

SEPARATE COVER

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COMMUNICATION POLICY (EDSSS) (7B)



MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 Matjhabeng Local Municipality recognizes the importance of communication in the diverse nature of the South African developmental society.
- 1.2 Matjhabeng Local Municipality believes that communication is a fundamental factor in the achievement of the goals of accountable, open, transparent and responsive local government.
- 1.3 The purpose of Matjhabeng Local Municipality's Communications Policy is to ensure that, as part of its ongoing commitment to provide high quality service, the Municipality is proactive in its internal and external communications.
- 1.4 Matjhabeng Local Municipality is committed to improving communication within the Municipality and between the Municipality and the local community as well as between the Municipality and other organs of state within the local, provincial and national spheres of government.
- 1.5 Matjhabeng Local Municipality believes that it is the duty of each Councillor and employee of the Municipality to ensure that internal and external stakeholders have correct, reliable information on time as to current and planned activities, policies, programmes, services, initiatives and procedures of the Municipality.
- 1.6 Matjhabeng Local Municipality commits itself to comply with all relevant statutory requirements regarding the making available of information, and access to information held by the Municipality.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Communications Policy of Matjhabeng Local Municipality aims to ensure that communications by Council and all departments are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.
- 2.2 The policy commitments are also based on Matjhabeng Local Municipality's vision and mission:



2.2.1 **Vision:** To be a benchmark developmental Municipality in service delivery excellence.

2.2.2 **Mission:** To be a united, non-racial, non-sexist, transparent, responsive Municipality; to provide municipal services in an economic, efficient and effective way; to promote a self-reliant community through the promotion of a culture of entrepreneurship; to create a conducive environment for growth and development; to promote co-operative governance, and; to promote a dynamic community participation and value adding partnership.

2.3 The strategic objectives of the Communications Policy, based on the principles of Batho Pele and informed by Matjhabeng Local Municipality's Integrated Development Plan and Business Plan are four-fold:

2.3.1 Through external communication, to seek continued improvement in public perception and understanding of Council and its services.

2.3.2 Through e-communication, to maximize the opportunity to communicate creatively and effectively through the use of new technology.

2.3.3 To strengthen Council's visual profile locally, regionally and nationally through consistent use of a strong corporate identity and visual branding.

2.3.4 Through internal communication, to increase employees' and relevant stakeholders' understanding of the aims and objectives of Council and promote ways of improving communication between departments.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Constitution of South Africa, Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Framework Act, 2005, the Municipal Systems Act, (Act No. 32 of 2000), the Municipal Systems Amendment Act 2003 (Act No 49 of 2003), the Municipal Structures Act, (Act 117 of 1998), Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act 2 of 2000), Municipal Finance Management Act (Act 56 of 2003) and various other legislation and working documents from government place unique obligations on local government to communicate with its citizenry.

3.2 The key obligation on municipalities in this regard is found in Section 16 and Section 18 of the Municipal Systems Act. It determines that a municipality must –

(s 16): "... develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance ..."

(s 18): requires that a municipality must –
"... communicate to its community information concerning-



- (a) the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation;
 - (b) the matters with regard to which community participation is encouraged;
 - (c) the rights and duties of members of the local community; and
 - (d) municipal governance, management and development.
- (2) When communicating the information mentioned (above), a municipality must take into account-
- (a) language preferences and usage in the municipality; and
 - (b) the special needs of people who cannot read or write".

It further requires the following:

"(1) When anything must be notified by a municipality through the media to the local community in terms of this Act or any other applicable legislation, it must be done-

- (a) in the local newspaper or newspapers of its area;
- (b) in a newspaper or newspapers circulating in its area and determined by the council as a newspaper of record; or
- (c) by means of radio broadcasts covering the area of the municipality.

(2) Any such notification must be in the official languages determined by the council, having regard to language preferences and usage within its area.

(3) A copy of every notice that must be published in the Provincial Gazette or the media in terms of this Act or any other applicable legislation must be displayed at the municipal offices.

(4) When the municipality invites the local community to submit written comments or representations on any matter before the council, it must be stated in the invitation that any person who cannot write may come during office hours to a place where a employees member of the municipality named in the invitation, will assist that person to transcribe that person's comments or representations.

(5)(a) When a municipality requires a form to be completed by a member of the local community, a employees member of the municipality must give reasonable assistance to persons who cannot read or write, to enable such persons to understand and complete the form.

(b) If the form relates to the payment of money to the municipality or to the provision of any service, the assistance must include an explanation of its terms and conditions".

