

SPEECH BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR DAN PLATO: COUNCIL MEETING OF 26 JANUARY 2011

Mr Speaker, councillors, City Manager, officials, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome back after the festive period. I hope that you are all well-rested and rejuvenated and ready to tackle a very tough few months ahead.

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for a job well done in 2010 – not only did we successfully host the Fifa Soccer World Cup, but we were also named the Best Run City in South Africa. This is amongst many other accolades bestowed on us including the best tourist destination in Africa, most amount of blue flag status beaches in the country and seven consecutive years of a clean audit.

Most recently Cape Town was hailed by the *Lonely Planet*, a popular travel website, as the second best beach in the world while *Tripadvisor* toasted the city's accommodation providers in its 2011 Travellers Choice Awards.

This highlights the importance of the City working closely with the private sector to ensure that we do not lose out on the tremendous tourist destination that we live in. I thank the private tourism sector for their commitment to promoting our city and all the staff involved in making this a city welcoming for visitors and residents.

I am also extremely proud of the City staff who toiled, often for very long hours, over weekends and public holidays, to ensure that our city functioned well during the Festive Season. There were no serious incidents and from what I gather the residents of Cape Town and our many visitors thoroughly enjoyed their holidays. This was not an easy feat and was only possible through the dedication and sacrifice of staff who gave-up their own holidays to serve Cape Town.

Every loss of life is a deeply saddening tragedy and my condolences to the families who recently lost loved ones. This festive season we tried to minimise loss of life and experienced the lowest drowning rate at our beaches and pools in the past three years with the current total being nine as opposed to 38 last year. Road fatalities decreased from 17 for the period 01 December 2009 to 17 January 2010 to 12 over the same period for 2010/11. I want to thank Capetonians for driving safer. However, this was also due to the drastic increase in roadblocks and traffic policing over the festive season with 193 923 people caught for committing general traffic violations.

The Festive Season Committee under the leadership of Richard Bosman, Executive Director: Safety and Security, worked extremely hard over the season and will continue to function until after Easter, whereafter the winter plan team will meet regularly. I have to make a special mention of Wilfred Solomons from Disaster Risk Management who went way beyond the call of duty this season to serve our City. Wilfred, I personally thank you for your sacrifice.

Speaker, all municipalities are required by law to compile a midyear assessment and review of their approved budget. However, the City's report on the Council agenda today which deals with this matter also proposes the adoption of an adjustment budget. By adopting these adjustments, the budget will be more realistic, achievable and implementable which will ensure optimum service delivery.

The adjustment budget takes into account the latest trends of the current financial year's expenditure as well as revenue and will ensure implementation of the budget in accordance with what is achievable on the ground. Specifics of the adjustments will be dealt with when the item serves before us.

Speaker, in my speech at the last Council meeting I mentioned the City's Corporate Scorecard and the need to change this to accommodate the requirements of the Auditor-General's processes to verify service delivery outcomes. This was not a satisfactory situation for the City as the Scorecard is a very important component of the Council's service delivery commitment to residents.

I am very pleased to report to you now that a subsequent engagement with the Auditor-General's staff proved very fruitful and resulted in a different approach to the audit process. I want to thank the Executive Deputy Mayor, Alderman Ian Neilson and Alderman Belinda Walker for facilitating that engagement and my thanks also go to the Auditor-General for his understanding of the City's efforts to comply with the legislation.

The Auditor-General's report on the Consolidated Annual Financial Statements for the year-ended 30 June 2010 is tabled today for noting by Council. I am pleased to report to Council that the City has again achieved an unqualified audit report for the year ended 30 June 2010 and with no material issues reported under Matters of Emphasis it is a "clean audit report".

Mr Speaker, this again demonstrates the coalition government's commitment to good governance and a clean administration.

Speaker, we are all well aware that 2011 is going to be an eventful year with local government elections anticipated sometime in May. This will be an exceptionally busy period for the councillors, however, I would like to reassure officials and especially the residents of Cape Town that service delivery and the City's core business will continue as per usual. The message that has been highlighted to all staff is that for 2011 it is *Business as usual* and we are committed to not only maintaining service delivery levels, but raising the bar even higher.

Speaker, I would like to encourage all Capetonians to actively participate in the democratic process in order to ensure that their candidate of choice is represented on this Council. I therefore encourage all who have not yet registered to vote or have moved residences since the last election to take their green barcode ID book to the local registration centre on the 5th and 6th of February and the 5th and 6th of March. Be part of the change that you want to see happen in our city.

