

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE MAYOR MATHABO LEETO:

We have arrived at the conclusion of the 2007/2008 financial year and have traversed indeed, a path full of complex challenges and opportunities.

The budget for 2008/2009 is not a mere balance of sheet of revenue versus expenditure, but an amount which the quality of lives of our people is dependent upon and over and above, an amount which will ensure that Council adheres to the responsibility and obligation to discharge good governance based on the Batho-Pele principles. It is a people and service delivery driven budget.

Matjhabeng Local Municipality has huge developmental needs and the disparities between affluent communities and those that are needy, continue. Council sees the budget as a policy instrument through which we seek to transform our society. This noble project of transforming our society should continue to propel and jet us to the commitment we made before we achieve freedom and in post 1994 period. We must continue to advocate and work towards the true realization of a better life through budget processes of this nature and continue to create conditions conducive for the betterment of our communities.

The budget for 2008/2009 comes at the end of the lengthy process of consultation and participation. This was to ensure that the aspirations and expectations of communities and stakeholders across the length and breadth of Matjhabeng find their expression in our Integrated Development Plan and Annual Budget so that we truly service the people as we have promised in 2005.

None of us shouldn't and must not forget that democracy is not only about how representatives are chosen. It is about how ordinary citizens are regarded in the decision-making process. They must be governors and not passive bystanders and they must be equal to decision-makers. We have used IDP (Integrated Development Planning) hearings and budget consultative public meetings as enablers in this regard. We therefore must ensure that councilors are the custodians of all critical information on economic activities, unemployment and poverty in the wards.

We must equally ensure that those who qualify are in the social security safety net to release our people from abject poverty. Such work is the most tangible form of public service together with

vibrant and well functioning Ward Committees that will inform the IDP and Local Economic Development (LED) strategies assisted by Community Development Workers.

The control and management of finances in 2007/2008 is basically skeptic. The revenue collection is not predictable as it fluctuate from time to time despite all efforts through financial recovery plans and oversight committees. The Department of Finance needs to step up all revenue collection measures, and outsourcing of the services must not be regarded as an alternative – only more revenue is lost to private sector.

The Municipality needs revenue to pay for, or maintain services. To residents who pay for their services: Thank you. To those who do not, but can afford to do so: Please pay for the water, electricity and other services you have already enjoyed.