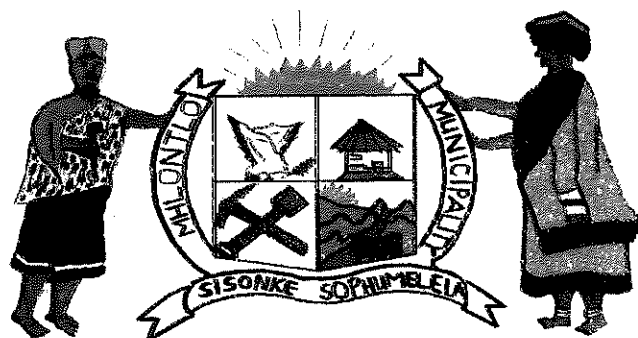


MHLONTLO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Communications Policy



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MLMCP001

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Mhlontlo Municipality is committed to building and maintaining good relationships with its internal and external stakeholders and to form partnerships with public and private sector which include national and international investments. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear principles and guidelines for communications in the Municipality .Furthermore this policy must define the roles and responsibilities within the municipalities' communications .This policy will ensure that communication takes place in a coordinated and uniform manner and furthermore aims to positively build and protect the image and integrity of the Mhlontlo Municipality .It aims to assist the Municipality in communicating the strategic direction and development of the municipality and give insight to its future development and planning.

2. LEGISLATION

The following legislation is applicable and must be adhered to in all communication with the media:

- i. Constitution of the republic of South Africa ,1996 (Act 108 OF 1996)
- ii. Local Government :Municipal Structure Act ,1998(Act 117 of 1998)
- iii. Promotion of Access to information Act ,2000(Act 2 of 2000)
- iv. Media Development and diversity Agency Act ,2002(Act 14 of 2002)
- v. Intergovernmental relations Framework Act ,2005(Act 13 of 2005)

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Communications policy seeks to ensure that the Mhlontlo Municipality acknowledges the importance of communications as a strategic management function and as an integral part of its daily functioning. It demonstrates that the Municipality is committed to a transparent and effective relationship with its internal and external stakeholders and will do so by a process of consultation and information dissemination. The Municipality acknowledges that it has a responsibility to inform its internal and external stakeholders of identified issues, progress made and results achieved addressing its mandate.

4. COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

4.1 Mayor

The Mayor is the Chief Communicator (principal spokesperson) for the municipality .The Mayor can delegate these responsibilities to the Municipal Manager whenever required. The Mayor together with the Municipal Manager and the Head of communication will be responsible for defining the annual communication priorities, objectives and requirements. This is done in consultation with the strategic Management services.

4.2 Speaker

The council speaker of the Municipality is the only authority to communicate on matters regarding council code of conduct and rules of order.

4.3 Municipal Manager

The Municipal Manager communicates on any area of the municipal administration, information around any legal processes the municipality might be engaged in. The Municipal Manager 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.

The municipal Manager ensures that all media enquiries must be treated as top priority and attended to within the stipulated deadline or within 24 hours, whichever the case may be. Both media enquiries and Responses must be in writing, except for radio and television interviews.

4.4 Head of Communication

The head of Communication serves as the Municipality authority on communication issues. He/she is responsible for co-ordinating all communication activities including the procurement of communication products and services. This includes the appointment of communication service providers, consultants and communications 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 Mayor and Municipal Manager.

4.5 Municipal Spokesperson

The Municipal spokesperson serves as the Council's spokesperson as delegated by the Mayor. He/she is responsible for co-ordinating liaison with the media, arranging media conferences and handling media queries. He/she is responsible for both the Mayor and Municipal media liaison. He/she is responsible for writing and archiving the Mayor's and other Office bearer's speeches.

4.6 Communications unit

The communications unit is responsible for co-ordinating all communications activities in the Municipality. In this regard the Communications unit, shall support and co-ordinate all communication efforts with the main aim of enabling the Mayor and Municipal Manager to perform their functions as Chief Communicators; shall provide strategic advice and counsel with regard to communication policy development, programme planning and programme implementation; develop and implement communication plans and produce publications for information dissemination; identify communication issues, developing 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 communications research.

5. PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

The following procedures and regulations are the rules that govern the implementation of the communications Policy.

