



**AfriForum's Municipal Audit
FOR MPUMALANGA**

2021



AfriForum

Part of the Solidarity Movement

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INTRODUCTION

AfriForum's municipal audit is a product of the Centre for Local Government and aims to measure the quality of life and service delivery in the country's respective municipal areas. Municipalities are the level of government that is closest to people and provide many of the important services that people are dependent on to survive and thrive, for example roads, and water and electricity provision. This level of government is to a large extent in a dilapidated or dilapidating state, however, and this affects millions of people in the country.

Another aim of the audit is to provide an overall picture of municipalities, thereby continuously focusing the attention on the fate of these municipalities and their residents. It is also an informative tool for the public, the media, opinion formers, decision makers and administrators to understand their municipalities and apply pressure to bring about change where necessary.

The municipal audit examines the demographics, socio-economic conditions, service delivery issues and the management of municipalities. Each report analyses the municipalities of a specific province, and each municipality is awarded an impression score out of 10. Follow-up reports on specific provinces also indicate which municipalities have improved and which municipalities have deteriorated. The first edition dealt with South Africa's most densely populated province and economic hub, Gauteng, while the second focused on the North West province. This report deals with Mpumalanga.

BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 546 215 in 2016 (538 593 in 2011)¹

Age distribution: 39,9% under 15; 55,3% between 15 and 64; 4,9% over 65¹

Education (20+): Matric 32,6% (25,7% in 2011); higher education 5,7% (7,3% in 2011)¹

Language (households): Tsonga 56,8%; Sepedi 24,5%; Sotho 5,4%; Swati 7,8%; Zulu 3,3%²

Housing: 96,3% in formal dwellings (95,9% in 2011)¹

Unemployment: It is unknown what the historic or current unemployment rates are.

Service delivery

- 7,4% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (12% in 2011).¹
- AfriForum did not recently inspect and score the drinking water and effluent in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.
- 6,2% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (6,8% in 2011).¹
- 96,5% of households use electricity for lighting (93,9% in 2011).¹
- 4,2% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (7,5% in 2011).¹
- AfriForum did not recently assign a score to a landfill site in Bushbuckridge.

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion for 2018/19: Unqualified with findings; the two previous opinions were either qualified (2017/18) or unqualified with findings (2016/17).³
- 37,2% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.³
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R93 080 388 at the end of 2018/19. This is commendable but seems to fluctuate quite significantly between financial years.³
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 19,8% of the operating expenditure.³

Bushbuckridge's score: 1,5 out of 10

1 Yes Media. 2019. Bushbuckridge Local Municipality – Demographic information. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1142/bushbuckridge-local-municipality>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

2 StatsSA. 2020. Bushbuckridge. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=bushbuckridge-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

3 Municipal Money. 2020. Bushbuckridge. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP325-bushbuckridge/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

CHIEF ALBERT LUTHULI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 187 629 in 2016 (186 010 in 2011)⁴

Age distribution: 34,1% under 15; 60,3% between 15 and 64; 5,7% over 65⁴

Education (20+): Matric 31,8% (27% in 2011); higher education 5,8% (6,3% in 2011)⁴

Language (households): Swati 56,6%; Zulu 34,6%⁵

Housing: 80,2% in formal dwellings (76,5% in 2011)⁴

Unemployment (official rate): 36,4% in 2016⁶ (35,4% in 2011)^{4,6}

Service delivery

- 11,6% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (22,6% in 2011).⁴
- AfriForum classified the drinking water in Badplaas and Carolina as “clean” in 2019 and 2020. The quality of the effluent in the municipality was not recently audited.⁷
- 19,2% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (18,9% in 2011).⁴
- 95% of households use electricity for lighting (87,5% in 2011).⁴
- 15% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (19,3% in 2011).⁴
- Carolina’s landfill site scored 0 in 2020 in AfriForum’s landfill audit.⁸

Management

- The Auditor-General’s audit opinion for 2018/19: Unqualified with findings – the two previous opinions were also unqualified with findings (2017/18 and 2016/17).⁹
- 28,6% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁹
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of almost R16 million at the end of 2018/19. This is encouraging and has shown sudden improvement.⁹
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 11,4% of the operating expenditure.⁹

Chief Albert Luthuli’s score: 1,5 out of 10

4 Yes Media. 2019. *Albert Luthuli Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1147/chief-albert-luthuli-local-municipality>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

5 StatsSA. 2020. *Albert Luthuli*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=albert-luthuli-municipality. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

6 Albert Luthuli. 2020. *Integrated Development Plan 2020/21*. Available at https://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Chief-Albert-Luthuli-2020-21-reviewed-IDP.pdf. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

7 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

8 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

9 Municipal Money. 2020. *Albert Luthuli*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP301-chief-albert-luthuli/>. Accessed on 10 April 2021.

DIPALESENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 45 232 in 2016 (42 390 in 2011)¹⁰

Age distribution: 25,5% under 15; 68,3% between 15 and 64; 6,2% over 65¹⁰

Education (20+): Matric 29,1% (24,1% in 2011); Higher education 6,1% (5,7% in 2011)¹⁰

Language (households): Zulu 55,6%; Sotho 24%; Afrikaans 8,9%¹¹

Housing: 73,7% in formal dwellings (67,4% in 2011)¹⁰

Unemployment: No recent statistics available (37,2% in 2011)¹⁰

Service delivery

- 28,5% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (38,2% in 2011).¹⁰
- The drinking water in Greylingstad and Balfour was classified as clean by AfriForum in 2019 and 2020. A score was not assigned to the effluent in these two towns during these years.¹²
- 71,3% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (74,9% in 2011).¹⁰
- 80,8% of households use electricity for lighting (83,1% in 2011).¹⁰
- 74,4% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (81,8% in 2011).¹⁰
- AfriForum did not recently assign a score to a landfill site in Dipaleseng.

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion for 2018/19 had a disclaimer of opinion. The two previous opinions were either qualified (2017/18) or unqualified with findings (2016/17).¹³
- 20,1% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.¹³
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R2 662 123 at the end of 2018/19. This is low and has seen a precipitous decline over the years.¹³
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 12,7% of the operating expenditure.¹³

Dipaleseng's score: 3 out of 10

10 Yes Media. 2019. *Dipaleseng Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1148/dipaleseng-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

11 StatsSA. 2020. Dipaleseng. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=dipaleseng-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

12 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

13 Municipal Money. 2020. *Dipaleseng*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP306-dipaleseng/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

DR JS MOROKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 246 016 in 2016 (249 705 in 2011)¹⁴

Age distribution: 31,7% under 15; 61,6% between 15 and 64; 6,6% over 65¹⁴

Education (20+): Matric 30% (25,1% in 2011); higher education 6,8% (6,6% in 2011)¹⁴

Language (households): Ndebele 36,1%; Pedi 30,7%; Tswana 17,3%¹⁵

Housing: 91,5% in formal dwellings (90,9% in 2011)¹⁴

Unemployment: No recent statistics available (46,6% in 2011)¹⁴

Service delivery

- 9,5% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (14,2% in 2011).¹⁴
- AfriForum did not recently audit and score the drinking water and effluent in Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality.
- 14,3% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (13,3% in 2011).¹⁴
- 95,1% of households use electricity for lighting (96,7% in 2011).¹⁴
- 6,4% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (13,6% in 2011).¹⁴
- AfriForum did not recently assign a score to a landfill site in Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality.

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion of 2018/19: Outstanding - the two previous opinions were either adverse (2017/18) or qualified (2016/17).¹⁶
- Due to the outstanding audit, there is no authoritative information available on how much of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.¹⁶
- The municipality had a cash balance of R0 at the end of 2018/19. This has shown a sharp deterioration over the years.¹⁶
- There is no data available on the municipality's latest unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.¹⁶

Dr JS Moroka's score: 0,5 out of 10

¹⁴ Yes Media. 2019. *Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipality – Demographic information*. <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1155/dr-js-moroka-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

¹⁵ StatsSA. 2020. *Dr. JS Moroka*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=dr-js-moroka-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

¹⁶ Municipal Money. 2020. *Dr. JS Moroka*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP316-dr-js-moroka/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

EMAKHAZENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 48 149 in 2016 (47 216 in 2011)¹⁷

Age distribution: 27,4% under 15; 67,8% between 15 and 64; 4,8% over 65¹⁷

Education (20+): Matric 32,7% (28,6% in 2011); higher education 5,1% (7,4% in 2011)¹⁷

Language (households): Swati 27,8%; Zulu 21,4%; Ndebele 18,4%; Afrikaans 10,5%¹⁸

Housing: 80,4% in formal dwellings (81,8% in 2011)¹⁷

Unemployment: 22,8%¹⁹ (25,9% in 2011)^{17,19}

Service delivery

- 46,7% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (55% in 2011).¹⁷
- The drinking water in Belfast, Dullstroom and Machadodorp was given a clean bill of health for 2018, 2019 and 2020. However, their effluent all showed significant signs of *E. coli*.²⁰
- 75,2% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (74,4% in 2011).¹⁷
- 83,1% of households use electricity for lighting (83,6% in 2011).¹⁷
- 56,3% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (71,7% in 2011).¹⁷
- AfriForum did not recently assign a score to a landfill site in Dipaleseng.

