

Report of the auditor-general to Limpopo Provincial Legislature and council on Polokwane Local Municipality

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

1. I have audited the financial statements of the Polokwane local municipality set out on pages xx to xx, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, statement of financial performance, statement of changes in net assets, and statement of cash flows and title of statement of comparison of budget information with actual information for the year then ended, as well as notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.
2. In my opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Polokwane local municipality as at 30 June 2023 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the Standards of Generally Recognised Accounting Practices (Standard of GRAP) and the requirements of the Municipal Finance Management Act of South Africa 56 of 2003 (MFMA) and the Division of Revenue Act 5 of 2022 (DoRA).

Basis for opinion

3. I conducted my audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the responsibilities of the auditor-general for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.
4. I am independent of the municipality in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' *International code of ethics for professional accountants (including International Independence Standards)* (IESBA code) as well as other ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit in South Africa. I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA code.
5. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of matters

6. I draw attention to the matters below. My opinion is not modified in respect of these matters.

Restatement of corresponding figures

7. As disclosed in note 63 to the financial statements, the corresponding figures for 30 June 2022 were restated as a result of errors in the financial statements of the municipality at, and for the year ended, 30 June 2023.

Significant Uncertainties

8. As disclosed in note 53 to the financial statements, the municipality is a defendant in multiple lawsuits. The ultimate outcome of these matters cannot presently be determined and no provision for any liability that may result has been made in the financial statements.

Material Water losses

9. As disclosed in note 41.2 to the financial statements, material water losses of R87 443 128 (2021-22: R 88 994 953) was incurred, which represents 36% (2021-22: 34%) of total water purchased. The water losses were due to illegal connections and pipe burst.

Material impairment

10. As disclosed in note 4 and 6 to the financial statements, material impairment of R1062 445 439 (2021-22: R1001 904 965) were provided for as a result of irrecoverable debtors.

Other matter

11. I draw attention to the matter below. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Unaudited Supplementary schedules

12. The supplementary information set out on page xx to xx does not form part of the financial statements and is presented as additional information. I have not audited these schedules and, accordingly, I do not express an opinion on them.

Responsibilities of the accounting officer for the financial statements

13. The accounting officer is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the standards of GRAP and the requirements of the MFMA and DoRA; and for such internal control as the accounting officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
14. In preparing the financial statements, the accounting officer is responsible for assessing the municipality's ability to continue as a going concern; disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern; and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the appropriate governance structure either intends to liquidate the municipality or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Responsibilities of the auditor-general for the audit of the financial statements

15. My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be

expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

16. A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is included in the annexure to this auditor's report.

Report on the audit of the annual performance report

17. In accordance with the Public Audit Act 25 of 2004 (PAA) and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I must audit and report on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance against predetermined objectives for the selected development priorities presented in the annual performance report. The accounting officer is responsible for the preparation of the annual performance report.
18. I selected the following development priorities presented in the annual performance report for the year ended 30 June 2023 for auditing. I selected development priorities that measure the municipality's performance on its primary mandated functions and that are of significant national, community or public interest.

Development priority	Page numbers	Purpose
Basic Service delivery	12-15	Provide basic services to the citizens
Local economic development	16-17	Stimulate economic development within the municipality

19. I evaluated the reported performance information for the selected development priorities against the criteria developed from the performance management and reporting framework, as defined in the general notice. When an annual performance report is prepared using these criteria, it provides useful and reliable information and insights to users on the municipality's planning and delivery on its mandate and objectives.
20. I performed procedures to test whether:
- the indicators used for planning and reporting on performance can be linked directly to the municipality's mandate and the achievement of its planned objectives.
 - the indicators are well defined to ensure that they are easy to understand and can be applied consistently, as well as verifiable so that I can confirm the methods and processes to be used for measuring achievements.
 - the targets can be linked directly to the achievement of the indicators and are specific, time bound and measurable to ensure that it is easy to understand what should be delivered and by when, the required level of performance as well as how performance will be evaluated.
 - the indicators and targets reported on in the annual performance report are the same as those committed to in the approved initial or revised planning documents.

- the reported performance information is presented in the annual performance report in the prescribed manner.
 - there is adequate supporting evidence for the achievements reported and for the reasons provided for any over- or underachievement of targets / measures taken to improve performance.
21. I performed the procedures for the purpose of reporting material findings only; and not to express an assurance opinion or conclusion.
22. The material findings on the reported performance information for the selected development priority are as follows:

Local economic development

Number of workshops/ Trainings conducted for Street Traders by 30 June every year

23. I could not determine whether the achievement reported against the target was correct, as there were no processes to consistently measure and report on achievements against planned indicators. Adequate supporting evidence was also not provided for auditing. Consequently, the reported achievement might be more or less than reported and was not reliable for determining if the target had been achieved.

