

ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY REMAINS FUNCTIONAL AND FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

ETHEKWINI Municipality continues to be functional and financially sustainable. This has been confirmed by independent institutions such as National Treasury, Statistics South Africa, and Rating Agencies. EThekweni City Manager Musa Mbhele presented an overview of the City's performance on service delivery at a lekgotla review workshop session convened by eThekweni Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba.

Mbhele said the City continues to be functional and financially sound despite challenges such as intermittent water supply in some areas, homelessness, land invasion, and safety.

The workshop was attended by members of the Executive Committee and senior management and focused on reviewing progress made in terms of implementing the 2024/25 financial year budget.

Mayor Xaba said: "We decided to conduct this workshop as part of fulfilling our oversight role in the implementation of the Integrated Development Plan. This will assist us to enhance service delivery."

According to the Census 2022, eThekweni Municipality has recorded a significant increase in the provision of services such as roads, electricity, and water and sanitation. This has been achieved despite the ongoing challenge of rapid urbanisation, evident by the increase in the number of informal settlements. The accelerated implementation of the Inner City Regeneration Programme has also yielded positive results, including improved levels of cleanliness in the City. This has created



Acting Deputy City Manager of Trading Services Ednick Msweli, above, attended a lekgotla review workshop which was convened by eThekweni Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba, pictured in the top image. The Executive Committee and senior City leadership was in attendance.

a positive investor climate as demonstrated by the increase in business confidence from 38.4 points to 60.7 points. The R217 investment in catalytic projects includes the R15 billion Westown development, the R1.9 billion Giba Business Estate, the R4.2 billion Oceans uMhlanga, Keystone, and infrastructure improvements in various tourism sites such as the beachfront.

This investment has contributed immensely to job creation in the City and as a result, eThekweni Municipality has emerged as

the leading metro in the country in terms of job creation and retention for 2024. This is according to the recent Labour Force Survey by Stats SA.

Regarding financial sustainability, the City Manager added that the City continues to maintain a sound financial position. "Our collection rate is currently at 93 percent with a gearing ratio of 16.7 percent. Our cash on hand is R8.5 billion. Credit Rating Agencies have given us an AA-rating, meaning that our credit worthiness is very strong," said

Mbhele.

He attributed this success to the prudent financial management policies, transparency, effective oversight as well as consistent support by key stakeholders such as National Treasury.

To address the challenge of intermittent water supply, Mbhele said the City will be accelerating the implementation of the Water Turnaround Strategy with a focus on reducing non-revenue water.

MAYOR ENGAGES RATEPAYERS ON WATER TURNAROUND STRATEGY

ETHEKWINI Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba on 6 March held a consultation meeting with ratepayers on the Water Turnaround Strategy.

Prior to the ratepayers meeting, the Mayor also met with employees from the Water and Sanitation Unit to track progress with regards to the implementation of the strategy.

The strategy seeks to improve the performance of the Water and Sanitation Unit and to reposition it to meet current and future water and sanitation demands. The implementation of the strategy is a work in progress and is based on a set of strategic objectives developed by the City and supported by National Treasury's City Support Programme. Mayor Xaba said among the strategic goals that the strategy aims to achieve is the reduction of non-revenue water by five percent annually until the City reaches the South African benchmark of 25



EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba recently met with ratepayers to present the implementation of the Water Turnaround Strategy which seeks to improve performance of the Water and Sanitation Unit.

percent.

Mayor Xaba said the City aims to operate an efficient and financially viable water service.

Other proposed interventions on the strategy include proactive water leak detection,

creating a Non-Revenue Water Nerve Centre within the Water and Sanitation Unit manned by a skilled technical team, and the deployment of technology including sensors to monitor water infrastructure.

PLANS TO REJUVENATE THE INNER CITY

THE of the City's regeneration plan was outlined by eThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele. He was speaking on the City's podcast eThekwini Matters where he outlined the plans for the central business district as well as the successes achieved thus far.

He said rejuvenating the inner city is vital for driving economic recovery and fostering a vibrant urban hub. "The first objective is to restore the inner city to be a hub for jobs. Among our objectives is promoting public safety through enhanced police visibility and investing in e-policing. We also want to work to attract businesses back into the CBD, which will create jobs. We are doing this by providing incentives for businesses who invest in the inner city," he said.

Mbhele said they are also focusing on upgrading the public realm to ensure everyone experiences the City in terms of pavements, lighting, maintaining of green spaces, and public ablution facilities.

