



NQUTHU MUNICIPALITY

CREDIT CONTROL AND DEBT-COLLECTION BY- LAW

2024-25

Be it enacted by the Council of the Nquthu Municipality, in terms of section 156(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, read with section 11(3)(m) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000), as follows:

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CHAPTER 1

DEFINITIONS AND APPLICATION

Definitions

1. In this by-law, unless inconsistent with the context –

“**account**” means a notification by means of a statement of account to a person liable for payment of any amount for which he or she is liable to pay the Council in respect of the following –

- (a) electricity consumption or availability fees based on a meter reading or estimated consumption;
- (b) refuse removal and disposal~
- (c) availability fees;
- (d) rates;
- (e) interest; and
- (f) miscellaneous and sundry fees and collection charges.

“**Act**” means the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000);

“authorised official” means any official or agent of the Council who has been authorised by it to administer, implement and enforce the provisions of this By-law;

“By-law” means a By-law adopted and promulgated by the Council;

“collection charges” means charges which may be recovered by the Council in terms of section 75A of the Act, and includes the cost –

- (a) of reminding customers of arrears;
- (b) for the termination, restriction and reinstatement of municipal services;
- (c) of any notice rendered, sent or delivered in terms of this By-law; and
- (d) all legal costs, including attorney and client costs, incurred in the recovery of arrear amounts;

“Council” means —

- (a) the Nquthu Municipality, exercising its legislative and executive authority through its municipal council;
- (b) its successor-in-title;
- (c) a structure or person exercising a delegated power or carrying out an instruction, where any power in this By-law has been delegated or sub-delegated, or an instruction given, as contemplated in section 59 of the Act; and
- (d) a service provider fulfilling a responsibility under this By-law;

“customer” means any occupier of premises to which the Council has agreed to provide or is actually providing any municipal service, or if there is no occupier, the owner of the premises concerned;

“fee” means a fee prescribed for or in respect of any municipal service;

“municipal manager” means the person appointed municipal manager in terms of section 54A of the Act and includes any person acting in that capacity;

“municipal service” means any or all of the services specified in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of section 2(1)(b);

“occupier” means any person who occupies any premises or part thereof, without regard to the title under which he or she so occupies;

“owner” –

- (a) in relation to a property referred to in paragraph (a) of the definition of “property”, means a person in whose name ownership of the property is registered;
- (b) in relation to a right referred to in paragraph (b) of the definition of “property”, means a person in favour of whom the right is registered;
- (c) in relation to a right referred to in paragraph (c) of the definition of “property”, means a person in favour of whom the right is registered or to whom it was granted in terms of any law; and
- (d) in relation to public service infrastructure referred to in paragraph (d) of the definition of “property”, means the organ of state which owns or controls that public service infrastructure, and includes a person who the Council may for the purpose of this By-law regard as the owner of a property in the following cases –
 - (i) A trustee, in the case of a property in a trust excluding state trust land;
 - (ii) an executor or administrator, in the case of a property in a deceased estate;
 - (iii) a trustee or liquidator, in the case of a property in an insolvent estate or the owner of which is in liquidation;
 - (iv) a judicial manager, in the case of a property in the estate of a person under judicial management;
 - (v) a curator, in the case of a property in the estate of a person under curatorship; (vi) a person in whose favour a usufruct or other personal servitude is registered, in the case of a property that is subject to a usufruct or other personal servitude;
 - (vii) a lessee, in the case of a property that is registered in the name of the Council and is let by it; or
 - (viii) a buyer, in the case of a property that was sold by the Council and of which possession was given to the buyer pending registration of ownership in the name of the buyer;

“Policy” means the Credit Control and Debt Collection Policy adopted by the Council;

“prescribed” means prescribed by the Council from time to time, by resolution;

“premises” means any piece of land, with or without any building or structure thereon, the external surface boundaries of which are delineated on –

(a) a general plan or diagram registered in terms of the Land Survey Act, 1927 (Act No. 9 of 1927), or in terms of the Deeds Registry Act, 1937 (Act No. 47 of 1937); or

