E84-04/2026

REPORT: ASBESTOS ROOFS IN THE MOSSEL BAY MUNICIPAL AREA

File Number: 15/1/B

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PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND / DOEL EN AGTERGROND

A Motion of Exigency regarding asbestos roofs in the Mossel Bay Municipal Area was considered by Council during the open Council Meeting of 26th February 2026. Council resolved as follows:

"That the Motion of the ANC for the Removal of Asbestos Roofs in the Greater Mossel Bay, be investigated for a possible solution whereafter the Item be brought back to Council."

The purpose of this Item is to respond to the above decision of Council by providing a summarised Report of Asbestos Roofs in Mossel Bay and recommend accordingly.

DISCUSSION AND MOTIVATION / BESPREKING EN MOTIVERING

Legal Requirements

In South Africa, Municipalities responsibilities regarding asbestos mainly arise from the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 and the Asbestos Abatement Regulations, 2020 as amended. Mossel Bay Municipality have responsibilities in two main roles, either the Employer and Owner/Controller of municipal buildings or infrastructure, and/or as the local authority responsible for environmental health and waste management.

A) In instances of being an Employer or Owner of Premises the key duties of the Municipality are to:

- Identify asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in municipal buildings, structures, or infrastructure.
- Compile and maintain an asbestos inventory/register of all asbestos on municipal premises.
- Conduct Risk Assessments to determine the condition and risk of exposure – if in good condition do not disturb.
- Develop and implement an Asbestos Management Plan to control or remove asbestos safely.
- Ensure employees and contractors are protected from asbestos exposure.
- Ensure removal or demolition involving asbestos is done by registered asbestos contractors.
- Notify the Department of Employment and Labour before asbestos removal work starts.

These duties exist because the regulations require anyone in control of premises to identify and manage asbestos to prevent exposure to workers and the public.

Council should note that in practice, if the asbestos containing material (ACM) is in good condition and not releasing fibre, it is the recommended approach to leave it in place and manage it.

B) Where the Municipality owns or manages government subsidised (RDP) houses, council housing, or other municipal buildings, it must:

- Identify asbestos materials (roof sheets, ceilings, pipes, etc.).
- Keep an asbestos inventory/register.
- Ensure materials are maintained safely.
- Using registered asbestos contractors if removal or repairs are required.
- Ensure safe disposal of asbestos waste.

Because the Municipality is the Owner and controller of premises, it does carries a legal duty to manage the asbestos risk.

C) If the property has been transferred to the beneficiary, the homeowner becomes responsible and is the duties and responsibilities the same as any other private homeowner. The Owner must:

- Avoid damaging asbestos material.
- Ensure any removal is done by registered contractors.
- Prevent exposure to occupants or neighbours.
- Ensure proper transport and disposal of asbestos waste.

Asbestos Contractor

When disposing of asbestos for whatever reason, an accredited Asbestos Contractors (AIA) must always be used and such a contractor must ensure that the legal asbestos removal procedures are always followed. Asbestos must be disposed of at accredited hazardous waste sites.

Accredited Waste Site

Council should note that, no waste site in the Garden Route area is accredited to accept asbestos material and currently the nearest accredited sites are in Cape Town and Gqeberha. All asbestos material must be transported to either of the two sites and together with the strict protocols in place when dealing with asbestos material by an accredited contractor makes it an extremely costly exercise.

Government Subsidy Houses with Asbestos Material.

The Mossel Bay area contains several Government Housing Schemes that were developed before 1990, prior to the ban on asbestos roofing materials. The table below provides an indication of the number of housing units developed during that period. However, the figures do not accurately reflect the current number of houses that still have asbestos roofing. Over the years, many homeowners have extended or renovated their houses, and in some instances the original asbestos roofing has been replaced during these modifications.

ASBESTOS ROOFS IN MOSSEL BAY MUNICIPALITY				
Government Housing Projects	Houses		Municipal Flats	Blocks
KwaNonqaba	948		Bergsig -Mossel Bay	1
Dalmeida	1000		Seesig - Mossel Bay	2
Grootbrak	450		Green Heaven - Grootbrak	25
Herbertsdale	45			28
Sonskynvallei	206			
Toekoms	35			
Brandwacht	60			
	2744			

Estimated Cost

To obtain an accurate account of the current situation and determine whether asbestos materials remain intact or have been damaged, a physical inspection of each property will be required. For possible roof replacing purposes, a comprehensive Assessment should be undertaken by a qualified professional service provider. This Assessment would involve a door-to-door survey across all affected areas to confirm the condition of the roofs and determine the actual cost of replacing asbestos roofing on both residential houses and municipal flats. The cost of such a survey is estimated at R1mil. The cost of removing and replacing the roofs, according to current rates per municipal tender, is estimated at R55,000 per/unit X 2772 units equals R152mil.

Comments from the Provincial Department of Infrastructure

The Municipality approached the Provincial Department of Infrastructure (Housing Department) to comment on the subject and indicate any possible programs and funding to replace asbestos roofs on government subsidised houses. Mr Gerhard Hanekom, Director: Regional HS Support – Garden Route and Central Karoo, commented via email on 10 March 2026, as follows:

"While the initiative appears to be driven at a national level, there is currently no formally approved programme in place to guide its implementation. Proceeding in an ad hoc or uncoordinated manner may have significant implications for the delivery of housing opportunities, particularly where limited resources need to be carefully prioritised. It is also important to note that we remain of the opinion that there is no conclusive clinical evidence indicating that asbestos roof sheets pose a health risk unless they are damaged, have deteriorated due to age, or require replacement because of structural defects in the roof structure.