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Adverse - the two previous opinions were both qualified (2017/18 and 2016/17).²¹
- 26,8% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.²¹
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R43 478 737 at the end of 2018/19. This is commendable and a continuation of this aspect's upward trajectory.²¹
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 19,5% of the operating expenditure.²¹

Emakhazeni's score: 3 out of 10

17 Yes Media. 2019. *Emakhazeni Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1156/emakhazeni-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

18 StatsSA. 2020. *Emakhazeni*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=emakhazeni-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

19 Emakhazeni Local Municipality. 2019. *IDP 2018/2019*. Available at <http://www.emakhazeni.gov.za/IDP-2018-2019.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

20 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

21 Municipal Money. 2020. *Emakhazeni*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP314-emakhazeni/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 455 228 in 2016 (395 466 in 2011)²²

Age distribution: 24,5% under 15; 72,5% between 15 and 64; 3% over 65²²

Education (20+): Matric 37,7% (31,4% in 2011); higher education 10,4% (13,9% in 2011)²²

Language (households): Zulu 38,6%; Afrikaans 14,9%; Sepedi 11,3%²³

Housing: 74,4% in formal dwellings (77,2% in 2011)²²

Unemployment: 26,6% (27,3% in 2011)²⁴

Service delivery

- 56% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (54,9% in 2011).²²
- The drinking water in Witbank and Ogies has received a clean bill of health for several years by AfriForum, but Ogies and Stoffberg last received a score in 2018. Kriel's effluent did not receive a score in 2020, but Witbank showed alarming levels of *E. coli*.²⁵
- 69,5% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (68,8% in 2011).²²
- 71,7% of households use electricity for lighting (73,4% in 2011).²²
- 64,6% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (67,2% in 2011).²²
- AfriForum assigned a score of 34% to the landfill site in Witbank.²⁶

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: disclaimer – as were the previous two.²⁷
- 26,2% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.²⁷
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R30 317 646 at the end of 2018/19. This is a vast improvement on previous years' balances.²⁷
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 29,9% of the operating expenditure.²⁷

Emalahleni's score: 3 out of 10

22 Yes Media. 2019. *Emalahleni Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1157/emalahleni-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

23 StatsSA. 2020. *Emalahleni*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=emalahleni-municipality-2. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

24 Emalahleni Local Municipality. 2020. *Integrated Development Plan 2019-2020*. Available at file:///C:/Users/eugene.brink/Downloads/2019-20%20FINAL%20ELM%20IDP%20(1).pdf. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

25 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

26 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

27 Municipal Money. 2020. *Emalahleni*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP312-emalahleni/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

GOVAN MBEKI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 340 091 in 2016 (294 538 in 2011)²⁸

Age distribution: 25,2% under 15; 70,6% between 15 and 64; 4,2% over 65.²⁸

Education (20+): Matric 37,3% (31,3% in 2011); higher education 10,5% (12,6% in 2011)²⁸

Language (households): Zulu 47%; Afrikaans 15,8%; Ndebele 7,6%²⁹

Housing: 76,3% in formal dwellings (71% in 2011)²⁸

Unemployment: 23,3%³⁰ in 2017 (26,2% in 2011)²⁸

Service delivery

- 44,8% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (56,5% in 2011).²⁸
- The drinking water in Bethal, Charl Cilliers, Evander, Leandra, Secunda and Trichardt were all classified as clean by AfriForum for consecutive years. However, in Bethal the effluent could not be tested due to problems at the plant. Charl Cilliers received no score in 2020 and the rest all contained significant amounts of *E. coli* in their effluent.³¹
- 91,1% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (88,9% in 2011).²⁸
- 93,7% of households use electricity for lighting (90,3% in 2011).²⁸
- 70,3% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (91,7% in 2011).²⁸
- The five landfill sites are in a doleful state and all received scores of 10% or less from AfriForum in 2020.³²

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Outstanding – the previous two were either a disclaimer (2017/18) or unqualified with findings (2016/17).³³
- 17,8% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.³³
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R97 241 781 at the end of 2018/19. This is a vast improvement on previous years.³³
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 23,9% of the operating expenditure.³³

Govan Mbeki's score: 4 out of 10

28 Yes Media. 2019. *Govan Mbeki Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1149/govan-mbeki-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

29 StatsSA. 2020. *Govan Mbeki*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=govan-mbeki-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

30 Govan Mbeki Local Municipality. 2021. *Third (3rd) review of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) – Amended*. Available at http://www.govanmbeki.gov.za/wp-content/strategic_documents/final_amended_idp.pdf. Accessed on 26 May 2021.

