

SOLLY: ONE YEAR ON

It's been a learning curve, says mayor... best is to come

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BEING the mayor of the capital city has been a learning curve for mayor Solly Msimanga, he said yesterday. He added the road ahead looked rosy, and residents would be treated like VIPs.

Msimanga was marking the end of the first year since his DA wrested control from the ANC during last year's municipal elections.

Mayors in charge of the DA-led municipalities were reporting back on their performance since they came to power.

Msimanga said since he was sworn in as mayor, he had to learn a whole lot of new things he had not known before assuming office.

"When we took over the city we knew there were things we knew that we knew, and that there were things we knew we didn't know. But then there are things that we got to know that we knew we didn't know," he said.

While the road travelled so far had not been smooth-sailing, largely due to a the R2 billion budget deficit inherited from the previous government, Msimanga expressed optimism about the future.

"When the DA took over in Tshwane, the capital city was on the verge of bankruptcy with a deficit in excess of R2bn owing to two decades of reckless governance by the ANC," he said.

His administration, he said, began addressing a multitude of problems to help stabilise the city and grow its economy.

The people of Tshwane can look forward to being treated as "VIPs", he said, adding that they would get better service than they ever did.

Under his leadership, the city had made efforts to attract investments worth R2.29bn in just nine months.

He said the investments, which would assist in job-creation, had exceeded the set target to attract at least R10.5bn in five years.

Msimanga expressed satisfaction at the way the DA had run the show



Mayor Solly Msimanga jokes with DA leader Mmusi Maimane during a briefing to provide report back on the progress in metros governed by the party.

PICTURE: DIMPHO MAJAJA

during the year in authority, hinting that better service delivery projects were in store for residents.

"This is just but the beginning of things to come in this administration," Msimanga said.

He bemoaned that the city inherited an almost R700 million broadband contract from the previous administration.

"The City is working to get on a solid legal and financial footing, so we can continue with the roll-out of Tshwane free wi-fi in a manner that does not threaten to bankrupt the City," he said.

Msimanga said the aim was to proliferate wi-fi offering to ensure that more residents had access to it and to date, the city had identified 1 000 spots in need of wi-fi

installation.

"The city is also extricating itself from a R2bn smart meter contract which was found to be irregular by the auditor-general. Legal proceedings are under way and we are optimistic that this will put the City in a much better position to provide affordable and sustainable electricity to our people," Msimanga said.

He said the City had uncovered massive corruption. "These include the City Hall scandal, the R30m shoe polish debacle, as well as the Dinokeng Tribe One-Nicki Minaj fiasco that cost the residents of Tshwane in excess of R60m, which is under investigation."

The extravagant mayoral mansion located at Muckleneuk was in the process of being sold to free up

much-needed funds for the City he said.

Although "blue lights" were banned, it was only President Jacob Zuma who could use them in Pretoria because he was allowed by certain laws of the country, Msimanga said.

As far as housing was concerned, more than 2 804 title deeds had to date been handed over to beneficiaries, and the city planned to deliver at least 6 000 more in the 2017/18.

"In the new financial year, the City is creating 23 000 Expanded Public Works job opportunities to alleviate the burden of poverty and ensure people can find work," Msimanga said.

In partnership with Eskom, the City had ensured that more than

80% of households had access to electricity.

Msimanga said: "Over R13m has been invested in the restoration of water infrastructure around the city, ensuring that clean water is a right, not a privilege."

At least R2bn was allocated to the metro police for efforts to rejuvenate the inner city.

The City also signed 23 service level agreements with non-profit organisation to assist with the war against drugs.

"These service-level agreements, supported by R40m from Tshwane 2017/18 new budget, will go some way into dealing with what is a huge problem experienced by the people of Tshwane," Msimanga said.

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Tension rife as metro coalitions hit snags

DA irked over scrapping with UDM in Nelson Mandela Bay

LUYOLO MKENTANE

THE DA has expressed difficulty and frustration over managing the coalition agreements keeping them in power in four of the country's biggest metros.

And a motion of no confidence has been planned against one of its coalition leaders as tensions reach boiling point.

However, DA leader Mmusi Maimane said they had turned the tide since coming into power in the metros of Joburg, Tshwane, and Nelson Mandela Bay, following the watershed municipal elections a year ago. The DA had retained its power in Cape Town.

Maimane was joined by DA mayors Herman Mashaba (Joburg), Solly Msimanga (Tshwane), Patricia de Lille (Cape Town) and Athol Trollip (Nelson Mandela Bay) yesterday as they briefed journalists on the progress made in the metros at the Jabavu Library in Soweto.

They said they had managed to curb the scourge of corruption, fraud and maladministration, and created job opportunities, delivered housing, title deeds and other basic municipal services.

But Maimane admitted that while coalitions "posed their own unique challenges, and are often difficult to manage", they were the



Joburg mayor Herman Mashaba.



Patricia De Lille, Cape Town mayor.



Athol Trollip, Nelson Mandela Bay mayor.

future of South Africa and should be embraced.

He said they had agreed with their coalition partners to put their differences aside and focus "on our shared goals".

"I am pleased to announce that one year on, the national coalition agreement last year still stands."

But the DA-led coalition in Nelson Mandela Bay, where Trollip has been butting heads with his UDM deputy mayor Mongameli Bobani over the direction the metro should take, seems to be on a knife-edge.

Trollip said of his relationship with Bobani: "It's extremely difficult and I've been very patient for seven months now, myself and my party leader (Maimane)... over seven months we have had three meetings at national level to deal with some of the critical issues.

"The main issues are councillor Bobani and his colleague vote against the coalition government in council. We have 61 councillors in the coalition (and) 50% is 60. But very often we only have 59 votes because those two (UDM) councillors don't vote with us. That is not

allowed in a coalition government if your equal partners don't support you."

Trollip said the real "frustration" had been the fact that there had been no consequences for Bobani.

"We have meetings and he (Bobani) gets told that if you do this, it's treasonous and... in the last council (meeting), he voted against the coalition on five occasions. My frustration is that his party and his leadership have not disciplined him," he said.

"In Mogale City, we had EFF councillors voting for an ANC

budget in defiance of their party position. They were... charged and there is a disciplinary process. Not so with councillor Bobani, and that's what has made it very difficult," said Trollip.

A vote of no confidence against Bobani is due to be held at the council chambers in Port Elizabeth on Thursday next week. "We will see what happens," added Trollip.

Bobani referred all questions to UDM leader General Bantu Holomisa.

Holomisa said issues between the two leaders had long been resolved

and that the metro's budget had been approved as a result.

"We are not members of the DA, we have a right to oppose him (Trollip) on issues. We can't rubber-stamp everything he comes up with," he said.

On the planned motion of no confidence against Bobani, Holomisa, sounding irritated, said: "If they don't want Bobani, they must go ahead and do that. But if we want - underline that - we can put a counter motion, if they push us that far.

"The dirty tricks campaign by Trollip must come to an end."