"We are also managing land use better, ensuring that we deal with illegal informal trade and other illegal acts such as illegal dumping in the CBD. We also want to enhance cleanliness so that all people who converge in the CBD enjoy the experience. As part of safety, we will deal with the issue of homelessness holistically."

Mbhele said the areas being targeted currently include the beachfront, stretching from the Point at the Harbour Mouth to the Umgeni River Mouth.

"Our priority is to ensure the beachfront continues to be a drawcard for tourists. We are also attracting private investment to support us in this regard. Mbhele said driving catalytic projects that exist in the CBD is also a priority. These include the Centrum Site, the old drive in site, a film studio, the Sports Precinct, the Point Waterfront Marina Development, and a light rail train that the City wants to introduce.

"It is pleasing to see how willing business people are to make the City better. When we engage with them about our programmes, they are prepared to avail their resources to get the City to where it needs to be and to make Durban better. We welcome this engagement," Mbhele concluded.

INTENSIFYING INVESTMENT AND TOURISM

AS A follow up to successfully hosting the Investec SA Golf Open Championship, the City was invited to participate in the forthcoming Yachting Aftersales and Refit Experience (YARE) Superyacht Expo to be held in Viareggio in Italy from 12 to 14 March. Viareggio is a small Tuscany town that has transformed into a superyacht epicentre.

The expo is an extension of the Golf Tourism and Lifestyle Convention activities, linked to the DP World/Investec SA Open Championship set of events, where eThekwini was approved as the host city. The golf tournament was crowned as a historic transformation milestone for both the City and Dylan Naidoo, the winner of the tournament.

EThekwini City Manager Musa Mbhele said Durban is set to become an increasingly attractive hub for prestigious international events, with several high-profile engagements on the horizon. "The Golf Business and Lifestyle Convention partnership with DP World and the Sunshine Tour, is one such example. This premier tournament has united key stakeholders in golf, tourism, super-yachting, and private aviation industries. This expo is a platform to promote Durban's potential as a global investment destination. It will also solidify the City's presence within the luxury tourism and investment sector," said Mbhele.

The YARE has offered Durban and its maritime stakeholders to be the host city for YARE 2026.

The YARE is an annual business conference that creates an opportunity for participants to interact with over 100 superyacht captains and over 300 blue chip global companies.



JOY AT FURNITURE GRADUATION

EXCITEMENT filled the air on 7 March as 60 trainees received their South African Qualification Authority (SAQA)-accredited NQF Level 2 certificates in Furniture Making. This took place during a Furniture Manufacturing Skills Development Training Programme graduation ceremony at the Umkhumbane Entrepreneurial Support Centre.

This followed three months of hard work, where the graduates honed their skills in crafting various types of furniture at this centre. During the ceremony, some of their impressive creations were on display, including headboards, couches, and tables.

Graduate Andile Ngubane, 21, said he is well on the road to success: "I have already secured two clients and have received additional orders. I'm grateful for this opportunity and the customers for supporting my business."

Since its launch in 2019, the initiative has empowered over 230 trainees, many of whom are now running successful businesses and



There was excitement all round on 7 March as furniture manufacturing trainees received their certificates, celebrating three months of hard work and officially launching their entrepreneurial journeys.

making a positive impact in their communities in terms of jobs creation.

The ceremony was attended by the City's Deputy Chairperson of Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Phili Ndlovu and Ward 29 Councillor Bhekisisa Mngadi.

Both councillors congratulated graduates and praised the quality of the furniture and the success of

the initiative. The programme is two-fold, with another group of trainees set to complete their 12-month training later this year.

Councillor Ndlovu highlighted the programme's significant social impact.

"The furniture-making sector was historically male-dominated, but now the majority of the trainees are women and youth who are creating job opportunities."

PARTNERSHIPS CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Beneficiaries of the City's Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PEP) at their place of employment.

ENHANCING job creation in eThekweni remains high on the City's economic development list of priorities. And to promote job creation, the City has partnered with the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme Office to invest R7.5 million.

This investment will enable the City to upskill and onboard 231 unemployed youth, demonstrating its commitment to addressing youth unemployment.

The partnership, supported by major industry players and regional and national stakeholders, will strengthen the relationship between the private and public sectors, providing skills development and guaranteed employment opportunities for unemployed youth. The City prioritises economic growth through the Shape Durban Strategy, which calls for eThekweni Municipality to eliminate poverty, decrease inequality, maintain economic development, and generate new employment.

