

# Thembelihle Social Audit Report

**2 February 2018**

A social audit is a community-led process of reviewing official government documents to determine whether government information about the service that is being delivered to the relevant community, aligns with what is being delivered on the ground. This report provides information about the recent social audit that took place in Thembelihle informal settlement in Region G in the City of Johannesburg.

The social audit focussed on the desludging of pits and Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets in Thembelihle, a service that is delivered by Supreme Sanitation (Pty) Ltd. Residents have experienced a number of problems with the delivery of this service and decided to collect information through a social audit to enable a constructive, evidence-based discussion with the municipality about how these issues might be resolved.

We would like to thank Johannesburg Water for their participation in this social audit process, giving generously of their time to discuss the project and providing critical information.

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## Section 1: What is a social audit?

Social auditing is a process that is used to monitor service delivery, and facilitate engagement between government and communities around the findings of these monitoring efforts. During the social audit process a community will gather detailed evidence about how a service is being delivered in their area, and will compare this evidence to government information about that service. For example, if the service is outsourced, a community can use the relevant tender document or contract to determine the details of the service that government has contracted a service provider to deliver. The community, then, compares this information to what is being delivered to them. The findings that emerge are used to engage with government about specific service delivery challenges. Research shows that this exchange can result in improved service delivery by giving government information about local circumstances and the performance of contractors.

Social audits have been conducted in South Africa since 2013, drawing strongly on the principles of the social audit methodology used in India.<sup>1</sup> Since 2013, this methodology has been used in different parts of the country at both local and provincial level, with a focus on a range of services including sanitation, water, housing and school infrastructure. The inclusion of detailed government commitments, the gathering of relevant community evidence and the provision of a platform to facilitate meaningful engagement between government and the public make social auditing a powerful social accountability tool. This approach can reduce antagonism between stakeholders, creates a platform for constructive dialogue and provides valuable feedback to government about grassroots implementation and reception of basic services.

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<sup>1</sup>For more on social audits, please see <https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/social-audits-in-south-africa-guide-2015.pdf>

## Section 2: The Thembelihle social audit process

Thembelihle is an informal settlement in Region G in the south of Johannesburg. The settlement has been in existence since the mid-1980's, and is currently home to around 8000 households.

Thembelihle is a highly organised community. During the xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals in South Africa, the community came together to make sure that there were no attacks in Thembelihle, a feat that was commended by the Department of Home Affairs. Through persistent engagements with the municipality around the provision of basic services, community members have also managed to achieve several service delivery improvements in Thembelihle. Despite these successes, Thembelihle still faces several serious service delivery issues, sanitation being a critical one.

About 8 years ago, Johannesburg Water delivered Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets to Thembelihle residents. These toilets require constant draining (desludging) and Johannesburg Water contracted a private service provider to deliver this service. Due to issues with the delivery of this service, which are discussed in this report, the state of sanitation in Thembelihle has steadily deteriorated over the last few years

Planact has been working with this community for over ten years, in partnership with the Thembelihle Crisis Committee (TCC). TCC requested that Planact assist them to improve their understanding of the local government systems which inform the provision of these and other services so that they could better engage with the municipality about addressing the service delivery challenges they face. As part of their support to the community, Planact introduced the social audit tool. The community decided to use this tool to gather specific evidence about the desludging of pit toilets in Thembelihle, and inconsistencies between the contract requirements and what is delivered. They felt this evidence would support constructive engagement with the municipality about the issue.

Planact is a non-governmental development organisation, incorporated as a Section 21 company in 1995 (Registration number 9401660/08), whose aim is to bring about local development for the poor within an integrated framework. Originally formed as a voluntary association of professionals in 1985, Planact has evolved into a well-established non-profit

organisation whose contributions to urban development processes are widely known and valued. <http://www.planact.org.za/>

The implementation of the social audit methodology in Thembelihle followed 10 steps:

## Step 1: Establishment of a social audit planning and implementation committee

At the start of 2016, Planact began discussions with TCC about implementing a social audit in Thembelihle. Some TCC members attended a Social Audit Network (SAN) training of trainers in Ekurhuleni in March 2017, along with participants from all over the country. As part of this training, TCC members participated in a mock social audit process in an informal settlement in Wattville, Ekurhuleni. Soon after this training a full social audit process was conducted in three informal settlements in Wattville and some of the TCC members participated in the data capture and analysis steps.

The Social Audit Network (SAN) is a network of organisations that conduct social audits across South Africa. SAN was established with the aim of increasing the knowledge and practice of social audits and to promote the legitimacy of this community based monitoring and participation tool in South Africa.

In May 2017, Planact and the International Budget Partnership South Africa (IBP-SA) ran a public procurement training for TCC members, focusing on the contract for the desludging of Pit and VIP toilets in informal settlements in Johannesburg. The purpose of this training was to support TCC members to understand the process followed in awarding the contract, and to access and analyse the necessary government information for their own audit.

IBP-SA provides support to build expertise and skills of civil society actors involved in budget advocacy in South Africa, with a focus on strengthening and deepening citizen engagement with budgets and service delivery outcomes. IBP-SA and its partners conduct research and advocate at a municipal level for improvements in budget transparency, participation and accountability. IBP-SA also works to strengthen the partnerships and dialogue between civil society groups and other stakeholders in the budget process, including government.

During the annual TCC conference in July 2017, it was agreed that sanitation is one of the campaigns TCC will continue with, and it was agreed that they would go ahead with the social audit starting in November 2017. Task teams were set up for each of the campaigns and the team focusing on sanitation included the social audit planning and implementation committee who had been involved in the trainings earlier in the year.

## Step 2 and 3: Establishing contact with Johannesburg Water; and accessing information

The TCC social audit planning and implementation committee, with support from Planact and the IBP-SA, first made contact with officials in Johannesburg Water in June of 2017. They requested face-to-face meetings with officials in Johannesburg Water, to explain both the social audit and how they felt the process could be of value to Johannesburg Water. Unfortunately, the request was declined. The TCC social audit committee proceeded with a request for the information they would need for the implementation of the social audit (the full set of bid documents for contract JW OPS 04/13). The process unfolded as follows:

- Planact and TCC submitted a written request for the bid documents to Johannesburg Water's Supply Chain Management (SCM) department in July 2017. The SCM department's information officer referred the request to the legal department. It was refused and Planact and TCC were told to submit a formal PAIA request.
- A formal PAIA request was submitted in August 2017, using a PAIA application form from the national Department of Water and Sanitation. The form was refused and Planact and TCC were instructed to use a Johannesburg Water PAIA form.
- The PAIA application was resubmitted using the Johannesburg Water form and payment of R35 was made, as instructed by the relevant officials. This application was also refused and Planact and TCC felt that they could challenge the reasons given for the refusal.
- Planact and TCC submitted a written response challenging the reasons given for the refusal and did not receive any response from Johannesburg Water.
- Planact and TCC subsequently contacted the Managing Director (MD) of Johannesburg Water to explain the issue and to request his intervention. The processes followed and responses received were shared with him. The MD's secretary responded and undertook to send the documents.

- Planact and TCC met with officials representing the MD of Johannesburg Water on the 10th October 2017 and received all the information/documents as requested.
- Additional information about the service was requested on the 2nd of November 2017 from Johannesburg Water and it was received on the 13th of November 2017.

#### Step 4: Social audit training

As mentioned, members of the TCC social audit planning and implementation committee attended various workshops and trainings, including the following:

- An Introduction to Social Audit training workshop was held with Thembelihle community members in 2016 to help them understand the methodology. Subsequently, another training was held with volunteers from the community, with the objective of putting together a team that would be responsible for accessing the relevant documents and liaising with the community during the social audit process.
- The Thembelihle social audit team sent two representatives to attend a Social Audit Training of Trainers workshop, facilitated by representatives of SAN. This training took place in March 2017, and was held in Wattville with participants from all over the country. The training included sessions on analysing government documents, developing social audit questionnaires and implementing questionnaires effectively to gather evidence. It also included a mock social audit, as well as the data capturing and analysis phase of the Wattville social audit, so that participants could learn more about how to conduct this critical phase of the social audit process.
- A public procurement training was facilitated by Planact and IBP-SA. This focused on the local government procurement process, and specifically on the procurement of the service TCC and community members would be auditing in Thembelihle.
- A social audit training was held at the beginning of the social audit process for the full group of community volunteers. This training covered all the steps in the methodology but also focused on analysing the government information that would be used for the social audit, on developing questionnaires and on preparing for the data collection.

