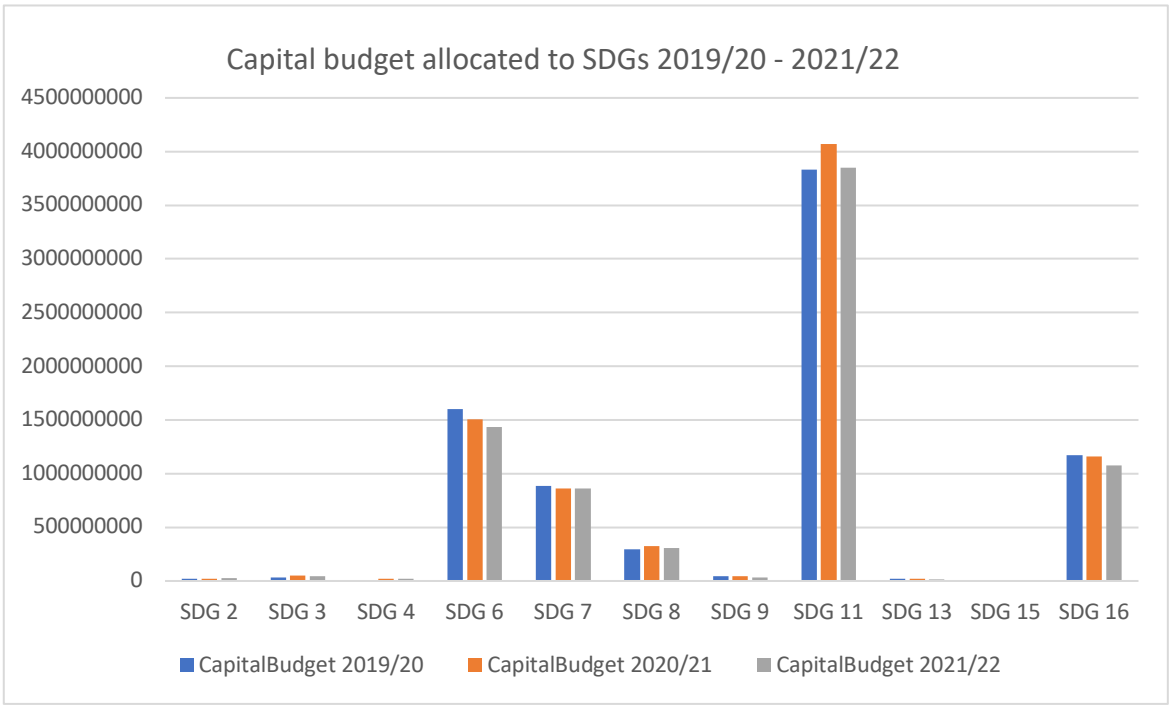

Figure 13: Capital budget allocated by SDG 2019/20 – 2021/22 (Akkiah, 2019)

When assessing municipal budget prioritisation by SDG, the focus of EMM on SDG 11, and its associated targets, is clear. Almost R12 billion has been allocated to various SDG 11 projects since 2019/20. There was a significant increase in budget between 2019/20 and 2020/21. However, this decreased slightly the following year, perhaps linked to the reprioritisation of funds as a result of Covid-19.

The City further analysed projects by SDG sub-goal and target, and noted that in 2019, SDG target 11.1 has a total of 226 municipal projects, with over R1 billion capital budget allocated and an average spend of almost R5 million per project (Akkiah, 2019).

5.3 Synchronisation (across public and private sector)

UCLG (2019:84) states that “adopting a multistakeholder approach to SDG implementation is the best way to ensure ownership by citizens and communities, and long-term sustainability of impact.” The

role of partnerships is also emphasised in the NUA, and particularly those between city authorities and universities in the Global South, and their more developed neighbours (EMM, 2020).

Respondent 1 (2022) echoes this, noting that most functions require cooperation between different spheres of government in their delivery.

Synchronisation between stakeholders includes the need to understand the chains of interdependency between different functions. "Non-performance in one area has a significant impact on other spheres of government" (Bannister *et al.*, 2021:269). This issue of human and financial capacity is one that affects all spheres of government. Strategic planning skills need improvement in all three spheres of government (*ibid.*).

EMM has identified key stakeholders in achieving the SDGs including: strategists; known 'champions' of specific initiatives; managers and team leaders; academics; specialists and experts; recognised industry or topic experts; customers or suppliers; government or regulatory bodies; professional institutions; trade unions; consultants; independent specialist organisations; industries or professions; opinion makers; lobby groups/social activists; international partners; and donors. This list of potential partners was identified by the municipality as options to be investigated in achieving the SDGs.