Speaker, we have several major projects that are set to be launched since the last Council meeting. The City's Housing Directorate has, to date, utilised 89% of its 2010/2011 national housing subsidy allocation on various housing projects, informal settlement upgrades, emergency housing interventions as well as the current project aimed at upgrading more than 7 500 housing rental units. Major housing projects will commence in:

- Witsand
- Bardale
- Happy Valley
- Gugulethu Infill Project
- Delft: The Hague

And these are but a few – many more will be rolled out during the course of the year.

Next week Tuesday, I encourage all Capetonians to get on their bicycles, put on your helmets and join myself and Councillor Elizabeth Thompson, Mayoral Committee Member for Transport, Roads and Major Projects, as we test ride the new 15 km non-motorised transport(NMT) route between Blaauwberg Road and the city centre, which is part of the first major route of the new MyCiTi system. I have been heartened by the number of cyclists and pedestrians who are using the route and the very positive feedback that we have received. This route provides pedestrians and cyclists with their own dedicated lane separate from normal traffic.

It is an exciting and ground breaking project and shows our City's commitment to provide safe thoroughfares for pedestrians and commuters right across the city. Over the next few years we want to link individual NMT routes across the city. My support for this initiative also comes at an important time in our city's calendar. We are only a few weeks away from the Cape Argus Cycle Tour and unfortunately at this time of year we often hear stories of accidents involving vehicles and cyclists. I would like to remind both cyclists and motorists to be considerate of each other at all times. We are all users of the road and must obey the law, cyclists wear your helmets and reflective clothing, motorists please approach cyclists with care and give them a wide berth when passing.

Speaker, the City of Cape Town has developed a cohesive strategy to position Cape Town as a hub for entrepreneurship on the African continent. Last year the City hosted a successful global entrepreneurship week at various locations ranging from the Convention Centre to UWC and Khayelitsha. This year the City will continue its good work with this major project of building a business-friendly Cape Town. In partnership with the South African banking and venture capital community, the City will be looking at innovative ways to enable funding of capital to Cape Town's start-up businesses.

Speaker, over the coming weeks and months you will see that Cape Town is blessed with major events such as the Cape to Rio yacht race, Cape Town International Jazz Festival, J&B Met, Two Oceans Marathon, Design Indaba, Argus Cycle Tour and the Volvo Oceans yacht race. The combined contribution from these events to the economy of Cape Town runs into billions of rand and is helping to sustain Cape Town's important services sector.

The Cape Town International Jazz Festival, for example, contributed R685 million to the SA economy in 2010 and the Design Indaba contributed well in excess of R200 million.

The last Council meeting saw the establishment of the Cape Town Events Advisory Committee which will, amongst other tasks, help to identify the major events for which the city should bid. In future, business, promotion agencies, other relevant role-players such as our universities, the City and Provincial Government will work together to attract events.

Speaker, on 12 January the MEC for Social Development announced an 'amnesty period' as of 1 February 2011, which will give all existing unregistered Partial Care Facilities six months in which to apply for registration.

The City is supporting this initiative by simplifying the processes relating to the submission of application forms to obtain clearance in terms of the land-use regulations, building development regulations, health and fire regulations. Whilst the City's Departments will endeavour to deal with these applications in the shortest possible time it cannot compromise on the requirements of legislation, nor the safety of children using these facilities.

Furthermore, should the City, at any time during this 'amnesty period', become aware of situations that pose an immediate threat to life and property it has no alternative but to enforce the legislation to ensure that remedial action is taken as a matter of urgency as we cannot compromise on the safety of our children.

I encourage all unregistered Partial Care Facilities to embrace the opportunity granted by the MEC to start the process of registration. The City will gladly provide advice and guidance during this process and has also procured a range of services which are aimed at providing training, development and support to crèches as our contribution towards assisting crèches to improve the quality of services in a holistic and sustainable manner.

Mr Speaker, it is not our aim to close down crèches, but rather to work with crèches to get them to meet the minimum standards and to assist them in becoming sustainable as we recognize the vital role that they play in meeting the needs of our children during their important formative years.

Speaker, 2011 is going to be a challenging year for all involved with the Council, but I would once again like to reassure everyone that the City will continue to strive to be more efficient and continue the work done in 2010. I wish you all the best for the remainder of 2011 and I urge you all to surpass the goals that you set for yourself.

I thank you in advance for all your hard work.