POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY

A Secondary city with a 20:30 Vision

“Embedded in this IDP is our vision to realize a metro status as embraced in the Vision 2030 and Smart City concept which aims to transform the City of Polokwane into a bustling and growing metropolis that provides high quality of life for its people” Executive Mayor, Cllr T.P. Nkadimeng, Polokwane Municipality (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 26).

Source: Author’s own photo

Report prepared by

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1. Introduction

The Polokwane Municipality is situated in the northern part of South Africa, centrally within the Limpopo Province and the Capricorn District Municipality. The Municipality covers an extensive area of 377,579 hectares. It is the administrative capital of Limpopo and is also the economic hub of the province. Recently, the Municipality of Aganang was incorporated into Polokwane, thereby adding a large, mostly rural area to the Municipality.¹

Being centrally located in the province and also the fact that the city area of Polokwane is situated at the nexus of important national and provincial roads – which radiate out like spokes of a wheel – result in it being well linked to neighbouring countries, surrounding provinces and particularly to Gauteng. Importantly, whereas Polokwane is still 70% rural, its urban node is a growing, modern city. Linked to this primary node are the two smaller, formal towns of Seshego (to the north-west) and Mankweng (to the east). On the outskirts of these urban areas are four clusters of settlements, namely Sebayeng/Dikgale (north-east); Molepo/Chuene/Maja (south); north-west) and Aganang (north-west) (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 64).

The Municipality has a bustling town that is racially integrated. The Municipality has a clear vision of the future, and it has all the required plans and policies in place (Polokwane 2030). It is planning an integrated bus rapid transit (BRT) system and it has large shopping malls and a growing number of high-income gated communities. It has moreover improved its audit outcomes and for the first time last year, it contributed its own funds for capital projects, which indicates a move away from sole dependence on grants.

Figure 1: Settlement structure of Polokwane

Source: Polokwane SDF, 2010

¹ The economic and planning data and the SDF therefore do not yet include this area.
To understand the current spatial configuration of Polokwane and the policies to address spatial integration, it is important to have an appreciation of the apartheid forces that shaped its history. Situated in the Limpopo Province, the present Polokwane comprises a large urban complex that originated as the former white town of Pietersburg, one centrally located in a municipality that comprises satellite former homeland towns and a large rural hinterland of traditional settlements.

To achieve the objectives of separate development under apartheid, the government enacted several laws and introduced policies, which, in Limpopo, resulted in the establishment of black towns, the Lebowa homeland and industrial deconcentration, and border industrial areas. The intention was to separate black and white areas, to separate African ethnic groups (Northern Sotho) and to provide cheap labour close to white towns to prevent the influx of Africans into white towns. What this meant in the case of Polokwane, was that Pietersburg developed as a white town and some distance from it, in the early 1960s, Seshego (10 km) and Mankweng (30 km) were established as black towns. In 1972, the homeland of Lebowa intended, for the Northern Sotho people, was declared a self-governing area and Seshego was made the temporary capital (Donaldson & van der Merwe, 2000, p. 121). Government invested in housing and infrastructure in these black towns and in the 1970s, it built 2,308 houses in Seshego and 561 in Mankweng (Donaldson & van der Merwe, 2000, p. 123), mainly to accommodate Africans relocated from Pietersburg.

![Figure 2: Former Lebowa homeland in Polokwane](http://www.go.galegroup.com/)


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2 There was also the colonial heritage, particularly relating to the Land Acts and segregation.

3 Particularly, the Bantu Authorities Act, No. 68 of 1951, used to create the former Lebowa homeland, and the Regulations for the Administration and Control of Townships, also known as Regulation 293 of 1962 (Cloete & Massey, 2017, p. 152), which allowed for tenure in the form of permission to occupy permits in areas not surveyed.

4 Lebowakgomo was also established as a capital and administrative centre for Lebowa (Donaldson & van der Merwe, 2000, p. 118) but this town falls outside the boundaries of Polokwane.

Surrounding the towns are large expanses of traditional land where tribal authorities allocate and manage land. The government’s regional industrialisation strategies of the 1970s and the 1980s aimed to locate industries in homeland areas close to existing white towns. Seshego was identified as an industrial growth point (though never formally declared one) and incentives were offered for industry to relocate there (Cloete & Massey, 2017, p. 154). Between 1980 and 1997, the towns of Seshego and Mankweng experienced considerable growth so that the land areas of the towns doubled (Donaldson & van der Merwe, 2000, p. 126). Pietersburg also expanded during this period and displayed the characteristics of an apartheid city shaped by the Group Areas Act, as illustrated below:

![Figure 3: Schematic of the Pietersburg apartheid town, c.1996](https://www.impulscentrum.be/south_africa/mod3_city/lesson21.asp)

The ideological and spatial separation was carried through into the administrative, political and governance systems, which resulted in a complex situation that needed to be addressed in the process of establishing a new local government system for Polokwane during the political transition in the 1990s (Donaldson & van der Merwe, 2000, p. 126). Seshego and Pietersburg were amalgamated into the new Transitional Local Council (TLC) and when the new municipal boundary was demarcated, Mankweng was included with traditional areas that were to remain intact and not divided between municipalities (Donaldson & van der Merwe, 2000, p. 130). This brought together many different areas and systems under one single municipality.

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6 Mankweng grew by 189%, increasing its area from 251 ha to 726 ha, while Seshego grew by 117%, increasing its land area from 1 264 ha to 2 741 ha.

7 There were areas administered under the Transvaal Provincial Administration, the self-governing territory of Lebowa – which had a legislative assembly and cabinet – and the homeland areas with traditional authorities (Donaldson & van der Merwe, 2000, p. 127).
Today, the CSIR categorises Polokwane as a city area (second in the hierarchy of settlements) because of its population size and the Government and Economic Services Index\(^8\), which rates it between two and five (CSIR, 2016, p. 6).

The present report was commissioned by the South African Cities Network (SACN) as part of their ongoing and pioneering research on secondary cities in South Africa. In this research series, we explore the issue of spatial integration within secondary cities and those cities’ potential in terms of achieving the vision and objectives of the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) recently adopted by Cabinet.

This report is therefore structured into six sections of which sections two and three provide important contextual information on Polokwane to set the scene for interrogating the Municipality’s spatial planning, spatial structure and spatial plans in sections four and five. Conclusions are drawn in Section six.

Our preparation of the report involved desktop research and interviews, a site visit to Polokwane and meetings with several officials to allow us to explore in some depth the spatial issues confronting the Municipality.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

2.1 Demographic overview

Polokwane has an estimated population just in excess of the 700 000 mark. The 2011 Census indicated a population of 629 000. Since 2007, the population has grown at a rate of 2.8% (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 89). During the same period, the population of the Limpopo Province grew at 1.2%, while the growth in the Capricorn District stood at only 0.8% (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 89). This is an indication of Polokwane’s increasing dominance in both the province and the district.

Table 1: Demographic data on the population of Polokwane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of people</td>
<td>424 835</td>
<td>508 277</td>
<td>628 999</td>
<td>702 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of urban people</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>257 836</td>
<td>272 085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total rural number of people</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>371 163</td>
<td>430 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural (traditional)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>351 154</td>
<td>418 975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural (commercial farms)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20 009</td>
<td>11 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households</td>
<td>85 373</td>
<td>124 978</td>
<td>178 001</td>
<td>214 464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual growth rate of population since previous period</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual growth rate of households since</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^8\) This index reflects the extent of formal economic activity where the higher the index the higher the diversity of the economy (metropolitan areas have an index of 7, for example).
Spatially, however, this distribution and growth has not been evenly spread across the Municipality, especially because there are large rural areas in the Municipality. The distribution of the population across the main clusters in Polokwane is shown in the table below and serves to illustrate the variant densities ranging from 27.2 in Seshego down to only 0.4 in the Molepo complex.