Number of workshops/ Trainings organized by the municipality in partnerships with sector partners offered to SMME's by 30 June 2023.

24. An indicator of '*number of workshops/trainings conducted for street traders by 30 June every year*' was included in the approved service delivery and budget implementation plan. However, an indicator of '*number of workshops/trainings organized by the municipality in partnerships with sector partners offered to SMME's by 30 June 2023*' was reported in the annual performance report.

Other matters

25. I draw attention to the matters below.

Achievement of planned targets

26. The annual performance report includes information on reported achievements against planned targets and provides explanations for over- or underachievement's / measures taken to improve performance. This information should be considered in the context of the material findings on the reported performance information.
27. The municipality plays a key role in delivering services to South Africans. The table that follow provides information on the achievement of planned targets and lists the key service delivery indicators that were not achieved as reported in the annual performance report. The reasons for any underachievement of targets / measures taken to improve performance are included in the annual performance report on pages xx to xx.

Targets achieved: 63%		
Budget spent: 89%		
Key service delivery indicators not achieved	Planned target	Reported achievement
Number of Job opportunities created through EPWP by 30 June 2023 (Temporary job opportunities)	3552	625
Number of new substations built by 30 June 2023	1	0
Increase percentage of Households with access to electrification by 1,1% (2360HH) by 30 June 2023	1.1%	0.24%
Increase percentage of households with access to sanitation by 0.75% (1800HH) by 30 June 2023	1.68%	0.07%
Number of disaster management plan reviewed (Annual review) by 30 June 2023	1	0
Km of trunk route constructed by 30 June 2023	1km	0

Material misstatements

28. I identified material misstatements in the annual performance report submitted for auditing. These material misstatements were in the reported performance information for Local economic development. Management did not correct all of the misstatements and I reported material findings in this regard.

Report on compliance with legislation

29. In accordance with the PAA and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I must audit and report on compliance with applicable legislation relating to financial matters, financial management and other related matters. The accounting officer is responsible for the municipality's compliance with legislation.
30. I performed procedures to test compliance with selected requirements in key legislation in accordance with the findings engagement methodology of the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA). This engagement is not an assurance engagement. Accordingly, I do not express an assurance opinion or conclusion.
31. Through an established AGSA process, I selected requirements in key legislation for compliance testing that are relevant to the financial and performance management of the municipality, clear to allow consistent measurement and evaluation, while also sufficiently detailed and readily available to report in an understandable manner. The selected legislative requirements are included in the annexure to this auditor's report.

32. The material findings on compliance with the selected legislative requirements, presented per compliance theme, are as follows:

Annual financial statements, annual performance report and annual report

33. The financial statements submitted for auditing were not prepared in all material respects in accordance with the requirements of section 122(1) of the MFMA.
34. Material misstatements of non-current assets, expenditure and disclosure items identified by the auditors in the submitted financial statements were subsequently corrected and the supporting records were provided subsequently resulting in the financial statements receiving an unqualified audit opinion.

Procurement and contract management

35. Persons in service of the municipality whose close family members had a private or business interest in contracts awarded by the municipality failed to disclose such interest, in contravention of the code of conduct for staff members issued in terms of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.
36. Some of the construction contracts were awarded to contractors that did not qualify for the contract in accordance with section 18(1) of the Construction Industry Development Board Act 38 of 2000 and CIDB Regulations 17 and 25(7). This non-compliance was identified in the procurement processes for water and sanitation.
37. The preference point system was not applied for some of the procurement of goods and services as required by section 2(1)(a) of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act.

Consequence Management

38. Some of the unauthorised expenditure incurred by the municipality was not investigated to determine if any person is liable for the expenditure, as required by section 32(2)(a) of the MFMA.
39. Some of the irregular expenditure incurred by the municipality were not investigated to determine if any person is liable for the expenditure, as required by section 32(2)(b) of the MFMA.
40. Some of the fruitless and wasteful expenditure incurred by the municipality was not investigated to determine if any person is liable for the expenditure, as required by section 32(2)(b) of the MFMA.
41. Authorisation of unauthorised expenditure amounting to R1 040 556 577 was not done through an adjustment budget, as required by section 32(2)(a)(i) of the MFMA.