(b) a sectional plan registered in terms of the Titles Act, 1986 (Act No. 95 of 1986),

which is situated within the area of jurisdiction of the Council;

“property” means –

(a) immovable property registered in the name of a person, including, in the case of a Sectional title scheme, a sectional title unit registered in the name of a person;

(b) a right registered against immovable property in favour of a person, excluding a

mortgage bond registered against the property;

(c) a land tenure right registered in favour of a person or granted to a person in terms of any law; or

(d) public service infrastructure;

“rates” means a municipal rate on property levied in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act, 2004 (Act No. 6 of 2004).

Application of this By-law

2.(1) This By-law only applies in respect of amounts of money due and payable to the Council for –

(a) rates;

(b) fees and surcharges on fees in respect of the following municipal services –

i. refuse removal and disposal;

ii. availability fees thereof; and

iii. electricity consumption and the availability thereof;

(c) interest which has or will accrue in respect of any amount of money due and payable or which will become due and payable to the Council in regard to rates and municipal services; and

(d) collection charges;

(2) This By-law also applies to any municipal service provided through pre-paid meters, in so far as the By-law may be relevant.

CHAPTER 2
SERVICE AGREEMENTS AND GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF
PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Provision of municipal services to applicants

3.(1) No municipal service may be provided to any applicant, unless and until –

- (a) application for the service has been made in writing on a form substantially similar to the form prescribed;
- (b) any information and documentation required by the Council have been furnished;
- (c) a service agreement, in the form substantially similar to the form of agreement prescribed, has been entered into between the customer and the Council; and
- (d) an amount equal to the amount prescribed, in cash or a bank cheque, has been deposited as security or other acceptable security, as prescribed, has been furnished.

(2) If an applicant for a municipal service is an existing customer of the Council in respect of any other municipal service in respect of which the account is in arrears –

- (a) such arrears must be paid; or
- (b) an agreement for payment of the arrears in terms of section 22 must have been entered into and payment in terms thereof must not be in arrears, before an application for a new service in terms of this section may be considered.

(3) The Council may at any time require a customer to increase a deposit paid or security furnished in terms of subsection (1)(d);

(4) No interest is payable on any amount deposited in terms of subsection (1)(d) or (3).

General terms and conditions for the provision of municipal services

4. The general terms and conditions for the provision of any municipal service set out in a service agreement contemplated in section 3(1)(c) are deemed to be incorporated in this By-law and apply to the provision of such service to any customer.

Estimated consumption

5. The Council may have an estimate made of the consumption of electricity for any relevant period if –

- (a) no meter reading could be obtained in respect of the period concerned; or

(b) no meter has been installed to measure the consumption on the premises concerned, and the customer concerned is liable for payment of the prescribed fee in respect of such estimated consumption.

New service agreements and deposits or security by existing customers

6.(a) Any existing customer, or the trustee, liquidator, judicial manager or curator of such customer, may be required by the Council to enter into a new service agreement to replace an existing agreement of the customer concerned, and to pay a deposit or furnish security contemplated in section 3, notwithstanding the fact that a service agreement was previously entered into in respect of the municipal service concerned and the provisions of section 3(3) apply in respect of such new agreement.

(b) The provisions of section 3(4) apply to a deposit referred to in subsection (1).

Termination of service agreements

7.(1) Subject to the provisions of sections 14 and 22 –

(a) a customer may terminate an agreement for the provision of any municipal service by notice in writing of not less than seven days' to the Council, of his or her intention to do so;

(b) the Council may, subject to compliance with the provisions of this By-law and any other applicable law, by notice in writing of not less than 14 days, to a customer, terminate his or her agreement for the provision of the municipal service concerned, if the customer –

(i) has not used the municipal service during the preceding six months and has not made arrangements to the satisfaction of the Council for the continuation of the agreement; or

(ii) has, in relation to the municipal service concerned, failed to comply with any provision of this By-law and has failed to rectify such failure after the service on him or her of a notice of compliance in terms of section 8;

(iii) has failed to pay any prescribed fee, collection charge or interest due and payable in respect of the municipal service concerned;

(iv) has made an arrangement with another services provider to provide the municipal service concerned to the customer; or

(v) has vacated the premises to which the agreement concerned relates.