#### Step 5: Analysing government information and developing social audit questionnaires

Based on their analysis of the tender documents, and specifically focusing on the detailed requirements for the service, the social audit group develop two questionnaires. Examples of the questionnaires are submitted with this report.

- Resident questionnaire: This form consisted of a set of questions to be completed by residents of Thembelihle. The questions asked about resident's experiences of specific components of the service, including how often their toilet was desludged, whether the contractor removed debris from the toilet before desludging, and whether they used chemicals once the toilet had been drained.
- Physical verification: This was a form to be completed by social auditors while physically inspecting the VIP toilets in Thembelihle. This form included questions about the condition of the toilet, whether there was a lid on the seat and whether the toilet was suitable for use by disabled community members.

## Step 6: Gathering information in the community

Once the questionnaires had been finalised and printed, the social audit team were divided into teams: a team responsible for resident interviews; and a team responsible for physical verification. The members of these teams were allocated to the different sections of Thembelihle. The team for household interviews consisted of 2 auditors per household, to ensure their safety and the collection of more reliable information.

The following number of questionnaires were completed:

**Resident questionnaires: 1178**

**Physical verification forms: 966**

**TOTAL QUESTIONNAIRES: 2144**

**NB: The excel spreadsheets accompanying this report contain all the raw information used and referenced in this report.**

## Step 7: Analysing the information gathered

All the information collected during step 6 was cleaned, verified and analysed. As a first step in the analysis, the social auditors who had administered the questionnaires manually analysed all the forms collected. This process consisted of selecting the critical questions in each of the two

questionnaires (the criteria for selection was generally linked to the information provided in the tender specifications) and then manually counting and recording responses. This means that for each question with a Yes/No response, all the Yesses and Nos were counted and recorded. For open-ended questions, the most common themes were identified and for each of these questions, the responses linked to each theme were counted and recorded.

The second step in the analysis was done electronically. All the forms were captured using google forms, which automatically calculates and produces a set of results. These results were cross referenced against the manual analysis to identify any discrepancies, which were then investigated and corrected. The raw data in the excel spreadsheets accompanying this document was generated through this process. Every form captured through google forms has a unique number and the corresponding hard copies of these forms are available.

The final results were taken back to a forum of all the relevant community stakeholders, who then discussed the specific findings and recommendations to be included in this report.

## **Step 8: Findings report**

Once the analysis was complete, and the findings and recommendations had been refined and agreed upon, this report was developed and all the raw information was put into formats to be shared with the municipality.

## **Step 9: Preparation for engagement with the municipality**

Once the information is submitted to the municipality, the next step in the social audit process is to prepare for an engagement between community representatives and Johannesburg Water. The purpose of this engagement is to discuss the findings and recommendations, and to reach agreement on how to proceed. Preparations for this engagement include discussions within the community to determine which findings and recommendations to focus on in the engagement.

## **Step 10: Engagement between the community and the municipality**

During this engagement, the findings and recommendations are shared, residents are given space to share testimonies about their experiences of the delivery of the service, the municipality is given time to respond and there is a discussion of the way forward.



## Section 3: Information about the servicing of VIP toilets

The desludging of VIP toilets in Thembelihle is done according to the contract for the ***Hire of vacuum tankers for the desludging of pits and VIP toilets at various informal settlements within the City of Johannesburg*** (Contract JW OPS 04/13)

### 3.1 Award and Extension of the Contract<sup>2</sup>

The contract JW OPS 04/13 was first awarded in August 2013 to two service providers, namely Supreme Sanitation (Pty) Ltd and Ntships Construction and Projects cc t/a The Drain Surgeon for the period 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2016, with an option to extend for a further 12 months. A new tender for the service (JW OPS 04/16) was requested in August 2016, with the closing date 16 August 2016. To ensure that the delivery of the service continued in the meantime, the contract JW OPS 04/13 was extended on a month-to-month basis for 6 months, ending on 28 February 2017. The contract was further extended through a deviation until 31 March 2017 to allow for the evaluation for the award of the new contract. By the end of March, the award was still not finalized and a further deviation was requested on a month-to-month basis for 6 months until 30 September 2017. A Deviation Report dated 29 September 2017 indicates that the new contract was not awarded and that the process for re-tender has started. To allow for the continuation of the service, the contractors were appointed for another 6 months - from 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2018.

The tender documents for contract JW OPS 04/13 include some specifications and requirements for the hire of vacuum tankers for the desludging of pit and VIP toilets and these are presented below.

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<sup>2</sup> This information has been drawn from the Johannesburg Water (SOC) Limited Bid Adjudication Committee Report on the “Hire of vacuum tankers for the desludging of pits and VIP toilets at various informal settlements in the City of Johannesburg” (29 August 2013); the Johannesburg Water (SOC) Limited Deviation Report for the “Deviation from official procurement procedure for the appointment of service provider for the hire of vacuum tankers for the desludging of pit and VIP toilets” (29 September 2017); and the Request for Tender JW OPS 04/16.

## 3.2 Technical Specifications<sup>3</sup>

The Technical Specifications (JW 7) include the following requirements (Point 1):

- “The contractor shall be required to provide a service for the emptying of pits, conservancy tanks, aqua privies and VIP’s in various informal settlements within the City of Johannesburg.
- It is estimated that a total of fourteen (14) vacuum tankers (with a capacity of 6.0 kl to 10 kl) will be required. The tankers will be required to work mainly in informal settlements and it is the responsibility of the Contractor to familiarize himself with the environment at these locations”

In addition, it was stated that the information “is given in good faith and without commitment to Johannesburg Water. The quantities and distances travelled may vary from those stated”.

It should be noted that the above specifications do not provide any indication of the number of informal settlements to be serviced, the estimated number of toilets to be serviced, as well as how often the toilets are expected to be serviced.

## 3.3 Special Conditions indicated in the Bid Documents<sup>4</sup>

The scope of the contract (page 3 of JW 6) includes the following:

“10.1 The Contractors shall be required to supply vacuum tanker services as specified in this document as and when required during the full period

the contract within the City of Johannesburg’s municipal boundaries.

10.2 The type of systems to be serviced includes unimproved pit latrines, conservancy tanks, aqua privies and VIPs.

10.3 The contractor in addition to the desludging of the different systems as indicated in 10.2 would also be required to remove all unwanted debri from the pits before desludging commences.”

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<sup>3</sup> This information has been drawn from the Request for Tender JW OPS 04/13

<sup>4</sup> This information has been drawn from the Request for Tender JW OPS 04/13

Item 28 (page 8 of JW6) also requires that “the Contractor’s Operator must ensure that the desludging point is cleaned and disinfected immediately after the truck has discharged the waste. The cleaning needs to happen prior to the truck leaving the discharge point.”

Point 10.3 and Item 28 are two of only a few places where we can find some requirements on how the service should actually be performed.

In terms of the duration (page 4 of JW6), it is indicated that the “tenure of the contract will be for a period of thirty-six (36) months, with an option to extend the contract for a further twelve (12) under the same terms and conditions”.

In terms of quantities (page 4 of JW6), it is stated that the “quantities are given in good faith and without commitment to JW. The Contractor shall be bound to supply whatever quantities of tankers that JW actually requires during the period of the contract, irrespective of the extend by which the total varies from those stated.” In addition, it is stated that the “vacuum services may be required anywhere within” ... “the City of Johannesburg boundaries.”

