



Councillor Matshidiso Mfikoe

MMC: Environment and Infrastructure Services

STATEMENT BY THE MMC FOR ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT (EISD) Cllr. MATSHIDISO MFIKOE, BRIEFING THE MEDIA AT THE PIKITUP SELBY DEPOT ON THE 29TH NOVEMBER 2015

1. Unprotected labour action at Pikitup

On behalf of the City of Joburg and Pikitup I would like to apologise for the disruption of waste management services and the severe inconvenience to residents of Joburg, as a result of unprotected strike action by the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) and defiance of a court order to return to work.

Let me at the outset condemn the vandalism that took place in our City. There can be no justification, under any circumstances, for trashing the city, which belongs to residents. It is tantamount to a guest in one's home emptying the trash cans in the bedroom.

The labour action followed a request by SAMWU on 19 November 2015 to meet with the Managing Director and management of Pikitup on 20 November 2015, without any prior notification. This was not possible due to prior engagements and a commitment to schedule an extraordinary meeting on Thursday 26 November was made, notwithstanding that the proper place to raise these issues would have been in the monthly Local Labour Forum.

Our Constitution and Labour Relations Act uphold the right of workers to protest and to withhold their labour. Strike action, however, should always be a last resort and the decision of SAMWU to embark on an unprotected work stoppage is condemned in the strongest possible terms. Disciplinary processes and legal action will be taken against those responsible for the intimidation, violence and damage to property that ensued.

I am pleased, however, to report that the Board and Management of Pikitup met with SAMWU leadership on Saturday. I am informed that the substantive issue discussed was salaries, an issue raised with the company for the first time on 27 November 2015 and a matter subject to the 2015 Salary and Wage Agreement of the South African Local Government Bargaining Council. I am informed that the meeting was cordial and that there was agreement that the ongoing action was not in the interests of residents, the affected workers and the company.

The meeting agreed that Management and SAMWU will meet tomorrow (Monday) to discuss three issues

- Allegations of internal disparities in salaries in the company
- Benchmarking of salaries with that of other City of Joburg entities
- The system of salary progression

The Board of Pikitup will meet on Tuesday to receive a report back from this meeting.

We have appointed a service provider to commence with services today to clear the backlog and restore normality. It is noted that the union is not supportive of this action, however, SAMWU has not made a commitment to return to work and the company has an obligation to restore normal services.

In closing on this issue, I reiterate the appeal of the Board, in the view of the serious ramifications, for workers to return to work. I am confident that the leadership of SAMWU shares our concerns and will make every effort to restore normality.

2. A call to action

The management of waste is a collective responsibility which starts at home and at work. We have seen the consequences of failure to manage waste disposal in the last week. It must serve as a wakeup call to all of us that we must change the way we deal with waste. As active and responsible citizens it is our responsibility to change our personal behaviours. My heartfelt plea is that citizens respond to our call

- to stop irresponsibly generating waste with all the attendant harmful environment consequences that jeopardise future generations
- to become active participants in applying the basic principles of waste management: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle when disposing of waste

Waste is not simply something we throw away – it has economic value and we appeal to all residents and businesses to minimise and separate waste and grow the recycling economy. The Pikitup website offers information on how to action this.

3. Performance of Pikitup

In this regard, I have observed social comment that Pikitup is incompetent.

I am pleased to report that there has been a financial turnaround at Pikitup and for the first time since the formation of the company there is a cash surplus. This will allow Pikitup to innovate and implement best practice going forwards. Plans are in motion to ensure Separation at Source throughout the city, to ensure that waste reclaimers and recyclers are able to better extract value from the waste chain, and to divert waste from landfill sites.

We will announce the details of the performance of the company and the results of the financial audit in the near future.

The City of Johannesburg is your HOME! Don't trash it. Recycle, Re-use and Reduce.

For more information, contact:

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