Table 2: Spatial distribution and population density

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster-management area</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
<th>Density – persons/ha</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molepo/Chuene/Maja</td>
<td>189 037</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>More than half of the municipal area includes farm areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mankweng</td>
<td>68 898</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Former black town and home to the University of Limpopo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebayeng/Dikgale</td>
<td>34 061</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Cluster</td>
<td>15 089</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Includes the former city of Pietersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seshego Cluster</td>
<td>3 311</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>Smallest area with highest density; former black town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moletji Cluster</td>
<td>64 564</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>374 959</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Polokwane IDP 2014–16 (Polokwane Municipality, 2017, p. 88)

Table 3 below reflects a broad estimate of densities across the rural and urban areas:

Table 3: Population density across the Municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLOKWANE: POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area of the municipality – ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total built-up area (urban area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per m² for built-up area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households per m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households per m² for built-up area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from 1996 and 2011 Census and 2016 Household Survey}

The number of households in Polokwane is estimated at 214 464 (2016), thus 36 463 more than in 2011 (178 001 households). Significantly, the number of households has grown faster than the population and reflects a steady increase.
What this means is that approximately 7 300 new households are formed each year, all of whom must have access to accommodation and to the resources of the Municipality. The household size of 3.5 persons per household is lower than in the Limpopo Province (3.8) and also the Capricorn District (3.7) (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 70), which is probably due to the relatively higher urban population that tends to have smaller households.

Polokwane is experiencing in-migration. The information on migration was obtained from a study conducted in 2012 by the Feinstein International Centre in conjunction with the University of the Witwatersrand\(^\text{10}\). Their study researched internal and external migration and found 95% of the migration into Polokwane to be internal. Whereas almost half of the internal migrants come from South Africa – though they were born outside of Polokwane – the other half were born in Polokwane. High numbers of the latter migrants (71%) migrated from the rural areas of Polokwane to the city (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 70). Because the N1 highway connecting Zimbabwe and Johannesburg passes through Polokwane, it attracts migrants from South Africa’s northern neighbours. Most (95%) of the international migrants are from Zimbabwe and the remaining 5% are from Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland and Malawi. Interestingly, more than half of external migrants move from townships or urban areas within their home countries (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 71).

The Feinstein study also investigated the reasons for migration and it was found that 56% of international migrants moved to Polokwane as a result of conflict, land disputes or evictions in their country of origin and that 17% of them had some kind of family tie to Polokwane (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 73), thus making it a familiar place to settle. Almost half (46%) of the internal migrants indicated that they had moved to Polokwane for economic reasons or because they had family there (15%) or for education (14%) (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 73).

According to Figure 4 below, the population composition of Polokwane is skewed towards greater numbers of people in the economically active age range, with the majority being in the cohort of 15–29 years. It also has a high number of very young people (0–4 years).

\(^9\) The Research Report obtained these data from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses and the 2007 Community Survey.

\(^{10}\) This study was mentioned in the Polokwane 2030 Economic Development and Growth Research Report and has the reference: African Centre for Migration and Society, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Feinstein International Centre, Tufts University. 2012. “Developing a profiling methodology for displaced people in urban areas, case study: Polokwane, South Africa”.

9 | P a g e
Global Insight estimated that in 2015, 59,664 people in Polokwane were infected and living with HIV/AIDS. This points to a steady increase since 2007, when 52,486 were infected and the figure of 57,444 in 2011 (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 98).

Most residents in Polokwane live in formal brick structures, 48% own their own homes and only 8% still need to pay off home loans (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 83). The second most significant housing typology and tenure form is rental and 22% indicated they were renting a property (compared with only 13% in Limpopo). An additional 18% indicated they were occupying rent-free accommodation (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 83).

Polokwane has been able to reduce the number of informal dwellings, as evidenced by the following formal data:
Table 4: Informal settlement structures in Polokwane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of houses</td>
<td>85 373</td>
<td>124 978</td>
<td>178 001</td>
<td>214 464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of informal structures</td>
<td>10 447</td>
<td>19 476</td>
<td>16 044</td>
<td>11 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage informal</td>
<td>15,6</td>
<td>9,0</td>
<td>5,2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census and Community Household Survey, 2016

The 2017 Draft IDP however indicates that land invasions are an emerging problem. The Municipality has listed the properties in town and on the farms that have been invaded and it has obtained court orders to enforce land-use management and planning. Informal settlements are to be found on eight properties and in one township in town and in Seshgo, and also on five farm portions (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 71). In the past ten years, the Municipality has upgraded six informal settlements and has identified five other informal settlements in the municipal area\(^\text{11}\) that need upgrading/relocation.

Polokwane also has a number of blocked projects that would provide 2 555 units, mostly in the former homeland areas (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 80). The Municipality has identified several portions of land owned by either the Municipality or the Province that are to be developed for integrated human-settlement development so as to address the backlogs (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 82).

2.2 Economic overview

Polokwane is both the capital city and the economic hub of Limpopo Province. Its role as an administrative and financial centre and its central location as a transport hub, dominate its sectoral contribution to the local economy. The primary sectors of agriculture and mining, though they contribute a small percentage to the economy, are in decline. The secondary sector (manufacturing and construction) is fairly small but significant in Polokwane. It has been ‘holding its own’ but is struggling to increase its contribution. As expected, the tertiary sector has been responsible for the dominant contribution while trade, finance and government services have made significant contributions.

The composite table below (Table 5) summarises the contributions of the main economic sectors and their growth rates over specific periods. Even if the overall picture is one of unevenness and change, some trends are nevertheless evident:

- Except for mining (shaded red), all sectors of the economy have grown since 1996.
- High growth was experienced in the five-year period after 1996 but, driven largely by the decline in the mining sector, growth slowed considerably in the decade between 2001 and 2011.
- Some recovery is evident between 2011 and 2015 (except in mining and electricity) though generally at levels half of what they previously were.

\(^{11}\) Disteneng, Freedom Park, Mankweng Unit F, Mankweng Unit G Ext, Ext 106 (recently relocated from Mohlakaneng and Disteneng) (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 83)
However, transport, agriculture, construction and government sectors were good performers.

- Since 2011, the finance, insurance, real estate and business-services sector has been the top contributor to the economy, with government (shaded green) in the second position.

Table 5: Economic sectoral analysis of Polokwane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Sector contribution to economy</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas and water</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade, catering and accommodation</td>
<td>3,655</td>
<td>4,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage and communication</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>1,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate and business services</td>
<td>5,861</td>
<td>6,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General government</td>
<td>3,877</td>
<td>5,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community, social and personal services</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>1,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17,196</td>
<td>21,221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from Census 1996 and Census 2011 and Household Survey

Other key economic indicators for Polokwane are noted below. Importantly, there has been an increase in household income.

Table 6: Economic indicators for Polokwane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>424,835</td>
<td>508,277</td>
<td>628,999</td>
<td>702,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. employed</td>
<td>70,935</td>
<td>93,768</td>
<td>155,691</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed people as a percentage of total population</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household income</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>38,385</td>
<td>95,587</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual growth in household</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>income (2001–2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual CPI (2001–2011)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency ratio</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from Census 1996 and Census 2011

The local economic outlook for Polokwane is improving. According to local economist, Glen Steyn, “there are signs that the provincial economy is starting to find traction in 2016 and that this will be positive for economic growth and create additional demand for trading, financial and professional services from Polokwane” (Polokwane Observer, 2016).

According to the Polokwane Observer of 18 August 2016, the lifting of the moratorium on development, the Sanral investment of R640m in the construction of the eastern ring road, the redevelopment of the Seshego Industrial Park, the investment in several motor dealerships at the southern entrance to the city, the Motor City development next to the Thornhill Shopping Centre, the construction of a provincial theatre and student housing all signal that “the local economy is healthy and that local investors’ confidence in the long term growth of the city is restored”.

