



HWANGE

MONTHLY e-NEWSLETTER

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HLB reviews its Strategic Plan

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) has completed revamping and realigning its Strategic Plan (2021-2025) in-line with the country's National Development Strategy (NDS) I and Vision 2030.

The development comes as the local authority forges ahead to improve service delivery and good corporate governance.

HLB Town Secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose said the reviewing of the Strategic Plan was in accordance with Government's expectations of improved service provision by local authorities towards attainment of NDS I and Vision 2030.

Through reviewing our Strategic Plan, we (HLB) want to ensure that in all the processes and activities we carry out, we are in-line with the Government's vision in terms of policy thrust," he said.

Pastor Mdlalose further added that the crafting of the Strategic Plan was part of the local authority's initiative aimed at improving good corporate governance.

"We are also looking at introducing a measurement of results through adoption of the IRBM (Integrated Result Based Management) system where we will be able to come up with instruments, which will...*Cont. next page*



Hwange Local Board employees pose for a picture after a Strategic Plan review workshop.

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...allow us to assess and measure the level and quality, effectiveness and efficiency of our service delivery mandate,” he said.

“Pastor Mdlalose also said it was of paramount importance for the local authority to enhance its accountability.

“We need to be accountable to the State because the resources that we use are State resources. We get inter-governmental fiscal transfers, Devolution Funds and we are allowed to tax in terms of the law.

“Therefore, we must put those resources to good use so as to provide the services needed to enable Government to deliver towards the vision for its citizens by 2030,” said Pastor Mdlalose.

HLB workers committee chairperson Mr Themba Tshuma said the Strategic Plan should guide the local authority towards improving corporate governance.

“The Strategic Plan is meant to map the direction, which we should take as Council. Henceforth we should always be guided by it. Our plea is that it should have checks and balances, as well as monitoring mechanisms to enable it to serve its purpose,” said Mr Tshuma.

HLB chairman Councillor Nqobile Ocean Mabhena said the involvement of representatives of the Council’s workers committee would go a long way towards

embracing and appreciation of the Strategic Plan by employees.

“We brought in the employees, the workers committee members for them to appreciate and also to take ownership of this (Strategic Plan review) process. Many a times you hear workers saying the processes belong to management and councillors, but let me hasten to say that this doesn’t belong to anyone. It’s a collective responsibility to ensure our Council moves forward,” said Clr Mabhena.

HLB vice-chairman Councillor Admire Munhenga added that the newly reviewed Strategic Plan would work as an impetus to encourage residents to timeously pay their rates.

“If the Strategic Plan is effectively implemented, it will be an easy task for me to entice residents to be up to date in terms of paying rates to the Council,” he said.

Ministry of Local Government and Public Works principal administrative officer Ms Annah Takaendesa said the reviewing of the Strategic Plan by HLB heralds a change of fortunes by the local authority.

“Things are improving at the Hwange Local Board. As much as they can’t change overnight, but things are moving on the right track. As long as there is that pull him or her down syndrome things won’t improve, but only if there’s unity of purpose. There is just a need for harmony between the Councillors and Council management,” she said.

HLB is one of the few local authorities to realign its Strategic Plan in-line with NDS I and the country’s Vision 2030.

The Ministry adopted and introduced strategic planning to local authorities in the late 1990s. Local authorities are therefore expected to formulate and implement strategic plans.

HLB reviews its Strategic Plan

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HLB to meet ERRP timelines

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) is well on course to meet its timelines for the resuscitation of road infrastructure in its area of jurisdiction under Government's Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme (ERRP).

HLB Town Engineer Philip Nguni said he was satisfied with the work being carried out under Government's funded programme aimed at rehabilitating the country's roads most of which were severely damaged due to excessive rains as of late last year to the beginning of this year.

"We are basically on course, the only problem is that people tend to think projects like these can be done overnight. If we continue with this pace by the time we get to the rainy season we would be done," he said.

HLB was allocated ZWL\$58 million under ERRP, which would be undertaken in three phases.