EMM's focus on incremental informal settlement upgrading sees "general acceptance that the new approach to upgrading needs to be inclusive of all informal settlements, incremental, participative and partnership-orientated. This is consistent with both National Policy as well as international practice" (EMM, 2021:190). This approach to upgrading requires a more functional relationship between the state and the urban poor which leverages partnerships for more effective social capital formation, collaboration and 'self help.' In doing so, the municipality has adopted the view that upgrading is a sustained process of urban change, programmatic and area-based in its orientation (EMM, 2021).

Strategic partnerships already in place in the municipality include global partnerships with organisations such as UCLG, C40 Cities and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), and regional partnerships with the Africa Forum for Urban Safety (AFUS) (EMM, 2020). In addition, a partnership focused specifically on incremental informal settlement upgrading has been launched with the EU and the Project Preparation Trust. This project, called *iQhaza Lethu*, is piloting a partnership-based approach to upgrading. To date, ten pilot projects have been identified in the municipality (EMM, 2020). The project aims to mobilise communities in the upgrading process and create cross-sector institutional arrangements to roll out services and improve living conditions (EMM website, 2021).

With regard to SDG 11, and specifically the achievement of the first goal focused on ensuring sustainable human settlements, organisations such as the C40 Network are key in the sharing of global

expertise around areas such as adaptation and water, solid waste, energy, transportation and urban planning. EMM has implemented several actions linked to basic service delivery and aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change. These include projects such as the Durban Energy Office Solar Project that aims at ensuring 40% of Durban's energy supply comes from renewable energy by 2030; and the Buffelsdraai Landfill closed loop system which improves waste management processes with spin-off benefits including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the generation of renewable energy (EMM, 2020). In projects such as these, a clearer link to ensuring basic service delivery in urban areas (SDG 11), is realised in a more sustainable manner that is reflective of the general intention behind SDGs.

South African municipalities are required by legislation to consult the wider community prior to adoption and finalisation of IDPs and budgets. In 2019, following the tabling of the draft budget and IDP in Council in March, EMM arranged various public participation and community consultative meetings to receive representations and submissions from stakeholders such as ward committees, residents, community organisations, organized business and other stakeholder formations.

Other public participation processes include programmes such as the *Masakhane* Campaign, the creation of stakeholder engagement forums, community based planning, ward committees, traditional leaders, Operation *Sukuma Sakhe* (OSS), and support to vulnerable groups to encourage their participation in local communities. In 2018, the City also entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the member organisations of the South African Shack Dwellers International Alliance (SASDI Alliance). This alliance provides expertise in community-driven, participative and incremental programmes for the improvement of informal settlements and backyard dwellings (EMM website, 2021).

Community Based Planning (CBP) is an element of participatory planning in EMM which is intended to promote more active involvement of citizens in determining the priorities for service delivery. In 2016/17, ward-based plans for all 110 wards were finalised. In these, the following areas of priority were identified:

- Human Settlements
- Skills development
- Water and Sanitation
- Health
- Parks and Recreation
- Safer Cities and Security management
- Electricity

- Agriculture
- Transport
- Roads

It is clear the extent to which issues relating to SDG 11, and specifically SDG 11.1 (a focus on sustainable human settlements) are priority areas for communities in EMM.

One of the key challenges noted in the 2021/22 IDP is the need to improve community engagement "to ensure these processes are deeply institutionalised and that all stakeholders are involved in guiding and influencing decision making, programme initiation, implementation and monitoring. There is a need to strengthen partnerships with business and NGOs" (EMM, 2020:310). In this, the municipality notes its own internal challenges around non-participation by municipal departments, poor or sporadic support by their own public participation departments, non-attendance by volunteers and poor coordination and integration of all programmes by all stakeholders (EMM, 2020). As one of the key elements identified through this research, the need for municipalities to synchronise their efforts with other stakeholders, this challenge is particularly pertinent for the realisation of SDG 11.

