

## INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE EMNAMBITHI /LADYSMITH MUNICIPALITY

### PREAMBLE:

The Emnambithi Municipality acknowledges the central role of an integrated communication strategy to reposition and rebrand local government across the country. The key messages should include elements that express:

- Our commitment to democratic and responsive local government
- Concretising the principle 'the people have spoken'.
- What local government will do to fulfil its mandate of the people
- Profiling of local government leaders linked to their local government commitments
- Encouraging two-way communication between local government and the people
- The need to promote social participation and access to information.

The strategy should reinforce the position that our municipality is a caring, competent, transparent, knowledgeable, honest and trustworthy, accountable and in touch with the people, accessible, committed and a people-centred and customer driven institution.

### LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK:

The strategy is informed by the following pieces of legislation:

- Constitution, 108 of 1996
- Organised Local Government Act, 1997 (d1)
- Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000
- Local Government Municipal Structures, 117 of 1998
- Promotion of Access to Information Act, 3 of 2000
- Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003
- Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Framework Act, 2005
- Media Development and Diversity Act, 14 of 2002.

### INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT:

Communication to be located in the office of the Mayor and report administratively to the Municipal Manager.

There must be synergies and co-ordination between the Mayor's office and the Office of the Speaker in relations to community outreach, road shows, imbizos and ward committee campaigns.

The strategy seeks a dynamic and interactive relationship with councillors on key communication issues, including public participation, current affairs, emerging communication risks and information on ongoing government programmes.

### COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS AND ACTIVITIES

The key messages and content of the communication strategy should include:

- A focus on achievements and progress
- Plans in addressing challenges
- An internal communication strategy
- The importance of co-operative governance and synergies between the three levels of government in improving conditions at local level.
- The importance of all partners in making local government work better.
- The promotion of community pride and ownership of community facilities.

#### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:

The strategy is aligned to the policy of Community Participation as endorsed by the municipality, and should be inclusive of the work of the Community Development Workers, Ward Councillors and Ward Committees.

#### INTEGRATION OF WARD COMMITTEES INTO GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

This should include:

Broad based consultation with ward committees to establish communication and information needs.  
Ward committees to disseminate and champion government programmes  
Ward committees tasked with CDW's to develop a profile and data base of each ward, and build in mechanisms to communicate with the people on the ground  
Regular briefings with portfolio committees within the ward committees.  
Ward committees to provide input and feedback of municipal services, IDP, budget and performance management system.

#### WARD COMMITTEE CAMPAIGN:

This campaign should be seen as an ongoing process that would ensure the following:

Community meetings to be held to elect ward committees  
Introduction of new ward councillors  
Raising awareness of ward councillors, ward committees and CDW's  
Publicising the programme of ward committee meetings  
Distribution and publicise DPLG ward committee publications  
Indigent policy  
Access to free basic services

#### COMMUNICATION CALENDAR:

Among the key communication milestones and opportunities in each year should include:

- National and provincial budget speeches
- Municipal budget consultation process
- IDP process
- January mid term report
- Local growth and development summits
- National commemorative days
- Local Government Week (public awareness co-ordinated by SALGA)
- Local Democracy Week
- Imbizo Focus Week

#### COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS:

This should include taking the message to communities through community meetings, road shows, community outreach programmes, stakeholder meetings (ongoing interaction and consultation with youth, women, business, traditional leaders, NGO's, CBO's and FBO's etc, media liaison with community newspapers, community radio station, information kiosks, pay point centres and all community facility bulletin boards.

The communication distribution should ensure door-to-door programme, workshops, stakeholder meetings and interaction, call centres, websites, letters to the editor and newsletters.

Public education campaign should focus on how local government works including the citizens' charter, profiling the ward councillor and ward committee members, service delivery standards, performance management, municipal reports and IDP reviews.

#### MEDIA RELATIONS:

The strategy should also be inclusive of a media relations component that provides for a framework to build media relations, common understanding and agreements with the media, improving media coverage of municipal events and achievements, managing media briefings on municipal development priorities. It must clarify media protocols, roles and responsibilities, authorisation to address the media, and the authority to speak on behalf of the municipality.

#### INTERNAL CAMPAIGNS:

The municipality's internal communication should, among other things, reinforce the Batho Pele campaign which would assist in the:

Changing the internal structure of service delivery

Service standards and ethics

Customer care policy

#### COMMUNICATION CYCLE:

The communication cycle to begin in February in each year after the State of the Nation Address and to end in January the following year.

The implementation of the strategy begins in July and ends at the end of June the following year.

#### CONCLUSION:

This policy framework is not exhaustive and merely provides the guidelines for an effective, efficient and meaningful interaction with our communities. It should be aligned to the district, provincial and national government initiatives to ensure that government speaks unequivocally with one voice, one message.

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