31 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at AfriForum. 2020. Blue and Green Drop Project 2020. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

32 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

33 Municipal Money. 2020. *Govan Mbeki*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP307-govan-mbeki/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

LEKWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 123 419 in 2016 (115 662 in 2011)³⁴

Age distribution: 26,5% under 15; 67,9% between 15 and 64; 5,6% over 65³⁴

Education (20+): Matric 28% (25,1% in 2011); higher education 7,7% (10,3% in 2011)³⁴

Language (households): Zulu 65%; Afrikaans 13%; Sotho 10%³⁵

Housing: 77,5% in formal dwellings (73,6% in 2011)³⁴

Unemployment: 27,1% in 2019³⁶ (25,9% in 2011)³⁴

Service delivery

- 43,5% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (55,2% in 2011).³⁴
- The drinking water in Morgenzon and Standerton were all classified as clean by AfriForum for consecutive years. However, the effluent in Morgenzon received no score in 2020 and in Standerton high levels of *E. coli* were detected.³⁷
- 85,7% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (83,6% in 2011).³⁴
- 90,8% of households use electricity for lighting (88,6% in 2011).³⁴
- 65,8% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (82,2% in 2011).³⁴
- The five landfill sites are in a doleful state and Morgenzon's site received a zero score in 2020 from AfriForum, and Standerton 18.³⁸

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Disclaimer – the previous two were either qualified (2017/18) or unqualified with findings (2016/17).³⁹
- 20,2% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.³⁹
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R12 444 370 at the end of 2018/19.³⁹
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 20,4% of the operating expenditure.³⁹

Lekwa's score: 2,5 out of 10

³⁴ Yes Media. 2019. *Lekwa Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1150/lekwa-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

³⁵ StatsSA. 2020. *Lekwa*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=lekwa-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

³⁶ Lekwa Local Municipality. 2021. *Draft IDP 2021/2022*. Available at https://www.lekwalm.gov.za/Information/statutory_documents. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

³⁷ AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

³⁸ AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

³⁹ Municipal Money. 2020. *Lekwa*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP305-lekwa/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 695 913 in 2016 (658 604 in 2011)⁴⁰

Age distribution: 32,2% under 15; 63,9% between 15 and 64; 3,9% over 65⁴⁰

Education (20+): Matric 37,2% (32,6% in 2011); higher education 9,3% (11,7% in 2011)⁴⁰

Language (households): Swati 77,6%; Afrikaans 6,7%; English 4,6%⁴¹

Housing: 90,6% in formal dwellings (91,6% in 2011)⁴⁰

Unemployment: 26,4% in 2019 (24,8% in 2016)⁴²

Service delivery

- 25,2% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (37,7% in 2011).⁴⁰
- The drinking water in White River, Kaapsehoop and Barberton were all classified as clean by AfriForum in 2020. However, the effluent in Nelspruit (Mbombela) showed some signs of *E. coli* and no score was assigned to White River.⁴³
- 27,6% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (31,9% in 2011).⁴⁰
- 95% of households use electricity for lighting (88,9% in 2011).⁴⁰
- 29% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (33,4% in 2011).⁴⁰
- The landfill site in Barberton received a score of 46 from AfriForum in 2020. The other two sites, namely White River Transfer Station and Nelspruit, were not scored.⁴⁴

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Unqualified with findings – as were the previous two.⁴⁵
- 24,6% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁴⁵
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R94 843 988 at the end of 2018/19. This is a vast improvement on previous years.⁴⁵
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 10,5% of the operating expenditure.⁴⁵

Mbombela's score: 4 out of 10

40 Yes Media. 2019. *City of Mbombela Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1244/city-of-mbombela-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

41 StatsSA. 2020. *Mbombela*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=mbombela-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