Again, it should be noted that these special conditions make no mention of how many toilets the contractor will be expected to desludge or how often desludging should take place.

### 3.4 Working Hours<sup>5</sup>

On page 5 of JW6, the working hours are stated as follows:

“20.1 Plant will be required to work on and ‘as and when’ required basis:

20.2. The normal working hours will be as follows:

Mondays to Fridays from 07h30 to 16h00

20.2. The JW regions may sometimes require the Contractor to work outside the hours specified in clause 20.2.

20.3 Not withstanding the hours of work, the intention of this contract is to provide a service to the community and it is envisaged that the contractor appointed will negotiate a service agreement with the Regional Manager for the region to be serviced.

i.e. agree to specific hours of work per day”

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<sup>5</sup> This information has been drawn from the Request for Tender JW OPS 04/13

In addition, prospective contractors were asked to quote “hourly rates” on the form of tender and these “must include the services of an operator, fuel oil, stores and an operational assistant and all other expenses incidental to the hire and operation of the plant and work to be performed.”

While the requirements above refer to working hours, there is again not indication of the number of units to be serviced during these hours, or how many toilets can realistically be expected to be serviced in a working day. The social audit team was unable to access a copy of this service agreement so it is unclear what, in addition to working hours, is covered by this agreement.

### 3.5 Requirements and Payment<sup>6</sup>

According to pages 5 and 6 of JW6, daily time sheets have to be completed for “all items of plant”, i.e. the vacuum tankers and “JW will be charged on the basis of such daily time sheets, when signed by the Regional Manager”.

Payment will be done based on monthly invoices – “covering a calendar month”.

Again – no indication or estimate is provided of the number of units a contractor will be expected to service and how this will be considered when payment is done. It appears as if payment will simply be done on the basis of time sheets, and after these have been approved by the Regional Manager.

### 3.7 Additional Information

After engaging with the tender documents, Planact and the Thembelihle Social Audit Committee contacted Johannesburg Water with some questions. In response, Johannesburg Water provided the following additional information:

- The names of the relevant Regional Manager, the onsite coordinator and the acting Chief Operations Officer.
- Johannesburg Water provided a copy of the schedule that has to be signed off by a person nominated by the community that the said toilet has been cleaned, as well as a copy of

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<sup>6</sup> This information has been drawn from the Request for Tender JW OPS 04/13

the schedule used internally by Johannesburg Water to check how many toilets were cleaned per day and in which location. Johannesburg Water uses these schedules with job cards (an example was also provided) to monitor the delivery of the service.

- In the communications Johannesburg Water also indicated that “In terms of the contract, the toilets are supposed to be serviced once every three months or on an as and when reported basis. Johannesburg Water has, however, been servicing the toilets at Thembelihle once every two months or on an as and when reported basis.” It should be noted that the reference to the toilets being serviced once every three months could not be found in the tender documents.

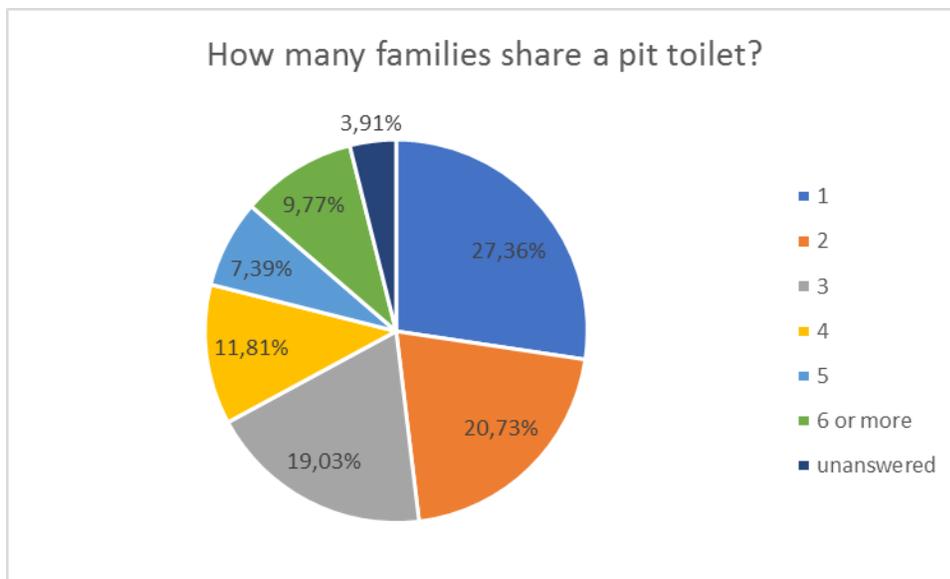
## Section 4: Social audit findings

### 4.1 General

#### **Finding 1: 62% have been living in Thembelihle for a decade or more**

62 % of the 1 177 Thembelihle residents interviewed during the social audit process, have lived in Thembelihle for 10 years or more. 5.43% of the residents interviewed have been living in Thembelihle for 30 or more years. This demonstrates that Thembelihle is neither new nor temporary, but rather an established and organised community of residents with a reasonable request for dignified basic services.

#### **Finding 2: 69% share their VIP toilet with other families**



The 1994 Water Supply and Sanitation Policy White paper states that “adequate basic provision is defined as one well-constructed VIP toilet (in various forms, to agreed standards) per household”.<sup>7</sup> And the 2001 White Paper on Basic Household Sanitation’s guidance on a minimum acceptable level of basic sanitation is “a toilet facility for each household.”<sup>8</sup>

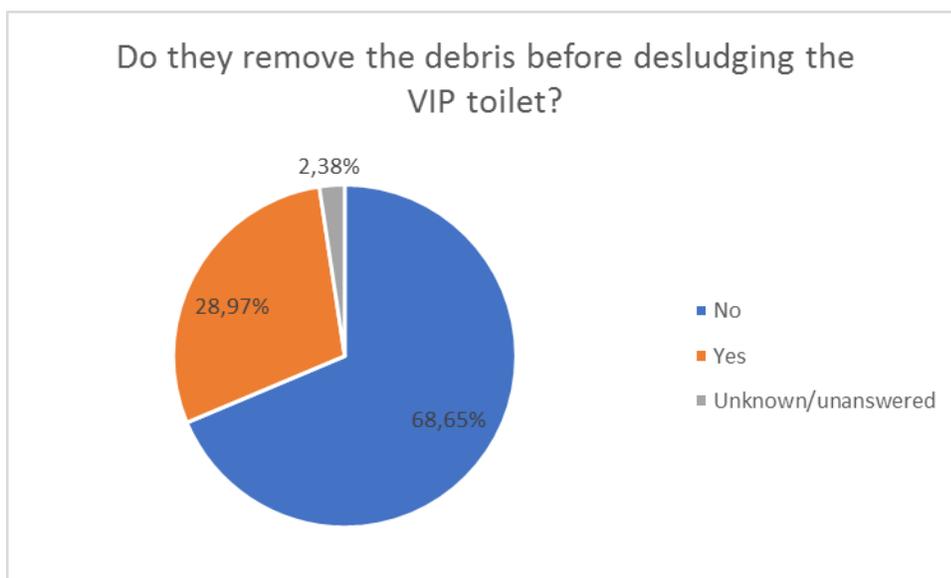
<sup>7</sup> <http://www.dwa.gov.za/Documents/Policies/WSSP.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dwa.gov.za/Documents/Policies/SanitationReviewPolicy.pdf>

While the policies and guidelines suggest that an acceptable basic standard for VIP's is 1 toilet per household, only about 27% of the residents interviewed reported having a toilet for exclusive use by their household. 69% reported sharing with 1 or more other families. In addition, 9.77% of residents reported that 6 or more households share a single toilet. Numerous families using a single toilet makes the regular and efficient servicing of these toilets even more critical, and the impact of an inefficient service even more dire.

