

# THEMATIC COMMITTEES BASED BUDGETING METHOD

Gweru City, Zimbabwe

## 1. Starting Point

City budgeting has predominantly been coined as a hotbed of antagonism at City of Gweru. Council would in its own wisdom prepare a budget which it will take for public consultation will be meant to coax residents and clients into rubber stamping an already crafted and finished product. The consultation was meant to give a form of color that there was inclusive participation and involvement. This has been the norm and practice for all these years and the budgets have always been approved by the responsible Ministry.

The result of the above methodology became the genesis of entrenched resistance by resident who started to disregard council bills and this saw collection rates plummeting down. This saw council debtors growing from \$8m in 2013 after debt write off to \$68 million as at 30 June 2019.

## 2. Institutional Setting

### THEMATIC COMMITTEES

In 2018 council administration took a position and formulated thematic budget committees. Council operations were grouped and classified in sub groups according to the nature operations. With the roll out of program-based budgeting the thematic committees were then modelled around the Program Based Budgeting clusters as follows:

1. Governance and administration
2. Water and Sanitation
3. Social Services
4. Roads
5. Public Safety and Security Services
6. Natural Resources, Conservation and Management

The thematic committee members were drawn from residents, resident associations, ward development committees, Institutions of Higher education, government departments etc. The members would be clustered according to expertise.

### 3. Approach

#### METHODOLOGY

The thematic committees would come up with a wish list of what they wanted council to provide under each program and produce detailed bills of quantities. The sub- committee proposals would be aggregated to come up with total proposed council budget.

Collectively the thematic committees would trim down the wish list to palatable levels that would result in acceptable tariffs

## 4. Outputs

### CONSULTATIONS

The thematic committees would then lead out in ward meetings budget consultations. This greatly improved the acceptance index among residents

### IMPACT

The impact has been increased participation and has seen average collection levels increasing from an average of \$1,2million to \$2,4 million

## 5. Lessons learnt / 6. Transfer

### FUTURE PROSPECTS

The thematic method holds the future for growing city budgets and incorporation of stakeholder views into council planning. There is need to institutionalize the concept as a best practice across councils for better results