

SPEECH: POST-COUNCIL MEDIA BRIEFING

Delivered by: Executive Mayor of Polokwane Municipality, Cllr Makoro John Mpe

Date: Wednesday, 30 July 2025

Good afternoon members of the media,
Councillors,
Municipal leadership,
and the people of Polokwane watching us from our virtual platform

Today, I stand before you after a decisive and progressive Council sitting — a meeting that once again affirmed our commitment to good governance, financial discipline and responsive service delivery. We continue to march forward as a *City on the Rise* — and we are rising together with our people.

Audit and Performance Audit Committee (APAC) Report

Council received and adopted a comprehensive report from the Audit and Performance Audit Committee. I am proud to announce that Polokwane Municipality has made significant strides in addressing audit concerns. We have reduced Auditor-General findings from 135 in the 2019/20 financial year to 91 in 2023/24.

Additionally, we have recorded an impressive 87% implementation rate on internal audit findings and a 100% performance achievement for our Internal Audit unit's fourth-quarter progress. Most notably, the municipality reported

zero fruitless and wasteful expenditure in the last quarter, a remarkable achievement.

Council further approved key governance tools including the APAC Charter, Code of Conduct, and the Workplan for 2025/26. We also adopted the Terms of Reference for the APAC Technical Committee.

To sustain this momentum, the City Manager and Executive Directors have been directed to develop individual performance improvement plans by the 15th of August. The appointment of a Chief Audit Executive will be expedited and finalized by the 30th of September.

Financial and Performance Reports

Council adopted the Annual Financial Statements and Annual Performance Report process plan for the 2024/25 financial year. Furthermore, the Fourth Quarter Financial and Institutional Performance Report was tabled and adopted.

The report shows encouraging signs of progress:

- The Municipality achieved 84% of its service delivery targets.
- Capital expenditure reached 91% of the adjusted budget.
- Revenue collection stood at R5.5 billion, representing 92% of our adjusted budget.
- Operating expenditure closed at 97%, showing improved financial discipline and responsible budget management.

Service delivery gains include:

- A 2.87% increase in household access to clean water.
- 880 new household electricity connections.
- Over 21 kilometers of roads tarred or paved in the last quarter.

These figures confirm that we are not only spending our budget but doing so wisely and in a way that meets the needs of our communities.

Appointment of Senior Managers

Let me highlight a major point of emphasis in this Council meeting: **the strategic appointment of highly qualified, competent professionals to lead our institution.**

Council has now finalized the appointment of two critical senior management positions — the **Chief Operations Officer** and the **Executive Director for Water and Sanitation.**

As Executive Mayor, I will be submitting a written report to the MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs in line with legislative prescripts governing the appointment of senior managers.

Let me make it very clear: **we are appointing based on merit, not politics.** The time of deploying friends and favour-seekers is over. In this administration, **excellence is non-negotiable.**

Appointment of Chief Operations Officer: Ms Babalwa Mosomane

Council has appointed **Ms Babalwa Mosomane** as the new **Chief Operations Officer** — a seasoned professional with impeccable credentials:

- Postgraduate Diplomas in **Forensic Auditing** and **Internal Auditing** from UNISA
- B-Tech and National Diplomas in Internal Auditing from **Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University**
- **Municipal Finance Management Programme** and **Programme in Management Development** from **Wits Business School**

She is also a **certified internal audit practitioner**, **certified ethics practitioner**, and a **qualified quality assessor**, accredited by the relevant professional bodies.

Her career journey spans institutions such as:

- **Coega Development Corporation**
- **SAB&T Chartered Accountants** as Senior Internal Auditor
- **Capricorn District Municipality**
- **Thembisile Hani Local Municipality** as Chief Internal Auditor
- She joined Polokwane in 2023 as Assistant Manager for Risk-Based Audits and has been **acting as Chief Audit Executive** since February 2024.

This is a strategic appointment. **Ms Mosomane will drive internal systems reform and operational excellence in this administration.**

Appointment of Executive Director: Water and Sanitation — Mr Kennedy Chihota

We are also proud to announce the appointment of Mr Kennedy Chihota as Executive Director for Water and Sanitation. His appointment is particularly vital as we address historical water backlogs and odour challenges affecting residents from Annadale and Emdo Park to Madiba Park.

Mr Chihota is a professionally registered engineer (ECSA) and holds:

- **Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering** (University of Zimbabwe)
- **Four Master's Degrees** in:
 - Water Resources Engineering & Management (University of Zimbabwe)
 - Business Administration (University of Zimbabwe)
 - Property Development (University of the Witwatersrand)
 - Engineering (University of Stellenbosch)

He brings experience from:

- **University of Limpopo** (Senior Lecturer)
- **Capricorn District Municipality** (PMU Manager, Water Services Manager, and Senior Manager for Infrastructure)
- **City of Cape Town, Johannesburg Water, and City of Ekurhuleni**
- **Managing Director at Ekurhuleni Water Care Company**

With this caliber of leadership, **we are not experimenting — we are executing.**

Testimonials on Mr. Kennedy Chihota

Mr. Kennedy Chihota is widely regarded as a visionary professional whose contributions to local government and water and sanitation sectors are both extensive and impactful.