## 4.2 Desludging VIPs

### Finding 3: 69% said that Supreme doesn't remove debris from the pit before desludging



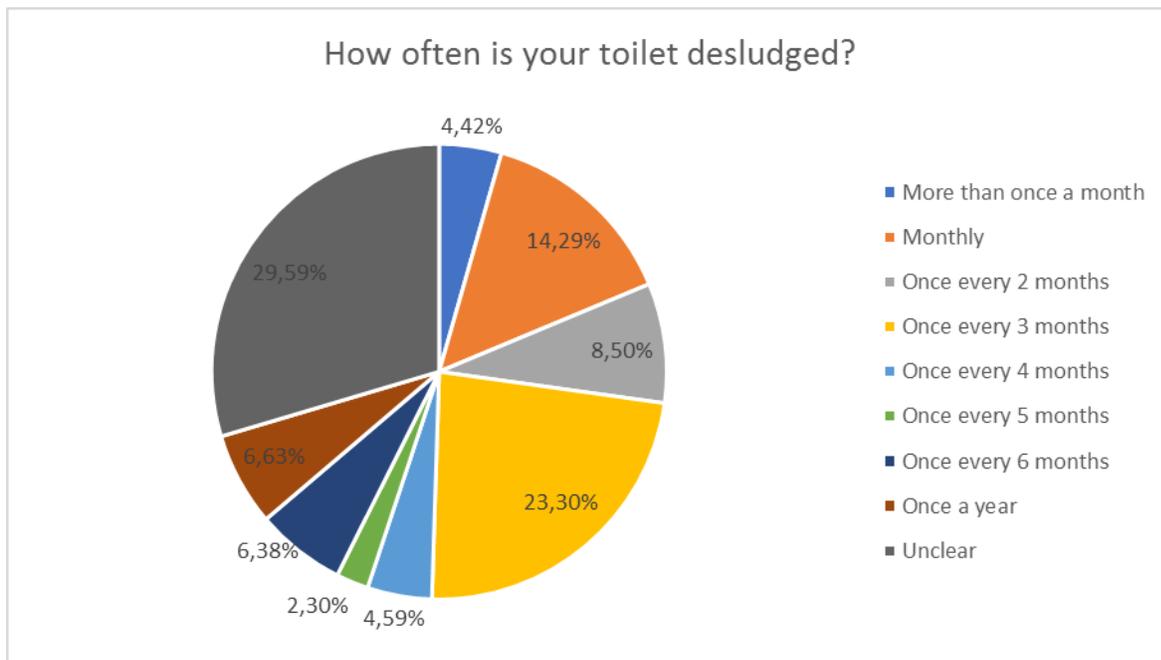
Point 10.3 under “Special conditions” in the tender specifications (JW OPS 04/13) indicates that “the contractors in addition to the desludging of the different systems as indicated in 10.2 would also be required to remove all unwanted debris from the pits before desludging commences.” 69% of the residents interviewed indicated that Supreme workers do not remove debris from the VIPs before draining them.

#### **Residents' Comments**

*“They say remove the debris before we drain, if not pay R100.”*

*“We finish to take out the bottles and after they never come back to drain this when they tell members of the community to clean the debris and promise to come later.”*

**Finding 4: 20% said their toilets are desludged less frequently than once every three months**



Points 20.1 – 20.3 under Special conditions” in the tender specifications (JW OPS 04/13) state that the contractor “will be required to work on an ‘as and when’ required basis”, with “normal working hours” from “Mondays to Fridays from 07h30 to 16h00”; and the “JW regions may sometimes require the Contractor to work outside the hours specified in clause 20.2”.

It is also stated that “notwithstanding the hours of work, the intention of this contract is to provide a service to the community and it is envisaged that the contractor appointed will negotiate a service agreement with the Regional Manager for the region to be serviced. i.e. agree to specific hours of work per day”.

The specifications do not provide any indication of how often the VIP toilets should be desludged and what this means in terms of number of toilets that the contractor would be expected to desludge in a working day. Additional information received from Johannesburg Water indicates that in terms of the contract the toilets are supposed to be serviced once every three months or on an as and when reported basis. It was indicated that in reality, Johannesburg Water has been servicing the toilets once every two months or on an as and when reported basis.

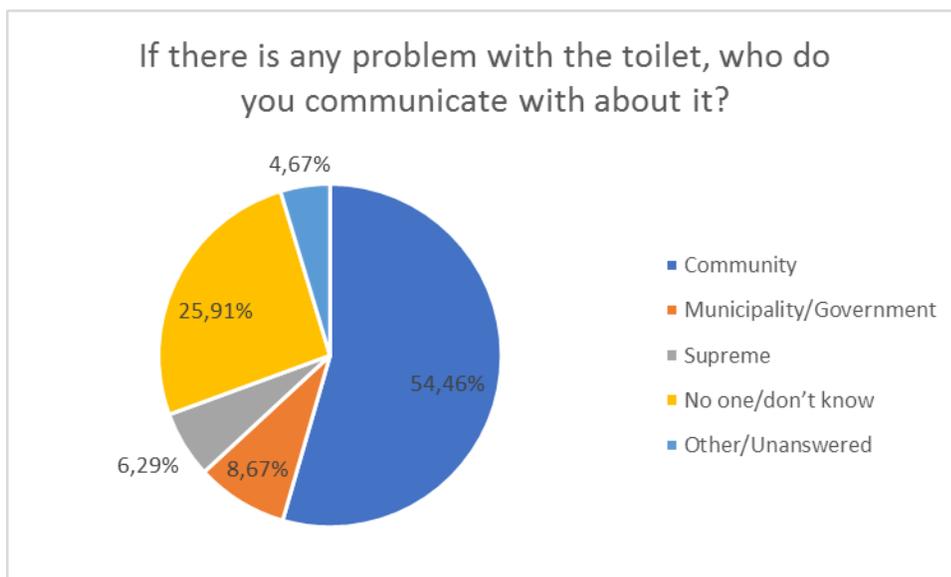
The social audit results clearly show a large variation in the regularity of the service and community members have received no schedule or rationale for when their toilets are desludged. In practice, this means that the truck will visit at unexpected times and these visits can be many months apart.

- A total of 27% of residents reported that their toilet is desludged once every 2 months or more often, while an additional 23.3% reported that their toilet is desludged only once every 3 months
- Almost 20% of residents indicated that their toilet is only desludged once every 4 months or even less frequently

**Residents' Comments**

*"It is very difficult for those of us who work. We don't know when Supreme will come and so sometimes we are at work and there is no-one to pour water into the pit, so our toilet doesn't get emptied."*

**Finding 5: 54.46% said that if they have a problem with the pit toilet they notify someone in the community**



There was some variation in the reporting process that community members follow if they have a problem with their toilet e.g. if it is full. 54.46 % said they contact someone in the community, and

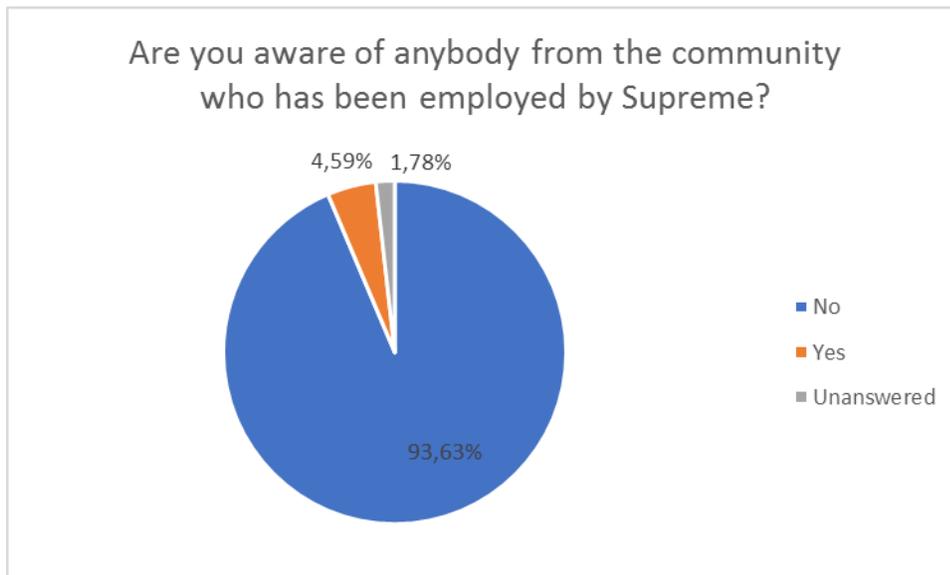
25.91 % said that they did not know who to contact or they did not contact anyone. Small percentages said they contact Supreme (6.29%) or the municipality (8.67%).