The local authority was allocated ZWL\$11 million for Phase I but has since received ZWL\$ 2,2 million.

Phase I entails road side vegetation clearing, storm water drainage clearing and resuscitation and pothole filling. Phase II, which runs concurrently with Phase I involves road resealing with Phase III meant for reconstruction.

"The roads are ready for resealing. We started the project one and a half months ago but we have covered a lot ground. ERRP is a three-year programme we are still to do Phase II, which entails reseal thereafter we do reconstruction under Phase III," said Eng Nguni.

A contractor engaged by the local authority, Enfund Construction is at an advanced stage of completing rehabilitation of a 1,2 kilometre (km) stretch at Chibondo medium density suburb.

"HLB has also engaged a contractor under ERRP (II). At the moment the contractor is doing pothole patching over a stretch of 1, 2 kms in Chibondo. The



Hwange Local Board employees clearing a storm water drain



Hwange Local Board employees embarking on storm water drainage stone pitching

contractor is expected to reseal the same road," said Eng Nguni.

The Government budgeted ZWL\$33.6 billion for the second phase and Zimbabwe National Road Administration has already disbursed ZWL \$2.3 billion as it intensifies

efforts to rehabilitate the country's road network.

Under ERRP, the Government is targeting to rehabilitate 10 000 km of roads countrywide.



Water and Sewer reticulation at Phase 4 on course

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) has made significant strides towards completing the installation of water and sewer reticulation systems at Empumalanga Phase Four housing project as it forges ahead to fully service the area.

HLB Town Engineer Philip Nguni said about 60 percent of residential stands and houses in Empumalanga Phase 4 have been connected to water.

“We have connected 360 houses and stands out of a total of 548 to water, which translates to about 60 percent of the work we have carried out so far.

“As part of expediting the process we have since gone to tender for the procurement of steel pipes as the area we are working on has a rock outcrop,” he said.

Eng Nguni said installation of the sewer reticulation system was expected to commence soon.

“The sewer reticulation is linked to the installation of the trunk sewer line, so we are in the process of identifying a consultancy to do the designs and thereafter we expect to commence works,” he said.

Eng Nguni said the local authority was looking forward to completing installation of water and sewer reticulation systems before the end of the year or early next year.

The delay in the installation of these reticulation systems is a legacy issue dating back to 2009, when the local authority’s previous administration engaged a contractor who somehow failed to service the residential stands in question.

Irked by the delay in servicing, some of the beneficiaries moved in and started construction activities.

However, through the intervention of the administration, servicing of the area



A Hwange Local Board employee works on a pipe at Empumalanga Phase 4 housing project

resumed with the project being funded from the local authority’s coffers.

The local authority started the water reticulation system installation project mid-last year after efforts of starting it earlier were stalled due to the Covid-19 national lockdown.

The project has also been slowed down due to the presence of a rock outcrop in the area. The local authority currently relies on manual labour to excavate rocky areas due to lack of the requisite machinery.



HLB works on harmonising formal and informal businesses operations

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) is working on creating a conducive environment for both formal and informal business players to operate from.

HLB Town Secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose said the Covid-19 induced national lockdowns led to the sprouting of numerous informal traders in virtually all suburbs within the local authority's area of jurisdiction as well as the country as a whole.

"If you look at the entire country, the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequently imposition of lockdowns saw shopping areas being seriously limited and shops opening for a very short period, thus most people started selling goods from all corners," he said.

The business community has since the beginning of the year raised concerns of unfair competition from informal traders accusing them of denting the profitability of their enterprises.

Since the advent of Covid-19 there has been a tremendous surge of unregistered shops as well as individuals selling goods from their backyards.

The outcry from the business community prompted HLB to raid vendors that were selling their wares by the roadsides and at homes without licenses.

"As a planning authority we must always respond to what we see as an impediment to development and service provision. We have already moved in to stall certain types of informal trading through our security details. However, what's important is that, when Council police are moving to enforce the law, they should be protected by the Zimbabwe Republic Police," said Pastor Mdlalose.

