



**CITY OF JOHANNESBURG**  
Councillor Jack Sekwaila

MMC: Environment and Infrastructure Services Department

**Emergency cable replacement project to address power supply interruptions in the Innerscity is underway.**

**21 May 2024**

The MMC for Environment and Infrastructure Services in the City of Johannesburg, Cllr Jack Sekwaila has announced that the work of replacing two 88kV oil cables from Observatory to Bellevue substations is well underway as part of attempts to fast-track plans to permanently resolve outage challenges in the areas supplied from these two substations. The process of digging to remove the problematic oil cables has started and residents are urged to cooperate and give the team on site the space to do their work uninterrupted. This will not interrupt power supply.

“This undertaking is in response to multiple outages problems we have had in the areas fed from Bellevue and Observatory substations through the old and worn-out cables. The two 88kV oil cables have long reached the end of their useful life span and that’s why they have been prone to faults.” Said Cllr Sekwaila.

In a meeting held over a week ago, between the management of the office of the MMC for environment and infrastructure services, City Power and councillors, a four-month plan aimed at ending the current power supply issues was presented.

“That plan involves removing the 63-year-old oil cables and replacing them with newer, environmentally-friendly, and improved quality cables. This operation will require highly technical and specialised skills to ensure that quality of the work and safety standards are upheld,” he said.

The condition of the existing cables was worsened by the devastating fire that gutted Observatory substation in December 2023, damaging the oil cables in the process. Since that incident, there has been a notable increase in power outages. To provide temporary relief for customers, the entity installed interconnector cables on a stretch of 3 km distance between Observatory and Bellevue substations.

City Power has been using the two cables from the interconnectors to provide electricity to customers on a rotational basis. Unfortunately, due to the increased load demand, they have also been tripping and faulting. Cllr Sekwaila commended City Power for the ongoing efforts in trying to resolve the service disruptions.

“We know how frustrating these past few months have been for our residents, but City Power, under the leadership of CEO Tshifularo Mashava has been exemplary. They have put contingency measures in place to ensure that residents are not left completely in the dark, especially given the fact that permanent repairs would require a significant amount of time”, Cllr Sekwaila added.

The MMC appealed to residents to start actively contributing to lowering power usage, to ensure that the interconnectors that have been installed to provide temporary relief, can hold longer. If consumption levels drop, there may be no need for further load rotation.

The following suburbs have been affected by these undesirable interruptions:

- \* Upper Houghton
- \* Yeoville
- \* Bellevue
- \* Bellevue East
- \* Bezvally
- \* Observatory
- \* Dewetshof
- \* Cyrildene
- \* Kensington

“We encourage residents to always switch off non-essential household appliances to keep the load levels on the network low and manageable. It must be noted that the interconnectors were not designed to hold heavy loads for extended periods of time. With the help and cooperation from communities, City Power can continue providing supply even under these challenging circumstances while the cable replacement work continues alongside. By September this year, the project, which is part of a maintenance work, will be complete. We further appeal to our customers in these areas to remain patient with City Power teams that are working hard to ensure that the network is stabilised and continuity of supply is maintained”, concluded Cllr Sekwaila.

**ENDS**

**Issued by City Power  
Isaac Mangena, Spokesperson**

**Media enquiries may be directed to Tumi Mashishi  
Manager, Media Liaison**

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