The residents who rely on other community members to contact the contractor when their toilet needs emptying, said that this was an informal system set up by the community and the members who perform this function are not compensated by the Supreme for their services. The findings not only suggest that community members do not use one specific channel to report problems with their toilets, but also that there is confusion about the correct procedure to be followed. This is a critical finding.

**Residents' Comments**

*"They don't use any chemicals to clean after the have drained the toilet and sometimes they drag the pipe behind the truck which leaves human waste along the streets where people are walking"*

**Finding 6: 93.63% said that they don't know anyone from the community who has been employed by Supreme**



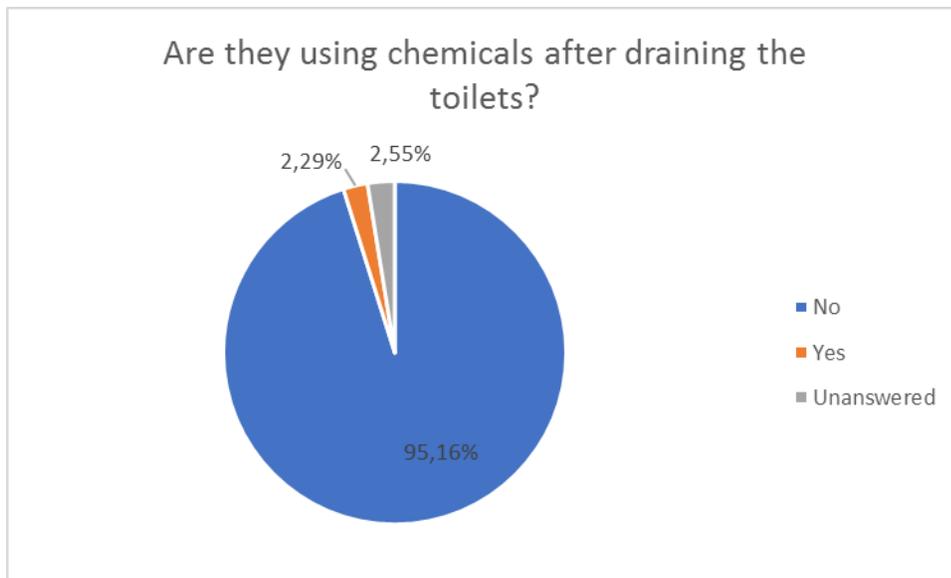
Bidders for contract JW OPS 04/13 were required to complete a "qualification sheet". One of the questions bidders were asked on this sheet was "will assistants/drivers be employed from the community", to which they had to reply yes or no. The bidders are requested to substantiate any "no" answers on a separate page. It is unclear to what extent the questions in the qualification sheet are considered during evaluation, and if they all become requirements once the contract has been signed. However, it is clear that the employment of local labour is a consideration.

93.63% of the community members interviewed, said they did not know anyone from the community who has been employed by Supreme. The community members responsible for contacting the contractor when residents experience problems with their toilets are not compensated for their services (see Finding 6) and are expected to use their own cell phones to contact Supreme.

**Residents' Comments**

*'We have people who are volunteers from the community in each section. Community members go to them to report if a toilet is full and they call supreme. The problem is that they don't even get payed and yet they use their cell phones to call. They are also used to sign off service sheets to show that they agree that supreme came and drained the pits.'*

**Finding 7: 95.16% said that Supreme does not use any chemicals after draining the toilets**

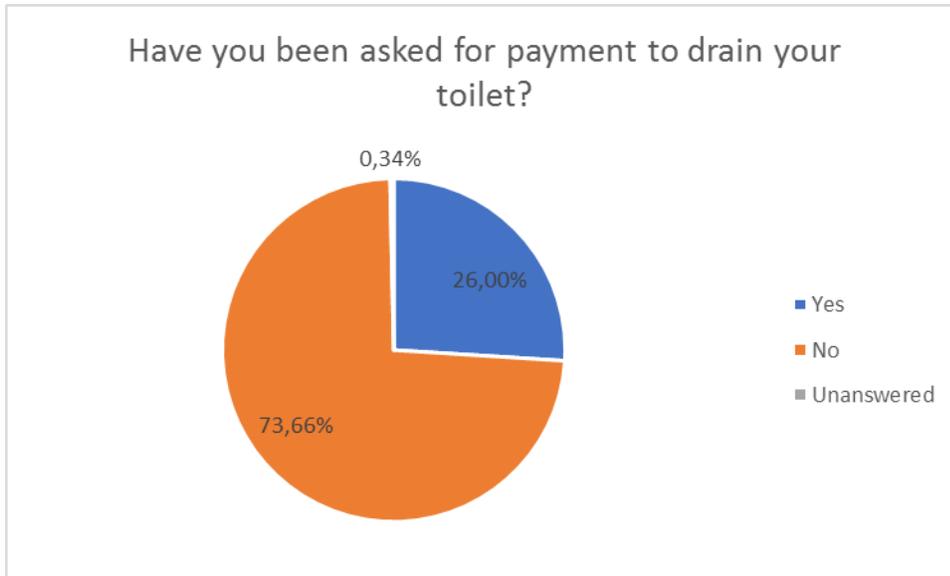


Point 28.1 under “Special conditions” in the tender specifications (JW OPS 04/13), indicates that the “Contractor’s Operator must ensure that the desludging point is cleaned and disinfected immediately after the truck has discharged the waste”. And this should happen “prior to the truck leaving the discharge point”. The contractor can be fined if this does not happen. 95.16% of the residents interviewed said that Supreme does not use any chemicals to disinfect the area once they have finished draining the toilet.

**Residents' Comments**

*"They don't use any chemicals to clean after they have drained the toilet and sometimes they drag the pipe behind the truck which leaves waste along the streets where people are walking"*

**Finding 8: 26% said that Supreme has asked them for payment to drain the toilets**



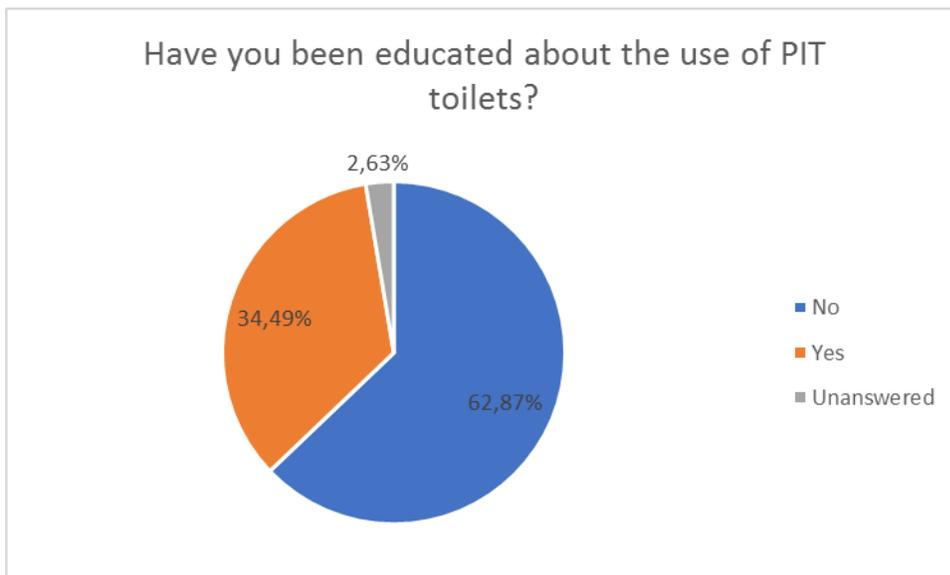
26% of the residents interviewed, have at some point been asked to provide payment for the desludging of their toilets. The service is fully funded by the municipality and community members should not be requested to pay for the provision of any part of the service. Incidents such as these indicate that the delivery of the service is not being monitored sufficiently. It also suggests that the community was not provided with accurate information on how the service should be delivered, which would have empowered them to hold the contractor to account.