One former colleague recalls working with Mr. Chihota at Capricorn District Municipality between 2003 and 2008, during the mayoralty of Motalane Dewet Monakedi and under the leadership of Municipal Manager Tracey Malatji. At the time, Mr. Chihota served as the Manager for the Project Management Unit. His colleagues describe him as perceptive, visionary, calm, and calculated in his approach. Where others saw problems, Kennedy consistently identified solutions. Notably, he played a critical role in developing a range of concept and policy documents for infrastructure management, leading to the municipality relying on consultants for less than 10% of its work—a remarkable achievement.

Another colleague from the academic sector shared that he worked with Mr. Chihota at the School of Water and Sanitation at the University of Limpopo, some 20 years ago. There, he was instrumental in training staff from all provinces, capacitating and mentoring many of the water and sanitation managers who are in leadership roles today. Together with Mr. Martin, he led the development and resourcing of the Department of Water and Sanitation. He is described as a highly rated individual with impeccable morals and ethics. His appointment is strongly supported and viewed as a correct and commendable decision.

As President Nelson Mandela once said:

“It doesn’t matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice.”

This quote reminds us that performance matters more than identity. What Polokwane needs — and what we are delivering — are **leaders who can get the job done** and serve our communities with honour, skill, and commitment.

On Misinformation and Paid Campaigns

We are aware of a deliberate, paid social media campaign seeking to discredit this municipality and its leadership.

Let me be crystal clear: **no amount of noise will distract us from delivering to the people of Polokwane.** While others are posting propaganda, **we are laying tar, connecting electricity, and delivering clean water.**

Service Delivery & Financial Discipline: Progress You Can See

Under this administration, Polokwane is seeing **real change**:

- **99% of our Integrated Urban Development Grant (IUDG)** was spent — not returned. In the outer year of 2022/23, we spent 97%. In 2023/24, we spent 98%. We are rising.

- We are busy upgrading **Nelson Mandela Drive**, following recent work on **Dorp, Church, Bodenstein, Thabo Mbeki**, and others.
- We have improved **waste collection coverage**, including in **rural areas**.
- We have **drilled multiple boreholes, upgraded pools and tennis courts**, and transformed the **Seshego Stadium** — bringing **PSL football to the township**.
- We built a **state-of-the-art water treatment plant in Seshego**, supplying up to **10 megalitres of water per day** into the system.

These are not promises. **These are facts on the ground.**

Cost Savings and Clean Governance

Because of decisive leadership:

- We have saved **millions of rands** by curbing excessive **overtime claims** and reining in **fleet management costs**. Over the past two financial years, the municipality has significantly reduced its expenditure, demonstrating improved financial discipline and cost containment. In the 2022/23 financial year, spending stood at R119,787,112. This was reduced to R107,593,903 in 2023/24, resulting in a saving of R12,193,209. In the current 2024/25 financial year, spending further decreased to R68,220,729, reflecting an additional saving of R39,373,174 compared to the previous year. Altogether, this represents a total saving of **R51,566,383** over two years.
- That money is being redirected — not to luxury offices or consultancy — but to **services that touch the lives of our people**.

And where there are lapses or wrongdoing, we don't hide — **we investigate**. We hold people accountable because clean governance is our foundation.

Council Resolutions Summary

Council has approved the **2025/26 IDP and Budget Review Process Plan**, ensuring inclusive, participatory planning aligned with national and provincial goals.

The **Polokwane Housing Association's Q4 report** was noted, with Council calling for urgent corrective action and the appointment of a Company Secretary by 30 September 2025.

A report on the **municipal fleet** highlighted the need to improve operational efficiency. Council also reaffirmed compliance with the **RT29 Transversal Contract** to ensure fair and cost-effective procurement.

Council noted Polokwane's upcoming participation in the **2025 SAIMSA Games in Maseru**, promoting team spirit and inter-municipal collaboration.

The adopted **Back to Basics Action Plan for 2025/26** focuses on improving core services, enhancing financial controls, and increasing community involvement.

A report on **outstanding debts** owed by staff, councillors, and ward committee members was presented, with Council calling for accountability and settlement of all debts.

Progress on the **shift work system** was welcomed, as it is already yielding improved operational efficiency.

Council approved the **takeover of the Curro Heuwelkruin High School access road** to ensure safer, well-maintained infrastructure.

The **Development Charges and Contributions Policy (2025)** was adopted, ensuring fair infrastructure contributions by developers.

Several key **land and infrastructure development resolutions** were passed, including:

- Reservation of land for the **Matlala substation**,
- Adoption of the **Capital Expenditure Framework (CEF)**,
- Approval of the amended **Polokwane Planning By-Law (2025)**.

A **servitude registration** was approved for a water pipeline through Palmietfontein Farm, enabling future water infrastructure development.

Council took decisions on various **leases and land use matters**, including:

- Long-term lease in **Pietersburg Extension 18**,
- Finalisation of **Seshego E site donations**,
- Renewal of **SANCA's lease**, and
- Donation of land to the **Department of Public Works**.

Approval was also granted for a delegation to attend a **Public Works Seminar in China**, promoting knowledge exchange on infrastructure development.

Finally, Council noted a review of the **Integrated Waste Management Plan**, reaffirming environmentally sound and regulation-compliant waste handling practices.

Polokwane is indeed a **City on the Rise**. And we are rising not because of speeches or slogans — but because of **results, discipline** and **visionary leadership**.

Let those who doubt our direction look at the facts. Let those who spread lies see the truth rise up around them in the form of paved roads, unqualified audits and functioning services.

We rise together — with our people.

Thank you.

I am now ready to take questions.