(2) A customer to whom notice has been given in terms of subsection (1)(b), may within the period of 14 days referred to in that subsection, make written representations to the Council

why the agreement concerned should not be terminated and if such representations are unsuccessful, either wholly or in part, the agreement concerned may only be terminated if the decision on such representations justifies it.

Notices of compliance

8. If a customer fails or refuses to comply with any provision of this By-law, a notice of compliance must be served on that customer, requesting him or her, subject to the provisions of section 7(2), to forthwith comply with the provision concerned to avoid the termination of his or her agreement in terms of section 7(1)(b)(ii).

CHAPTER 3 ACCOUNT ADMINISTRATION

Accounts

9.(1) Accounts must be rendered and administered in accordance with the Policy, other prescribed requirements and any other law.

(2) Failure by the Council to render an account does not relieve a customer of the obligation to pay any amount that is due and payable in terms of this By-law.

(3) The Council may, in accordance with the provisions of section 102 of the Act –

(a) consolidate any separate accounts of a customer liable for payments in terms of this By-law to the Council;

(b) credit any payment by such customer against any account of that customer; and

(c) implement any of the debt collection and credit control measures provided for in this By-law in relation to any arrears on any of the accounts of a customer.

(4) The amount due and payable by a customer constitutes a consolidated debt, and any payment made by a customer of an amount less than the total amount due, will, subject to the provisions of section 20(a), be allocated in reduction of the consolidated debt in the order prescribed.

(5)(a) Any amount paid by a customer in excess of an existing debt may be held in credit for the customer in anticipation of future rates and fees for municipal services or for the purposes contemplated in section 15(b).

(b) No interest is payable on any amount contemplated in paragraph (a)

Account information

10. Accounts must contain the following –

- (a) the consumption or estimated consumption as determined for the measuring or consumption period;
- (b) the measuring or consumption period;
- (c) the applicable prescribed fee;
- (d) the amount due based on the estimated consumption;
- (e) the amount due and payable for any other municipal service;
- (f) the amount in arrears, if any;
- (g) the interest payable on any arrears, if any;
- (h) collection charges insofar as they may be relevant;
- (i) the final date for payment; and
- (j) the methods, places and approved agents where payment may be made.

Account administration

11. The Council must, subject to the provisions of section 5, endeavour to ensure —

- (a) accurate metering of consumption at fixed intervals with the minimum delay between service connection and first and subsequent rendering of accounts;
- (b) accurate and up-to-date information in accounts;
- (c) accurate monthly accounts with the application of the appropriate and correct prescribed fees, rates and other related amounts due and payable;
- (d) the timely dispatch of accounts;
- (e) adequate provision and the efficient operation of facilities for payment throughout the municipal area;
- (f) the appointment of agents to accept payments on behalf of the Council; and
- (g) appropriate hours of business in order to facilitate account payments.

Queries or complaints in respect of accounts

12.(1) A customer may lodge a query or complaint in respect of the accuracy of any amount due and payable in terms of an account rendered to him or her in terms of this By-law.

(2) A query or complaint must be lodged with the Council before or on the due date for payment specified in the account concerned, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.

(3) If a query or complaint is lodged after the due date for payment specified in the account concerned, such query or complaint must be accompanied by the payment of at least an

amount equal to the average amount per month that was due and payable in respect of the service concerned during the preceding three months.

(4) An authorised official must register the query or complaint and provide the customer with a reference number.

(5) The Council must –

(a) investigate or cause the query or complaint to be investigated within 14 days, or as soon as possible after the query or complaint was received; and

(b) inform the customer, in writing, of its finding as soon as possible after conclusion of the investigation, instructing that any amount found to be due and payable must, subject to the provisions of section 22, be paid within 21 days from the date on which the customer is notified thereof, unless an appeal is lodged within that period in terms of subsection (6) or section 13.