Furthermore, it is unclear whether the broader implications of such a Policy have been fully considered. The scope would extend beyond houses constructed under the housing subsidy regime to include dwellings developed through earlier State-assisted initiatives, such as Transnet housing, municipal loan schemes, and various self-help housing projects. This raises additional questions regarding the treatment of privately owned properties. For example, if these homes are included, it would need to be clarified whether private homeowners would similarly qualify for State-funded assistance.

As indicated, there is currently no approved Programme Framework. Should such a programme be developed in future, consideration should be given to safer and more cost-

effective alternatives, such as the encapsulation of asbestos roofing using rubberised coating systems, rather than pursuing a blanket replacement approach.

In light of this, the Department is not currently implementing eradication measures at scale but will continue to liaise with our national counterparts in this regard, and issue more formal directives as and when possible."

Way forward

From the above, currently no outside funding or programme is available for the Municipality to replace asbestos roofs on government subsidised houses. Being mostly privately owned properties, with the legal responsibility being with the Owner, and considering the associated extravagant costs, it is advised that Council does not budget for such a programme. The Municipality must continuously engage with Provincial and National Government on the matter and should such a programme be rolled out in future, apply accordingly.

Due to future liabilities after replacing roofs and associated construction complexities and risks, it is advised that the Municipality not being the Implementing Agent, but such a project be directly implemented by Provincial or National Government. The Municipality should limit its role to facilitate, do beneficiary administration, coordination, oversight and reporting, and should avoid agreements that could result in liabilities of roof replacement on non-municipal owned buildings and houses.

Council should further take note of its responsibilities towards its owned buildings and ensure compliance accordingly. Furthermore, it is advised that the subject be part of the Municipalities communication drive to keep home and property owners informed and aware of the health risks associated with asbestos materials as well as procedures to follow should owners want to replace such roofs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS / FINANSIËLE IMPLIKASIE

The financial cost for a professional to conduct a survey off all government subsidised houses with asbestos roofs is estimate at R1mil and the cost to possible replace all these roofs are estimated at R152mil.

COMMENTS FROM FINANCIAL SERVICES

No further comments.

COMMENTS FROM CORPORATE SERVICES

No further comments.

COMMENTS FROM DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SERVICES

No further comments.

COMMENTS FROM TECHNICAL SERVICES

No further comments.

COMMENTS FROM LEGAL SERVICES

No further comments.

COMMENTS FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES

No further comments.

COMMENTS FROM COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICES

No further comments.

COMMENTS FROM MUNICIPAL MANAGER

No further comments.

CONCLUSION / SAMEVATTING

A Report is provided in response to a Motion of Exigency regarding asbestos roofs in the Mossel Bay Municipal Area that was considered by Council during the open Council Meeting of 26th February 2026. A Legal Framework exists that sets out the duties and responsibilities of Property Owners pertaining to asbestos elements in buildings. In Mossel Bay, approximately 2772 government build houses has asbestos roofs, although this figure must be verified through a formal survey. The cost to replace asbestos roofs on Government Build Houses, is estimated at R152mil. No Government Program is currently available to fund such a project in Mossel Bay. It is recommended that the Municipality continue engaging with government and should a program be initiated, the Municipality apply accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

That the following recommendation be made to Council:

"1. That Council takes cognisance of the Report regarding asbestos roofs within the greater Mossel Bay area.

2. That Council takes cognisance that, if the asbestos containing material (ACM) is in good condition and not releasing fibre, it is the recommended approach to leave it in place and manage it.

3. That Council takes cognisance that each Homeowner has the following duties pertaining to asbestos roofs and other asbestos materials that are part of the building structure:

   3.1 Avoid damaging asbestos material.

   3.2 Ensure any removal is done by registered contractors.

   3.3 Prevent exposure to occupants or neighbours.

   3.4 Ensure proper transport and disposal of asbestos waste.

4. That Council takes cognisance that an estimated 2744 Government Subsidised Houses, that were built prior to 1990, were built with asbestos roofs and that a Formal Assessment and Survey must be done to confirm accurate numbers and condition of the roofs

5. That Council takes cognisance the estimated cost of R152mil to remove and replace asbestos roofs of Government Subsidised Houses and that currently no Provincial or National Government Program is available for the removal and replacement of asbestos roofs.

6. That the Municipality continue to engage with the Provincial and National Government on this matter and apply accordingly as soon as a program is initiated to remove and replace asbestos roofs on previously built Government Subsidised Houses.

7. That, due to the liability risks associated with the removal and replacing of asbestos roofs on privately and other non-municipal properties, the Municipality refrain from entering Implementation Agreements on buildings not owned by the Municipality and the Municipality assist such a possible project through facilitation, beneficiary administration, coordination, oversight and reporting.

8. That Council takes cognisance of its responsibilities towards its own buildings that contain asbestos material and the respective Directorates responsible for these buildings ensure compliance accordingly.

9. That the Municipality, through its various communication initiatives, continue to keep home and Property Owners informed and aware of the health risks associated with asbestos materials as well as procedures for removal and replacement."