The 2021 IDP further discusses the facilitation of action by all stakeholders in attaining the municipal vision, the building of collaborative partnerships and improved communication. Examples of initiatives implemented and relevant to this research report include:

- Sustainable Living Exhibition in partnership with KZN COGTA;
- Sustainability Open Forums/Seminars held with all interested stakeholders;
- Schools Recycling Programme in partnership with Earth organisation and South Durban Basin ABM;
- Climate Change PhotoVoice project in the INK ABM - Botanic Gardens/INK ABM Schools Citizenship Programme;
- Schools Ambassador Programme;
- Schools Leadership Programme in partnership with Wright State University, USA;
- Inner City Cardboard Recycling Project;
- Storytelling through art in partnership with Cato Manor ABM;
- Exploring new and more creative ways of conceptualising, planning, implementing and managing public spaces;
- Soccer and life skills programme during July school holidays that targets vulnerable children living in the Durban Inner City in partnership with UNISA- Bright Site Project,

Business sector and eThekwini Departments, ITRUMP, Safer Cities and Imagine Durban project; and

- Schools permaculture gardening program (EMM, 2021).

One of the case studies identified for the synchronisation element of this research, is that of the Cato Manor Redevelopment project. This was one of the largest urban redevelopment projects completed in South Africa, with multiple funders, stakeholders and a clear objective to create a productive and sustainable community for the poor and previously marginalised residents of the area. Funders for the project included national and provincial government, the EU and EMM (EMM, undated). Low-cost housing, schools, libraries, community halls, roads and clinics were constructed, and economic development and community empowerment initiatives were facilitated.

The Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) notes that the project "has achieved world-wide acclaim from development specialists as a model for integrated development" (CMDA website, 2021:1). Specifically for this focus on synchronisation, much of the success of the project is attributed to the high level of grassroots community involvement. In addition, the nature of the project, as one implemented by an independent agency, meant that the constraints faced by government were not an issue, and innovative practice was possible (Odendaal, 2007).

A second case study relevant to the discussion around the importance of synchronising efforts in the localisation of SDGs, is that of the partnership with the Global Future Cities Programme. eThekwini is in the process of developing a data management and information management solution, the Informal Settlements Information Management Solution (ISIMS) project, that will improve how the municipality collects, analyses and manages data on informal settlements. In 2020, the first SDG Project Assessment Session was held in Durban, to discuss alignment to the SDGs. This focused on data principles, stakeholder engagement processes and other work that had been undertaken through the project.

Respondent 2 (2022) notes that strong partnerships with the private sector are needed. However, a challenge is the general low level of awareness about the SDGs amongst the general public. In this regard, she states that, "Education among citizens and communities for the SDGs generally and advocating the benefits of, and generating support for, mixed-income housing development in particular, will also be an effective way to advance a more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable city" (Respondent 2, 2022).

One of the challenges noted in interviews is the difficulty in innovating given the stringent legislative and supply chain processes, and bureaucratic operating procedures, that are in place in municipalities (Respondent 1, 2022). In this regard, a possible solution that should be further explored by

municipalities is partnerships with civil society and private sector stakeholders, who may not be subject to such rigorous standards, and therefore able to provide more innovative solutions to issues of service delivery and improving the quality of lives of urban communities.

Assessing municipal synchronisation

In measuring the success of EMM's localisation of the SDGs, with regard to the synchronisation aspect of the conceptual framework, a number of indicators were identified:

- Has the municipality partnered with other stakeholders in the delivery of basic services?
- Does the municipality acknowledge and measure the work done by other stakeholders?

Each of these indicators is further discussed below.

Has the municipality partnered with other stakeholders in the delivery of basic services?

eThekwini has a number of partnerships in place, especially relevant to the delivery of SDG 11.1. These include the formalisation of informal settlements, the provision of services and the incremental improvement of communities. While these partnerships appear to be funded and operational, and are discussed throughout municipal documentation, there is little evidence of the success of such partnerships or the monitoring and evaluation thereof. It should be noted however, that many projects linked to sustainable human settlements may be longer-term, large-scale projects that are not necessarily reported on annually.

Does the municipality acknowledge and measure the work done by other stakeholders?

EMM does not appear to actively record and document work done by other stakeholders in the delivery of human settlements. For example, private sector low cost housing development or upgrading of backyard settlements, in the delivery of sustainable human settlements, is not detailed in its municipal planning and reporting. While One Plans are intended to eventually document all work planned and completed in a specific municipal area, this does not yet take place. As such, the reflections of municipal progress in localising SDG 11 are fairly one-sided, focusing on just the municipal contribution, and in some cases that of provincial and national government.

5.4 Concluding the analysis

In concluding the analysis against each of the three focus areas, firstly, the research found that the alignment of EMM's municipal plans and budgeting to global, and even national and provincial goals, was good. The municipality has identified specific programmes that will work to achieve each SDG, and has allocated budget and resources to these programmes. In addition, the municipality reports regularly on its progress against each of these programmes.