Six months later, a local economist, Glen Steyn, elaborated on this optimistic growth scenario, stating that Polokwane’s economic growth in the first quarter of 2017 had been better than in the previous year. He noted that the strong growth in the city’s economy between 2000 and 2010 had been attributable to the tertiary sector but that there was some evidence of redundant capacity in office and retail space and future growth could have to be generated in other sectors. He was optimistic about 2017 but cautioned that the growth was insufficient to accommodate population growth and that government could contribute by raising the budgets for capital expenditure and infrastructure maintenance (cited in Viljoen, 2017, p. 9).

As regards income, the Draft 2017 IDP includes projections for 2016 income. It is interesting to note an important shift in income categories between 2011 and 2016 where all the lowest income categories showed a marked drop in numbers and a noticeable increase in the number of people earning over R30 000 per annum, this indicating a move out of the very poorest income categories (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 103). The city interprets this as a sign of a growing economy.

### 2.3 Snapshot of municipal budgeting in 2016/17

The State of the City Address by the Executive Mayor, Thembi Nkadimeng in June 2016, provides a useful snapshot of key budget information:

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12 Announced by Minister of Trade and Industry, Rob Davies (Polokwane Observer, 2016)
13 Mercurius Motors (Jeep, Mitsubishi, Fiat and Alfa) and the Audi dealership
14 See [http://limpopoonline.co.za/?p=8045](http://limpopoonline.co.za/?p=8045)
Table 7: Key financial and budgetary allocations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure/Indicator</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipal revenue</td>
<td>R2,8b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital budget</td>
<td>R573m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property tax as a % of revenue</td>
<td>10,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water (replace asbestos pipes, smart metering)</td>
<td>R375m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation (upgrading)</td>
<td>R229m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural electrification (154 372 households now have electricity and 7 194 are to be electrified to eradicate the historic backlog, excluding new growth)</td>
<td>R25m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRPTS</td>
<td>R371m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee costs (including Aganang)</td>
<td>R644m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations and maintenance</td>
<td>R203m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Own contributions to capital budgets)</td>
<td>(R239m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grants</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIG</td>
<td>R253m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIG</td>
<td>R153m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBIG (new)</td>
<td>R180m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigent threshold monthly earning</td>
<td>Reduced from R5 400 to R3 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum threshold for free basic electricity (8 169 beneficiaries)</td>
<td>Increased from 50Kw to 100Kw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDPG (villages)</td>
<td>R64m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit outcome</td>
<td>Unqualified with findings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from State of Polokwane Address, 2016

To provide context to the figures above, in 2011, Polokwane Municipality adopted a turnaround strategy. In 2011/12, it only had an operating revenue of R1,496m, which is now (2017) risen to R2,8b while the capital budget has increased from R385m in 2011/12 to R580m in 2015/16.15

In terms of access to services, citizens in Polokwane enjoy the following access:

---

Table 8: Access to services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households</td>
<td>85 373</td>
<td>124 978</td>
<td>178 001</td>
<td>214 464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households with indoor water access</td>
<td>25 127</td>
<td>24 022</td>
<td>59 998</td>
<td>62 593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households with indoor water access</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households with flush-toilet access</td>
<td>23 263</td>
<td>40 890</td>
<td>78 509</td>
<td>103 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households with flush-toilet access</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households with electricity access</td>
<td>36 414</td>
<td>79 527</td>
<td>147 710</td>
<td>201 583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households with electricity access</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households living in informal structures</td>
<td>10 447</td>
<td>19 476</td>
<td>16 044</td>
<td>11 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households living in informal structures</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from Census 1996, Census 2011 and Household Community Survey 2016

3. UNDERSTANDING THE SPATIAL GEOGRAPHY OF POLOKWANE (providing the context for the Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and spatial analysis)

The map In Figure 6 clearly illustrates the central spatial location of Polokwane Municipality in the Limpopo Province and the location of Polokwane City as an important transport nexus.
In order to assess the Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and the spatial challenges facing Polokwane, key influences on spatial form had to be identified and then subjected to careful scrutiny so as to provide the context for understanding the spatial challenges facing the Municipality.

In summary, the major influences on the spatial structure of Polokwane are:

- The settlement hierarchy – range and types of settlements across the Municipality
- Road patterns and linkages – key nexus of transport routes
- Traditional land holdings and land claims
- Water and sanitation-infrastructure constraints to development

### 3.1 Settlement hierarchy

At 377 579 ha, the spatial extent of the Polokwane Municipality is large. This extent features large tracts of rural farm land, rural traditional land with rural homesteads, small villages, village clusters, some small towns and the large city of Polokwane-Seshego. The variety of settlement forms, pose a number of spatial challenges in addressing spatial development.

In order to address spatial planning in the Municipality, Polokwane has directed its planning by using the concept of a hierarchy of settlements adopted by the Province, the settlements being classified as first-, second-, third-, fourth- and fifth-order settlements and it has modified this to suit a municipal nodal hierarchy. The first-order settlements are the bigger urban areas and those that are classified as growth points. In Polokwane, there are three types of growth points – the Polokwane city/
Seshego area is a declared provincial growth point, the Mankweng area is a district growth point and Sebayeng/Dikgale cluster is a municipal growth point. In Polokwane, the district growth point corresponds to a second-order settlement and the municipal growth point to a third-order settlement (that is, having services though limited economic activity). Smaller villages in rural areas are called population concentration points or fourth- and fifth-order Polokwane settlements (having clinics and schools that functionally link them). The last category is that of isolated villages. The Municipality determines the level of development and the scale of facility to be provided in the settlement on the basis of these categories and has adopted a spatial development concept of spatial concentration (in urban areas) with a selective cluster approach in rural areas rather than a dispersion or concentration model (see next section). This directs growth to the premier node of Polokwane-Seshego and to other identified nodes while, however, not excluding interventions in the rural areas.

3.2 Corridors and transportation

Polokwane City is located at the centre of a hub with roads radiating out in several directions like the spokes of a wheel. This offers considerable development opportunities to capitalise on this central location and addresses the spatial linkages between the settlements/nodes. The Municipality has adopted the concept of corridor development along the main routes to focus development on these accessible routes. In Polokwane, the corridors are of varying scales, influenced largely by the order of road that links the areas, illustrated in Figure 7 below:

![Figure 7: Main roads and corridors linking Polokwane](image)

Source: (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 39)

The corridors include two national SDI corridors that support regional connectivity:

- Development Corridor 1: The Pretoria/ Gauteng – Polokwane City – Mankweng – Tzaneen Development Corridor
In addition, corridors have been identified (in the Functional Development Areas) that provide local connectivity and are intended to integrate the smaller towns and settlement areas with Polokwane city:

- Public Transport Integrated Corridor (F1)
- Southern Gateway Development Corridor (F2) (seen as successful and attracting much development)
- Eastern Gateway Development Corridor (F3)
- Northern Gateway Development Corridor (F4) (to link the city and the airport)
- Outer Eastern Link (F5)

As can be seen from the photographs below, while they have been designated as corridors, the identified routes demonstrate variable development.
In as far back as 2007, Cabinet approved the Operational Plan for an integrated rapid transit system (IRTS) for Polokwane (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 36). Much of the motivation for this is based on integrating outlying Seshego, Moletji and Mankweng with Polokwane City to make transport more affordable to residents commuting these distances. The system has been named ‘Leeto la Polokwane’ or ‘the Journey of Polokwane’ and it is to be constructed in phases,\(^{16}\) Phase 1 road improvements (cycle lanes and bus bays) now being implemented.

### 3.3 Traditional land and land claims

A significant area of the Municipality (estimated to be just more than 70\%) is land under customary administration. Such land is not easily incorporated into urban areas and the land development processes differ from those in the (former white) urban areas, thereby creating not only spatial but also administrative/institutional fragmentation. Parts of the traditional areas closer to urban nodes are becoming densely settled and when they reach urban densities, they put pressure on the Municipality to plan and service them (see photo Figure 10, below) – this while it does not receive revenue for these services.

The map below indicates the extent of the traditional areas, the settlements’ (very scattered) location and the land claims present within Polokwane.