3.3 The Municipal Systems Amendment Act 2003 (Act No 49 of 2003) requires the following:

"21A(1) All documents that must be made public by a municipality in terms of a requirement of this Act, the Municipal Finance Management Act or other applicable legislation, must be conveyed to the local community -

- (a) by displaying the documents at the municipality's head and satellite offices and libraries;
- (b) by displaying the documents on the municipality's official website, if the municipality has a website as envisaged by section 21B; and



(c) by notifying the local community in accordance with section 21 of the place, including the website address where detailed particulars concerning the documents can be obtained.

(2) If appropriate, any notification in terms of subsection (1)(c) must invite the local community to submit written comments or representations to the municipality in respect of the relevant documents.

21B(1) Each municipality must-

(a) establish its own official website if the municipality decides that it is affordable; and

(b) place on that official website information required to be made public in terms of this Act and the Municipal Finance Management Act.

(2)

(3) The municipal manager must maintain and regularly update the municipality's official website ..."

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 For the purpose of this Policy any word or expressions to which a meaning has been assigned in the Act shall bear the same meaning in this Policy.

4.2 Unless the context indicates otherwise, the following meaning are assigned:

- Council: the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Matjhabeng Local Municipality
- Executive Mayor: the executive political head of Matjhabeng Local Municipality
- Municipal Manager: means the person appointed by the Municipal Council as the Municipal Manager of the Municipality in terms of section 82 of the Local Government Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) and includes any person acting in such position, and to whom the Municipal Manager has delegated a power, function or duty in respect of such delegated power, function or duty
- Municipal services: all services including water, sanitation, electricity, refuse, rates and taxes reflected on the municipal account for which payment is required by the Municipality, and any other service rendered by the Municipality for which payment is required
- Customer: means any occupier of any premises to which the Municipality has agreed to supply or is actually supplying services, or if there is no occupier, then the owner of the premises
- Communication: written, verbal, visual, graphical semiology and all those activities involved in the production and distribution of material and information to the Matjhabeng community - whatever the communication medium - about Council's policies, programmes, services and initiatives, corporate identification of Council's programmes, services and activities, interaction and engagement with the public, communication activities and processes within Matjhabeng Local Municipality, communication on issues of importance or strategic value, public information needs and the monitoring and evaluation of communication programmes and projects
- Internal stakeholders (not exclusive): Statutory Council institutions, Councillors, Employees (including management), Ward Committees, Community Development Workers



- External stakeholders (not exclusive): Community, Customers, Indigents, Rural and Urban communities, Government institutions, Labor Unions, Youth Groups, Women Groups, Faith Based Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Non-profit Organizations, Non-government Organizations, Sector fraternities (Agriculture, Business, Sport etc), Media (electronic and print), Investors, Service Providers, Visitors

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Communications Policy of Matjhabeng Local Municipality defines communications as a function that is central to the work of local government.

5.2 It sees communications as a shared responsibility involving Council, employees at all levels and other internal stakeholders. It calls for co-operation and co-ordination within, between and among Council, its internal stakeholders and all the departments of Matjhabeng Local Municipality through the 8 Batho Pele principles:

- regularly consult with customers
- set service standards
- increase access to services
- ensure higher levels of courtesy
- provide more and better information about services
- increase openness and transparency about services
- remedy failures and mistakes
- give the best possible value for money

5.3 Through this principles-based policy, Matjhabeng Local Municipality, as a provider of municipal services to its customers, will strive to be open, fair, balanced and accessible in its communication, and commits to:

- 5.3.1 Communicate clearly, openly, accurately and regularly with each other, the public, professional partners and other stakeholders in order to promote mutual understanding, and give a better service to the people of Matjhabeng that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of the public and respectful of individual rights.
- 5.3.2 Provide the public with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programmes, services, initiatives and procedures, or the development of policies, programmes, services, initiatives and procedures.
- 5.3.3 Maintain open, responsive communications with the public and developing proactive strategies to assess and address public concerns.
- 5.3.4 Encourage Councillors and employees to communicate openly and effectively with the public about policies, programmes, services and initiatives they are familiar with and for which they have responsibility.
- 5.3.5 Seek new ways of communicating information to socially excluded, marginalized and hard to reach residents.