42 Mbombela. 2021. *Draft Integrated Development Plan review, 2021-2022*. Available at <https://www.mbombela.gov.za/idp2020.html>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

43 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

44 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

45 Municipal Money. 2020. *Mbombela*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP322-mbombela/#financial-performance>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

MKHONDO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 189 036 in 2016 (171 982 in 2011)⁴⁶

Age distribution: 34,6% under 15; 60,9% between 15 and 64; 4,5% over 65⁴⁶

Education (20+): Matric 28,8% (25,5% in 2011); higher education 3,8% (5,4% in 2011)⁴⁶

Language (households): Zulu 88,2%; Afrikaans 3,5%⁴⁷

Housing: 75% in formal dwellings (65,2% in 2011)⁴⁶

Unemployment: There is no reliable indication of the current state of unemployment in the municipality (35,9% in 2011)⁴⁶

Service delivery

- 17,7% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (30,9% in 2011).⁴⁶
- The drinking water and effluent in Piet Retief were certified as clean by AfriForum in 2020.⁴⁸
- 42,8% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (39,5% in 2011).⁴⁶
- 77,1% of households use electricity for lighting (66,8% in 2011).⁴⁶
- 38% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (33,8% in 2011).⁴⁶
- The landfill site in Piet Retief received a score of 48% in 2020.⁴⁹

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Qualified – as were the previous three.⁵⁰
- 22,6% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁵⁰
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R5 812 426 at the end of 2018/19. It is also showing strong year-on-year improvements.⁵⁰
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 39,9% of the operating expenditure.⁵⁰

Mkhondo's score: 3 out of 10

46 Yes Media. 2019. *Mkhondo Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1151/mkhondo-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

47 StatsSA. 2020. *Mkhondo*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=mkhondo-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

48 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

49 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

50 Municipal Money. 2020. *Mkhondo*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP303-mkhondo/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

MSUKALIGWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 164 608 in 2016 (149 377 in 2011)⁵¹

Age distribution: 27,8% under 15; 68,1% between 15 and 64; 4,1% over 65⁵¹

Education (20+): Matric 31,6% (29,2% in 2011); higher education 10,1% (9,6% in 2011)⁵¹

Language (households): Zulu 71,4%; Afrikaans 9,7%; Swati 8,4%⁵²

Housing: 79,1% in formal dwellings (75,3% in 2011)⁵¹

Unemployment: 23,6% in 2016⁵³ (26,8% in 2011)^{51,53}

Service delivery

- 50% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (53% in 2011).⁵¹
- The drinking water in Breyten, Chrissiesmeer and Ermelo were all classified as clean by AfriForum for consecutive years. Ermelo's effluent was given a clean bill of health in 2019 and 2020.⁵⁴
- 74,3% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (70,6% in 2011).⁵¹
- 82,4% of households use electricity for lighting (74,7% in 2011).⁵¹
- 62,3% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (65,5% in 2011).⁵¹
- The five landfill sites are in a worrisome state. Breyten's site received no score from AfriForum in 2020 and Ermelo 18.⁵⁵

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Adverse – the previous two were either adverse (2017/18) or qualified (2016/17).⁵⁶
- 22,6% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁵⁶
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R24 533 932 at the end of 2018/19. This is a vast improvement on the two previous years.⁵⁶
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 20% of the operating expenditure.⁵⁶

Msukaligwa's score: 3,5 out of 10

51 Yes Media. 2019. *Msukaligwa Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1152/msukaligwa-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

52 StatsSA. 2020. *Msukaligwa*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=msukaligwa-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

53 Msukaligwa Local Municipality. 2021. *2021/2021 IDP*. Available at <http://www.msukaligwa.gov.za/MsukWeb/Documents/Reports/IDP/2020%202021Msukaligwa%20IDP.pdf>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

54 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

55 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

56 Municipal Money. 2020. *Msukaligwa*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP302-msukaligwa/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 410 907 in 2016 (393 030 in 2011)⁵⁷

Age distribution: 38% under 15; 58,3% between 15 and 64; 3,6% over 65.⁵⁷

Education (20+): Matric 29,6% (25,5% in 2011); higher education 6,5% (6,4% in 2011)⁵⁷

Language (households): Swati 88%; Tsonga 6,7%⁵⁸

Housing: 91,7% in formal dwellings (92.3% in 2011)⁵⁷

Unemployment: 32,4% in 2016 (30,7% in 2014)⁵⁹

Service delivery

- 5,6% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (20,9% in 2011).⁵⁷
- The quality of drinking water and effluent was not recently measured by AfriForum in 2020.
- 4% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (7,6% in 2011).⁵⁷
- 95,1% of households use electricity for lighting (83,3% in 2011).⁵⁷
- 17,5% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (20,2% in 2011).⁵⁷
- No landfill sites in the municipality were recently audited by AfriForum.