Figure 10: Traditional land settlement patterns on the road to Mankweng, illustrating dense settlement
Source: Author’s own photo

Figure 11: Map of rural settlements and land claims
Source: (Polokwane Municipality, 2010)

3.4 Water and sanitation infrastructure
In 2013, the Municipality, because it lacked sufficient water and sanitation capacity, declared a moratorium on new development. According to the Executive Mayor, this
has since had a detrimental effect on economic development\textsuperscript{17} as many development companies and professional consultants consequently ceased to operate in the City. This statement was corroborated in the discussions with private developers. Officials from Planning and Finances also expressed concern and noted that municipal revenue had likewise decreased.\textsuperscript{18} The above possibly indicates that there was little integration of spatial planning, infrastructure and finance either to determine the overall impact or to seek alternative though, admittedly, interim solutions.

The Municipality had been aware of the looming problem for several years\textsuperscript{19} and sought assistance from other spheres of government to increase water supply and upgrade sanitation. Short-term solutions have now been turned around and the replacement of old asbestos water pipes will go some way towards addressing the water losses caused by such pipes. Longer-term water solutions require R1.5b to provide sustainable provision (Polokwane Municipality, 2014, p. 107). Likewise, a long-term solution in the form of a regional sanitation plant is required and just more than R750m has been allocated to this over the next three years.\textsuperscript{20} The municipal officials indicated that the moratorium has now been lifted and that development applications are again being accepted because it is anticipated that in three years’ time (the time it takes from application submission to soil being turned on site) the water situation should ease. Addressing water losses will also improve the situation – within the city itself and in Seshego. According to the 2017 draft IDP (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 125), water losses currently run to as high as 48%.

3.5 Summary of issues affecting spatial planning in Polokwane

Understanding how the Municipality articulates its opportunities and constraints is useful in terms of confirming the sets of issues that affect spatial planning in Polokwane. Several source documents were referred to and the key aspects are summarised below:

Strategic development issues noted in the SDF 2010:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location on Great North Road</td>
<td>Low densities in rural area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway to Africa</td>
<td>High unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital of Limpopo</td>
<td>Relatively low skills levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatively high growth rate</td>
<td>Large numbers of people living in poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative economic sectors</td>
<td>Low agricultural potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unrehabilitable mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sewage works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No plan to protect sensitive areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of cadastral / land-use data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative water balance in urban areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land-use management systems only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{17} State of the City of Polokwane Address 2016
\textsuperscript{18} The Deputy CFO indicated that it had resulted in a decline in economic growth to less than 2% and that the valuation roll had stagnated, and that assessment rates and income had been reduced.
\textsuperscript{19} Reported in the press since 2011
\textsuperscript{20} State of the City of Polokwane Address 2016
The Municipality’s more recent IDP notes the following spatial challenges (City of Polokwane, 2017, p. 71):

- Inadequate ownership of land in rural areas
- Illegal land uses
- Outdated LUMS policies
- Outdated GIS data
- Property management
- Lack of human capital
- Limited funding
- Land claims
- Illegal townships
- Poor integration of human settlements with institutional facilities
- The Land-use Management Scheme is currently only limited to the urban area of Polokwane City/Seshego
- Illegally occupied RDP housing units

Interestingly, a similar list of issues was noted in the Municipality’s 2012/13 IDP.
• Shortage of service delivery in urban / semi-urban areas can slow down development and greatly affect future development
• Lack of capacity to maintain existing service infrastructure
• Prevalence of HIV and TB is a constraint to the potential for growth and development
• Weakness in terms of procedures guiding governance and accountability
• Shortage of suitably skilled workers contributes to low economic growth
• Disparities in income and the gap between rich and poor
• The lack of appropriate plans such as the SDFs to guide development results in a fragmented spatial structure in the Province
• New housing projects are located far from economic opportunities.

In effect, all the aforementioned assessments indicate that Polokwane has enormous potential because of its location, its urban infrastructure (good roads an airport and railroads) and its capital city status. It is however challenged in terms of its inability to provide sufficient water and sanitation for economic growth, by the extent of rural needs and rural poverty, and by the need to diversify its economy. All of these suggest the need for a more integrated approach to longer-term spatial and economic development planning to direct future growth.

4. Overview of the SDF
The Polokwane Spatial Development Framework (SDF) was prepared in 2009/2010 and finally approved by Council in 2012. The previous SDF had been approved in 2007. In discussions with municipal planning officials and former officials it was mentioned that even before 2007, the SDFs of the Municipality were informed by the principles of the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) and the Land Development Objectives (LDOs). This meant that post-1994 spatial planning in the Municipality was guided by the planning concepts of the integration of areas and of densification and compaction of urban areas and these guiding principles were reflected in their spatial development plans.

The 2010 SDF, because it predates the NDP and SPLUMA, refers to the DFA principles and to the former National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP) as points of departure. Officials recognise this and have indicated that the SDF will soon be updated to bring it into line with more recent government policies. It therefore obviously also predates the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF). This notwithstanding, the SDF does acknowledge and build on principles similar to those found in SPLUMA and in the IUDF.

Because the Municipality did not consider the 2007 SDF to be a holistic plan,21 this prompted the 2010 SDF to take a slightly different approach. However, in both the 2007 and the 2010 SDFs the approach was to prepare a high-level macro SDF and then identify areas in which more detailed SDFs needed to be prepared. The 2007 methodology focused on what were called strategic development areas or areas in

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21 The emphasis in the 2007 SDF was on identifying eight Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) and Potential Development Areas (PDAs) and proposing planning interventions in these areas. This ‘fragmented’ approach to planning for unconnected spaces in the Municipality was acknowledged in the 2010 SDF.
which the Municipality identified a need for more detailed planning. However, this led to a fragmented approach\textsuperscript{22} to spatial planning, which was addressed in the 2010 SDF.

In acknowledgement of the diversity of the areas that go to make up Polokwane and to rectify the fragmented approach to planning in the 2007 SDF, the 2010 SDF proposes three components to the SDF:

a) **A high-level or macro SDF for the Municipality of Polokwane as a whole** – this proposes the overarching spatial conceptual approach for the Municipality as a whole and provides a spatial vision, principles, a spatial conceptual approach and guidelines.

b) **Local SDFs for the three urban nodes** of Polokwane City (including Seshego), Nobody-Mankweng-Badimong and Sebayeng/Dikgale – these are still at the conceptual level but, spatially, indicate the urban edges, the corridors, road hierarchies, nodes and key land uses.

c) **Rural areas** – the SDF is very conceptual and largely underpinned by the approach to direct investment in people rather than places.

Given that the spatial form of the Municipality includes both urban and rural areas, this approach is practical. However the SDF notes that the local SDFs are, to a great extent, conceptual and proposed that a comprehensive LSDF be prepared for Polokwane City based on more detailed data (Polokwane Municipality, 2010). As a result, the LSDFs contained in the SDF can be viewed as merely conceptual and while they do apply spatial concepts in specific areas, these have not been fully ‘tested’ in terms of empirical data or trend analysis and they also represent only the first attempt at guiding spatial development in these urban nodes. As an urban area experiencing development pressures, it is apparent that Polokwane City needs a detailed SDF.

Each of the three components making up the 2010 SDF will now be discussed briefly.

**4.1 The macro SDF for Polokwane**

In terms of the high-level or macro SDF for the municipal area as a whole, it identifies a spatial vision and objectives. The spatial vision is rooted in the reality of the high levels of poverty, the modest ability of the Municipality to address all needs, national spatial principles and supporting local potential. The Vision reads:

*Enhance sustainable development and alleviate poverty by focusing scarce resources on areas with economic growth potential and the highest return on capital.*

This means that the Municipality should identify the areas with both the greatest development potential and inability to “earn money for the Municipality” and then direct development to these areas so that it has the means to address poverty sustainably.

