
CLOSING ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY, CLLR MAKORO JOHN MPE, DURING THE MAYCO STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION HELD AT EUPHORIA GOLF & LIFESTYLE ESTATE

08–09 November 2025

Programme Facilitator, Mr. Blessing Manale, who has impeccably steered this strategic planning session;

Speaker of Council, Cllr Welhemina Modiba (in absentia);

The Whip of Council, Cllr Adolph Rapetswa;

Chair of Chairs, Cllr Rufus Muthabine;

The MPAC Chairperson, Cllr Mapula Phoshoko;

All Members of the Mayoral Committee;

Special greeting to MMC Malope and congratulations to her on her graduation;

The Board Chairperson of PHA, Kgoshi Setlamorago Thobejane (Ngwato);

The Leadership of our trade unions, Mr Fortune Mashabathaga representing SAMWU and Mr Mack Malinga from IMATU;

The City Manager, Ms. Thuso Nemugumoni, and your team of Executive Directors and Managers;

The Chairperson of APAC, Mr. Stanley Ngobeni (in absentia);

All other municipal officials present here;

Representatives of various entities and external stakeholders, including Eskom represented by Ms Ruth Booie and Mr Siphe Majola, Lepelle

Northern Water represented by Ms Aluwani Gangashe and her team,
National Treasury represented by Ms Letumile Sebolai and Mr Sydney
Maesela;

Receive my warmest greetings.

Today, as we close this strategic planning session, we signify a new way of strategic planning and chart a positive trajectory for inclusive development.

We quote **Kofi Annan** who says, *“To live is to choose. But to choose well, you must know who you are and what you stand for, where you want to go and why you want to get there.”*

We have gathered here for the past two days to reflect but also renew our efforts to build a better Polokwane – a City of Stars that meets the dreams and aspirations of its residents.

From this strategic planning session, we emerge with a commitment to execute radical and far-reaching decisions in order to produce real and tangible results for the residents of Polokwane.

In this regard, the municipality shall adopt the rapid response approach to ensure that issues such as water, keep lights on, keep communities safe,

fight cable theft and infrastructure vandalism, affecting our residents are attended promptly and resolved without delay.

Related to this approach is the need to improve the functioning of the **MyPolokwane App** as an efficient tool of reporting and resolving issues on the ground. We must ensure that calls that are closed reflect the actual work done to the satisfaction of the resident concerned.

The App should help us to reduce direct high call volumes to councillors, ward committees and employees as well as to reduce service delivery marches.

Programme Director,

We have acknowledged that our dedicated efforts to make Polokwane succeed are at times obscured by **negative media reports** and social media attacks that hurt the image and reputation of our beloved municipality.

It has been reflected that these negative media narratives also impacts our audit process and fees which increased to 13% for the municipality and 8% for PHA in the 2024/25 financial year.

We have thus agreed that we need a **dedicated communications action plan** to address the costs that accrue from these negative reports. This

must be geared towards ensuring mass communication with available technologies to our residents.

However, we must advise you colleagues that the imperative to defend the reputation of the City of Polokwane does not lie solely with the political leadership or communications unit but requires all of us to safeguard to integrity of our institution.

Let us be reminded of the words of **Simon Sinek** when he said, *“customers will never love a company until its employees love it first”*. This demands us to build an institutional culture of patriotism.

Thus, we must accept that if there are internal issues to be addressed, surely there are proper channels within the institution to articulate such issues without falling prey to politically motivated smear campaigns.

Financial Management

Programme Director, we are pleased that the municipality has registered a steady increase in revenue collection, which has enabled us to achieve and retain the **Grade 6 Status**.

However, we note that one of the factors that are hampering our revenue collection efforts is debt.

Hence, we recently embarked on programme to switch off major debtors, including government departments, that owe the municipality millions of rands and have not shown any commitment to settle their debts.

We must now be more aggressive on our debt management program, focusing on traffic fines management with the use of technology, promoting our debt incentive scheme and massively rolling out the risk-based smart meters.

We have appreciated the need to better manage contingent liabilities, especially on legal costs. We must also ensure that our depreciation is cash-backed. Accordingly, we have agreed that the municipality must explore alternative dispute resolution mechanisms as proposed by Legal Services rather than litigating on every matter.

Colleagues,

We appreciate the retaining of an unqualified audit opinion for three consecutive years. However, we have made it clear that it is not a farfetched dream for Polokwane to achieve a clean audit. If we keep this understanding in mind, we will succeed.

Water and Sanitation

The provision of reliable water supply remains our apex priority. We have registered our concerns about the performance of Lepelle Northern Water

which impact on the reliability of the provision of bulk water to the City. This concern is raised against the backdrop of the fact that we have never failed to meet our financial obligations to the utility.

We appreciate that the representative of Lepelle acknowledged today that Polokwane is their top customer and deserve priority. We hope that this acknowledgement will be supported by concomitant action to improve bulk water supply.

We have agreed that there must be proactive and reliable communication regarding the planned shutdowns necessitated by the ongoing Lepelle Northern Water upgrades to ensure that residents are kept abreast of short-term water disruptions.

Lepelle must also put in place plans to minimise water supply disruptions during the course of the planned shutdowns. We thus welcome the commitment from Lepelle to utilise their water tankers for deployment to our hotspots during the shutdowns.

