

About the Institution

Beaufort West Local Municipality is located in the Central Karoo District in the Western Cape. It is responsible for local service delivery, including water, electricity, refuse removal, and essential infrastructure maintenance. The Executive Mayor is the Municipality’s political head. The Municipal Manager is its administrative head and accounting officer. In 2024/25, the Municipality’s expenditure was R382.8m.¹

Flag Status

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
								
Improper appointments	Co-opting key functions	Climate of fear or favour	Corrupt awards	Financial malpractice	Obstructing accountability	Manipulating perceptions	Private gain	Shadow network

ISS Analysis

- ACTis has raised three flags for Beaufort West Local Municipality and placed two under monitoring.
 - The Municipality suffers from prolonged political and administrative instability. High rates of leadership turnover are likely driving institutional instability. This may be contributing to a culture of impunity, weakening internal controls and creating conditions in which informal influence can displace formal authority.
 - Despite progress under a Financial Recovery Plan (FRP), serious financial management and
- accountability issues persist. The continued failure to finalise annual reports and address historical audit findings weakens corrective feedback loops, allowing financial governance failures to endure rather than be corrected. Entrenched practices have become difficult to disrupt, even with external intervention.

 - While many of those implicated in corruption have left the Municipality, informal networks may still be influential.



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Under monitoring

Findings

Flag #1

Improper Appointments



The flag is raised due to a prolonged vacancy in the head administrative position and high turnover in the political head position.

- Three former Mayors have been accused of misconduct while in office. Former Mayor and Speaker Noel Constable and former Mayor Quinton Louw were arrested in 2021 on fraud and corruption charges.² Former Mayor Gideon Pietersen was accused of fraud.³ These officials have since left the Municipality. However, Constable served in public office as a member of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament from July 2024 to March 2026; and, as of July 2026, two remain in public office – Louw and Pietersen are councillors at the Central Karoo District Municipality.⁴
- Political and administrative leadership has been unstable, with nine different mayors in five years and the Municipal Manager position vacant since May 2025.⁵

Flag #3

Climate of Fear or Favour



The flag is being monitored to determine whether a wider pattern of protecting selected officials exists.

- Although Constable, Louw and Pietersen left the Municipality following allegations of misconduct, none has been convicted of any criminal offence. Two of them remain politically active in local politics and public service across the wider Central Karoo District.⁶
- In 2024/25, the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) found inadequate consequence management for officials responsible for irregular expenditure, fruitless and wasteful expenditure and unauthorised expenditure.⁷

Flag #5

Financial Malpractice



The flag is raised due to systemic weaknesses in financial management and a negative financial situation.

- In March 2022, the Western Cape Provincial Treasury imposed an FRP on the Municipality to address longstanding governance and financial challenges.⁸ The first phase required the Municipality to improve revenue collection and capital expenditure and meet the conditions for the Eskom Municipal Debt Relief programme, which enables



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critical debt-reduction measures. In December 2024, the Western Cape Government's Oversight Committee deemed that sufficient progress had been made to allow the Municipality to advance to Phase 2, the stabilisation phase. In May 2026, the Oversight Committee reported further progress: more payments had been made to Eskom, a third of the debt to Eskom had been written off, and cash management and revenue billing controls had improved. However, to progress to Phase 3, the Municipality would need to stabilise management, improve revenue collection (to build liquidity reserves) and capital spending, and address high water losses.⁹

- Accumulated irregular expenditure was reduced from R224m in 2023/24 (45.6% of total expenditure) to R55.9m in 2024/25 (14.6% of total expenditure). The Municipal Council wrote off R183.7m during the year, mostly related to procurement irregularities. According to the Annual Report, this followed the Municipal Public Accounts Committee's (MPAC) recommendations. MPAC reportedly confirmed that the write-off would cover prior years where no fraud, deliberate misconduct, or financial loss was incurred, and that all goods and services were received. However, the AGSA noted in its 2024/25 audit report that it did not investigate whether any person was liable for the irregular expenditure.¹⁰
- The AGSA reported a material finding for water distribution losses in 2024/25. The losses reached 76.4% of total water purchases, primarily due to ageing infrastructure and widespread unmetered water connections caused by mass meter failures. The AGSA noted that a process to install new water meters has started, but it is unclear how extensive it is or whether better-quality meters are being installed.¹¹
- The AGSA found 'significant internal control deficiencies' in several areas. This included management's failure to institute monitoring processes to ensure actions from previous years' audits were adequately addressed, particularly related to consequence management for irregular expenditure, unauthorised expenditure and fruitless and wasteful expenditure. The AGSA also found that billing system challenges and capacity constraints in the revenue department delayed the implementation of a flat billing rate (presumably for municipal account holders). This contributed to the Municipality's financial challenges, which led to late payments to creditors and the need for an FRP.¹²
- According to the Annual Report, current liabilities exceeded current assets by R43.5m in 2024/25, raising doubts about whether the Municipality will be a going concern in six months. Impairment of funds owed by debtors was R243.1m, equivalent to 63.5% of annual expenditure.¹³

Flag #6

Obstructing Accountability



The flag is raised due to a pattern of accountability-related deficiencies in external audit outcomes over multiple years.