The development objectives that the Polokwane SDF intends achieving include:

\textsuperscript{22} The SDAs tended to focus on the “spaces between urban nodes” and did not, in many instances, include the urban areas and so they focused on ‘patches’ of the Municipality.
• Guiding growth in a sustainable way in line with development principles;
• Promoting economic growth and addressing unemployment;
• Promoting investment opportunities through industrial development;
• Promoting sustainable human settlements by integrating them through the processing of improved public transportation and road networks (BRT) and in doing so, in a spatially responsible manner;
• Promoting infrastructure investment in priority areas;
• Opening up strategic land for economic development and attracting investors;
• Protecting and preserving sensitive environmental areas;
• Promote guidelines for the integration of areas (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 161).

Statements such as these make it evident that spatial integration is firmly articulated in the Polokwane Municipality SDF. In addition, the new local SDFs include the need to address, inter alia, existing distorted spatial patterns, the integration of settlements, infrastructure and transport (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 171). These objectives are broadly in line with newer policies such as the NDP, SPLUMA and the IUDF, although the notion of spatial transformation is not explicitly articulated.

The SDF grapples with conceptual spatial development aspects such as future form and development models that would address the existing spatial structure. It does this by proposing three spatial development alternatives and by selecting a preferred option. At a broad conceptual level, the three options are:

**Spatial concentration model** – this is largely based on the NSDP approach of building on economic strengths of core areas and social development interventions in rural areas (investing in people rather than places in such areas). This model will see a concentration of investment and development in the Polokwane City area, consolidating its status as a gateway into Africa and a capital city.

**Spatial concentration combined with a selective cluster approach in rural areas** – which focuses resources in rural areas, in identified clusters of settlements along with the above concentration model for the urban areas. Polokwane is 70% rural and this addresses development in these areas. This is the preferred option.

**Dispersion model** – this takes a blanket approach and spreads development across the Municipality. It is seen as unrealistic and unsustainable because the Municipality cannot address all needs simultaneously.

These are presented diagrammatically below:
In line with the preferred model, the SDF proposes local conceptual SDFs for the three main urban concentrations (selected clusters).

4.2 The local conceptual SDFs for Polokwane City, Nobody, Mankweng and Badimong, and for Sebayeng/Dikgale

The SDFs for these areas are summarised below.

**Polokwane City conceptual LSDF**

The principles underlying this city SDF include aspects such as supporting the capital city, promoting sustainable development, compact city-development principles, urban integration and infilling, mixed land uses along intra-urban linkages and mixed-use corridors and nodes to reduce travel, creating quality urban environments, and the creation of a functional open space system (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 202). An urban edge is defined and a guideline stipulated that 90% of the urban area within the edge should be developed before any development is permitted outside of it – in the fringes (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 203).

The SDF capitalises on the main routes as corridors of development, identifying them and placing them in a corridor hierarchy. For example, the N1 eastern by-pass, which is part of the national SDI, must not include noxious activities and special attention must be given to the design and aesthetics of buildings and to landscaping. The second-level corridors include the Dilokong Provincial Corridor to Burgersfort (Chuenespoort Rd) and the old N1/R71 that forms the east-west corridor (which is also the link to Mankweng and the R81), and should all attract major new developments that depend on high levels of accessibility. The activity spines are urban-level routes that must support mixed land uses and the development of nodes along these routes (e.g. Nelson Mandela Drive and Polokwane Drive) (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 204). The LSDF provides a guideline for what types of land

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**Implications of the preferred model**

- A focus on creating a regional node in Polokwane-Seshego
- Defining a hierarchy of settlements and rural clusters to which investment is to be directed
- Investment in rural nodes largely to go to community facilities and social support
use are suitable for each of the corridors and the densities to be promoted along them. In general, these guidelines promote mixed uses, offices, business parks, hi-tech industries, sports facilities and higher-density residential developments. The spatial planning concept of corridors is therefore supported by mixed land uses and higher density, more compact development along these routes.

Suggestions are made in the LSDF that there is a lack of transport facilities for long-distance transportation, that a transport hub be considered and that integrated transport needs to link the taxi and bus terminus, the railway station and the Polokwane International Airport (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 210).

![Figure 13: Major land uses in Polokwane City](image)

Source: (Polokwane Municipality, 2010)

Guidelines are provided for the development of the different hierarchies of nodes, including discouraging new nodes in favour of consolidating the existing nodes. Attention is specifically devoted to gateway nodes because they are locations of potential regional use such as regional shopping centres (the Mall of the North having already been established on the N1/R81 Southern Gateway), value centres, hotels and commercial centres. Other nodes include the medical node (around the Provincial Hospital and the Medi-Centre in town), the sports node (around the Peter Mokaba Stadium) and an administrative node in the southern CBD where most of the government buildings are located (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 213).

This high-level SDF for the Polokwane City area therefore provides a spatial structure to the city and gives high-level guidance, based on relevant spatial development principles, regarding where to locate desirable land uses. On paper, this interprets the spatial integration principles.
Nobody, Mankweng and Badimong conceptual LSDF

This LSDF was prepared to provide a framework for the area that is situated about 30 km from Polokwane City. The framework demarcates the urban edge, structuring elements and guidelines for future development. The LSDF proposes more detailed planning for this area at a future date (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 218). These areas are former black towns that have grown in an organic fashion and the SDF proposes that future development be underpinned by principles of compact settlement, preventing sprawl by having a settlement cluster edge, identifying suitable land uses, and promoting sustainable development through balancing natural resources, providing social infrastructure and creating job opportunities.

The area has good linkages to Polokwane (the R71 and other routes), it has the University of the North as a major attraction, some industrial development and is surrounded by agricultural land.

The LSDF therefore proposes that the urban development be focused along corridors (i.e. the main roads linking the area), that nodes be established at corridor intersections, that informal settlements be formalised, that urban agriculture and agri-industries be located in the area close to where people live and that sensitive environmental areas be protected.

![Figure 14: Mankweng LSDF](image)

Source: (Polokwane Municipality, 2010)

The Mankweng LSDF is therefore an attempt to organise space and the area’s future development but at a very high level. More detailed spatial planning is needed.

Sebayeng-Dikgale conceptual LSDF
A similar conceptual LSDF is proposed for this area based on defining an edge, concentrating development within that edge (infilling) along corridors (the main roads that run through the area) and at nodes, and providing social and community facilities in the area.

![Figure 15: Sebayeng/Dikgale cluster LSDF](image)

Source: (Polokwane Municipality, 2010)

The SDFs for these two smaller urban areas are informed by concepts of integrating these settlement clusters into urban systems, to be achieved largely through transportation linkages and local economic development along corridors close to existing urban concentrations and by capitalising on the comparative advantages that area has to offer. The development paradigm appears to be one of growing development outwards from the small centres and from Polokwane City so that, in future, they may merge. The LSDF does not provide a clear sense of the role of these towns, their envisaged future shape and role, their projected contribution to spatial transformation and the long-term development goals of the Municipality.

**Development of rural areas and remaining rural villages**

The spatial development approach taken in these areas differ quite markedly from the one followed in the urban areas and it acknowledges that these areas are experiencing out-migration to more economically developed areas. If upliftment is to occur, major infrastructure and economic investment are thus less important than social investment (community facilities, mobile clinics, schools, welfare programmes) and investment in people (grants and social upliftment programmes) (Polokwane Municipality, 2010, p. 226).

Generally, it can be seen that the approach to the spatial development of the urban areas of Polokwane is one of supporting development within urban boundaries,
targeting infill, attracting development to a hierarchy of nodes, focusing new development along identified corridors and creating linkages between urban settlements that are close together (e.g. Polokwane and Seshego). On the other hand, the approach taken in the rural areas is to invest in people and not in places (as per the NSDP, which was a national informant of this SDF).

Discussions with officials in the Municipality indicated that the SDF has informed the IDP and then increasingly so in recent years. The Municipality has drafted municipal planning by-laws that will be approved by Council in the near future and the SDF will subsequently also be guided by the provisions in the by-law and those in the national legislation (SPLUMA and MSA).