(6) A customer may, subject to the provisions of section 13, lodge an appeal with the municipal manager in terms of section 62 of the Act against a decision referred to in subsection (5), within 21 days of the date of the notification of the decision.

(7) The Council must inform the customer concerned in writing of the decision on the appeal, instructing that any amount found to be due and payable, must be paid within seven days from the date on which the customer is notified thereof.

Appeals against decision by service providers on queries and complaints

13.(1) If a decision contemplated in section 12(5) has been made in respect of a municipal service provided by a service provider fulfilling a responsibility under this By-law, assigned to it in terms of section 81(2) of the Act, a customer may lodge an appeal against that decision by giving written notice of the appeal and reasons to the chief executive officer of the service provider concerned, within 21 days of the date of the notification of the decision.

(2) The chief executive officer must promptly submit the appeal to the appropriate appeal authority specified in subsection (4).

(3) The appeal authority must consider the appeal, and confirm, vary or revoke the decision, but no such variation or revocation may detract from any rights that may have accrued as a result of the decision.

- (4) If an appeal is against a decision taken by –
- (a) a staff member, other than the chief executive officer, the chief executive officer is the appeal authority;
 - (b) the chief executive officer or any committee of the service provider –
 - (i) the board of directors of the service provider; or
 - (ii) a committee of directors who were not involved in the decision concerned and appointed by the board of directors for this purpose, is the appeal authority.
- (5) An appeal authority contemplated in subsection (4), must commence with an appeal within 42 days and decide the appeal within a reasonable period.
- (6) A service provider must comply with the provisions of section 12(7).

Arrear accounts

14.(1) If a customer fails to pay an amount due and payable for any municipal service or rates on or before the due date for payment specified in the account concerned, a final demand notice may be sent to the customer.

(2) Failure by the Council to send a final demand notice does not relieve a customer from paying the arrears concerned.

- (3) A final demand notice referred to in subsection (1), must contain the following –
- (a) the amount in arrears and any interest payable, and a statement that payment must be made within 14 days of the date of the final demand notice;
 - (b) that the customer may in terms of section 22, conclude a written agreement with the Council for payment of the amount in arrears in instalments within the period contemplated in paragraph;
 - (c) that if no such agreement is entered into within the period stipulated in paragraph (b), that the electricity services may be terminated or restricted and that legal action may be instituted for the recovery of any amount in arrear without further notice;
 - (d) that the customer's name may be made public, and may be listed with a credit bureau in terms of section 21(1)(a);
 - (e) that the account may be handed over to a debt collector or attorney for collection;
 - (f) that proof of registration as an indigent person in terms of section 25 and any other documentation required by the Council must be furnished to the Council on or before the date for payment contemplated in paragraph (a);

(g) that an indigent person referred to in paragraph (f) is only entitled to benefits relating to municipal services as stipulated in the Council's policy relating to the supply of municipal services to indigent persons; and

(h) that the customer has an opportunity to make representations in writing on any matter referred to in a final demand notice within the period of 14 days contemplated in paragraph (a).

Action to secure payment

15. The Council may, in addition to the normal civil legal steps to secure payment of any in arrear amount of accounts, take the following action to secure payment of such amount –

(a) The termination or restriction of the provision of any municipal service in terms of section 16; and

(b) the allocation of the whole or a portion of a payment of an account, or the whole or a portion of a pre-payment for future accounts as contemplated in section 9(5)(a), as payment for arrear municipal service fees or rates, in terms of section 20.

Power to terminate or restrict provision of municipal services

16.(1) For the purposes of subsection (2), a final demand notice means a notice contemplated in sections 12(5)(b), 12(7), 13(6) and 14(1).