The second area of focus was that of integration of plans and goals within the municipality. It was found that the municipality has extensive integration processes through its IDP, budgeting and SDBIP process. In addition, it reports annually against these plans and targets. However, there are some challenges in ensuring that SDGs are effectively understood and implemented at a departmental and unit level.

Finally, the area of synchronising plans with other spheres of government and other stakeholders, is one lacking in EMM. There is no evidence that the municipality tracks progress against SDGs where these are delivered by other role players, especially when it is done so outside of governmental fora. The current DDM approach, and the One Plans being developed, should go a long way in addressing this weakness if they achieve their intended goals of synchronisation and coordination.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

EMM has long been lauded in its approach to sustainability and its inclusion of projects and budgets to ensure an innovative approach to providing services in a sustainable, green manner. However, it is noted that there often appears to be an alignment of words and not alignment of practice (Respondent 2, 2022). As such, a more detailed assessment of how eThekwini localises the SDGs was important.

In this research, the process by which EMM localises SDGs into its planning and operations has been discussed and assessed. Through the literature review of scholarly work around the localisation of SDGs, three key areas in localising global goals were extracted: firstly the need to ensure alignment of local plans with global and national plans; secondly a focus on the integration of goals across all municipal planning and budgeting; and finally the need for synchronisation of local municipal planning with the work done by other stakeholders, including other spheres of government, the community, private sector and civil society.

It was found that eThekwini has made considerable progress as a local government, in aligning its programmes and projects to those of the SDGs. SDG 11 receives the largest budget allocation in terms of capital expenditure, with the municipality committed to a number of programmes around the provision of sustainable human settlements, the incremental upgrading and formalisation of informal settlements and the improving of its communities' quality of life through ensuring at least the delivery of basic services.

However, the municipality's success in the leveraging of partnerships to achieve its goals, and the tracking and record of implementation done by other role players is lacking. In doing so it misses an opportunity to allow other stakeholders to implement programmes especially ones which may require more innovative funding and development than a structure of government is able to achieve. The One Plans currently being developed as part of the DDM process may go some way to addressing this issue. However, the success thereof will only be measurable in years to come.

In finalising a set of clear recommended processes in localising global goals, the following can be extracted from this research:

1. Local government must ensure its IDP, SDBIP, budgets and business plans are clearly aligned with the NDP and provincial plans, Africa 2063 and the SDGs.
2. Indicators (at least those of the SDGs, the NUA, International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) city indicators, and Circular 88, plus a possible larger set of relevant local indicators) must be reported on regularly.

3. Constant communication and reporting of SDGs is critical. Respondent 4 (2022) notes this could take the form of short videos at the start of every community event, large stakeholder and community workshops, masterclasses, training programmes and ongoing engagement and involvement with the private sector and civil society.
4. Joint ownership of SDG delivery is needed. The One Plans should aim to achieve such a goal, but importantly it will be through joint actions that this is achieved.

In reflecting on the implications of this research for urban management, it is evident that there is still a fair way to go in ensuring that cities truly embrace and deliver on global goals of sustainability and development. While there is definitely acknowledgement of such goals in municipal plans, the case study focus on one of South Africa's largest and most well-capacitated municipalities especially in terms of their approach and commitment to sustainable development, may not correctly reflect the capacity and attention given to global and national goals at smaller and less-resourced municipalities. Future research around the new District Development Model approach will assist in providing more evidence on the impact of an integrated, synchronised approach to development in all municipal areas.

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Personal Communication

Respondent 1. Bannister, S. (personal communication January 2022). Commissioner on the National Planning Commission. Email and telephonic interview.

Respondent 2. Joseph, K. (personal communication January and February 2022). City of Johannesburg Deputy Director: Strategy and Research. Email interview.

Respondent 3. Milne, M. (personal communication February 2022). Chief Director: Office of the Premier, KwaZulu-Natal. Virtual interview.

Respondent 4. Moodley, S. (personal communication January and February 2022). Research Associate Urban Futures Centre and former senior manager EMM: Office of the City Manager. Email and telephonic interview.

Appendix A: Ethics clearance

Protocol Number: SOAP124/06/2021

Appendix B: Plagiarism declaration

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION TO BE SIGNED BY ALL HIGHER DEGREE STUDENTS

SENATE PLAGIARISM POLICY: APPENDIX ONE

I Andrea McGahey (Student number: 943955) am a student registered for the degree of M.U.S. in the academic year 2022.

I hereby declare the following:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
- I confirm that the work submitted for assessment for the above degree is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise.
- I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this in not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

Signature: _____ Date: 22/2/2022.