- 5.3.6 Foster feedback and enhancing public access to policies, programmes and services.
- 5.3.7 Produce all communication in 'plain English', available on request in the recipients' language of choice within Council's Language Policy, written for its intended audience and unambiguous, timely and of an appropriate quality.
- 5.3.8 Employ a variety of ways and means to communicate, and provide information in multiple formats to accommodate diverse needs.
- 5.3.9 Identify and address communication needs and issues routinely in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programmes, services, initiatives and procedures.
- 5.3.10 Provide information to the public to encourage them participate in decision-making, enabling them to express their views and expectations to Council.
- 5.3.11 Provide information to the media on policies, initiatives, and services.
- 5.3.12 Respond promptly to issues and concerns raised through the media.
- 5.3.13 Develop promotional campaigns that reinforce key messages and highlight priority services.
- 5.3.14 Publish its key successes – and sharing them with Council, employees, and key partners/stakeholders.
- 5.3.15 Provide high quality and accessible service information and publications to customers and potential customers through offices and employees.
- 5.3.16 Prepare all Council communication, both internal and external, in line with other appropriate Council policies concerning freedom of information, data protection, fairness and equality, customer care and environmental and economical sustainability.
- 5.3.17 Communicate in a manner that affirms our nation's values of democratic, freedom, openness and transparency, security and respect.
- 5.3.18 Promote and encourage intergovernmental relations and effective communication between Matjhabeng Local Municipality and other spheres of government.
- 5.3.19 Align Matjhabeng Local Municipality's Communication Policy and Communication Strategy to National Government's requirements.
- 5.3.20 Publish information on services and policies on Council's website.
- 5.3.21 Continually seek out and exploit the opportunities presented by electronic communication to benefit Council and the community it serves.



- 5.3.22 Use Council's website to promote Council and its services and to facilitate channels of communication between Matjhabeng Local Municipality and its internal and external stakeholders.
- 5.3.23 Raise awareness of the achievements of Matjhabeng Local Municipality and the programmes and services delivered.
- 5.3.24 Promote and market the investment potential of Matjhabeng.
- 5.3.25 Promote the corporate brand identity and image of Matjhabeng Local Municipality.
- 5.3.26 Provide information, all communication and promotional material issued by Council to both internal and external audiences in a clearly branded, concise fashion to be clearly identifiable as having come from Council.
- 5.3.27 Work with partners to co-ordinate and promote events and marketing initiatives in Matjhabeng that celebrate and highlight Matjhabeng Local Municipality's achievements and strengths.
- 5.3.28 Promote the individual services provided by Council, but always be mindful of their contribution to the Municipality as a whole.
- 5.3.29 Adhere to the guidelines laid out in the publications and printed material protocol and any corporate identity protocol and style guide as determined by Council.
- 5.3.30 Ensure appropriate use of national symbols, as prescribed by state protocols and official municipal symbols as prescribed by Council.
- 5.3.31 Maintain a strong two-way flow of information within Council that supports and encourages teamwork, trust and loyalty.
- 5.3.32 Inform all Councillors and employees of issues and events that affect Matjhabeng Local Municipality and the impact it will have upon them.
- 5.3.33 Use a redeveloped intranet site to communicate fully with Councillors, employees and relevant stakeholders, and actively encourage its use.
- 5.3.34 Ensure that Councillors are kept informed about municipal initiatives in their wards and involving them wherever possible in the planning of local events and consultation programmes.
- 5.3.35 Develop internal and external communications strategies to help develop and deliver all of the above.
- 5.4 In return, Council will expect those it is communicating with to respect the privacy and rights of Councillors, municipal employees, Council's customers, partners and stakeholders.



6. IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

- 6.1 The Executive Mayor as well as the Municipal Manager will be responsible for driving the Communications Policy and Communications Strategy by actively, and demonstrably, applying its principles to all aspects of Matjhabeng Local Municipality's work.
- 6.2 The Office of the Executive Mayor and the Office of the Municipal Manager are jointly responsible and accountable for the implementation of this policy with more inclination and emphasis on the administrative accountability of the Municipal Manager to ensure the success of this policy through institutional mechanisms.
- 6.3 Council must evaluate, review and adopt the Communication Policy and related by-laws.
- 6.4 Council must oversee and monitor the implementation and enforcement of the Municipality's policies in this regard.
- 6.5 The Municipal Manager (MM), as accounting officer, must implement and enforce this Policy and any relevant by-laws emanating from its existence.
- 6.6 The Municipal Manager must establish and control the administration necessary to fulfill this Policy, and report efficiently and regularly to the Executive Mayor in this regard.
- 6.7 Heads of Departments will take responsibility for ensuring the successful implementation of the Communications Policy within their areas of responsibility.
- 6.8 Heads of Departments will be responsible for ensuring that their particular department contributes input to the Municipality's external and internal newsletter, Council's website and other corporate sources of information as appropriate or determined from time to time by the Municipality's communication needs.
- 6.9 The Matjhabeng Municipal Council will establish Communications Department as part of the municipal directorate with key human resource located in the administration including the Head of Communications and communications unit located in the office of the Executive Mayor for Executive Mayor's communications needs such as spokesperson, speechwriter, media liaison officer and other posts which may be deemed necessary.
- 6.10 The Communication Department will provide advice and guidance to members and officers on the communications aspects of major issues facing Council and, through its diverse activities supports Council's core values and political priorities. It will play a key role in all areas of communication such as:
- External communications
 - Internal communications
 - New media – internet/intranet
 - Media relations and management
 - Corporate identity
 - Marketing and promotion