The Global Business Services (GBS) Sector Development Programme is one way the City is working to achieve this goal. The City's Economic Development Unit has a Memorandum of Agreement with GBS to provide unemployed youth with employment opportunities.

CLAIRWOOD MASTERPLAN STILL IN PROGRESS

ETHEKWINI Municipality is in the process of consulting with residents of Clairwood and businesses in the area about a proposed amendment in the Land Use Management Scheme to turn it into a logistics park. The City urges all interested parties to submit their comments in writing before the closing date of 8 April.

The purpose of the amendment in the Municipal Land Use Management Scheme to logistics park is to ensure better management of the area, which has evolved over time from a residential to a mixed-use logistics park.

The City aims to ensure that all land uses in the area are done legally and within the ambit of the relevant regulations, making it a safe, manageable space for all users.

Lekha Allopi, Deputy Head of the Development Facilitation Department said: "It must be noted that the plan will bring with it many benefits for the area, including investment in infrastructure such as new and improved roads, electricity and storm water drainage." She said while communities were concerned about preserving the area, the master plan aims to preserve the

cultural and heritage sites and introduce a more sustainable, quality neighbourhood. She assured residents that there will be no rezoning of properties in Clairwood through the master plan without the owner's consent. Interested and affected parties are encouraged to provide written comments on the amendment to the Land Use Scheme in writing.

The document can be found on <https://www.durban.gov.za/pages/residents/lums-adverts>. E-mail: noreply.dfdobjection@durban.gov.za Tel No. 031 311 7876 (Miss Thobile Mlaba)



HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

THE 2024 KwaZulu-Natal Cluster Skills Development Accelerator recently held a graduation for participants. The graduation marked a key milestone in the journey of the City's small and medium-sized enterprise (SMEs) in the furniture, chemical and automotive industries. The ceremony not only recognised the accomplishments of SME graduates but also demonstrated the Accelerator Programme's revolutionary influence on the City's economic landscape.

Takalani Rathiyaya, the City's Economic Development and Planning Unit Deputy Head said the KZN furniture industry



The 2024 KwaZulu-Natal cluster skills programme graduates celebrated their achievements at the Royal Golf Club.

plays an important part in the provincial economy, making a substantial contribution to GDP growth and job creation.

"The Accelerator was

introduced in March last year with a clear goal which was to position high-potential SMEs as key vendors for leading businesses," he said.

As part of eThekweni's larger initiatives to promote local industrial development, the Accelerator sought to improve and elevate SMEs through focused interventions such as capital investment, standards upgrading, and market access.

The impact of the Accelerator was evident through several successes witnessed over the course of the year which included SMEs presenting their value propositions to leading retailers and gaining exposure to large customers and retail standards.

Commercial opportunities were also identified by lead firms, paving the way for further engagement and collaboration.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE CLOTHING AND TEXTILE INDUSTRY

THE KwaZulu-Natal Clothing and Textile Cluster invited small, medium, and micro enterprises to a strategic planning session on 4 March in Kloof. They were supported by the City's Economic Development and Planning Unit for the session. The programme aimed to offer innovative solutions to issues affecting the clothing and textile cluster's growth as well as to highlight their achievements in the previous financial year. Through this programme, the textile and apparel sectors as well as manufacturers will collaborate to promote innovation and ongoing progress in the sector.

Despite localisation and improved manufacturing sales, capacity utilisation and employment in the formal



The KwaZulu-Natal Clothing and Textile industry is supported by the City's Economic Development and Planning Unit. The industry presented their plans for growth in 2025.

sector have declined.

The KZN's clothing and textile sector has launched Project Assegai which aims to boost growth, inclusivity, and competition. The initiative aims to attract investment by opening domestic and foreign markets, implementing value chain reform, and connecting

businesses with investors. It also focuses on increasing output, fostering advanced technological skills, and upskilling future executives. The project also promotes sustainability and resilience, ensuring a robust value chain for KZN's apparel and textiles industry.

RATES REBATE RENEWAL DEADLINE

PROPERTY owners who receive a rates rebate are reminded that their rebate renewal forms are due by 30 April 2025. The forms have already been sent to beneficiaries.

Rebates are granted because eThekweni Municipality, in terms of the criteria set out in the Rates Policy, may exempt a specific category of owners of properties, or the owners of a specific category of properties, from the payment of a rate levied on their property. In order to continue to receive this rebate for the 2024/25 financial year, the form must be signed in the presence of a Commissioner of Oaths and submitted to the nearest Sizakala Centre or Municipal office. The forms can also be emailed to ratesrebates@durban.gov.za.

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