5.1 Media relations

The Municipal manager through the communications unit is the first line of contact with the media and the communications unit is responsible for co-ordinating all media relations. All media queries should be referred to the communications unit. All media responses must be signed off by the Municipal Manager. The communications unit must coordinate interactions with the media such as media conferences, briefings, media releases, media invites and advertising. The communications unit is responsible for media evaluation and monitoring. Items of importance will be circulated to those impacted upon, either for information purposes or for 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. Inquiries 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 high priority.

5.2 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 municipal programmes, relevant human resource information, and other useful information that staff may have an interest in.

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

Newsletters, Posters, email, Pamphlets & Brochures, Notice boards, Workshops, staff meetings, SMS and Payslips.

5.3 External Communication

The main purpose of external communications is to inform stakeholders of services and programmes of the Municipality. Different tools and mediums are used to communicate with stakeholders such as the following:

Billboards, Posters, Pamphlets/leaflets, Radio, Television, Outreach programmes, Public participation programmes, summits, workshops, website, Newspapers, road show, stakeholder engagements, exhibitions, & imbizos.

5.4 Production of communications materials

The communications unit must be consulted on communications material that is produced on behalf of the municipality and approved by the municipal manager.

5.5 Corporate image

The Communications unit is responsible for the corporate image of the Municipality. This responsibility includes the following: The look and feel of the municipality; the type of

communication material to be used by the municipality i.e folders, letterheads, business cards etc.; the way communications material is used and produced i.e the font, logos, corporate identity.

5.6 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 done in conjunction with the communications unit and authorized by the municipal manager.

5.7 Website

The Municipality's internet site serves as its window to the public and as such the communications unit has the following responsibility; the head of the Communications unit has the sole responsibility of placing and removing material from the Municipal website, information will be placed on the site only after the approval of the Municipal manager. It is the responsibility of departments to provide the communication unit with information for their webpages.

5.8 Social Media

Social Media is a public platform and must be treated as such. As Civil servants, employees and councillor must be aware of the fact that their actions and comments in the public domain can be associated with the Municipality thus employees are encouraged to act accordingly on social media especially if their profile reflects their employment at the municipality

The Communications unit must constantly interact through the municipal Facebook site and respond as best and as honest as possible acting in a honest respective manner. Only authorised personnel may comment on behalf of the Municipality in all forms of media on issues of the municipality and its personnel. Employees are not allowed to comment in all forms of media on confidential issues of the municipality. Furthermore employees may not comment on the municipal social media accounts in a manner that is derogative to the municipality and its personnel.

5.9 Language Policy and translations

The Mhlontlo 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. Xhosa and English are business languages for the Municipality and all official notes and advertisements issued for general public information must be published in Xhosa and English.

5.10 Copyright

The Municipality owns all publicity 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.

5.11 Exhibitions

Communications unit is responsible for branding and corporate identity of the Municipality, thus the unit must be consulted when departments are taking part in fairs and exhibitions on behalf of the municipality.

5.12 Events

Events shall be organised as prescribed in the council events calendar and communications Unit shall take full responsibility for media, publicity and branding.

5.13 Communication in crisis situation

In the event of a crisis or disaster, the following process must be adhered to:


- The Line manager (assistant director) who's area of responsibility is involved, informs the relevant Director, Municipal Manager & head of Communications.
- A crisis committee must be constituted, consisting of the municipal manager, mayor, relevant EXCO members, relevant director, head of communications and relevant officials.
- The Crisis Committee drafts a plan of action, manages the crisis and communications releases the necessary statements in consultation with the principal spokespersons (Mayor & Municipal Manager).
- No media statement from or interview with any other officials is permitted without prior approval by Municipal Manager and/or Mayor.
- Staff members are to be kept informed of the situation.

5.14 Procedures and compliance

This Communication policy is intended to guide the communication processes of Mhlontlo Municipality horizontally and vertically in a standardised manner with unified messages. The communication policy and its procedures are applicable to every staff member and councillor in the Municipality. Any member of staff and member of councillor who contravenes the communication policy will be subject to disciplinary process.

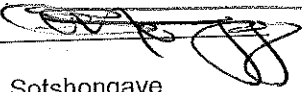
Policy Approval

Signed on behalf of council by:



N. Dywili

Mayor



S.G. Sotshongaye

Municipal Manager