Flag raised



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- According to the AGSA, audit findings from previous years – including those related to oversight, governance and consequence management responsibilities – have not been addressed.¹⁴
- The AGSA issued an unqualified audit outcome in 2024/25 – an improvement from the qualified audit outcome of 2023/24.¹⁵

Flag #9

Shadow Network



The flag is being monitored to determine whether a set of actors is involved in repeated acts of improper influence at the municipality.

- Previous mayors and municipal managers at Beaufort West Municipality have been implicated in corruption. For example, Constable was succeeded by Louw, and the two were arrested on charges related to the same contract alleged to have been irregularly awarded. As of July 2026, two remain in public office – Louw and Pietersen are councillors at the Central Karoo District Municipality, within which Beaufort West’s District Municipality falls.¹⁶



Flag raised



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Under monitoring

Recommended Actions

	DUTY BEARER	ACTION(S)	ASSOCIATED FLAGS
1.	Beaufort West Municipal Council	Appoint a permanent Municipal Manager.	Flag #1: Improper Appointments
2.	Beaufort West Local Municipality executive management	- Institute all AGSA recommendations, including consequence management. - Strengthen financial controls and management.	Flag #5: Financial Malpractice
3.	Western Cape Government	- Continue implementing the FRP. - Ensure that the Council appoints a permanent Municipal Manager, and scrutinise the suitability of the candidates.	Flag #5: Financial Malpractice Flag #1: Improper Appointments
4.	Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation	Investigate outstanding corruption allegations related to Beaufort West Municipality and the wider region and make referrals for prosecution.	Flag #4: Corrupt Awards Flag #9: Shadow Network
5.	Public Protector	Investigate the cause of the high leadership turnover and instability.	Flag #1: Improper Appointments



Flag raised



Flag lowered



Under monitoring

The 9 Flags

Flag #1

Improper Appointments

Improper appointments, dismissals or failure to remove individuals in senior positions may be used to drive a corrupt agenda.

Flag #2

Co-opting Key Functions

Informal control may be established over critical functions within the institution to abuse them.

Flag #3

Climate of Fear or Favour

The working culture favours loyalty over duty; alignment with a corrupt agenda is rewarded, and resistance is punished.

Flag #4

Corrupt Awards

Contracts, licences, partnerships, loans and/or investments may be awarded irregularly and repeatedly benefit the same actors.

Flag #5

Financial Malpractice

The institution's financial management practices may be abused to advance a corrupt agenda.

Flag #6

Obstructing Accountability

The institution's internal operations might be deliberately obscured to hide potential misconduct.

Flag #7

Manipulating Perceptions

A public narrative that frames misconduct as innocence may be promoted.

Flag #8

Private Gain

Illicit gains may be distributed to benefit the same actors.

Flag #9

Shadow Network

The same public and private actors may collude to gain control over an institution's assets and functions, benefiting repeatedly.

About ACTis

What is ACTis?

The Anti-Corruption Tracker Information System is an initiative of the Anti-Corruption and Accountability Project at the Institute for Security Studies. It provides analysis on corruption and state capture in South Africa, to inform early intervention and enforcement. It utilises a system of indicators and an AI-driven data-collection and analysis tool, validated by human experts. It identifies risks within individual government institutions and produces actionable recommendations to address them, with a view to disrupting patterns of state capture and corruption.

Findings are shared directly with government and other duty-bearers, civil society organisations, the media and the public, empowering authorities to intervene, strengthening accountability, and enabling citizens activism.

Links to ACTis Information:

Further project information may be found at the following links:

[Terms and Definitions](#)

[Project Methodology and Analytical Framework](#)

[About the Anti-Corruption and Accountability project](#)

[About the Institute for Security Studies](#)

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References

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- ² Weekend Argus, Beaufort West mayor and speaker among four suspects arrested for fraud and corruption, 17 September 2021, <https://capeargus.co.za/weekend-argus/news/2021-09-17-beaufort-west-mayor-and-speaker-among-four-suspects-arrested-for-fraud-and-corruption/>; Western Cape Provincial Parliament, Parliament of the Province of the Western Cape: Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports, 13 June 2024, <https://www.wcpp.gov.za/sites/default/files/ATC%201%20-%2013%20June%202024%20Reprint.pdf>, p. 1; Weekend Argus, Two ANC Western Cape candidates to step aside following corruption allegations, 21 September 2021, <https://capeargus.co.za/news/politics/2021-09-21-two-anc-western-cape-candidates-to-step-aside-following-corruption-allegations/>; Municipalities of South Africa, Central Karoo District Municipality (DC5) Council and Management, <https://municipalities.co.za/management/144/central-karoo-district-municipality>.
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