

MEDIA STATEMENT

CITY POWER COMMITS TO ONE-WEEK STUDY TO ADDRESS ELDORADO PARK NETWORK CAPACITY CHALLENGES

 17 September 2026

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City Power will commence a one-week network study from Monday, 21 September 2026, to assess the feasibility of reconfiguring the electricity network supplying Eldorado Park. The study will examine the correlation between the Eldorado Park and Nancefield substations, as well as other areas experiencing capacity challenges, such as Freedom Park and Devland. This follows concerns raised by residents and ward councillors regarding recurring outages, network overloading, and ageing infrastructure.

The commitment was made by City of Johannesburg Executive Mayor, Cllr Dada Morero, during City Power's fifth Electricity Imbizo in Eldorado Park on Thursday, 17 September 2026, where residents raised concerns about the reliability of electricity supply, non-functioning streetlights, ageing infrastructure, vandalism and the impact of network configuration and capacity constraints on their communities.

The study will assess whether Freedom Park and Devland can be isolated from the current configuration in a way that could help address capacity constraints in Eldorado Park. City Power will use the findings to determine the capacity requirements and provide the community with an indication of what would be required and how long any necessary network reconfiguration could take.

The Executive Mayor said the purpose of the intervention was to move beyond simply hearing residents' concerns and to establish, from an engineering perspective, what can practically be done to improve the stability of the network.

"We are going to do a study, and that study will take a week. The teams will start on Monday to understand the Eldorado substation vis-à-vis the Nancefield substation and Freedom Park and Devland, so that we are going to do a quick study to say can we isolate Devland and Freedom Park so that if we isolate them, will it be able to help us address our capacity problems in Eldorado," said Executive Mayor Morero.

The Lenasia SDC's network faces a combination of ageing infrastructure, network overloading, cable failures, widespread illegal connections, vandalism, theft and meter tampering.

Much of the switchgear, transformers and underground cable network in older parts of Lenasia and Eldorado Park has exceeded its designed 30-to-40-year lifespan, increasing the vulnerability of the network to failures, particularly during periods of rain and peak demand.

However, City Power has prioritised capital investment in the Lenasia SDC during the 2026/27 financial year, with the focus on renewing ageing infrastructure, improving network capacity and reliability, restoring equipment, strengthening communication and control systems, and improving protection of electricity infrastructure.

The investment programme includes the renewal of substations and medium-voltage (MV) switchgear, replacement of ageing high-voltage (HV) equipment and restoration of plant that is currently out of service. It also includes work to improve alternative supply arrangements, strengthen communication links to substations, improve remote monitoring and operations, and enhance security systems at critical infrastructure.

Projects include the renewal of infrastructure at Hopefield and Lenasia South substations, work at Ennerdale, the Trade Route HV switching yard and control room, and the replacement of the neutral earthing compensator at Lehae. The broader programme also includes fibre and LTE communication infrastructure, remote terminal units, multiplexers, DC systems and integrated security systems.

These interventions are intended to improve network visibility and operational response, reduce failure risks and restoration times, return equipment to service and strengthen the network's ability to support reliable electricity supply across the SDC.

The investment response is being undertaken alongside operational measures to improve fault response. City Power's Lenasia SDC has also identified the need to streamline dispatch systems and increase artisan capacity to improve fault turnaround times.

City Power Chief Financial Officer, Rendani Sadiki, said the Ward-by-Ward Service Delivery Programme's approach was enabling City Power to better understand the specific challenges experienced by residents and connect those concerns to technical and operational interventions through teams on the ground, including assistance with billing queries, logging calls, public lighting and other customer service queries.

"We understand that electricity challenges are not simply technical matters. When an outage lasts too long, when a streetlight does not work, when there is a billing problem or when infrastructure repeatedly fails, it affects people's homes, businesses, safety and daily lives. This is why we have brought our teams directly into the different wards, so that residents can raise their concerns with the officials responsible for addressing them and so that we can better understand what is happening on the ground," said Sadiki.

Sadiki said the approach was intended to ensure that community concerns did not end with the Imbizo, but were connected to the relevant operational teams for follow-up.

"Where matters can be resolved on site, our teams are attending to them immediately. Where further technical work is required, the matter is logged and monitored for follow-up. The purpose is not simply to receive complaints, but to understand the issues affecting residents and connect those concerns to the work of our technical and operational teams," added Sadiki.

The entity is also continuing with smart meter installations and improved automated metering systems as part of the normalisation programme. Smart metering improves accountability, supports accurate billing, reduces opportunities for tampering and provides City Power with better information for long-term network planning.