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Unqualified with findings – as were the previous two.⁶⁰
- 45,1% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year. This is very high, especially considering the service delivery backlogs and challenges in the municipality.⁶⁰
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R205 822 074 at the end of 2018/19.⁶⁰
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 19,4% of the operating expenditure.⁶⁰

Nkomazi's score: 2 out of 10

57 Yes Media. 2019. *Nkomazi Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1144/nkomazi-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

58 StatsSA. 2020. *Nkomazi*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=nkomazi-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

59 Nkomazi Local Municipality. 2021. *Nkomazi Local Municipality Final Integrated Development Plan (2017-2021)*. Available at https://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Nkomazi-Municipality.pdf. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

60 Municipal Money. 2020. *Nkomazi*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP324-nkomazi/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

PIXLEY KA SEME LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 85 395 in 2016 (83 235 in 2011)⁶¹

Age distribution: 32,7% under 15; 61,2% between 15 and 64; 6,2% over 65⁶¹

Education (20+): Matric 29,6% (24,7% in 2011); higher education 6,1% (7,3% in 2011)⁶¹

Language (households): Zulu 82,2%; Afrikaans 6,8%⁶²

Housing: 88,9% in formal dwellings (76,8% in 2011)⁶¹

Unemployment: There are no recent statistics available on the unemployment rate (36,1% in 2011)⁶¹

Service delivery

- 23,7% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (38,9% in 2011).⁶¹
- The drinking water in Amersfoort and Volksrust was classified as clean in 2020. The effluent in Amersfoort, Volksrust and Wakkerstroom was not scored in 2020.⁶³
- 64,8% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (62,5% in 2011).⁶¹
- 86,8% of households use electricity for lighting (85,2% in 2011).⁶¹
- 53,2% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (62% in 2011).⁶¹
- While the landfill site in Amersfoort received no score in 2020 from AfriForum, Volksrust received a paltry 16%.⁶⁴

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Disclaimer – the previous two were unqualified with findings.⁶⁵
- 27,5% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁶⁵
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R142 589 019 at the end of 2018/19. This is a growing sum and indicates a positive trend.⁶⁵
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 1,2% of the operating expenditure.⁶⁵

Pixley Ka Seme's score: 2,5 out of 10

61 Yes Media. 2019. *Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1153/dr-pixley-ka-isaka-seme-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

62 StatsSA. 2020. *Pixley Ka Seme*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=pixley-ka-seme-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

63 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and Green Drop Project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

64 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum Report on the Municipal Landfill Audit Project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

65 Municipal Money. 2020. *Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP304-dr-pixley-ka-isaka-seme/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 278 749 in 2016 (229 831 in 2011)⁶⁶

Age distribution: 23,9% under 15; 72,4% between 15 and 64; 3,7% over 65⁶⁶

Education (20+): Matric 39,3% (35% in 2011); higher education 12,9% (14,4% in 2011)⁶⁶

Language (households): Zulu 27,8%; 22,1% Afrikaans; Ndebele 14,6%; Sepedi 10,6%⁶⁷

Housing: 81,9% in formal dwellings (83% in 2011)⁶⁶

Unemployment: 16,4% in 2015⁶⁸ (19,7% in 2011)^{66,68}

Service delivery

- 55,6% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (62,2% in 2011).⁶⁶
- The drinking water in Hendrina and Middelburg was classified as clean by AfriForum in 2019 and 2020. However, the effluent in Middelburg showed significant traces of *E. coli* in 2020.⁶⁹
- 79,4% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (81,9% in 2011).⁶⁶
- 90,6% of households use electricity for lighting (90,8% in 2011).⁶⁶
- 77,4% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (84,7% in 2011).⁶⁶
- The main landfill site in Middelburg received a score of 58% in 2020. The other two in Middelburg as well as the one in Hendrina were not scored.⁷⁰

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Unqualified with findings – the same as the previous two financial years.⁷¹
- 33,8% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁷¹
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R241 747 408 at the end of 2018/19. It is a vast and continuing improvement on previous years.⁷¹
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 3,2% of the operating expenditure.⁷¹

Steve Tshwete's score: 6,5 out of 10

66 Yes Media. 2019. *Steve Tshwete Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1158/steve-tshwete-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

67 StatsSA. 2020. *Steve Tshwete*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=steve-tshwete-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

68 Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. 2017. *2017-2022 Integrated Development Plan – Draft*. Available at <https://www.stevetshwetelm.gov.za/documents/IDP/draft%202017%20%20march%20print.pdf>. Accessed on 14 May 2021.

