

MEDIA STATEMENT

City Power Commits to normalisation programme following productive Electricity Imbizo in Tshepisoong



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City Power has committed to a comprehensive normalisation programme in Tshepisoong aimed at overhauling the electricity network, stabilising electricity supply and improving revenue collection in the area.

The commitment was made by the City of Joburg Executive Mayor, Cllr Dada Morero, and City Power Acting CEO Charles Tlouane during the entity's latest Electricity Imbizo, held at the Abundant Faith Christian Center in the Roodepoort township.

The engagement was attended by hundreds of residents from Tshepisoong, which comprises Wards 127, 128 and 150 and includes Leratong Village, Ebumnandini and neighbouring communities along the border with Mogale City Municipality.

The Electricity Imbizo comes amid concerns raised by residents and local councillors following the initial withdrawal of electricity services in the area.

The withdrawal followed low electricity vending patterns, widespread illegal connections, vandalism, sabotage activities, tampering and pushback against the network normalisation process.

Delivering his opening address, Acting CEO Charles Tlouane described the conditions under which residents live and City Power operates as undesirable, before outlining the interventions that will form part of the normalisation programme.

These will include comprehensive meter audits, the replacement of meters where required, transformer replacement, work on deteriorated overhead infrastructure, network reinforcement, regular monitoring of transformer and feeder performance, and targeted action against illegal connections.

Mr Tlouane condemned the acts of vandalism that borders on sabotage that have crippled the network supply in the area and damaged most of the infrastructure including transformers. Depending on their size, transformers cost between R400 000 and R1.2 million, highlighting the scale of investment required to strengthen the network.

The Tshepiso network serves an estimated 12 000 customers. Of the 11 958 registered prepaid customers, only 202 are actively purchasing electricity.

This represents an undesirable active vending rate of approximately 1.7% among registered prepaid customers.

Although prepaid meters were installed across the network during 2026 to improve access to electricity services and support revenue collection, many have subsequently been bypassed, something condemned by Mr Tlouane and gave as reason why the entity decided to switch off power.

“Switching off electricity because of non-payment is not, on its own, a sustainable solution to the challenges we face in Tshepiso. We need City Power and the community to work together to find a lasting solution. Customers must play their part by paying for the services they use and protecting the electricity infrastructure, while City Power must continue investing in and maintaining the network. When customers pay for electricity, it enables us to maintain and strengthen the network, which is essential to achieving a more stable and sustainable electricity supply,” said Tlouane.

Mr Tlouane highlighted lengths City Power went to accommodate the residents grappling with dire economic conditions and joblessness. He said the city bylaw allows City Power to charge R14 000 penalty for illegal connections and bypassed meters. However, the entity settled to onboard those that have not been buying electricity to pay R500 as a sign of intent to continue vending after being normalized. Those who have registered for Free Basic Electricity pay only R200 then get on board.

Delivering his keynote address, Executive Mayor Cllr Dada Morero sympathised with the residents, especially the young and the elderly who had to endure weeks without electricity, indicating that both City Power and the residents have done wrong things to one another.

The mayor appealed to residents to cooperate with City Power as the normalisation programme progresses, emphasising the need to manage and strengthen the network in a manner that protects both residents and City Power employees.

“We are here to ensure that we work together. City Power will do everything in its power to ensure the lights are kept on. But we need the community to work with us so that we can protect the network, address the challenges we have identified and ensure that electricity supply can be sustained,” said Morero, who announced that City Power will be on the ground from Monday to start with normalization programme while keeping the lights on.

Preliminary technical assessments conducted over the past 24 hours indicate that significant portions of the network remain compromised, with illegal connections, vandalism and tampering continuing in certain areas, after Power was restored this week in the township.

The mayor indicated that the normalisation programme is not a one-day event, but one that will be implemented in phases and may take up to six months, with progress regularly monitored as the various interventions are implemented.

To strengthen electricity supply to Tshepiso, five Eskom lines in Vlei Substation have been installed and will be running soon as City Power finishes with normalization. These lines are intended to increase capacity for future demand and reduce pressure and demand on the Tshepiso network.

Morero also acknowledged concerns raised by residents about the affordability of electricity and explained the City's cross-subsidisation approach.

“Prepaid customers who qualify for the Expanded Social Package will not be required to pay the monthly surcharge. Tshepiso, like most of the townships in the City, is also exempted from rates and taxes in recognition of the socio-economic challenges faced by the community,” said Morero.

The mayor further called on other City departments involved in service delivery to move closer to the community and respond to matters raised during the Imbizo.

This includes the Department of Human Settlements, particularly in relation to facilitating the electrification of some informal settlements in the area. City Power is ready to electrify any informal settlements including those in Tshepisoong after the department of Human Settlement has approved these settlements.

MMC for Infrastructure Services Cllr Jack Sekwaila called on residents to work with the South African Police Service to identify those involved in criminal activities including stealing and vandalising electricity infrastructure, sabotage, and ghost-vendors.

He warned residents against electricity mafias who illegally connect households and demand payment, highlighting the challenges created when individuals operate outside the legal process.

“That is criminality. Only City Power and Eskom have the right to sell electricity to the community, so our plea today is for the community to also play its role in fighting this criminal activity,” said Sekwaila.

City Power will keep the lights in Tshepisoong on, and will continue responding to faults, assessing the network and implementing the required maintenance interventions throughout the phased normalisation programme.

As part of relaunching the social compact with our residents across the city, City Power has introduced a mobile trailer office intended to bring customer service at the gates of the residents, and this will also continue in Tshepisoong throughout the normalisation programme, and beyond. The mobile office will provide residents with assistance on customer queries and billing-related matters, as well as support with Free Basic Electricity (FBE) and Expanded Social Package (ESP) registration.

The Tshepisoong engagement forms part of City Power’s ongoing programme of regional Electricity Imbizos aimed at bringing the entity’s leadership and technical teams closer to communities and creating a platform for residents to raise electricity-related concerns directly.

City Power will continue holding Electricity Imbizos across Johannesburg in the coming weeks, with further engagements planned in different communities as part of its commitment to strengthen communication, listen to customers and work with communities towards improving electricity services.

ISSUED BY CITY POWER

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