
**OPENING 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;

Council Speaker, Cllr Kobela Modiba;

Whip of Council, Cllr Phetola Rapetswa;

Chair of Chairs, Cllr Mmaphuthi Muthabine;

Chairperson of MPAC, Cllr Mapula Phoshoko;

Members of the Mayoral Committee;

The Chairperson of Polokwane Housing Association Board, Emeritus Kgosi
Setlamorago Thobejane (Ngwato);

Leaders of Organised Labour, Fortune Mashabathaga representing
SAMWU and Mack Malinga representing IMATU;

The City Manager, Ms. Thuso Nemugumoni;

Chairperson of APAC, Mr. Stanley Ngobeni;

All municipal officials present here;

Good morning, Kgotsong!

We gather here today not for routine or ceremony, but for reflection, renewal and recommitment to build a thriving City for the overall benefit of our residents.

This Mayoral Committee Strategic Planning Session represents the **highest political and administrative leadership level** of our municipality, the strategic nucleus from which every key decision, development intervention and service delivery outcome emerges.

Thus, as we meet here in Mookgophong, we do so to think deeply, plan strategically and act boldly. We do so deliberately over a weekend, not to escape the week's routine, but to demonstrate that leadership knows no clock and service has no schedule. While others rest, we work because the future of Polokwane cannot wait until Monday.

Former President **Nelson Mandela** once said, *"Vision without action is just a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world."*

That is our task to ensure that our **vision meets action**, and that every plan we conceive translates into tangible progress for the people of Polokwane.

Let me reiterate a few critical things. No matter how intelligent you may be, if you lack discipline, you will not succeed. Discipline entails respect for the residents of our City whom we are expected to serve without fail.

I should also remind you that Polokwane is the hope of not only the province, but the country as a whole and the organization that has deployed us.

A City on the Rise

Fellow Colleagues,

This strategic planning session must enable us to boldly restate that Polokwane is a City on the rise.

In September, Polokwane proved itself to be more than just Limpopo's administrative capital when it was confirmed by Real Estate Agent **Seeff Polokwane** that our average property values rose from **R850 000** a decade ago to about **R1.5 million** today.

Moreover, **BusinessTech** highlights that the City has transformed into a modern centre boasting shopping malls, restaurants, entertainment venues and thriving residential estates. It must be stated that some of these investments are within the innercity, an undeniable vote of confidence in the local economy.

All these developments point to a City on the rise and testify that our efforts to grow the local economy and create employment opportunities are bearing fruits.

Polokwane continues to be characterized by the hovering of cranes throughout the skies as evidenced by the construction of the academic hospital, the first psychiatric hospital and the GreenArch which will include the Hilton Hotel next to the upmarket greenery shopping centre.

Municipal Grading and Institutional Integrity

Programme director,

Polokwane is no ordinary municipality. It is a **Grade 6 City** — the economic and administrative capital of Limpopo, a space of opportunity, ambition and growing potential.

As we converge here today, we are pleased to have **maintained our Level 6 grading**, which reflects the scale of our population, the size of our budget, and the complexity of our governance systems. But let me take this opportunity to **clarify and firmly correct the misinformation** being circulated by individuals desperately seeking votes through distortion and deceit.

Let the people of Polokwane — and our dedicated employees — not be misled by false claims suggesting that this grading exists to enrich councillors at the expense of workers. **That is simply untrue.**

The **remuneration of councillors** is guided strictly by the *Determination of Upper Limits of Salaries, Allowances and Benefits of Different Members of Municipal Councils*, as published annually in the **Government Gazette** by the **Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)**. Municipal councils are legally bound to adhere to these determinations and **do not act outside of this framework.**

Similarly, **Section 56 and 57 Managers (Senior Managers)** are graded according to the size and classification of each municipality — from Level 1 up to Level 10. In our case, with Polokwane's current **Grade 6 classification**, the salaries of senior managers are set at **Level 8**, in full compliance with ministerial regulations.

For all **other municipal officials below Section 56/57 level**, salary adjustments and benefits are **not determined locally**, nor by Council. They are negotiated **nationally** at the **South African Local Government Bargaining Council (SALGBC)** — a legitimate platform where both recognised labour unions, **SAMWU** and **IMATU**, represent employees, while **SALGA** represents municipalities as the employer body.

The **outcomes of these national negotiations** are binding on all municipalities across South Africa, including Polokwane, and are implemented annually without deviation.

Financial management

Programme Director,

We have turned a new page in our financial performance story — one that reflects discipline, foresight and strengthened governance.

Under our leadership and through the commitment of our entire administration, the Municipality achieved a major milestone in the 2024/25 financial year — for the first time in recent years, **we did not return any portion of our allocated budget to the National Treasury.**

This was not luck. It was the outcome of tightened internal systems, smarter planning, and stronger oversight across the project cycle.

In the past, delayed procurement and readiness issues slowed down delivery. Thus, we must maintain the robust internal controls we have put in place to ensure that projects are planned and ready for implementation from day one of the financial year.