6.11 Day-to-day responsibility for the delivery of the actions in support of the objectives of the Communications Policy and Communications Strategy lies with the Communications Department and the detailed action plans that follow both the above, form the basis of the wider institutional departmental annual work programme.

7. COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to ensure effective communication and compliance to Municipality communication policy, the following roles and responsibilities are adopted:

7.1 EXECUTIVE MAYOR

The Executive Mayor is the Chief Communicator (spokesperson) for the Municipality on political issues. He/she can delegate these responsibilities to the MMC's or Municipal Manager whenever required. The Executive Mayor together with the Municipal Manager and Head of Communications Department will be responsible for defining the annual communication priorities, objectives and requirements. This will be done in consultation with the Executive Management of the municipality.

7.2 MUNICIPAL MANAGER (MM)

The Municipal Manager is the spokesperson for the Municipality on strategic and operational issues. He ensures that the annual communications strategy is in line with Municipality communications objectives and reflects the Municipality's priorities. The MM ensures the integration of the communications function within the Municipality's decision-making processes and the integration of strategic communication planning in the overall planning of the Municipality and further ensure that the department is capacitated with human and financial resources.

7.3 HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS (HOD)

Heads of Departments are responsible for:

- ensuring compliance with the Municipality's Communications Policy;
- attending to media inquiries through communication Department;
- ensuring that key communication issues and priorities are identified annually in line with the municipality's communication strategy and
- their programmes have communication action plans, this must be done in consultation with the Communications Department.

7.4 HEAD OF COMMUNICATION

The Head of Communication Department serves as the municipal authority on communication issues. He/she is responsible for co-coordinating all communications activities including the procurement of communication products and services. This



includes the appointment of communication service providers, consultants and communication activities of the various Clusters of the Municipality. All these activities must be either approved or recommended by him/her. He/she ensures that the Communication Policy and Procedures are communicated to staff and adhered to. He/she provides communication advice and counsel to the Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager.

7.5 MUNICIPAL SPOKESPERSON

The Municipal Spokesperson serves as the Council's spokesperson. He/she is responsible for coordinating liaison with the media, arranging media conferences, the issuing of media statements and handling media queries. He/she is responsible for both Executive Mayor's broad media liaison and to a particular extent, responsible for writing Executive Mayor and other Office Bearer's speeches. Where possible and necessary, the official will solicit assistance from the municipality's Head of Communications.

7.6 COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Communications Department is responsible for co-coordinating all communications activities in the Municipality. In this regard the Communications Department shall:

- support and co-ordinate all communication efforts with the main aim of enabling the Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager to perform their functions as Chief Communicators;
- provide strategic advice and counsel with regard to communication policy implementation, programme planning and implementation;
- develop and implement communication plans and produce publications for information dissemination.

Dedicated Communication Officers for each macro function shall be appointed per structure of communications department to focus on main functional areas. These officers will be responsible for all the communication requirements macro functions in the Municipality that deal with these functional areas - this includes identifying communication issues, developing implementation for communication strategies, implementing and managing communication actions such as: campaigns, events, advertising, design and printing of communication materials, audio-visual and still communication, marketing and communication research.

7.7 COMMUNICATOR'S FORUM

Communicator's Forum will be established comprising of representatives from all municipal departments and its meetings shall be held quarterly. The Forum is a strategic platform for information sharing and coordination within the municipality and shall be chaired by Head of Communications who will then report to the Executive Director; Strategic Support Services.



8. PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

The following Procedures and Regulations are the rules that govern the implementation of the Communication Policy.