Asset Management

42. An effective system of internal control for assets (including an asset register) was not in place, as required by section 63(2)(c) of the MFMA.

Expenditure Management

43. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent unauthorised expenditure amounting to R1040 556 577 as disclosed in note 54 to the annual financial statements, in contravention of section 62(1)(d) of the MFMA. The majority of the unauthorised expenditure was caused by incorrect budgeting for non-cash items.

Other information in the annual report

44. The accounting officer is responsible for the other information included in the annual report, which includes the audit committee's report. The other information referred to does not include the financial statements, the auditor's report and those selected development priorities presented in the annual performance report that have been specifically reported on in this auditor's report.
45. My opinion on the financial statements, the report on the audit of the annual performance report and the report on compliance with legislation do not cover the other information included in the annual report and I do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion on it.
46. My responsibility is to read this other information and, in doing so, consider whether it is materially inconsistent with the financial statements and the selected development priorities presented in the annual performance report or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.
47. I did not receive the other information prior to the date of this auditor's report. When I do receive and read this information and if I conclude that there is a material misstatement therein, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance and request that the other information be corrected. If the other information is not corrected, I may have to retract this auditor's report and re-issue an amended report as appropriate. However, if it is corrected, this will not be necessary.

Internal control deficiencies

48. I considered internal control relevant to my audit of the financial statements, annual performance report and compliance with applicable legislation; however, my objective was not to express any form of assurance on it.
49. The matters reported below are limited to the significant internal control deficiencies that resulted in the basis for the qualified opinion, the material findings on the annual performance report and the material findings on compliance with legislation included in this report.
50. The accounting officer did not adequately review the financial statements and performance information before submitting them for auditing, as a result material misstatements were identified.
51. The municipality did not adequately implement a record management policy and related procedures to ensure that all documentation is properly controlled and submitted timeously.
52. Non-compliance with legislation could have been prevented if compliance was properly reviewed and monitored by the municipality.
53. There is no process in place for selection and allocation of work for the service providers appointed through a panel.

Material irregularities

54. In accordance with the PAA and the Material Irregularity Regulations, I have a responsibility to report on material irregularities identified during the audit and on the status of material irregularities as previously reported in the auditor's report.

Status of previously reported material irregularities

Payment for buses not received

55. The municipality paid R 16 680 257 in 2019 for buses which they did not receive. This resulted in non-compliance with section 116 2 (a) of the MFMA in which the accounting officer did not take reasonable steps to ensure that a contract or agreement procured through the supply chain management policy of the municipality is properly enforced. This non-compliance resulted in a material financial loss amounting to R 16 680 257.
56. The accounting officer was notified of the material irregularity on 9 December 2022 and invited to make a written submission on the actions taken and that will be taken to address the matter. The accounting officer responded to the notification on 15 January 2023. The following actions were taken to address the material irregularity:
 - The municipality appointed a service provider (law firm) on 26 January 2023 to investigate the matter. The investigation was completed by the on 23 March 2023. The municipality is currently implementing the recommendations from the investigation report. The municipality is planning to finalise the process on 14 December 2023.

- The supplier was placed under business rescue on 18 August 2021.
- The municipality started negotiations with the business rescuer practitioners on 16 January 2023 with the objective to obtain the buses.

57. I will follow up the material irregularity during my next audit.

Auditor - General.

Polokwane

01 December 2023



AUDITOR - GENERAL
SOUTH AFRICA

Auditing to build public confidence

Annexure to the auditor's report

The annexure includes the following:

- The auditor-general's responsibility for the audit
- The selected legislative requirements for compliance testing

Auditor-general's responsibility for the audit

Professional judgement and professional scepticism

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout my audit of the financial statements and the procedures performed on reported performance information for selected development priorities and on the municipality's compliance with selected requirements in key legislation.

Financial statements

In addition to my responsibility for the audit of the financial statements as described in this auditor's report, I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the municipality's internal control.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements. I also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists relating to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the municipality to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements about the material uncertainty or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion on the financial statements. My conclusions are based on the information available to me at the date of this auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause a municipality to cease operating as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and determine whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

Communication with those charged with governance

I communicate with the accounting officer regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

I also provide the accounting officer with a statement that I have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence and communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on my independence and, where applicable, actions taken to eliminate threats or safeguards applied.