**Finding 9: Community members are told by Supreme to put water in the pits before the desludging truck arrives**

Supreme workers have told community members that they should put water in the pit toilets before the trucks arrive. This has not been specified in the tender specifications and the municipality has also not communicated this requirement to the community. Residents have indicated that Supreme workers sometime refuse to desludge the toilets unless community members put water into the pits before they arrive.

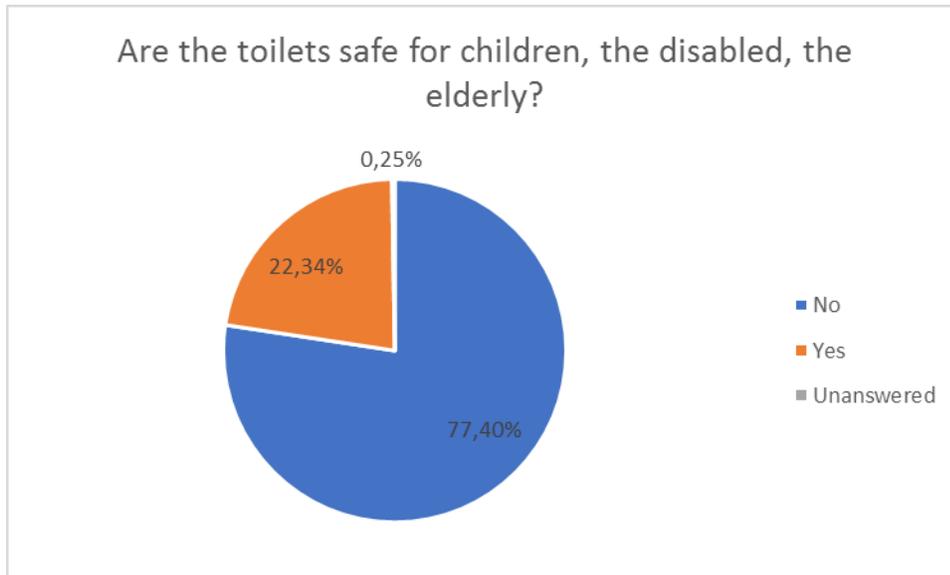
For the most efficient delivery of the service, community members should be informed not only about the exact nature of the service they can expect the contractor to deliver, but also about how they should use and prepare the VIP toilets to ensure efficient desludging (also see Finding 3 about the removal of debris). This suggests a need for the provision of education to the community on how to use VIP toilets.

The graph below suggests that some residents were educated about how to use the VIPs after their installation, but 62.87% of the residents interviewed have not received this training. The comments on this question suggest that the content and method of training varied widely, from posters on the walls of the toilets to door-to-door visits.



### 4.3 VIP toilets

**Finding 10: 77.4% said the VIP toilets are unsafe for use by children, the disabled and the elderly**



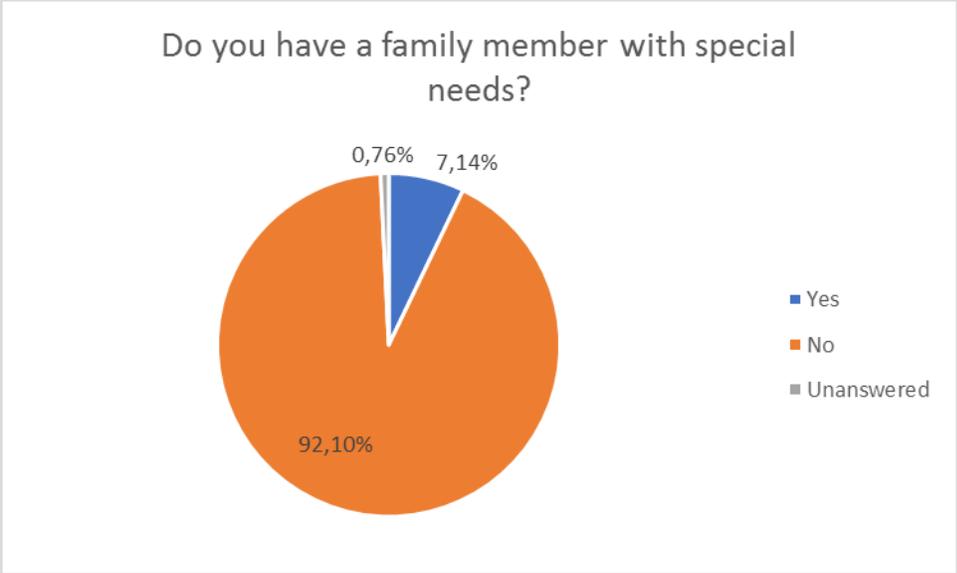
In addition to challenges with the desludging service there are also critical problems with the VIP toilets themselves. 77.4 % of the residents interviewed said that the VIP toilets are not safe for use by children, the elderly or the disabled.

#### ***Residents' Comments***

*"The hole of the toilet is too big and so children can fall in. They have to use a bucket in the house"*

*"The child can fall in because the seat is not stable"*

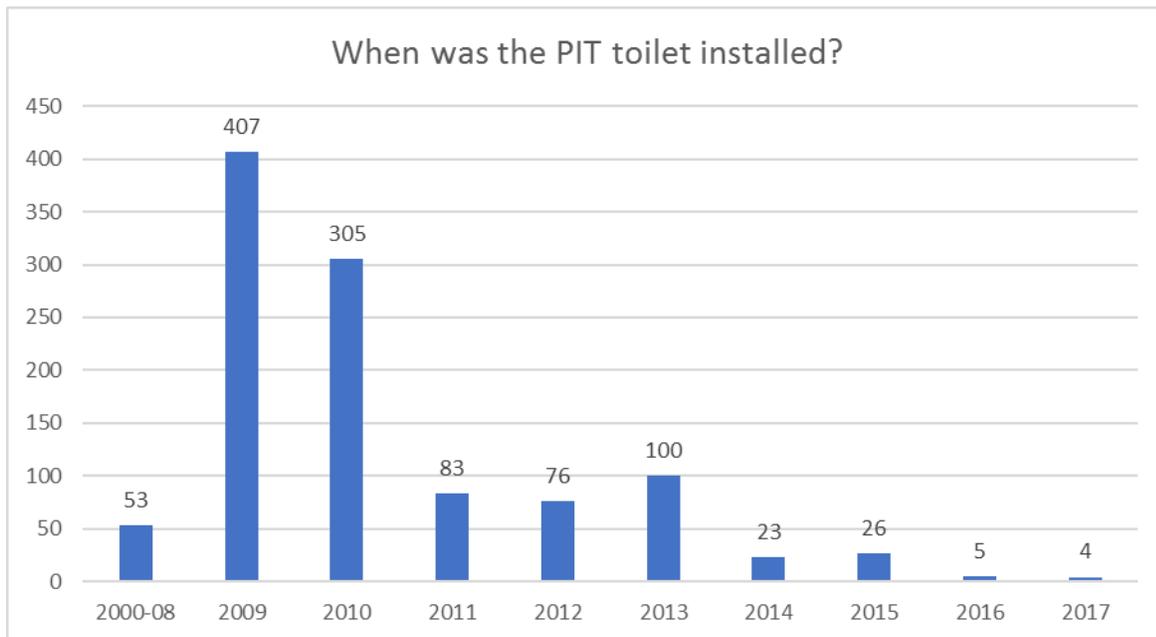
As seen in the graph below, 7.14% of the residents interviewed said that they do have a family member with special needs. This reinforces the need for toilets that can accommodate disabled residents.