He added that Council was in the process of introducing a raft of measures and bye-laws aimed at creating an enabling environment for businesses to operate.

"There must be bye-laws relevant to that (informal trading) situation and to deal with that particular situation, so that we are not found wanting in terms of the laws of the land.

"Right now we are working on a number of bye-laws including policies to that effect. This is coming at an opportune time for us to respond properly with the right instruments or policies to deal with the anomaly," said Pastor Mdlalose.

He, however, said the local authority was not out to eradicate informal sector activities but to formalise their activities.

"The high presence of informal traders shows that there's a huge market, so what we need to do is not to kill the informal sector activities but plan for them," said Pastor Mdlalose.

He noted that the local authority was working on coming up with decent working spaces for informal business operators.

"We want to encourage the development of trading space or places such as

incubators. So, that if we remove people from undesignated areas we take them elsewhere, but what should guide us is the effective demand for those facilities as recorded at Council offices," said Pastor Mdlalose.

He further encouraged individuals intending to trade to approach Council so as to enable it to come up with a comprehensive database of people seeking trading spaces.

"Whoever is moved or is being discouraged from trading at their homes should go to Council offices to have their names captured...but the unavailability of space at the moment doesn't mean that someone trades in places that are being discouraged," said Pastor Mdlalose.

A shop owner at Empumalanga suburb, Mrs Tariro Mukomana of Mukomana Trading said the existence and proliferation of backyard shops was seriously affecting the viability of her business concern...**Cont. on page 10**



One of the illegal backyard shops in Empumalanga



Councillors welcome allotment gardens policy

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) councillors have hailed the crafting of an allotment gardens policy as a major milestone towards alleviating poverty among vulnerable members of society.

Councillor Tendai Sibanda of Ward 5 said the creation of community gardens would play a pivotal role in improving livelihoods at most poverty-stricken households.

“This policy will go a long way towards improving household food security as well as enabling beneficiaries of the project to generate income through selling produce realised from the gardens,” said Cllr Sibanda.

According to the draft policy, HLB supports and encourages existing allotment gardens to become self-managed to a high standard.

The draft policy provides a framework of managing future community garden initiatives as part of a larger agricultural enterprise network within the local authority.

It also outlines basis for allotment gardeners to grow fresh organic produce to supplement their groceries and to develop friendships, socialise with neighbours and to connect with residents in their local community.

Cllr Sibanda is one of the pioneers of community gardens in Hwange urban. The policy-maker was instrumental in the setting-up of Sizimisele Community Garden in Empumalanga high density suburb in 2019.

The community garden is home to 14 women with different vulnerability backgrounds.

“The policy was long overdue and even the Chairman emphasised on its importance during a Full Council meeting, which was held recently. I’m of the view that projects of this nature enhance good relationships between Council and residents,” said Cllr Sibanda.

Allotment gardens connect with vibrant communities and economies to create a space for people to meet and share

knowledge, learn new skills and harvest in a harmonious way.

Councillor Andrew Mumpande of Ward 6 said Council should expedite the process of identifying land suitable to be utilised for community gardens as part of its efforts to assist poverty stricken families.

“This policy is very good, over and above all it’s enshrined in the Urban Councils Act and will go a long way towards assisting vulnerable members of the community. As such we expect the Town Planner to expedite the process of identifying land for the setting up of these gardens,” he said.

According to Schedule 2 of the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15, Powers of Council, section 7, Council has power to cultivate and farm land owned by the municipality or town which is not required for other purposes.

“Apart from improving livelihoods, the community gardens concept will be a plus to Council, as it will enable beneficiaries of the project, that would have otherwise been struggling to pay rates to fulfil their obligation,” said Cllr Mumpande.



**Ward Six
Councillor Andrew
Mumpande**



**Ward Five
Councillor
Tendai
Sibanda**

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Adios, Mr Phiri

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) acting finance director Mr Abraham Phiri has retired from the local authority after serving for over a decade.

Mr Phiri called it time after having served Council for 12 years.