Monthly progress meetings with contractors and consultants must remain the standard practice — allowing us to monitor implementation in real time, address bottlenecks early, and take decisive corrective action.

We must not allow collusion between consultants and contractors as this will compromise the quality of work and thus impact negatively on our residents.

This culture of **accountability and efficiency** will allow to sustain our impressive revenue performance.

We are happy that the municipality collected **R2.83 billion** in the 2024/25 financial year — a steady rise from **R2.38 billion (2023/24)**, **R2.46 billion (2022/23)**, **R2.32 billion (2021/22)** and **R2.09 billion (2020/21)**.

Polokwane's financial turnaround is not a coincidence — it is the product of deliberate leadership, prudent management and collective commitment to build a City that is financially sound, service-driven and development-focused.

Water Supply

Programme Director,

When I met with the President of the Republic, His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, I told him that **water remains my number one priority**

for Polokwane because water is not just a service — it is life, dignity and development itself.

Hence, we have made notable progress in improving the reliability of supply through infrastructure upgrades, leak reduction, and the diversification of sources.

The completion of the Seshego water treatment plant and much-awaited completion of the Sandriver North point to the fact that our three-pronged plan to arrest the water deficit in the short-term, medium to long-term remains on course.

As part of the medium-term interventions, we acknowledge the current disruptions arising from Lepelle Northern Water's ongoing upgrades, but wish to emphasize that these short-term disruptions are investments in long-term stability.

What we require is **honest and timely communication** from Lepelle Northern Water so that we can, in turn, communicate truthfully with our communities, businesses and institutions.

Polokwane continues to meet its financial obligations to the water utility in full and on time. What we seek in return is **value, reliability and**

partnership. Our planning must always look beyond the present — for we are building not only for ourselves but for **generations yet unborn.**

Energy provision

Programme Director,

We are facing what I often call a pandemic of infrastructure vandalism — where the very systems meant to light up our city are stolen or damaged. These criminal acts rob our communities of safety and our city of beauty.

But we are responding decisively. We have installed high-mast lights at key entry points and in rural areas, reclaiming the night and restoring visibility.

We have also recently embarked on a massive **Safer City Campaign** to clean up our city and rid it of criminal elements. This campaign must be sustained and executed on a regular basis.

Electricity expansion remains paramount. Within our jurisdiction, all areas are electrified — except for a few extensions that remain dependent on Eskom's capacity expansion. We continue to urge Eskom to resolve those constraints so that every household in Polokwane can enjoy the benefits of modern energy.

We are also intensifying efforts to implement solar-powered public lighting, integrating renewable energy into our city's infrastructure and reducing pressure on the grid.

Roads and Transport Infrastructure

Our progress on road infrastructure has been tangible and visible. Roads such as Nelson Mandela Drive, Campbell, Pierre, Oost and The Crescent Drive now stand as proud symbols of renewal and connectivity.

In the last four years, **66.35 kilometres** of roads were upgraded from gravel to tar or paving. These are the arteries of economic activity, social integration and service accessibility.

In the 2024/25 financial year, 16 road rehabilitation projects were completed translating into **10.7KM** whilst 5 road rehabilitation projects were completed for the 2025/26 financial year translated into **6.39KM**.

We are not only fixing roads, we are rebuilding mobility and accessibility. But as we expand, we must also enhance communication with communities and businesses affected by our works. Timely information about closures, detours and timelines builds trust and patience — and trust is the foundation of governance.

The progress on improving road infrastructure complements to work being done to upgrade our transport infrastructure with the recent opening of the **Thabo Mbeki Bus Station**, a significant milestone in our BRT program anchored on Leeto la Polokwane.

Human Settlements

The achievement of the **Level 2 Housing Accreditation** has granted us the autonomy to construct and manage low-cost housing projects directly as a municipality.

Recently, we successfully allocated **187 rural housing units across 17 wards**, following a transparent, data-driven process guided by verified need and technical readiness. This allocation represents our commitment to **spatial equity** ensuring that both urban and rural communities enjoy a fair share of development opportunities.

With every audit season, we are reminded of the challenges that **PHA** continues to grapple with. We must thus use this session to reposition PHA and enhance its performance as a leading housing entity in Polokwane.

Environmental Management and Internal Capacity

No modern city can thrive without a strong environmental conscience. We must intensify our efforts to promote clean spaces, efficient waste management and the greening of our urban environment.

Equally important is the **investment in our people** — the staff of Polokwane Municipality. A city is only as strong as its workforce. We must continue to upskill, digitise and inspire our officials to serve with integrity and innovation.

Conclusion

Fellow Colleagues,

This Strategic Planning Session is a declaration of intent. It is where vision meets discipline, and leadership meets accountability.

Let us use these two days to sharpen our strategies, renew our commitment and set a clear path forward — for the sake of every household, every business and every child who calls Polokwane home.

As **Kofi Annan** wisely said: *“To live is to choose. But to choose well, you must know who you are and what you stand for.”*

We know who we are. We are **Polokwane** — a City that leads, that learns, and that delivers. Let us plan with purpose, act with courage, and deliver with pride.

Ke a leboga. I Thank you.