69 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

70 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

71 Municipal Money. 2020. *Steve Tshwete*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP313-steve-tshwete/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

THABA CHWEU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 101 895 in 2016 (98 387 in 2011)⁷²

Age distribution: 27,7% under 15; 67,5% between 15 and 64; 4,8% over 65⁷²

Education (20+): Matric 36,9% (30,2% in 2011); higher education 9,9% (9,6% in 2011)⁷²

Language (households): Sepedi 35%; 17,3% Swati; 14,7% Afrikaans⁷³

Housing: 84,2% in formal dwellings (74,6% in 2011)⁷²

Unemployment: 26,5% in the last quarter of 2016⁷⁴ (20,5% in 2011)^{72,74}

Service delivery

- 30,3% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (38,8% in 2011).⁷²
- The drinking water in Lydenburg and Sabie was classified as clean by AfriForum in 2019 and 2020. However, the effluent in Lydenburg could not be measured in 2020 due to the water not flowing through the plant.⁷⁵
- 61,9% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (64,2% in 2011).⁷²
- 89,5% of households use electricity for lighting (84,3% in 2011).⁷²
- 57,8% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (58,6% in 2011).⁷²
- The landfill site in Lydenburg received a score of 10% in 2020.⁷⁶

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Qualified – the two previous years' opinions were either qualified (2017/18) or a disclaimer (2016/17).⁷⁷
- 28,3% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁷⁷
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R38 757 908 at the end of 2018/19. It is another step in a process of continuing improvement.⁷⁷
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 20,3% of the operating expenditure.⁷⁷

Thaba Chweu's score: 3 out of 10

⁷² Yes Media. 2019. *Thaba Chweu Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1145/thaba-chweu-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

⁷³ StatsSA. 2020. *Thaba Chweu*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=thaba-chweu-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

⁷⁴ Thaba Chweu Local Municipality. 2017. *Integrated Development Plan 2017-2022*. Available from <http://tclm.gov.za/tclm/index.php/mycouncil/public-engagements/idp/105-final-idp-2017-2022-term/file>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

⁷⁵ AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

⁷⁶ AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

⁷⁷ Municipal Money. 2020. *Thaba Chweu*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP321-thaba-chweu/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

THEMBISILE HANI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 333 331 in 2016 (310 458 in 2011)⁷⁸

Age distribution: 30,9% under 15; 65,2% between 15 and 64; 3,9% over 65⁷⁸

Education (20+): Matric 33,2% (26,1% in 2011); higher education 4,7% (5,2% in 2011)⁷⁸

Language (households): Ndebele 58,4%; Sepedi 12,6%; Zulu 12,5%⁷⁹

Housing: 86,5% in formal dwellings (85,6% in 2011)⁷⁸

Unemployment: 39,7% in 2017⁸⁰ (37% in 2011)^{78,80}

Service delivery

- 8,3% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (16,3% in 2011).⁷⁸
- The quality of drinking water and effluent in the municipality was not recently measured by AfriForum.
- 5,8% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (6,8% in 2011).⁷⁸
- 96,1% of households use electricity for lighting (92,3% in 2011).⁷⁸
- 9,9% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (4,6% in 2011).⁷⁸
- The landfill sites in the municipality did not receive any recent scores.

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Qualified – the two previous years' opinions were either qualified (2017/18) or qualified with findings (2016/17).⁸¹
- 17,7% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁸¹
- The municipality had a positive cash balance of R94 283 345 at the end of 2018/19. It is a significant improvement on previous years' balances.⁸¹
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 2,8% of the operating expenditure.⁸¹

Thembisile Hani's score: 1 out of 10

78 Yes Media. 2019. *Thembisile Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1159/thembisile-hani-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

79 StatsSA. 2020. *Thembisile*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=thembisile-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

80 Thembisile Hani Local Municipality. 2019. *2019-2020 Integrated Development Plan*. Available at <http://www.thembisilehanilm.gov.za/sites/default/files/IDP%20REVIEW%202019%20%282%29%20%3D%3D%3D%3D%3D%3D.pdf>. Accessed on 14 May 2021.