He joined HLB in 2009 as a treasurer. In 2014 to 2015 he was re-assigned to the position of acting housing director, only to revert to his previous post in 2016.

In 2018, Mr Phiri was again made to hold forte as acting housing director before the appointment of Mr Ananias Banda on a substantive basis the same year.

Although Mr Phiri was meant to retire in 2018, his request for a year's extension was granted.

He was later given another tenure to act as finance director in 2020 up until his retirement at the end of May this year.

Speaking at his farewell party, Mr Phiri said he had developed a strong bond with HLB and would forever cherish the time he served at the local authority.

"HLB happens to be the only employer I have served for so long. For that it will always have a special place in my heart. I enjoyed working with you (all at HLB). We had our good and bad moments but it's the good ones that I will forever cherish," he said.

Adding that even when he had misunderstandings with individuals at work the impasse would not last for long owing to the good rapport he had built with the entire workforce over the years.

"There are some people whom I would quarrel with but I took it that it wasn't a personal vendetta but it was largely to do with the office I was working from.

However, we would always patch up our differences within the shortest of periods and move forward," said Mr Phiri.



ALL SMILES...Ward 9 Councillor Fani Chirwa (left) and Hwange Local Board Chairman Councillor Nqobile Ocean Mabhena (centre) in joyous mood after handing over a present to Mr Abraham Phiri at his farewell party.

He further said he had confidence in the team he was leaving behind and pray that it fully supports whoever takes over from him.

HLB Town Secretary Pastor Mdlalose hailed Mr Phiri for his unwavering commitment towards executing his duties.

"I can proudly describe Phiri as a safe pair of hands where upon if a soccer team will be on the losing end, the blame will lay solely on the defence with the keeper having executed himself well.

"For me Phiri has been one such safe pair of hands whether we will be losing or we don't have money or we have money he was consistent in being reliable," he said.

Taking a leaf from the book of Job in the Bible, Pastor Mdlalose wished Mr Phiri well in his future endeavours.

"I pray that his latter end becomes greater than whatever he has achieved so far..." said Pastor Mdlalose.



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Baboons return to the mountains

EMPUMALANGA residents in Hwange have heaved a sigh of relief after the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) captured a troop of marauding baboons, which has been a menace at homes since the beginning of the year.

Ward Six Councillor Andrew Mumpande said incidents of baboons causing havoc in Empulamanga high-density suburb have gone down after a capturing unit from Zimparks apprehended and translocated some of the troublesome primates.

“Empumalanga residents are now living in peace from the baboons ever since Parks’ capturing unit came and captured the baboons. Of course, there are some areas especially in the DRC sections where it is said they occasionally come but the problem is no longer immense as it used to be,” he said.

Baboons are a perennial problem to residents of Hwange with the primates turning to ransacking houses and stealing food.

The primates can even go to the extent of ripping off roofs to gain entry into houses.

It is believed that their huge presence in residential areas is largely due to being slowly pushed out of their territories by habitat erosion and urban sprawl.

“Baboons are a real menace at times they can become too aggressive about grabbing food especially from women and children,” said Cllr Mumpande.

Ms Nokuthula Mpofu of Empumalanga acknowledged that the presence of baboons in their area has gone down.

“The baboons are no longer wreaking havoc as they used to do since we heard that ZimParks moved in to capture them

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but we are still experiencing some isolated cases,” she said.

ZimParks is on record as having said improper disposal of food by residents was luring baboons to invade their homes.

“Be fast, have no regrets...if you need to be right before you move, you will never win. The greatest error is not to move”

Dr Mike Ryan, WHO Epidemiologist

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A day in the life of a fire fighter

PROFESSIONS and career paths that people choose out of either passion or circumstances differ, and so are the risks and hazards that come with them.

There is no career without risks. Just that some are not as defined as others. One such profession with the highest risk of injury or calamity, which most people tend to ignore is that of fire fighters.

Fire fighters put their lives on the line every working day.

“There is always the chance that something will happen that we have no control over. And it's those fears that keep us awake at night. Every fire fighter holds a few secrets that they typically keep to themselves,” says fire fighter, Shonipai Muleya (35).

