



ZOMBA CITY COUNCIL

LOCATION

Zomba City is located at the Centre of Zomba District in the Southern Region of the Republic of Malawi, Central Africa. It covers an area of 39 square kilometres and shares all of its boundaries with Zomba District Council, which forms an integral part of its sphere of influence. Zomba City is the fourth largest urban centre in Malawi after Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. It is situated along M3 Road about 65 km north of Blantyre (the main Commercial Centre) and about 300km south east of Lilongwe (the Capital city).

Zomba City is located at the foot of Zomba Plateau. Zomba Plateau is 2085m above sea level. It is the fourth highest plateau in the country after Mulanje, Nyika, and Vipya. The Plateau is one of the renowned tourist attractions in the country because of its diverse natural resources and scenic beauty.

CLIMATE

Zomba experiences tropical climate, which has three seasons namely; hot rainy, cool dry and hot dry seasons. The hot rainy season starts from November and ends in April. Cool dry season occurs from May to July while hot dry season occurs from July to October.

(i) Temperature

The average monthly temperature for Zomba is 21.1C with a mean minimum of 11.5C in June and mean maximum of 29.8C in October.

(ii) Rainfall

Zomba receives annual rainfall between 600mm to 1500mm. Normally high rainfalls occur in January and February hence the wettest months in a year.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ZOMBA CITY

Zomba City Council was established under the Local Government (Urban Councils) Act, Cap 22.01 of the Laws of Malawi as a Local Authority and District Administration. Zomba became the capital in 1891 following the establishment of a British Protectorate. It was declared a Township in September 1900. The first British Commissioner and Consul General, Sir Harry Johnstone established the first Secretariat in Zomba in 1901. The Colonial administration chose Zomba because of its healthy climate and good location.

Zomba was declared a Planning area in 1955 with its first Outline Zoning Scheme (Urban Structure Plan) published in 1958. In 1975 when the capital was moved to Lilongwe, Zomba became the University town housing the University of Malawi central administration and Chancellor College (a constituent college). Zomba assumed municipal status in 1979 and was granted the City Status on 9th March, 2008.

POPULATION AND CULTURE

Zomba City has a population of 88,314 according to the 2008 population census, with an annual growth rate of 3.0%. Out of this, 44,755 were males and 43,559 were females. Its population density is 2,264 persons per square kilometre. About 65% of this population lives in unplanned areas. A total of 12,575 people were below the age of 5, while 39,190 were in the economically active age group of 15-35. The city has a total 6,092 orphans i.e. children below the age of 18 without parents. Zomba City has a total of 54,260 school going population (aged 3-29) but only 24,901 are attending school.

As a characteristic of urban areas, Zomba City has a heterogeneous population composed of different ethnic groups, cultures and languages. The dominant ethnic groups are the Yao, Lomwe, Mang'anja, Chewa, Ngoni, Tumbuka and Indians. The Europeans, Tongas and other Africans are in minority.

THE CITY COUNCIL

Zomba City Council is a corporate body established under the Local Government Act of 1998. The Chief Executive supported by seven technical departments, heads the administrative part of the Council. The political part of the Council is headed by the Mayor.

Zomba City Council carries out a wide range of activities and services. These include formulation of policy and decisions, promotion of infrastructure and economic development through the formulation, approval and execution of development plans, mobilisation of resources, formulation of by-laws and provision of primary education services and primary health care.

CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Among all four major urban economies in Malawi (Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, Zomba), Zomba's economic situation and structure is unique.

Zomba's distinct function is that of an administrative rather than commercial centre. It is a University Town and a centre of learning and public service delivery. This is reflected in the high share of employment in the government and related sectors.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT

A.FINANCING MECHANISM

i) Current Status

Zomba City Council is financed through local revenues, government transfers and donor funding. Local revenue sources include; property rates, market fees, rentals, planning fees, car parking fees, bus depot fees, other charges, profits from business undertakings like Resthouse and bar. The largest share of local revenue comes from property rates contributing about 80% of the total council revenue. At the moment the council is struggling to maximise collection from its local revenue sources to enable it deliver the required services.

ii) Envisioned Status

The council envisage improved revenue collection by improving revenue collection mechanisms, widening its revenue collection base and engaging in public private partnership.

iii) Areas Of Learning And Cooperation

As such the council envisage to improve its financing mechanisms through the cooperation by learning how other cities finance themselves, how they collect revenues, how they manage the public private partnerships if any in an effort to improve service delivery and revenue, how they relate with their central government. The council expects to learn and share with other cities on the operations of their finance departments.

B. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

i) Current Status

Zomba's distinct function is that of an administrative rather than commercial centre. It is a University Town and a centre of learning and public service delivery. This is reflected in the high share of employment in the government and related sectors. However the economy of Zomba City largely depends on the informal sector for employment and businesses than on the formal sector employment and trade. This has resulted into problem with street vending. Zomba city has failed to attract large scale industries despite presence of some significant raw materials.

ii) Envisioned Status

The city plans to attract large scale manufacturing industries with the aim of creating more employment opportunities for its citizens. This will in turn enhance local economic development. The city also plans to have well organised vending that can help reduce cases of street vending.

iii) Areas Of Learning And Cooperation

As such the city expects to learn how other cities create job opportunities for its citizens, how they attract industries and how the city can market itself to attract investors. The city also expects to learn on how other cities organise small scale business operators in the informal sector.

C. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FOR COUNCILS

i) Current Status

Zomba city council is mandated to provide quality services to its residents. This mandate is reflected in the city' strategic plan. However concerns are often raised by the residents most of which reflect on poor performance of the council.

ii) Envisioned Status

The council envisage improved service delivery to its residents. This can only be achieved if the council has a well established appraisal system of its staff and its services.

iii) Areas Of Learning And Cooperation

The city would therefore be interested to learn and share experiences on how staff appraisals are done, the appraisal systems in place and their effectiveness in improving service delivery and appreciate the reward systems in place.

2. MUNICIPAL POLICING

i) Current Status

Zomba City Council is currently grappling with petty crimes to do with people deliberately breaking municipal bye laws. Such cases include:

- Indiscriminate littering, refuse dumping and urinating
- Minibus touting
- Street vending
- Wrong car parking
- Noise pollution especially from the bars and bottle stores operating beyond the required time.

These petty crimes have adversely affected the general out look of the city by contributing to poor sanitation, noise and congestion especially in the central business area. The continued use and dependence on the public police has proved to be difficult because they are equally preoccupied with major issues and crimes.

ii) Envisioned Status

The council therefore plans to establish and introduce its own city police to help enforce most of its bye laws.

iii) Areas Of Learning And Cooperation

As a new concept in Malawi, the council expects to learn from other cities on how they enforce their municipal bye laws and have insights on how they operate and organise their municipal policing. This will enable Zomba City Council organise and establish its own Municipal Police for effective bye law enforcement.

3. CAPACITY BUILDING OF COUNCILS

i) Current Status

Zomba is the fourth largest and youngest city in Malawi. It was upgraded and declared a city in 2008. Such a declaration has come with high expectations from residents to demand high quality services from the council.

ii) Envisioned Status

The elevation of Zomba to a city calls for high calibre and experienced staff to respond to the people's needs and expectations that reflects on the city status.

iii) Areas Of Learning And Cooperation

As a growing city, Zomba has a lot to learn from other major and long established cities in terms of city planning, sanitation and environmental management, good governance in a local government system, roads and traffic management as well as good financial management. This can only be achieved through staff exchange programmes where Zomba will be able to share its experiences while at the same time learning from other cities.