5. Assessment of the SDF

The 2010 SDF was prepared by external consultants and then modified internally by the municipal planning officials before being approved by Council in 2012. What is therefore important to remember is that the Polokwane SDF was prepared before the NDP and IUDF became approved government policies and before SPLUMA was promulgated.

In this section, we attempt to assess whether the SDF has had an impact on spatial development in Polokwane. As benchmark, we essentially use the goals of spatial transformation set in the recently approved Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) and the SPLUMA. The methodology involved using a pro forma assessment sheet, asking officials in the Municipality questions regarding spatial development, undertaking site visits and making visual observations, in addition to mapping spatial growth over time. Also as part of the IDP assessment, the Department of Cooperative Governance (Cogta) evaluated all IDPs including SDFs and provided these findings to the respective municipalities. Polokwane’s draft IDP was assessed in early May 2017. These observations are also included in this section. Given that the assessment is essentially ‘testing’ the SDF against criteria that only came to the fore after the SDF had been approved, it would only be fair to observe that, in a direct assessment, it may not altogether measure up well to these criteria. This makes it useful also to observe any progress in spatial transformation in terms of the stated Polokwane SDF objectives.

The Polokwane SDF objectives and the IUDF objectives are summarised and to some extent ‘matched’ in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polokwane SDF objectives</th>
<th>IUDF objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guide growth in a sustainable way in line with development principles</td>
<td>Inclusive settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creation of sustainable settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote economic growth and address unemployment</td>
<td>Shifting jobs to high-density townships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote investment opportunities through industrial development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote sustainable human settlements by integration through improved public transportation and road networks (BRT) in a</td>
<td>Prevent the erection of housing in marginal places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve public transport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Polokwane SDF objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IUDF objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spatial manner</td>
<td>Reduce travel time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinate modes of transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote infrastructure investment in priority areas</td>
<td>Promote inclusive economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open up strategic land for economic development and attract investors</td>
<td>Create resilient settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect and preserve sensitive environmental areas</td>
<td>Prevent sprawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase urban densities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote guidelines for integrating areas</td>
<td>Promote safe settlements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.1 Quality of the planning process

The 2010 SDF is a comprehensive report with excellent maps prepared by the Planning Department’s GIS section and it appears to have good alignment with national and provincial principles and policies of the time. When it was prepared, the Municipality needed additional professional capacity and appointed external consultants. The consultants were familiar with the Polokwane area and the local consultant was a former local municipal planning official. The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Department has 13 planners and though it considers itself slightly understaffed it is coping (interview with Planning Department). They have several new functions with the introduction of SPLUMA as they now process all the Proc R293 permits. Land Use Management has five planners and two interns. The official indicated that the department probably has sufficient intellectual capacity to prepare the next SDF but that it lacks the time and will most likely once again outsource the SDF. It has improved GIS capacity and can prepare its own SDF mapping inputs.

The SDF was prepared with public consultation and workshops were held with stakeholders. Internal departments were also consulted and their respective relevant plans were incorporated, for example the Water Services Plan, the Transport Master Plan and environmental plans were all referred to in the SDF. However, in discussions with other departments, it was apparent that they had neither extensively participated nor internalised the SDF into their planning processes. The departments obviously still operate fairly independently. It would be fair to say that there is a growing awareness among all stakeholders of the importance of the SDF since the introduction of SPLUMA and SPLUMA processes. Indications are that a future SDF will assume a more central role in the planning done by other departments in the Municipality – especially technical services, economic development and finance.

The plan does take into account district, provincial and national planning policies, including the Limpopo SDF, which includes the provincial spatial rationale.

In the IDP assessment done by Cogta\(^\text{23}\), some shortcomings were noted, along with some positive aspects. The relevant comments include:

\(^{23}\) The findings were presented to the Municipality by Cogta in the form of a PowerPoint presentation and this presentation was made available for this study.
The Municipality reflects on the legacy of apartheid planning, however, there is no clear strategy on how to reverse that. There is no appreciation of the proposed IUDF interventions to achieve spatial transformation.

There is an LUS in place. However, it mostly covers the CBD and Seshego. Given the fact that 70% of the area is rural, how is the Municipality dealing with the LUS in the rural context? What are the plans to extend to other areas (commercial farming, rural areas, traditional areas and Aganang areas)?

The IDP does not clearly articulate the spatial correlation between environmental issues, development activities and patterns. Alignment of environmental plan/strategies with the other spatial plans is not visible.

While it is understood that the sectors of the economy are competitive for Polokwane, it lacks information on how the informal economy is being supported.

The service-provision challenges, especially in respect of water and sanitation, are reflected but do not seem to link up with economic development initiatives that may consequently be constrained.

The relationship between the Spatial Plan and the Economic Development Plan (and so also the Tourism Plan) is not clear.

There is insufficient information on how the Municipality is planning to build on the opportunity for a logistics hub.

There is no articulation of strategic infrastructure initiatives that will stimulate the local economy.

There is no plan to address land claims.

The Spatial Planning Directorate appears to have a good relationship with most of the traditional leaders of the surrounding areas and this relationship is being solidified through ongoing engagement in SPLUMA implementation meetings. There is a growing appreciation of the need to plan in denser areas under traditional leadership. However, issues such as being charged different tariffs for electricity (Eskom tariffs vs Municipality tariffs) and that the traditional areas are exempted from paying Municipal rates and service charges means that the areas have different systems in operation, which underscores the fact that spatial integration is linked to institutional and administrative integration.

Power play between parties in the process of preparing the SDF was neither evident nor mentioned in any interviews.

5.2 The quality of the plans

The SDF contains significant information on development in the Municipality and the GIS Department within the Spatial Planning and Economic Development Directorate prepared the mapping, which is of a high quality. The approach of preparing a macro SDF for the entire area and then local plans for the urban areas was a means of coherently guiding development in the urban areas where the pressure is, within an overall framework for the Municipality. However, being the first SDF to tackle local

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24 Including clarifying the roles of traditional leaders and municipalities in terms of SPLUMA – functions such as land-use management, decision-making structures to decide development applications and wall-to-wall land-use schemes.
SDFs, they are by nature conceptual and tend to reflect more what currently exists rather than make any bold statements about the future, longer-term spatial vision of the area or define in more detail actual sites where future development must be encouraged. However, it does acknowledge that more data and information are required for more detailed LSDFs. The LSDFs are based on sound planning principles, are aligned to achieving spatial integration and they use planning instruments to achieve these objectives, even if in a largely theoretical manner.

**SPLUMA compliance:** In terms of being SPLUMA compliant, the current SDF only partially complies, this being mostly due to the overlap in development principles of SPLUMA and the DFA and the existing MSA requirements for an SDF. In broad summary, the SDF complies with the following:

- Principles of integration, compaction and densification are inherent in the SDF approach;
- A spatial vision (in words) is articulated;
- Structuring elements are clearly indicated in the form of corridors, nodes, priority areas;
- It identifies where future development can occur (albeit at a highly conceptual level);
- It indicates areas where informal settlements will be upgraded;
- It indicates areas for which local plans need to be developed (CBD, Mankweng, Seshego and Sebayeng).

The aspects that are not included in the SDF and should be if it is to be SPLUMA compliant include:

- A single SDF plan of the Municipality including the future long-term spatial vision statement;
- The spatial implications of demographic, economic, human settlements and infrastructure trends spatially;
- A strategic assessment of the environmental pressures and opportunities within the municipal area;
- Identification of areas where shortened development procedures may apply;
- Spatial expression of the coordination, alignment and integration of sectoral policies of all municipal departments;
- A capital expenditure framework;
- An indication of the purpose, impact and structure of the Land-use Management Scheme (this is partially met, as there is some reference to this in the SDF but it is still only for small areas of the Municipality);
- No implementation plan.

Hence, the observation is that the SDF 2010 is neither sufficiently strategic nor is it integrated with the planning of other departments – particularly infrastructure and LED – and it is not linked to the budgets (budgets not shown spatially). The major underlying problem is that it is not accompanied by an implementation plan and so the trade-offs and how they will influence the planning of other sectors are not evident.
IUDF compliance: As with SPLUMA, compliance with the IUDF is limited because the SDF pre-dates the IUDF. The schematic below summarises the IUDF approach.

