The inaugural Galeshewe Urban Renewal Programme (GURP) Investment Imbizo was held at the Mayibuye Centre in Galeshewe on April 15th. Galeshewe, the main township in Kimberley and home to half the population of Sol Plaatje Municipality, is one of 8 Urban Renewal Areas proclaimed by the Presidency in 2001.

The purpose of the Investment Imbizo was for the Sol Plaatje Municipality to present the 20 component projects – ranging from the new provincial legislature precinct to a green belt - to the investor and development community. The emphasis was on property, construction and retail developments.

In addition, the imbizo was a networking opportunity for the approximately 80 representatives from business, government, development agencies, the media and local community who attended to learn more about the most successful URP in South Africa and how it can serve as a model for others.

The Imbizo was introduced by Sol Plaatje Executive Director of Strategy, Economic Development and Planning, Mrs Nomonde Tyabashe-Kesiamang, whose department is responsible for the planning and implementation of GURP. “It was a great success”, she said after the bus tour around Galeshewe that rounded off the day’s programme. “Galeshewe will be transformed in the coming few years, with the cooperation of government and the private sector. We invite proposals from all interested parties and have an open door policy”.

In the afternoon and evening, a cultural event was staged in the Mayibuye amphitheatre featuring artists and performers from Galeshewe, Kimberley and as far a field as Cape Town. Four traditional dance troupes entertained the large crowd of approximately 1000 people, interspersed with music, comedy and poetry recitals. The evening ended with the enchanting and powerful Nomfusi & The Lucky Charms who hail from Khayelitsha.

**Galeshewe – some background**

Galeshewe is one of the oldest townships in South Africa, having developed during the Kimberley diamond rush in the 1880’s. Located to the northwest of Kimberley’s CBD, Galeshewe faces social, economic and environmental challenges to its emergence as a quality place for people live, work and play.

The establishment of a National Urban Renewal Strategy in February 2001 created a special focus on key townships in South Africa. The Strategy emphases investment
in economic and social infrastructure, human resource development, enterprise development, the enhancement of the development capacity of local government, poverty alleviation and the strengthening of the criminal justice system. Eight nodal areas have been identified to deliberately address under-development and poverty and Galeshewe is included amongst these.

Since the announcement of the URP in 2001 the Galeshewe Urban Renewal Programme (GURP) has faced a number of challenges, specifically capacity and financial constraints and insufficient institutional arrangements to implement the various GURP projects. In spite of this, remarkable progress has been made in implementing key projects in Galeshewe. Visible signs of transformation are testimony to the ongoing efforts of the Sol Plaatje Municipality in partnership with the Northern Cape and National Government. In 2008 Sol Plaatje received further impetus to its efforts with the award of the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant - providing funds for Technical Assistance and Projects (Capital Grant).

The programme has three strategic themes:

**People**
The development of the people and community – build on the strengthen, unity and potential of the people of Galeshewe:

**Prosperity**
The economic development and tourism opportunities – building on the unique 'green' pilot projects and the heritage history of Galeshewe; and

**Place**
The creation of a quality, safe and pleasant place for people to grow building on the availability of public sector money.

GURP is driven by central government through the Treasury and is implemented by the Sol Plaatje Municipality and its development partners. The Municipal Department of Strategy, Economic Development and Planning is responsible for executing the Programme with the support of other Provincial and Local Government departments as appropriate.

Much of the past twelve months has been devoted to project identification, research, information gathering and analysis, planning and stakeholder communication. The programme has been boosted by expertise to support each of the 20 or so projects identified in the Programme. The GURP has now reached the stage where these projects have all made significant progress and are ready to be presented to a wider audience. Hence the decision to hold an Investment Imbizo.