8.1 MEDIA RELATIONS

Communications Department is the Municipality's first line of contact with the media and is responsible for co-coordinating all media relations. The following procedures have to be followed with regards to media liaison:

- It is advisable that before responding to media queries, Communications Department be consulted. In a situation where this is not possible, the response must be signed off by the relevant Head of Department and copied to Head Communications.
- All media queries must be referred to the Communications Department which will then engage with the relevant line functionaries for an adequate response.
- The Communication Department should ideally at all times coordinate interactions with the media, such as media conferences, briefings, letters to the media and advertising. The Communications Department is responsible for media evaluation and monitoring.
- A media monitoring service will be a point of focus for Communications Department. Items of importance will be circulated to those impacted upon, either for information purposes or for a draft response.
- Media queries are to be dealt with within the stipulated deadline or otherwise within 24 hours.
- Inquiries received after hours will only be dealt with during office hours unless there is obvious urgency or instruction to do so. Inquires from the media should be in writing.
- Responses are to be supplied in writing except for radio and television interviews.
- Media queries must be treated as top priority.

8.2 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The main purpose of internal communications is to facilitate and manage the flow of information within the municipality in order to create an informed workforce. Internal communications involves information about municipality's programmes, relevant human resource information, and other useful information that staff may have an interest in.

The following communication tools and mediums are to be used to communicate with staff members:

- Internal Newsletter (The Facts)
- Notice Boards
- Intranet
- Workshops
- Staff meetings
- Toilet notice boards
- SMS and
- Pay slips.



8.3 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The main purpose of external communications is to inform stakeholders of services and programmes of the municipality. Different communication tools and mediums are used to communicate with stakeholders:

- Billboards
- Radio
- Television
- Matjhabeng News
- Road shows
- Exhibitions
- Conferences
- Summits
- Workshops
- Internet and
- Newspapers.

All external communication campaigns must be approved by the Communication Department except where sanctioned by the Executive Mayor.

8.4 PRODUCTION OF COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

The Communications Department must be consulted on communications material that is produced on behalf of the municipality. Decisions to outsource such activity or part thereof must carry the approval of the Head of Communications.

8.5 ADVERTISING

Communication Department is responsible for co-coordinating all advertising activities. The Communication Department must approve all advertising or procurement of advertising services. No contract or payment can be signed without the approval of the Head of Communications or his/her representative taking into cognizance of the legislative duties of the Accounting Officer. In all instances the correct procurement procedures should be followed. Heads of Departments must compliment the budget.

8.6 CORPORATE IMAGE

Communication Department is responsible for the corporate image of the municipality. This responsibility includes the following:

- the look and feel of the municipality's office buildings
- the type of communication material to be used by the municipality i.e. folders, letterheads, business cards etc;
- the way communication material is used and produced i.e. the font, use of logo's, corporate identity, etc.
- the logo shall be used as prescribed in the Heraldry's guidelines and any protocol and/or statutory rubric.



8.7 BRANDING AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

Promotional material using the corporate identity of the municipality may only be used for official purposes. The production of such material must be authorised by the Communications Department. Branded merchandise is an integral part of the municipal branding strategy and as such cannot be developed without the approval of the Communications Department.

The use of the municipal logo on projects not initiated by the municipality has to be approved by the Communications Department. Strict adherence to the corporate identity is a given with the development of any branded material.

8.8 PROCUREMENT OF COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

Communication materials include any type of publication, newsletter, magazine, brochure, audiovisual material and any other material intended to convey to the public information. Communications Department has the responsibility of ensuring that communication products and services, including that of consultants, or services are acquired in a fair and equitable manner. The Communications Department must be consulted on procurement processes for communication. It is advisable to make use of the Communications Department's in-house service, depending on the type of project, the time frames, human resource capacity of the municipality and available budgets.

8.9 WEBSITE

The Municipality's Internet site serves as its window to the public and as such the Communications Department has the following responsibility:

- The Head of Communication Department or a delegated official has the sole responsibility of placing and removing material from the municipality's website.
- Information will be placed on the site only after the approval of a Department Head or a delegated official not lower than the rank of Manager.
- It is the responsibility of individual Departments to provide information for the web pages.
- The creation of links on the municipality website and or acceptance of a link of the municipality website to another website will only be done after the approval of the Head of Communication.

8.10 LANGUAGE POLICY AND TRANSLATIONS

The Matjhabeng Municipality language policy is based on the Constitution and the Municipal Systems Act, in this regard, it takes into account the language usage and preferences of the residents when communicating. English and Sesotho including isiXhosa are business languages for the municipality and all official notes and advertisements issued for general public information must be published in English and Sesotho including isiXhosa (Matjhabeng Municipality Language Policy).



8.11 COPYRIGHT

The municipality owns all municipal material and information it has paid for or created. Consequently, the reproduction of any such material requires the approval of the municipality. Copyright to the municipality allows the municipality the freedom to allow others to use the material without paying fees to the original producer. It also gives the municipality the authority to prevent misuse of the material by the producer or anyone else.