**The ICM Context: The IUDF: CORE ELEMENTS OF THE IUDF**

**VISION**

- Liveable, safe, resource-efficient cities and towns that are socially integrated, economically inclusive and globally competitive, where residents actively participate in urban life

**STRATEGIC GOALS**

- Inclusion and Access
- Inclusive Growth
- Effective Governance
- Spatial Integration

**LEVERS**

- Integrated urban planning and management
- Integrated transport and mobility
- Integrated and sustainable human settlements
- Integrated urban infrastructure
- Efficient land governance and management
- Inclusive economic development
- Empowered Active Communities
- Effective urban governance
- Sustainable Finances

**Strategic priorities**

![Diagram of IUDF core elements](image)

*Figure 16: IUDF core elements*

Source: IUDF Implementation Framework

A key strategic goal of the IUDF is to achieve spatial integration. Critical to achieving this is the SDF and how it is able to address the levers that will unlock the constraints to development. Spatial integration relies on all of the nine levers and a brief overview of how the SDF measures up to them follows:

**Lever 1** – integrated urban planning and management: The 2010 SDF attempts to address this even though it is difficult to integrate markedly different areas using different systems across a spatially dispersed area. The SDF is quite successfully achieving integrated spatial development along the Polokwane-Seshego Corridor and in other parts of some corridors. Integrated spatial planning management is less evident because the SDF does not appear to inform the planning and budgeting of all departments.

**Lever 2** – integrated transport and mobility: The SDF identifies corridors that are main transport links and is in the process of implementing an integrated rapid transportation system in Polokwane. This will improve mobility on the routes and reduce travel time, promote development along the route and bring the outlying traditional areas closer to Polokwane.

**Lever 3** – integrated and sustainable human settlements: Signs of this are less evident because projects have been implemented by national and provincial human settlement departments as the Municipality relies on these subsidies to provide housing. Allocated low-income housing subsidies tend to be spread across wards rather than being strategically applied to targeted area to achieve integrated development. The Municipality has a Housing Association that will deliver social housing in good locations to address more integrated human settlements, albeit in very small quantities. New, high-income residential areas take the form of gated
communities, mostly in the area between the city and the new Mall of the North, along identified corridors and on the edges of the built-up area. The only national catalytic sustainable human settlement project in Polokwane is a 660-unit, mixed-income, mixed typology development within a gated community and is an infill development in Bendor Ext 100\textsuperscript{25}.

**Lever 4** – integrated urban infrastructure: There is only limited success in this regard, especially as a result of the moratorium on development due to water and sanitation shortfalls. Although the Municipality has specific infrastructure plans, there is no integrated infrastructure development plan, so that infrastructure is being planned in ‘silos’ and then with little reference to the SDF. There does not seem to be an appreciation of the potential role and impact that integrated infrastructure investment can have on spatially transforming urban development.

**Lever 5** – efficient land governance and management: To some extent, this is also limited. The transition to managing traditional areas’ land-development permits will bring the management of these areas within the ambit of the Municipality. The Town Planning Scheme only applies in certain areas but there is acknowledgement that a new unitary land-use management scheme for the entire Municipality is required in terms of SPLUMA. Decisions regarding development applications were formerly taken by a political committee. Now, according to SPLUMA, these must be taken by a technical committee. The MPT is accordingly being constituted. Decision-making is slow and, according to interviewed developers/town planning consultants, it has now become even slower.

**Lever 6** – inclusive economic development: The Municipality has an economic plan that is neither fully integrated nor inclusive in that informal development is not incorporated. There needs to be a closer link between economic planning, infrastructure investment and spatial planning.

**Lever 7** – empowered, active communities: The introduction of SPLUMA and the new planning processes mean that the Municipality will have to rely more heavily on consultation and also that training across the board will be required.

**Lever 8** – effective urban governance: This enables effective implementation of the SDF. Polokwane has made improvements in this area since 2011. These include establishing land-use planning systems and increased staffing levels. However, effective governance of spatial planning and its impacts are less evident.

**Lever 9** – sustainable finances: There is a greater need to appreciate the link between, on the one hand, spatial planning and development and, on the other, municipal revenue. The development moratorium reduced revenue and stifled growth so that the Municipality’s finances have been put at risk.

In terms of the other strategic goals, the Municipality is making strides. Polokwane City has become substantially racially integrated, backlogs for housing are not excessive and the moratorium on water and sanitation is being lifted. There is moreover improved financial compliance with all reporting protocols from Treasury.

\textsuperscript{25} Information from unpublished power point presentation of the Housing Development Agency, June 2017
The Municipality has increased its support to indigent residents and most of the traditional areas are seen as ‘social’ areas in which the Municipality provides free basic services and other welfare support.

**General observations on compliance**

The SDF acknowledges the planning challenges on traditional land. The Department of Planning within the Municipality does not consider this to be an insurmountable constraint because there are processes and legal procedures for the acquisition of land for urban development in traditional areas. Improved cooperation and consultation will see the Municipality assisting traditional leaders to plan such areas without this constituting a threat to their land-administration and allocation functions (traditional leaders’ functions).

Though the plan supports higher densities in urban areas and has a specific densification strategy, these are still considered low densities by metropolitan or global standards (maximum densities are 74/75 du/ha along corridors and the inner city). Traditional areas are designated to be developed to densities of 44 units per hectare, compared with 31 du/ha in the suburbs.

Given that the SDF predates the IUDF, its overall approach, principles and planning instruments are fairly well aligned to the IUDF on a theoretical level.

### 5.3 Degree of implementation

Discussions with officials and external consultants revealed that, generally, the Municipality has some difficulties in implementing the SDF, the reasons for this including a lack of capacity, slow decision making, poor land-use regulation, developments being driven by private developers who do not adhere to the plans and, lastly, political influence.

The 2010 SDF does however not include an implementation plan, which therefore makes it difficult to assess implementation against dates or project implementation time frames. In addition, projects mentioned in the previous SDF (2007) and in the consecutive State of Polokwane addresses by the executive mayor refer to the same projects year after year, which points to implementation in the Municipality being slow.

There is no monitoring of the SDF or its implementation. None of the other departments who were interviewed indicated that they had had to report on how their policies, plans or projects complied with the SDF. Hence, the fact that there is an SDF does not appear to influence how other departments plan nor does it appear to substantially direct private sector investments in the Municipality. Officials in the planning department moreover indicated that it is generally difficult to implement the SDF.

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Notwithstanding these difficulties, it is apparent that some aspects of the SDF are being implemented and can be considered successful. The increasing densification and location of mixed land uses along the corridor between Polokwane and Seshego are in alignment with the plans. Similarly, in line with the SDF, development is occurring on the edges of Polokwane City towards Mankweng.

The Municipality is in the process of implementing SPLUMA. It has prepared draft municipal planning by-laws, which are competent and include provisions for the traditional areas. The implementation of spatial planning in the Municipality will in future largely be guided by this by-law.

It is apparent that the Polokwane Municipality has both good (high-level) plans and the necessary policies but it finds it difficult to move resolutely towards the implementation of these plans.

Table 11 below gives an indication of the tools used by the Polokwane Municipality to apply the planning concepts.

**Table 11: Application of spatial development instruments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spatial concept</th>
<th>Is this concept used appropriately?</th>
<th>Provide reasons for your answer, giving examples where possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development/activity</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A central planning instrument in Polokwane and a hierarchy of corridors have been defined and guidelines for development have been provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridors and spines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development nodes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Also used extensively and a hierarchy identified, linked to suitable land uses for each level of node in the hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development/investment zones</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Musina SEZ / Burgersfort SEZ in adjacent municipality and is linked to this. Attempts by Municipality to offer incentives to attract development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic/community areas; Multipurpose service-delivery centres</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In clusters – Thusong centres for lower-order settlements even if on traditional land (ways sought through agreements to secure the land for development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-use nodes or corridors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>This is used to good effect in Polokwane and is a key structuring element of the SDF. Mixed uses generally apply along higher-level corridors – seen as a mix of uses along the corridor rather than a mix of uses within a site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban edge/boundary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Proposes these for the main urban clusters and proposes strong enforcement of this through infill development and directing development within the edge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notwithstanding the presence of an SDF and of various planning instruments with which to effect spatial change, the Municipality has experienced distinctly organic spatial growth.