We recommit ourselves to the three point plan to arrest water shortages in the short-term, medium to long-term. We have also agreed to maintain the optimal performance of our own sources to augment water supply.

The drilling of boreholes remains central to our diversified approaches to deliver water to our communities. There is, therefore, a need to continuously pursue Eskom to ensure that completed water projects are energized.

Roads

We have appreciated the progress on expanding road infrastructure with the notable **66.35 kilometres** of roads upgraded to tar or pave since the start of this current term of Council.

This includes ensuring that almost all meshate have tarred roads as a symbol of confidence in the institution of traditional leadership.

We have also been implementing the war on potholes programs to ensure the maintenance of our roads to always remain at quality standards.

We will also expand the road to the University of Limpopo from a two lane to a three lane to better manage traffic along that side of Mankweng.

Essentially, our road infrastructure projects have expanded beyond the City to townships and rural areas, ensuring that almost every ward has a road project.

Local Economy

Programme Director,

The growth of our local economy to generate the much-needed job opportunities remains one of our key priorities.

To address the alarming rate of unemployment, particularly as it impacts the youth, we have agreed on the need to improve on graduates intake through programmes such as the graduates employment programme. Through this progressive programme, we have scrapped the requirement of job experience for entry level jobs. To this end, **233** positions have been filled – **129** by young people and **175** by those with no prior experience.

To drive economic growth, we remain committed to our longstanding catalytic projects such as the GreenArch that has attracted the Hilton Hotel, new TUT Polokwane campus, new school of medicine by the University of Limpopo and psychiatric hospital.

We remain committed to making land available to the both government and the private sector for development. Where there is no development after two years, we seize back our land. We do this to derive maximum value from land at our disposal.

Our efforts to promote economic growth must move beyond the City cluster. In this regard, we said that there is a need to revitalize factory sites

such as the Seshego industrial area to ignite local economic activities and job creation, even in the townships.

To redress the legacy of the past, we remain unwavering to the transformation agenda and elimination of past spatial development patterns. We thus reject the politicization of transformation by certain elements within society to sustain the legacy of apartheid spatial patterns. We are unapologetic about the need for genuine change and inclusive development.

Energy

Programme Director,

The illumination of our public spaces remain high on the agenda. We have mandated the Energy Directorate to move with speed to retrofit our street lights with solar, and start by targeting entrance areas into the City such as Nelson Mandela, R71, Matlala road and Peter Mokaba Sport Precinct.

We have agreed to continue with efforts to expand electrification, especially at the new extensions. Our engagements with Eskom to address capacity challenges must be intensified.

Transportation

Programme Director,

We have agreed that the next phases of Leeto la Polokwane must include expansion at Flora Park, Westernburg and Mankweng in order to increase passenger ridership.

The decision on which areas to expand to must be guided by the economic principle of competitive advantage. This will then help us to unlock benefits from the economic spin offs thereof, including revenue collection.

The need to expand to Mankweng is thus informed by the competitive advantages of the area. There are significant developments that are occurring in Mankweng, especially in and around the University. The municipality cannot be a spectator but must be actively involved in the development of Mankweng.

Law Enforcement

Fellow Colleagues,

The Community Services Directorate has achieved major milestones, especially with the promotion of the City as a sports tourism capital in the province and in the area of environmental management as attested by the numerous greening awards that we have won.

However, law enforcement and traffic remain areas of concern which requires improvement. We need to see a turnaround in these areas,

especially as we approach the festive season. We have also said that the use of technology must be part of our crime combating strategies.

Building Institutional Capacity

The investment in our human capital is critical for us to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. A disciplined, professional and dedicated workforce is what will help us succeed as Polokwane.

To this score, we appreciate the contribution and partnership with our organized labour, SAMWU and IMATU, in ensuring that we maintain the stability of our institution.

We have noted the request of the union leadership for us to review certain consequence management matters and will engage with them on these matters. We also urge our union leaders to make their members understand that our actions are meant to stabilise the institution, which also guarantees job security.

This strategic planning session has deliberated on the insourcing vis a vis outsourcing of certain services, particularly security services. There is underlying principle to limit the outsourcing of services, where possible. However, we have agreed that the question of insourcing must be risk-based, especially on services such as security.

Fleet

We have noted that the procurement and maintenance of fleet is a critical driver of service delivery. We have agreed that the municipality must invest in the capacity of our mechanical centre which used for the repairing of fleet to minimize costs of taking fleet to external service providers and further improving turnaround times.

Conclusion

Fellow Colleagues,

We emerge from this productive strategic planning session with renewed robustness to translate our bold commitments into the lived realities of our residents.

This means ensuring that residents receive water, roads are tarred, potholes are patched and job opportunities are created.

As we conclude, we have agreed to align our priorities with the Six Pillars of the governing's party Roll Call Action Plan to ensure that we accelerate the party's manifesto promises.

This strategic planning has reaffirmed that Polokwane is indeed a City on the rise. A City that remains the only hope for the achievement of a metro status – the first metropolitan municipality in the province.

I have no doubt that we are on course and Polokwane is on the rise.

Let Polokwane rise, Reaga Polokwane!

I thank you.