Compliance with legislation – selected legislative requirements

The selected legislative requirements are as follows:

Legislation	Sections or regulations
Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 (MFMA)	Section 1 - Paragraph (a), (b) & (d) of the definition: irregular expenditure, Section 1 - Definition: service delivery and budget implementation plan, Sections 11(1), 13(2), 14(1), 14(2)(a), 14(2)(b), 15, 24(2)(c)(iv), 29(1), Sections 29(2)(b), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(a)(i), 32(2)(a)(ii), 32(2)(b), Sections 32(6)(a), 32(7), 53(1)(c)(ii), 54(1)(c), 62(1)(d), 62(1)(f)(i), Sections 62(1)(f)(ii), 62(1)(f)(iii), 63(1)(a), 63(2)(a), 63(2)(c), 64(2)(b), Sections 64(2)(c), 64(2)(e), 64(2)(f), 64(2)(g), 65(2)(a), 65(2)(b), 65(2)(e), Sections 72(1)(a)(ii), 112(1)(j), 116(2)(b), 116(2)(c)(ii), 117, 122(1), Sections 122(2), 126(1)(a), 126(1)(b), 127(2), 127(5)(a)(i), 127(5)(a)(ii), Sections 129(1), 129(3), 133(1)(a), 133(1)(c)(i), 133(1)(c)(ii), 170, Sections 171(4)(a), 171(4)(b)
MFMA: Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, 2009	Regulations 71(1), 71(2), 72
MFMA: Municipal Investment Regulations, 2005	Regulations 3(1)(a), 3(3), 6, 7, 12(2), 12(3)
MFMA: Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings, 2014	Regulations 5(4), 6(8)(a), 6(8)(b), 10(1)
MFMA: Municipal Supply Chain Management Regulations, 2017	Regulations 5, 12(1)(c), 12(3), 13(b), 13(c), 13(c)(i), 16(a), 17(1)(a), Regulations 17(1)(b), 17(1)(c), 19(a), 21(b), 22(1)(b)(i), 22(2), 27(2)(a), Regulations 27(2)(e), 28(1)(a)(i), 28(1)(a)(ii),

Legislation	Sections or regulations
	29(1)(a), 29(1)(b), Regulations 29(5)(a)(ii), 29(5)(b)(ii), 32, 36(1), 36(1)(a), 38(1)(c), Regulations 38(1)(d)(ii), 38(1)(e), 38(1)(g)(i), 38(1)(g)(ii), 38(1)(g)(iii), 43, Regulations 44, 46(2)(e), 46(2)(f)
Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000	Sections 25(1), 26(a), 26(c), 26(h), 26(i), 29(1)(b)(ii), 29(3)(b), 34(a), 34(b), Sections 38(a), 41(1)(a), 41(1)(b), 41(1)(c)(ii), 42, 43(2), 56(a), 57(2)(a), Sections 57(4B), 57(6)(a), 66(1)(a), 66(1)(b), 67(1)(d), 74(1), 93J(1), 96(b)
MSA: Municipal Planning and performance Management Regulations, 2001	Regulations 2(1)(e), 2(3)(a), 3(3), 3(4)(b), 3(6)(a), 7(1), 8, 9(1)(a), 10(a), Regulations 12(1), 15(1)(a)(i), 15(1)(a)(ii)
MSA: Municipal Performance Regulations for Municipal Managers and Managers directly Accountable to Municipal Managers, 2006	Regulations 2(3)(a), 4(4)(b), 8(1), 8(2), 8(3)
MSA: Regulations on Appointment and Conditions of Employment of Senior Managers, 2014	Regulations 17(2), 36(1)(a)
MSA: Disciplinary Regulations for Senior Managers, 2011	Regulations 5(2), 5(3), 5(6), 8(4)
Annual Division of Revenue Act	Section 11(6)(b), 12(5), 16(1); 16(3)
Construction Industry Development Board Act 38 of 2000	Section 18(1)
Construction Industry Development Board Regulations	Regulations 17, 25(7A)
Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004	Section 3(1)
Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000	Sections 2(1)(a), 2(1)(f)
Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2017	Regulations 4(1), 4(2), 5(1), 5(3), 5(6), 5(7), 6(1), 6(2), 6(3), 6(6), 6(8), Regulations 7(1), 7(2), 7(3), 7(6), 7(8), 8(2), 8(5) 9(1), 10(1), 10(2), Regulations 11(1), 11(2)
Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2022	Regulations 4(1), 4(2), 4(3), 4(4), 5(1), 5(2), 5(3), 5(4)