Muleya is a member of the Hwange Local Board (HLB) Fire and Rescue team and took time to share his experiences as a fire fighter-detailing his ordeals and hazards he has been exposed to, 10 years into the trade.

Fire fighters face serious risks on the job such as heat exhaustion, burns, physical and mental stress. Additionally, they frequently come into contact with high levels of carbon monoxide and other toxic hazards.

“With these dangerous exposures, this line of work presents a likelihood for many diseases. Because of all these hazards, to be a fire fighter it needs courage, braveness and commitment,” said Muleya.

The fire fighter is part of a highly-skilled five member HLB Fire and Rescue team, which has been receiving specialised training from Operation Florian, a reputable organisation from the United Kingdom (UK) since 2015.

Operation Florian is a charity organisation that assists fire, rescue and ambulance services throughout the world.

HLB Fire and Rescue section does duty in Hwange District and also attend to accident scenes in Binga and Lupane districts. It is

also part of Hwange District's Civil Protection Unit (CPU).

Muleya reckons seeing accident victims with broken limbs and lifeless bodies is a horrendous moment, which is difficult to erase from one's mind-yet fire fighters come across these situations from time to time, in their line of duty.

“The job of a firefighter requires courage, it requires a person who can tackle any situation without fear. Of course, I won't rule out the importance of experience.

“For instance removing casualties from a vehicle wreckage requires the requisite knowledge and vast experience since the nature of accidents differ,” he said.

Muleya recalls the bus accident that happened along Hwange-Deka road last year as one of the most agonising scenes he has ever attended.

“The bus accident along Hwange-Deka road last year was so scary and agonising. I still vividly recall the events, the deafening screams from the victims. I occasionally suffer from flashbacks of seeing the seriously injured passengers,” he said.

Further stating that: “On the fateful day, we had to put on brave faces to remove passengers that were trapped while also attending to those that were injured. What might have saved the day is that we managed to reach the scene on standard time.”

Muleya said failure is the greatest unspoken fear that every fire fighter carries with them.

“Fire fighters are always on duty. The mind is never at rest. People depend on us to know what to do when they don't,” he said.

In 2013, Muleya was part of the fire and rescue team, which included those from Hwange Colliery Company Limited that rescued marooned villagers in the Lukosi area.

Apart from its rescue operations, HLB's Fire and Rescue section also offers trainings to institutions.

Early this year, the section successfully carried out a six-day training course aimed at imparting Sino Hydro workers with requisite skills to avert accidents at their work stations.

Muleya noted the need for the local authority to acquire another fire tender. HLB currently has one fire tender although it is awaiting delivery of another one from the UK.

Last year Operation Florian offered to donate one fire engine to HLB. However, the local authority is in the process of raising the US\$15 000 needed to ship it into the country including other supporting ancillary equipment.

Plans are also underway to construct a fire service station.

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...from page 5

“We pay rates and license fees to the local authority including various other statutory instruments to enable us to operate legally yet we are made to compete with people that are operating backyard shops who have the audacity to lower prices because they are not subjected to payment of taxes and licenses,” she said.

Mrs Mukomana said it was of paramount importance for Council to reign over illegal vendors so as to maintain cleanliness and order in its environs while also protecting citizens from consumption and use of hazardous foodstuffs and substances.

“It’s of paramount importance for a business to register first so as to operate legally. This enables it to maintain the required standards while also making it easy for Council to collect fees.

“People are now selling various goods at their homes including meat. This is illegal and dangerous to consumers. Over and above all these unscrupulous individuals are not paying inspection fees to Council,” she said.

Another businessperson, Mr Rodrick Hwaire said the local authority should expedite the identification of trading and work space for the informal sector so as to formalise their operations.

“HLB should identify operating spaces for individuals who intend to sell their wares. This will enable them to pay rates and the requisite operating licenses to Council, which will in turn enable the local authority to improve on service delivery,” he said.



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Firefighter Shonipai Muleya

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