(2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (4), the Council may terminate or restrict the provision of electricity, or both, whichever service is relevant, in terms of the prescribed termination and restriction procedures, to any premises if the customer in respect of the municipal service concerned –

(a) fails to make full payment of arrears specified in a final demand notice sent to the customer concerned, before or on the date for payment contemplated in sections 12(5)(b), 12(7), 13(6) or 14(1), whichever is applicable, and no circumstances have arisen which requires the Council to send a further final demand notice to that customer in terms of any of those sections, and the customer –

(i) fails to enter into an agreement in terms of section 22, in respect of the arrears concerned before termination or restriction of the service concerned; or

(ii) fails to submit written proof of registration as an indigent person in terms of section 25, before such termination or restriction;

(b) fails to pay any instalment payable in terms of an agreement referred to in paragraph (a)(i) before or on the due date;

(c) fails to comply with any condition of provision in respect of electricity, as the case may be, imposed by the Council;

- (d) obstructs the efficient provision of electricity to another customer;
- (e) provides electricity to a person who is not entitled thereto or permits such provision to continue;
- (f) causes a situation relating to electricity which, in the opinion of the Council, is dangerous or constitutes a contravention of any applicable law, including the common law;
- (g) in any way reinstates the provision of a previously terminated or restricted electricity service;
- (h) is placed under provisional sequestration, liquidation or judicial management, or commits an act of insolvency in terms of the Insolvency Act, 1936 (Act No. 24 of 1936) or is subject to an administration order granted in terms of section 74 of the Magistrates Court Act, 1944 (Act No. 32 of 1944), and there is a failure to enter into a new service agreement within 14 days of the Council requiring such service agreement in terms of section 6.

(3) The Council may send a termination notice to a consumer informing him or her –

- (a) that the provision of the service concerned will be, or has been terminated on the date specified in such notice; and
- (b) of the steps which can be taken to have the service reinstated.

(4) Any action taken in terms of subsections (1) and (2) is subject to compliance with:

- a) the relevant provisions of the Electricity Act, 1987 (Act No. 41 of 1987), if the provision of electricity is involved;
- b) the relevant provisions of the Health Act, 2003, (Act No. 61 of 2003), and any regulations made in terms of that Act; and
- c) the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No. 3 of 2000), in so far as it is applicable.

Reinstatement of municipal services

17.(1) The Council must reinstate full levels of provision of any electricity service terminated or restricted in terms of section 16(1) after –

- (a) the full amount of arrears, including interest and collection charges, if any, have been paid; or
- (b) an agreement for payment of the arrears contemplated in paragraph (a) has been entered into in terms of section 22; or
- (c) the full amount of arrears in respect of any agreement referred to in paragraph (b), including interest and collection charges if any, and any increase deposit, have been

paid, or any additional security required has been provided, and any other condition of the Policy that the Council may consider appropriate, has been complied with.

(2) Any reinstatement in terms of subsection (1) may only be done after an authorised official has issued a written certificate of authorisation to the effect that every applicable condition contemplated in subsection (1) has been complied with and that the municipal service concerned may be reinstated.

Interest charges

18. All arrears in respect of accounts for rates and municipal services bear interest at a rate prescribed.

Collection charges

19. A prescribed collection charge may be levied against the account of a customer, in respect of any relevant action taken in terms of, or for the purposes of, this By-law.

Full and final settlement of an amount

20.(a) The Council may appropriate monies received in respect of any debt contemplated in this By-law at its sole discretion, unless the customer otherwise instructs in writing.

(b) If any amount due and payable to the Council in terms of this By-law has not been paid in full, any lesser amount tendered to and accepted by any municipal employee, does not constitute payment in full and final settlement of the full amount, unless the lesser amount was accepted in full and final settlement in writing, under a power delegated or sub-delegated to such employee in terms of section 59 of the Act.

Accounts outstanding after the due date

21.(1) If an account for assessment rates or any municipal service rendered to a customer remains unpaid, wholly or in part, after the due date for payment stipulated in the account concerned –

(a) the defaulting customer's name may be made public, and may be listed with a credit bureau; and

(b) may be handed over to a debt collector or an attorney for collection.

(2) A customer is liable for any interest and collection charges and in addition payment of a higher deposit or the provision of additional security, if required by the Council.