As part of the social audit process, 820 VIP toilets were physically verified by social auditors. Of the toilets that were verified, 92% of the toilet were found to be unsuitable for use by disabled community members (see table below).

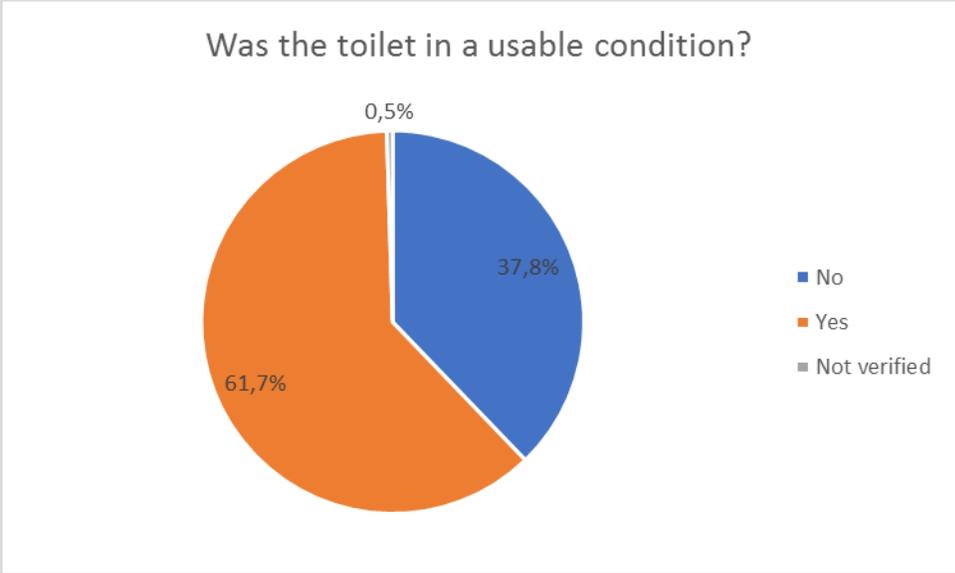
<b>Is the toilet suitable for use by disabled community members?</b>		
No	754	92.0%
Yes	58	7.1%
Unverified	8	1.0%
	<b>820</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Finding 11: 60.49% said their toilet was installed in 2009 or 2010**

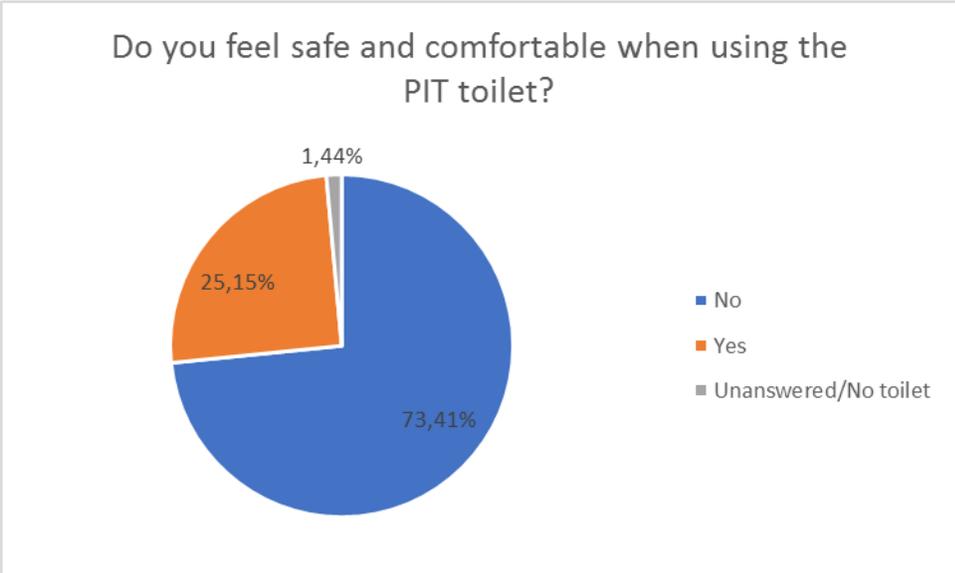


712 residents reported that their toilets were installed in 2009 or 2010, and an additional 53 said that their toilets were installed before 2009. This means that more than 60% of the VIP toilets in Thembelihle are between 7 and 8 years old, with some even older.

While the expected lifespan of the VIP toilets installed in Thembelihle is unknown, VIP toilets are generally not permanent structures. At some point in time, new pits must be dug, or the structure needs to be replaced or moved. As seen in the table below, 37.8 % of the 820 toilets verified during the physical verification process, were found to be in an unusable condition. One of the main reasons given for this was that the toilet structure was cracked or unstable.



**Finding 12: 73.41% of residents interviewed do not feel safe and comfortable when using the VIP toilet**



While almost 40% of the VIP toilets inspected during the physical verification were found to be unusable, 73.41 % of residents interviewed also indicated they do not feel safe and comfortable when using these toilets. The four main reasons presented are:

- The toilet is unstable
- The toilet is full
- The terrible smell

- The prevalence of flies, worms and rats

### **Residents' Comments**

*“Some of the toilet structures are broken and unstable, have cracks in the roofs and walls.”*

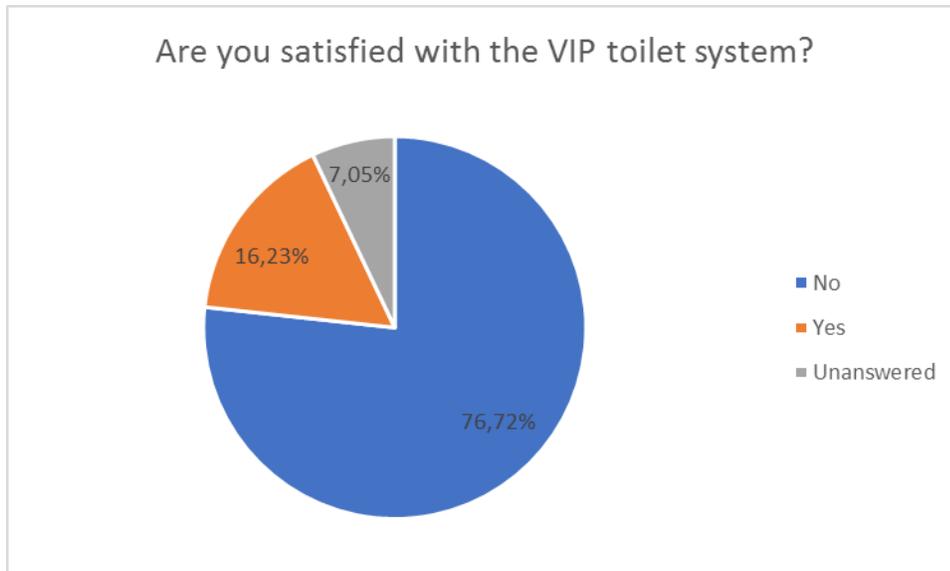
*“Some toilets have very large seat holes, often without seats, which makes using the toilet difficult and unsafe.”*

*“Women in Thembelihle get infections from using the full VIP’s because dirty water splashes back onto you when you are using the toilets”*

*“Many of the toilets don’t lock, some don’t even have doors, a curtain or cloth is used in its place”*

*“when you use a wheelchair, you cannot enter the toilet as the structure is small and there are no ramps to hold on”*

### **Finding 13: 76.72% of residents interviewed said they are not satisfied with the VIP toilets**



More than a quarter of the residents interviewed indicated that they are not satisfied with the VIP toilet system. The main reasons given were the same as those listed in finding 12 above.