81 Municipal Money. 2020. *Thembisile*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP315-thembisile/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

VICTOR KHANYE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Demographics and socio-economy

Population: 84 151 in 2016 (75 452 in 2011)⁸²

Age distribution: 27,5% under 15; 68,7% between 15 and 64; 3,9% over 65.⁸²

Education (20+): Matric 26% (26,7% in 2011); higher education 5,4% (7,7% in 2011)⁸²

Language (households): 35,7% Zulu; 25,1% Ndebele; 15,7% Afrikaans⁸³

Housing: 83,2% in formal dwellings (79,3% in 2011)⁸²

Unemployment: 21,6% in 2015⁸⁴ (28,2% in 2011)⁸⁵

Service delivery

- 54,4% of households have access to piped water inside their dwelling (48,4% in 2011).⁸²
- The drinking water in Delmas and Sundra was classified as clean by AfriForum during consecutive years. However, the effluent in Delmas was not scored in 2020.⁸⁶
- 76,7% of households have a flush toilet connected to sewerage (70,6% in 2011).⁸²
- 91% of households use electricity for lighting (84,9% in 2011).⁸²
- 69,1% of households enjoy weekly refuse removal (73,7% in 2011).⁸²
- The landfill site in Delmas received a score of 30% in 2020.⁸⁷

Management

- The Auditor-General's audit opinion in 2018/19: Disclaimer – the two previous years' opinions were both qualified (2017/18 and 2016/17).⁸⁸
- 19% of the budget went to salaries in the latest financial year.⁸⁸
- The municipality had a negative cash balance of R25 393 580 at the end of 2018/19. It is a sudden and significant deterioration after a positive balance of R5 million was recorded in 2017/18.⁸⁸
- Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure comprise 4,7% of the operating expenditure.⁸⁸

Victor Khanye's score: 3,5 out of 10

82 Yes Media. 2019. *Victor Khanye Local Municipality – Demographic information*. Available at <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1154/victor-khanye-local-municipality>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

83 StatsSA. 2020. *Victor Khanye*. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=victor-khanye-municipality. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

84 Victor Khanye Local Municipality. 2017. *Victor Khanye Local Municipality 2017-2021*. Available at file:///C:/Users/eugene.brink/Downloads/Updated%20IDP%202020_21%20(1).pdf. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

85 Victor Khanye Local Municipality. 2017. *2017–2021 Draft Integrated Development Plan*. Available at file:///C:/Users/eugene.brink/Downloads/Updated%20IDP%202020_21.pdf. Accessed on 14 May 2021.

86 AfriForum. 2020. *Blue and green drop project 2020*. Available at https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Blou-en-groen_2020_Engels.pdf. Accessed on 13 May 2021.

87 AfriForum. 2020. *AfriForum report on the municipal landfill audit project for 2020*. Available at <https://afriforum.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Landfill-site-audit-report.pdf>. Accessed on 17 May 2021.

88 Municipal Money. 2020. *Victor Khanye*. Available at <https://municipalmoney.gov.za/profiles/municipality-MP311-victor-khanye/>. Accessed on 18 May 2021.

CONCLUSION

For the most part, service delivery and management controls in Mpumalanga's municipalities are incredibly weak. Rampant unemployment, poor refuse removal and the paucity of piped water are some of the main troubles that afflict the municipalities in the province. Poor audit outcomes and high irregular spending are at the order of the day and undermine service delivery. The availability and use of electricity, as well as rising schooling levels, are indeed exceptions to the dreary picture that obtains in most municipalities. However, these are to a large degree reliant on decisions taken on and capacity provided by other spheres of government – and not by the municipalities. Also, rising school levels are undone by the high unemployment rate and the seeming non-availability of work within various municipal areas.

Steve Tshwete Local Municipality is, and has been, a lone but relative bright spot in a province where municipal challenges abound and do not seem to improve. Its low unemployment and other positive service delivery data signify a municipality that is reasonably well-managed. Nevertheless, there is vast room for improvement and the management of Steve Tshwete should not be lulled into a sense of complacency.

Lastly, the non-availability of official data is cause for concern. If not for AfriForum's own efforts in measuring the quality of water, effluent and landfill sites, these metrics cannot be measured with any degree of certitude. A lack of accurate information translates to deficient decision-making on the part of municipal management teams, as well as the public. It is recommended that municipalities strengthen their capacity to measure the effectiveness of their own service delivery.