Normalisation interventions have already been undertaken in a number of communities, including Lehae, Vlakfontein, Chauke Freedom Park and parts of Eldorado Park, as well as other areas across the City, such as Mayibuye, Kanana, Rabie Ridge, Freedom Park, Pennyville and Alexandra, including River Park and 11th Avenue. These interventions include meter installations, meter replacements and the removal of illegal connections to encourage customers to return to purchasing electricity legally.

The reliability of the network is also affected by infrastructure-related crime, including cable theft, vandalism, transformer oil theft, damage to mini-substations (MSS) and illegal connections.

The Lenasia SDC recorded 76 infrastructure-related crime incidents during the 2025/26 financial year, comprising 55 cable theft incidents, nine attempted cable thefts and 12 vandalism incidents involving pillar boxes, transformers, mini-substations and other network equipment.

Across the City Power network, 1,054 infrastructure-related incidents were recorded during the same financial year, with 280 suspects arrested. City Power also conducted 58 joint operations, including operations targeting scrap metal dealers, while 2,551 joint operations were undertaken to remove illegal electricity connections at informal settlements, hijacked buildings and individual properties. City Power continues to work with law enforcement through the Region G Law Enforcement Task Team and with communities to protect critical electricity infrastructure.

MMC for Environment and Infrastructure Services (EISD), Cllr Jack Sekwaila, said infrastructure protection remained essential to maintaining a reliable electricity network and cautioned residents against attempting to repair or interfere with electricity infrastructure themselves. He said City Power was also repairing pillar boxes in Eldorado Park and urged residents to use the correct channels to report service delivery problems, suspicious workers and poor workmanship.

Streetlighting was among the concerns raised by residents, with the community highlighting non-functioning lights and the safety implications for people using public spaces.

During the Imbizo, it was outlined that City Power is implementing a solar streetlighting rollout, including the replacement of 300 luminaires in Region G and the installation of 25 solar high masts. The solar solution is intended to provide lighting that can continue operating independently during electricity outages.

MMC Sekwaila said the rollout would begin with main roads before extending to other streets as the programme progresses.

“We have seen in some of the crime-infested areas where criminals tend to tamper with the infrastructure to switch off the lights, making sure that they can either hijack or abuse women in those areas. We are putting solar streetlights that charge during the day and are lit at night, so that they do not rely only on the electricity supply in the area,” said MMC Sekwaila.

The intervention will therefore address both the restoration of existing public lighting and the introduction of solar-powered lighting in identified areas.

City Power also highlighted that, from 1 October 2026, it will begin the process of ring-fencing its electricity business, a change that will place greater emphasis on the entity generating and managing its own revenue, billing and collection and raising capital to reinvest in its electricity network.

City Power’s Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), Thamsanqa Mathiso, said the process formed part of the broader metro trading reforms being undertaken with National Treasury and would require City Power to strengthen its revenue collection and reinvestment capacity.

“From the first of October, City Power is starting a process of ring-fencing, where City Power will have to raise its own cash, its own billing, its own collection and raise capital from the other investors to be able to invest back into the network,” said Mathiso.

The ring-fencing process places a direct link between revenue collection and the organisation’s ability to maintain and invest in electricity infrastructure. Mathiso said City Power would also intensify normalisation communication with customers to strengthen understanding of the need to generate sufficient revenue to maintain and stabilise the network.

Executive Mayor Morero also urged qualifying residents to make use of the City’s customer support programmes, including the Expanded Social Package (ESP), Free Basic Electricity (FBE) Programme and the City’s Phase 4 of its Debt Relief Programme.

Under the FBE programme, qualifying indigent households can receive between 50kWh and 120kWh of free electricity each month and are exempt from the R70 service charge and R140 network capacity charge. Registration remains open at City of Johannesburg regional offices.

Parallel to that, the Debt Relief Programme provides qualifying customers with a 50% write-off of municipal debt, together with 100% waivers of interest and fees, subject to the programme's qualifying criteria and terms. The programme runs until 31 October 2026 and is available to qualifying residential customers, pensioners, businesses and other eligible institutions.

The Executive Mayor stressed that residents who are able to pay for municipal services have an important role to play in supporting households that cannot afford to do so.

"Those who can afford to pay for services help to sustain the system for those who cannot afford to pay. That contribution allows the City to continue supporting vulnerable households while maintaining the services and infrastructure that communities depend on," said Executive Mayor Morero.

Residents were also encouraged to use electricity responsibly, manage consumption and consider alternative energy solutions where possible.

The City Power Imbizo forms part of the ongoing regional Electricity Imbizo programme, which is intended to provide communities with a direct platform to raise electricity-related concerns and to strengthen accountability around the interventions required to address them.

The City and City Power will continue engaging with Eldorado Park and the broader Lenasia SDC through the Ward-by-Ward programme, with follow-up interventions and feedback to communities forming part of the ongoing response.

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