**Finding 14: 27.44% of the toilets were found to be inaccessible by vacuum truck**

<b>Can the toilet be access by truck?</b>		
No	225	27.44%
Yes	587	71.59%
Unanswered	8	0.98%
	820	100.00%

During the physical verification of 820 VIP toilets, the auditors also verified whether the toilets could be accessed by a vacuum truck. While it can often be challenging for trucks and other larger vehicles to access specific areas and stands within informal settlements, accessibility was only found to be a problem with 27.4% of the toilets. This is a relatively small percentage of the toilets, but still indicates a problem that needs addressing, possibly by widening and grading some roads in the settlement.

**Finding 14: 51% specified that they would like a flushing toilet**

The final question of the resident questionnaire allowed residents to provide any additional comments. Here 604 residents or 51 % of those interviewed indicated that they would like a flushing toilet.



## Section 5: Recommendations

### 5.1 Recommendations for improved implementation of the contract for the *Hire of vacuum tankers for the desludging of pits and VIP toilets at various informal settlements within the City of Johannesburg*

The tender documents state that “the intention of this contract is to provide a service to the community and it is envisaged that the contractor appointed will negotiate a service agreement with the Regional Manager for the region to be serviced”<sup>9</sup>. The recommendations in 5.1 propose improvements to the current service agreement, but we also propose that these improvements be included in the contract. The General Conditions of Contract (clause 34.1) suggests that the contract can be amended if such an amendment is entered into writing and signed by both parties. We also recommend that all the improvements detailed below be considered for inclusion in the tender specifications when a new tender for the service is developed and issued.

#### 5.1.1 Needs Assessment

- We recommend that a detailed needs assessment be conducted as a matter of urgency to inform a desludging process that will ensure that all VIP toilets in Thembelihle are emptied regularly and that no households are left with a full toilet for an indefinite period. Such a needs assessment should be conducted in consultation with the Thembelihle community.
- This needs assessment should include an accurate count of all the VIP toilets in Thembelihle, the stand number where each toilet is located, whether there is more than one toilet on a stand, and the number of households using each toilet. This will be a key source of information for any adjustments to the service agreement or contract.

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<sup>9</sup> See Request for Tender JW OPS 04/13, JW6, clause 20.3

- The needs assessment should also include a thorough inspection of each VIP toilet and all structural problems such as unstable seats, broken doors and cracked slabs should be recorded.
- The findings of the social audit confirm that in many cases more than one household uses a VIP toilet. A toilet being used by, for example, five households will need more regular desludging than what the current service agreement provides for.

### **5.1.2 Service Delivery Schedule**

- The service agreement and contract for the desludging of VIP toilets in Thembelihle should include a service delivery schedule which is based on the information recorded in the needs assessment, specifically taking into account the number of households using each toilet.
- While the schedule will be drawn up by the relevant Johannesburg Water officials (including the regional manager for region G) and Supreme Sanitation (Pty) Ltd, a draft of this should be shared and discussed with the community and the schedule should only be finalised once the community's input has been incorporated. Johannesburg Water should also provide reasons to the community for not incorporating any of their inputs, where this is the case.
- The schedule should be organised by section of Thembelihle; it should show the stand number for each VIP toilet, the number of households using this toilet and the regularity with which each toilet should be serviced based on the number of households using the toilet.
- The schedule should also specify the days and estimated time of day Supreme Sanitation (Pty) Ltd will desludge each VIP toilet in Thembelihle. The schedule should clearly show which toilets will be desludged more regularly based on the number of families using the toilet.
- The actual desludging could be organised and scheduled by section of Thembelihle.
- The schedule should also show the specifications of the service so that community members know what should be delivered.
- Provision should be made for the review of this service agreement when needed, in consultation with the community.

### **5.1.3 Additional Service Delivery Specifications**

- Supreme should be required to supply any water necessary for the desludging process in the Thembelihle, and this should be specified in amendments to the service level agreement.
- The service delivery specifications should be amended to make provision for regular briefing sessions by the municipality and/or the contractor to educate the community on how the desludging process works and how the toilets should be used to enable effective desludging. The social audit team members would like to work with the municipality and/or contractor to provide any support necessary to ensure that such a briefing happens as soon as possible, and then at six-monthly intervals thereafter.

#### **5.1.4. Monitoring**

- The detailed service delivery schedule described in 5.1.1 should be used as basis for the monitoring of the delivery of the service.
- The copy of the service delivery schedule used for monitoring purposes should have space added for both signing off by the relevant person and for any comments. Johannesburg Water should, in consultation with the community, clarify who should be responsible for signing off on the desludging of individual toilets.
- In communication with Planact and the Thembelihle community, Johannesburg Water has indicated that the Regional Manager for the contract is also assisted by an “onsite coordinator”, who is in turn assisted by “site inspectors”. Johannesburg Water should arrange a meeting with the Thembelihle community to explain the roles and responsibilities of these players in the monitoring of the delivery of the service (using the schedule as described above), including:
  - Who is responsible for on-site monitoring of the delivery of the service
  - How often should this person be on-site
  - Who should the community contact if they are not satisfied with the delivery of the service
  - How the signed-off services schedule will be used to approve invoices and final payments
- Regardless of the information shared in the meeting requested above, we recommend that Johannesburg Water provide to the Thembelihle community a schedule of regular site visits by relevant officials from Johannesburg Water, to both observe the delivery of the service on-site as well as provide community members with the opportunity to raise concerns.

- Johannesburg Water should ensure that a system is in place for receiving and actively responding to complaints and emergencies (in addition to supplying the details of the relevant contact person as mentioned above).
- We recommend that health inspectors visit Thembelihle on a quarterly basis, to identify, monitor and address any health issues experienced by residents as a result of using the VIP toilets.

**As indicated in the introduction of this section, these recommendations are for improvements and adjustments to the current delivery of the service. These improvements should however also be included in the service agreement, the contract, the tender specifications when a new tender for the service is developed and issued.**

**The recommendations presented above are based on findings from a social audit in Thembelihle, Region G, but could be applied to all informal settlements serviced by this contract. The Thembelihle community, as well as all other communities impacted by this contract, should be provided with a copy of the amended service agreement and contract as soon as they have been finalised.**

## 5.2 Recommendations for improved sanitation provision in Thembelihle

Thembelihle has been in existence for more than 30 years, and a significant portion of the residents have been living there for ten years or more. Thembelihle is neither new nor temporary, but rather an established and organised community of residents with a reasonable request for dignified and permanent basic services.

The findings from the social audit indicated that many households still share a VIP toilet with one or more other households, while many residents stated that they feel unsafe using the toilets because the seat or structure is broken or unstable.

Johannesburg Water is asked to provide the community with a detailed plan for improving the provision of sanitation services to Thembelihle. The long-term objective of this plan should be the provision of full flush toilets on a one-to-one basis to households living in Thembelihle.

The plan should also include the following medium- and short-term objectives:

- In the medium-term Johannesburg Water should provide additional VIP toilets to (1) reduce the ratio of households to toilets as well as (2) provide for those households that don't have access to any toilets.
- In the short-term Johannesburg Water should repair all the structural problems with the current VIP toilets (these would already have been identified and recorded as part of the needs assessment referred to in 5.1.1).
- In the short-term Johannesburg Water should provide toilets (VIP or otherwise) suitable for access and use by disabled residents, children and the elderly.
- The Thembelihle community is currently investigating the use of a bio-enzyme based chemical that is placed in the pit to break down waste and create a waste product that is easier to desludge. The community asks Johannesburg Water to consider this or similar alternative solutions as part of improving the service in the short-term.

The proposed plan should provide detailed timelines for achieving the long-, medium- and short-term objectives referred to in the previous paragraph. For each of the objectives the following minimum information should be provided:

- The number of toilets to be installed or repaired.
- The numbers of the stands where the toilets will be placed or repaired.
- Details and timelines for the procurement of the relevant service provider (including for the provision of connector and/or bulk infrastructure if applicable) and the delivery of the service or infrastructure.
- Information (including timelines) of how and when the community will be consulted in both the development and implementation of the plan and its objectives