(3) No action taken in terms of this section may be suspended or withdrawn, unless the arrears, any interest thereon, collection charges, and higher deposit, if required by the Council, have been paid in full or, instead of a higher deposit, additional security has been provided, if so required.

Agreements for the payment of arrears in instalments

22.(1) A customer with positive proof of identity or a person authorised, in writing, by such customer, may, subject to the approval of the Council, enter into an agreement in a form substantially similar to a form prescribed, for the payment of arrears in instalments.

(2) The amount due and payable by a customer in terms of an agreement contemplated in subsection (1), constitutes a consolidated debt and any payment made by a customer of an amount less than the total amount due, must be allocated in reduction of the consolidated debt in the order prescribed, unless the customer otherwise instructs in writing.

(3) A customer may be required to arrange a debit order for the payment of arrears in respect of which an agreement, contemplated in subsection (1), has been entered into.

(4) Subject to the provisions of subsection (5), no agreement for the payment of arrears may allow for a period of payment of longer than 24 months.

(5)(a) The Council may allow a period of payment in excess of 24 months for the payment of arrears, but not exceeding a period of 60 months, if special circumstances which the customer could not reasonably have prevented or avoided, prevail and which, in the opinion of the Council, warrant a longer period of payment.

(b) Documentary proof of any special circumstances as contemplated in paragraph (a), must be furnished by a customer on request by the Council.

(6) The Council must, in exercising its discretion in terms of subsection (5), have regard to a customer's –

- (a) credit record;
- (b) consumption;
- (c) ability to afford the proposed instalments, taking into account the customer's financial situation;
- (d) level of service;
- (e) previous breaches of agreements for the payment of arrears in instalments; and
- (f) any other relevant factor.

(7) A copy of an agreement contemplated in subsection (1), must, on request, be furnished to the customer concerned.

(8) If a customer fails to comply with an agreement contemplated in subsection (1), the total outstanding amount, including the arrears, any interest thereon, any collection charges, and payment of a higher deposit if required by the Council, will immediately become due and payable, and additional security, if so required, must be provided, without further notice.

(9) If a customer fails to comply with an agreement contemplated in subsection (1), entered into after receipt of a termination notice for electricity services, or both, as the case may be, the municipal service concerned may be terminated without further notice, in addition to any other action taken against or which may be taken against the customer concerned.

(10) No customer is permitted to enter into an agreement contemplated in subsection (1), if that customer has failed to honour a previous agreement for the payment of arrears in instalments, unless the Council otherwise decides.

(11) Once an agreement contemplated in subsection (1), has been concluded, the amount in arrears must be reflected as a current amount, and no further interest may be added.

Disputes as to amounts owing

23. If any dispute arises as to any amount owing by a customer, the customer must, pending resolution of that dispute, continue to make regular monthly payments in respect of rates, if applicable, and in respect of any municipal service concerned based on the average monthly fees for the preceding three months prior to the dispute arising, plus interest if applicable, until the resolution of that dispute.

Dishonoured cheques

24. If any payment is made to the Council by a negotiable instrument, and such negotiable instrument is dishonoured, the Council may levy costs and administration fees against the account of the defaulting customer at a prescribed rate.

CHAPTER 4 INDIGENT PERSONS

Registration as indigent person

25.(1) A person who wishes to receive assistance in terms of the Council's policy for the provision of municipal services to indigent persons, must make application for registration as an indigent person on a prescribed form at any of the Council's offices.

(2) An application in terms of subsection (1), must be considered by the Council which must adhere to the principles of transparency, equity, consistency, non-discrimination, accessibility, empathy, integrity, confidentiality and objectivity during the evaluation process.

(3) An applicant, contemplated in subsection (1), must, at the request of the Council, furnish any further information to enable the Council to arrive at a decision and the Council may, for the purpose of properly evaluating the application, also conduct any investigation which it considers appropriate.

(4) An applicant must be informed that he or she will automatically be disqualified from receiving any assistance contemplated in subsection (1), and be liable to –

- (a) refund the amount of any such assistance received from the Council, if the application or information contemplated in subsection (3), contains any false information; and
- (b) prosecution if any false information as contemplated in paragraph (a) is furnished by the applicant.

