

Honourable Speaker of Council, Cllr Gary van Niekerk

Deputy Executive Mayor, Cllr Mkhuseleli Jack

Council Chief Whip, Cllr Bill Harington,

Members of the Mayoral Committee, All Councillors

City Manager and Senior Managers

Leaders from the different political parties

Distinguished Guests

Members of various Media Houses

Ladies and Gentlemen

2 February 2023

Good Day,

Speaker and Councillors, today I have the privilege as the Executive Mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay to table the 2022/23 Adjustments Budget under the leadership of the Metro's Coalition Government.

Such an occasion, Honourable Speaker, bears deep significance for the political leadership of this Municipality, but more importantly, for the diverse communities that make up our Metro.

I table this Adjustments Budget in the climate of a Metro facing an unrelenting 8 year drought with an economy hampered by the effects of Eskom Blackouts.

Local government remains a strategic site for the delivery of basic services and as such, its role is weaved into the fabric of the communities it serves. It is common knowledge that the Metro has in recent years gone through a rough patch, which severely affected service delivery and other key delivery related targets.

However, we as a Metro have shown resilience throughout these difficulties and we need to acknowledge the visible achievements dotted around the city, which serve as evidence of our capabilities as the NMBM.

We also remain mindful of the anchor role that industries such as the automotive sector continue to play in the development of this city through job creation.

High unemployment remains a monumental challenge for Nelson Mandela Bay, as such we must focus all our energy to create a stable environment that will allow business to retain jobs and grow into creating more jobs.

This Adjustments Budget is tabled in the context of the Metro's current financial position – the decision by Council in 2022 to adjust the water tariff upwards upon the advices of both National Treasury and the Department of Water & Sanitation did not have the desired effect of reducing water consumption. Instead it had a hugely negative effect on the Metro's Revenue Collection Rate. Council has since changed this decision and I am certain that our Revenue Enhancement strategies will soon bear fruit.

The hard work that has gone into producing this budget documents provides foresight into how we will be able to mitigate the adverse effects of the identified service delivery challenges in our Metro.

It was also predestined that in a city named after our iconic first democratically elected President, Nelson Mandela, we would have to govern in a coalition of different parties in a spirit of cooperation, reconciliation and united interest to deal with the issues of all the citizens of the City and their respective needs.

Our stakeholder engagements have emphasised, among other things, that our budget must speak to the provision and improvement of basic services; an Efficient Metro with professional staff who are efficient at delivering basic services – safe and reliable roads and transport services, a stable water supply and a responsive administration where water leaks are identified and repaired and a sewerage system that is functional. A sustainable and financially viable electricity department.

A human settlements department that assists development and accelerates housing delivery. A safe Metro that is capacitated to ensure that our communities are safe and our Metro assets are protected from vandalism. A healthy Metro with a clean environment to live in. A resilient Metro adapting to changing times that is forward thinking and innovative. An opportunity Metro that provides policy certainty, to grow the economy and generate investment and jobs. A vibrant and attractive sports, arts and recreation sector to add to the quality of life in our Metro. (and to those who can't see the vision of investing in sporting events – I'd encourage you to visit your nearest optometrist)

It remains key that we remind ourselves that in order to achieve all this, we need a capacitated, stabilised and modernised and operational service delivery environment. We have made great strides in the 5 months since taking office to stabilise the institution, with strategic interventions at the lacklustre supply chain management department are already bearing fruits and a number of service delivery contracts such as; the water leaks repair contract, the sewerage point repair contract, pothole repairs and road markings contracts and others already unblocked. Backlogs in key service delivery aspects are steadily declining - more is to come in the very near future.

It is our commitment as this administration to remain vigilant in the monitoring and implementation of the approved cash-flow strategy. Our goal is to ensure that we keep to the promises that have been made.

This Adjustments Budget will have a total operating revenue of R16.3 billion and total operating expenditure of R16.4 billion for the 2022/23 financial year. Through strategic interventions the deficit is been reduced from R550 million to R83 million – placing us in a strong position for a surplus in the new financial year.

The Assistance to the Poor (ATTP) Programme is a focus for our government to ensure that the thousands of families who fell off the system due to the Metro's bureaucracy are added back – an amendment to the policy has already kick started this programme.

We express our sincere gratitude to residents and businesses that consistently pay their municipal accounts. Their contributions go a long way towards expanding and sustaining service delivery.

Speaker, we are quite aware of many households who cannot pay. We will continue to assist them. The ATTP Budget speaks to this. But our message is unambiguous: people who can afford to pay for municipal service should pay.

Nelson Mandela taught us, through his infinite wisdom, to embrace the courage of our convictions when he said that, “after climbing one great hill; one only discovers that there are many more hills to climb”.

To members of the Council, let us continue to impact change in the lives of our people as history will judge us if we dare fail to deliver on our mandate.

I thank you.