The map below illustrates the spatial location of this growth and the change that has occurred between 1990 and 2014.

In land-area terms, Polokwane’s urban areas increased from 30 596 km² to 42 525 km², which added 11 929 km² in land area to the Municipality.\(^{27}\)

From this map, several important observations can be made regarding urban growth trends:

\(^{27}\) This would exclude the newly-incorporated Aganang.
- Extensive urban infill has taken place along the Polokwane-Seshego axis;
- There has been expansion to the north-east of Polokwane City;
- Significant infill and land uptake in Mankweng;
- Substantial growth has occurred on traditional land in the smaller nodes closest to Polokwane and to Mankweng;
- Many rural settlement clusters have experienced growth;
- Growth has occurred along key roads.

Figure 17: Urban growth 1996 - 2014
Source: Mapable

5.5 Spatial transformation
Polokwane is a municipality with many challenges and not all of them are necessarily spatial. However, at the spatial level, Polokwane is dichotomous because of the two different land and development regimes present within its boundaries – traditional land and land administered by the Municipality. Not only does the Municipality have no say in the allocation of land for shelters in traditional areas (though having some input as regards commercial developments in traditional areas in that such developments require planning approval) nor does it have operational spatial development plans in these areas that can be used to manage development.

While the Municipality has been proactive in consulting and involving traditional leaders in aspects of planning and development – especially around spatial planning through the SPLUMA consultation processes\textsuperscript{28} – the inability to manage the increasing residential densification of traditional land closer to Polokwane is resulting

\textsuperscript{28} The new draft provincial planning legislation and the draft Polokwane planning by-law make provision for the leaders to be involved in land-development decisions and in broader spatial planning.
in unplanned spatial development processes that are serving to transform the spatial landscape of Polokwane. This land is accessible to the city and discussions with officials indicate that residents do not have to pay formal rates and taxes or service charges if they settle on such land.

Conversely, in the former black (R293) towns, in Seshego and Mankweng, and in Polokwane City, the Municipality is able to plan, to zone land, to decide applications for development and to issue rates and services bills. This means that it can have more influence over the spatial nature of development.

It has therefore been relatively successful in directing development along key corridors, especially in the area between Seshego and Polokwane. It has directed the infilling and consolidation of the Mankweng Node. However, it has not been very successful in achieving spatial integration of residential areas, so that most growth in this respect has either been through peripheral, gated townhouse developments for the middle-to-upper income groups, while the inner-city densification of residential development has been achieved through uncontrolled and unplanned population and building densification as poorer people and students have crowded into existing buildings to be closer to the opportunities provided by city living.

Before any strong claims of spatial transformation can be made, more explicit spatial interventions are needed in Polokwane around integrated residential development where the poor can be provided with affordable and accessible shelter.

There is evidence of racial integration in Polokwane and a study by Donaldson and Kotze – spanning the pre- and post-1994 political changes – was able to conclude that Polokwane became racially integrated or racially desegregated in a relatively short time (Donaldson & Kotze, 2006).

![Figure 18: Map illustrating spatial racial change](image)

Source: (Donaldson & Kotze, 2006, p. 566)

Discussions with the City Manager pointed to the need for an explicit, spatial, longer-term city-development strategy to direct investment and to achieve a more

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29 The study looked at the former Pietersburg city area and its suburbs only.
30 Meeting with Mr Dikgape Makobe, 27 June 2017
compact, efficient city that will lead to accelerated economic growth in the Municipality. This is an indication that the current SDF is not considered to be able to achieve this. What is required is a plan with a well-directed implementation focus, one that has to indicate specific sites and areas to which development must be directed in order to meet the objectives of spatial transformation (many of which are already implicit in the current SDF).

Lastly, as regards spatial transformation, it is important that the preparation of the new SDF must be done differently. It must be a collaborative venture with other departments so that more integrated planning and budgeting can occur and more importantly, that the SDF gains wide acceptance within the Municipality and that everyone commits to the same spatial vision so that the combined resources and budgets are targeted to identified and agreed areas or priority/special zones. Business and SOEs, and also provincial and national departments must all participate in the preparation and implementation processes so that the SDF becomes a reflection of where all parties intend investing within the Municipality. Not only must the outcome be an SDF that has buy-in, but it must shape and direct the Capital Investment Framework so that infrastructure and other capital investment, and also social facilities are correctly targeted. It must however have an implementation plan with time frames and responsibilities. It must be informed by an agreed spatial vision that will help achieve the longer-term vision (e.g. Vision 2030) for development in the Municipality.

To achieve the spatial transformation suggested above, will require not only technical capacity within the planning and other departments in the Municipality but also, specifically, expertise that is able to package projects in such a way as to attract public-private partnerships.

6. General conclusions
Polokwane Municipality’s spatial structure has by and large been determined by its historical colonial and apartheid origins. It is a Municipality that, while also having to provide for a large, essentially dispersed rural community, has moreover to contend with increasing urban development in its relatively small urban centres, and with ever-increasing densification of the traditional areas in close proximity to the urban centres and along some of its development corridors. The current spatial form of the Municipality is that of a single, prime urban node, two smaller urban centres and a dispersed rural settlement. However, its location at the nexus of several important regional and international road corridors (together with its capital status) is also bound to influence its future spatial form.

It has an SDF that addresses the fundamental issues and directs development towards achieving a more compact, integrated form through concentrating development on corridors and selected nodes. The theoretical spatial concepts are all adequately articulated in the SDF. However, buy-in in respect of and wide commitment to this SDF are lacking and it has not to date succeeded in achieving its stated objectives. This is so largely because implementation of the plan has been weak. The Municipality itself appears to have neither the capacity nor the ability to undertake effective implementation. While it is possible to suggest that some wider economic issues may recently have slowed development, there are also other factors inherent to the municipality that have contributed to a lack of implementation.
It has a very small capital budget with which to catalyse development in the right areas. It is hamstrung by poor infrastructure maintenance and there is a lack of forward planning. The result is that there is little linkage between, on the one hand, the good intentions contained in the adequate spatial plans and, on the other, the ‘on-the-ground’ implementation of these intentions. Private-developer dominance, an inability to regulate residential growth in traditional areas, a lack of integrated planning and of political decision making – all of these have together conspired to create the apparent disjunctures between plans and the spatial location of new development.

Opportunities for spatial transformation are ever present in the Municipality – the presence of the corridors; the lack of a strong decentralisation trend that makes the CBD an attractive option for denser, mixed-class residential development; the availability of (municipal-owned) vacant, infill land; and, strong growth in the tertiary sector are all factors on which to capitalise so as to target spatial interventions by using a clear, well-supported SDF that is linked to a longer-term city development strategy, a capital expenditure framework and an implementation plan.
References


## Appendix 1

### Meetings held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person/Department</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rian Beukes</td>
<td>Consultant preparing SDF 2010</td>
<td>5 June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willem Davel And Sanri Rademeyer</td>
<td>Aurecon consultants</td>
<td>5 June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of City Planning and Property Management</td>
<td>Polokwane Municipality</td>
<td>5 June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Technical Services: water and sanitation</td>
<td>Polokwane Municipality</td>
<td>6 June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Services</td>
<td>Polokwane Municipality</td>
<td>6 June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting CFO</td>
<td>Polokwane Municipality</td>
<td>6 June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>Polokwane Municipality</td>
<td>5 June 2017; 27 June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie Esterhuisen</td>
<td>Polokwane Observer CEO</td>
<td>27 June 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>