(5) If the Council finds an applicant to be indigent, such applicant is entitled to assistance in terms of the Policy referred to in subsection (1), and his or her personal particulars must be recorded in a prescribed register of indigent persons.

(6) The position of every indigent person so recorded, must be reviewed annually by an authorised official in accordance with the directives of the Council.

(7) A successful applicant must be informed in writing that he or she must immediately notify the Council when his or her indigent status has changed.

CHAPTER 5
MISCELLANEOUS

Council's right of access to premises

26. The Council may exercise its right of access to premises in terms of section 101 of the Act through the municipal manager or any authorised official or any duly appointed agent of the Council, authorised thereto in writing.

Conflicting laws

27. If there is any conflict between a provision in this By-law and a provision of any other By-law, the provision in this By-law must prevail.

Preservation of rights consequent on non-compliance

28. A failure by the Council to comply with any provision of this By-law does not in any way affect the liability of any person to pay any amount due and payable to the Council as contemplated in this By-law, nor the Council's right to recover such amount.

Transmission of documentation

29. Subject to the provisions of any law, if in terms of or for the purposes of this By-law any written communication must or may be rendered, sent or delivered –

(a) by the Council to any person, such communication must be –

(i) delivered by hand –

(aa) to that person's domicilium citandi et executandi, as stipulated in an agreement entered into in terms of section 3(1)(c) or 6(a); or

(bb) in the absence of such agreement, to that person's most recently recorded address; or

(cc) to the premises concerned in respect of which rates are levied or any municipal service is provided, whichever is relevant; or

(ii) sent by post to the address referred to in subparagraph (i)(aa) or (bb), whichever is applicable, or to the address of the premises contemplated in subparagraph (i)(cc).

(b) by any person to the Council, such communication must be –

(i) delivered by hand to –

(aa) the Council's domicilium citandi et executandi stipulated in the agreement contemplated in paragraph (a)(i)(aa); or

(bb) another address, if the Council in writing furnished such an address to the person concerned; or

(ii) sent by post to the address referred to in subparagraph (i)(aa) or, in the circumstances contemplated in subparagraph (i)(bb), to the address contemplated in that subparagraph.

Prima facie evidence of documentation

30. For the purposes of the recovery of any amount due and payable to the Council in terms of this By-law –

- (a) a copy of any relevant account; and
- (b) an extract from the Council's records relating to the quantity of consumption or provision of any municipal service and the period of provision of such service, certified by an authorised official as being correct,

constitute prima facie evidence of the information contained in such documents.

CHAPTER 6

APPEALS

Appeals

31.(1) A person whose rights are affected by a decision taken by any authorised official under this By-law, may appeal against the decision by giving written notice of the appeal and reasons to the municipal manager within 21 days of the date of the notification of the decision.

(2) The municipal manager must promptly submit the appeal to the appropriate appeal authority mentioned in subsection (4).

(3) The appeal authority must consider the appeal, and confirm, vary or revoke the decision, but no such variation or revocation of a decision may detract from any rights that may have accrued as a result of the decision.

(4) When the appeal is against a decision taken by –

- (a) a staff member other than the municipal manager, the municipal manager is the appeal authority; or
- (b) the municipal manager, the executive mayor is the appeal authority.

(5) An appeal authority must commence with an appeal within six weeks and decide the appeal within a reasonable period.

CHAPTER 7 GENERAL

Offences

32.(1) Any person who -

- (a) contravenes or fails to comply with any provisions of this By-law;
- (b) fails to comply with any lawful instruction given in terms of this By-law; or
- (c) obstructs or hinders any authorised official in the execution of his or her duties under this By-law –

will be guilty of an offence and will be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding R5 000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 3 months or both.

Repeal of existing By-laws

33. The Council's existing Credit Control and Debt Collection By-laws are hereby repealed.

Short title and commencement

34. This By-law will be called the Nquthu Municipality Credit Control By-law for financial year 2024/25.