



DRAKENSTEIN

MUNISIPALITEIT • MUNICIPALITY • UMASIPALA

Paarl | Wellington | Gouda | Saron | Simondium

Communication Policy

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Signed by the City Manager

Signature Date

24 June 2020

A city of excellence

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DEFINITIONS IN THIS DOCUMENT

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| Communication | Refers to communication with the purpose of sharing information with the public, the press and staff members through the various communication methods as stipulated by this document. |
| IDP | Integrated Development Plan as approved by the Drakenstein Municipal Council |
| JOC | Joint Operations Committee |
| KPA | Key Performance Area |
| LED | Local Economic Development |
| SOP | Standard Operation Procedure as approved by relevant Executive Director |



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Drakenstein Municipality is committed to interactive communication - building relationships with its internal and external stakeholders - and to forming partnerships with the public and private sector. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear principles and guidelines for communication in and by the Municipality. The different roles and responsibilities within the Municipality's communication are made clear: what is being communicated when and by whom. This policy will ensure that communication takes place in a coordinated, strategic and uniform way. The communication policy must ensure that the Municipality's strategy includes Paarl, Wellington, Mbekweni, Saron, Simondium, Gouda and Hermon in all communication efforts. The central message of all communication must reflect the vision of the Drakenstein Municipality, "a city of excellence".
- 1.2** The policy aims to positively build and protect the image of Drakenstein Municipality. It aims to assist the Municipality in communicating the strategic direction and development of the Municipality and to give insight into its future development and planning.

2. LEGISLATION

- 2.1** The following legislation is applicable and must be adhered to in all communication with the media:
- 2.1.1** Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996);
 - 2.1.2** Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998);
 - 2.1.3** The Municipal Systems Act, No 32 of 2000;
 - 2.1.4** Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000);
 - 2.1.5** Promotion of Personal Information Act 4, 2013
 - 2.1.6** Media Development and Diversity Agency Act, 2002 (Act 14 of 2002); and
 - 2.1.7** Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (Act 13 of 2005).

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS DOCUMENT

- 3.1** This Communication Policy seeks to ensure that Drakenstein Municipality gives effect to Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) and thereby acknowledges the importance of communication 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, information dissemination and interactive communication.

3.2 This Communication Policy also gives effect to the Municipality's Integrated Development Plan, which is reviewed from time to time.

3.3 Drakenstein Municipality acknowledges that it has a responsibility to inform its internal and external stakeholders of identified issues, progress made and results achieved in addressing its mandate. This policy will in essence strive towards achieving the vision and mission of Drakenstein Municipality.

4. PRINCIPAL SPOKESPERSONS

4.1 The Executive Mayor and the City Manager are the principal spokespersons of Drakenstein Municipality. Their communications must articulate the vision of the Municipality. The Executive Mayor and the City Manager will be the only spokespersons unless they delegate a specific task to an official or councillor.

4.2 The Speaker of the Municipality will be the only authority to communicate on matters regarding Council code of conduct and rules of order.

4.3 The Municipality's Communication and Marketing division will assist the principal communicators as tasks are delegated to them. The City Manager will deal with all administration-related queries, while the Executive Mayor will deal with queries related to policy (enacted as well as not yet approved).

4.4 The Communication and Marketing division will aid in any of these matters as delegated to them by the principal communicators.

4.5 At all times, the communication of all role-players must be underpinned by the following messaging:

4.5.1 Drakenstein Municipality as a city of excellence;

4.5.2 Drakenstein Municipality as a place of equality, inclusiveness and opportunity;

4.5.3 Drakenstein Municipality as an open and transparent local government; and

4.5.4 Drakenstein Municipality as a fast-growing, well-governed, and financially stable investment destination.

4.6 It is important that all spokespersons communicate with a singular and unified message, supporting one another at all times. To support this effort, all role-players must be kept up to date, within reason, of external public communication.

4.7 Potentially controversial issues should, wherever possible, be shared with primary spokespersons as to create awareness of issues which may negatively impact on the image of the Municipality. The primary spokespersons are:

4.7.1 Executive Mayor

The Executive Mayor communicates all aspects of Council policies and programmes and is also the key spokesperson for all public participation unless it is delegated otherwise.

4.7.2 City Manager

The City Manager communicates on any area of the municipal administration; on information around any legal processes the Municipality might be engaged in; any matters that relate to the running of the Municipality as a whole and are not specific to an existing policy, programme or activity of a particular department; and all media enquiries unless delegated otherwise – mostly to executive directors.

All media enquiries must be treated as top priority and attended to within the agreed deadline with the media. Enquiries should be received in writing and responses issued in writing, except for radio and television interviews.

4.7.3 Speaker

The Speaker will communicate on all Council-related matters, on rules of order and code of conduct.

4.7.4 Manager: Communication and Marketing

He/she will be responsible for the coordination of media communication, media conferences, media statements and handling media queries unless indicated otherwise. The Communication and Marketing division will act on the instruction of the City Manager and the Executive Mayor. Critical, controversial or sensitive media responses are subject to the approval of the City Manager unless indicated otherwise. All other responses must be approved by the Manager: Communication and Marketing before being issued. The Communication and Marketing division and its staff should not in any way become involved in media opportunities of a party political nature. Such queries should be directed to the Office of the Executive Mayor and/or Speaker.

5. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- 5.1** The main purpose of formal internal communication by means of the channels listed below, is to facilitate and manage the flow of information within the Municipality to generate an informed workforce. Internal communication includes information on programmes, relevant information regarding human resources and information of interest to staff members.

Planning for specific communications must be done on a weekly and/or monthly basis and relevant tasks assigned to the relevant communication staff to ensure the timely communication of news and information.

5.1.1 Internal Newsletter

The monthly distribution of the Internal Newsletter informs staff of the latest municipal developments, decisions and policies relating to them. The Internal Newsletter ensures that all staff members receive relevant and updated information, and promotes the corporate image, culture and morale of staff. The Internal Newsletter is sent out via email to those staff members who have email access. Printed copies are distributed to depots for staff members who do not have email access.

5.1.2 Intranet

The Intranet gives staff easy access to the municipal website, a municipal telephone list and systems such as Solar SCOA, Collaborator, Ignite, Resourcelink, Comply and more.

5.1.3 Notice printed on payslips

Notices are printed on payslips as a form of communicating with the staff, especially regarding confidential information.

5.1.4 Noticeboards

Notices are placed on municipal noticeboards to inform the staff of staff-related information and events.

5.1.5 Communication messages via email

Communication messages are sent via email to inform staff of staff-related information, events, policies and other matters.

5.1.6 Internal Communication Forum

The Internal Communication Forum, represented by each directorate within the Municipality, meets monthly. This ensures the coordination of communication activities and the development of the Municipality's communication capacity. Through this forum municipal activities, new projects and initiatives are brought under the Communication and Marketing division's attention.

5.1.7 Mobile communication

Drakenstein Municipality makes use of focused WhatsApp groups to immediately communicate information and situation reports relating to disasters, fires, floods, accidents, power outages, burst pipes, land invasion situations and more. This system gives groups of colleagues instant access to the latest information on a situation and enables them to act on it immediately. The Manager: Communication and Marketing acts at the Administrator of most of these groups, and adds and removes members at the instruction of the City Manager.

6. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The main purpose of external communication is to inform and engage stakeholders of the Municipality's services, achievements, projects, initiatives and programmes. Planning for specific communications must be done on a weekly and/or monthly basis and relevant tasks assigned to the relevant communication staff to ensure the timeous communication of news and information.

6.1 Municipal Website

The municipal website is being updated with news, legislation and other information as required, timeously, and on a daily basis. The website ensures that the local, national and international communities, businesses, visitors to the Drakenstein area, stakeholders and all other spheres of government are informed regarding service delivery within the municipal area.

A contact person must be identified in each department, section or division to assess and monitor relevant website sections on a regular basis and send information updates to the communication officer responsible for the website.

6.2 External E-Newsletter

6.2.1 The monthly distribution of the External Newsletter ensures that communities and the municipal accountholders of the Drakenstein area are informed regarding service delivery by the Municipality.

6.2.2 The Municipality will launch a new electronic External Newsletter in 2020, which will convey municipal news and important municipal information to a wider section of the Drakenstein community, and further enhance the Municipality's profile as a city of excellence.

The e-newsletter will publish news stories about the Municipality's projects, plans, initiatives and achievements, as well as consumer-focused, relevant, topical and interesting content. It will also publish some of the Municipality's tender notices, general notices and job opportunities.

The e-newsletter will primarily be distributed to subscribers via email. Initially, existing municipal databases will be approached to subscribe to the new e-newsletter, while campaigns will also be run to grow subscribers to ensure that the e-newsletter reach as many members of the Drakenstein community as possible.

The Municipality must ensure that the e-newsletter is effectively distributed to the public, and that the specifications and format of the e-newsletter are evaluated on a regular basis in order to ensure effective communication with the general public.

In terms of Section 21 of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) the e-newsletter is determined as publication of record. The Municipality may from time to time make use of other publications or news outlets to ensure that its information or advertisements reach a wider or specific audience.

6.3 Media

6.3.1 The distribution of press releases on a regular basis is a way of engaging the media in promoting the image of the Municipality, and of building close relationships with members of the media. This is also a way to provide in-depth background information to journalists regarding good news items of the Municipality.

6.3.2 Media communication will happen reactively or proactively. Reactive communication will focus on enquiries received from the media and/or the public. Appropriate information will be sourced and a response drafted and then sent to the media upon approval of the City Manager and/or Manager: Communication and Marketing.

6.3.3 Proactive communication will focus on driving a positive message from the Municipality. The purpose of proactive communication is to release and manage a story to maximise coverage thereof. Stories with a negative impact should also be relayed in this manner to maximise control of the story. Proactive communication further necessitates pre-planning and following a content or communication schedule.

6.4 Advertising

Secure advertising space from time to time in local community newspapers to publish service delivery news as well as messages by the Executive Mayor - in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. This is to ensure that Afrikaans, English and Xhosa community members are informed in their mother tongue of municipal service delivery news. Areas of free advertising must also be explored. This includes advertising via branding and social media.

6.5 Branding

The Communication and Marketing division should ensure that sufficient municipal branding is displayed at as many events as possible. Branding must be used to create a feeling of unity and pride within all towns of the Municipality, and to portray the vision of a city of excellence.

A corporate identity manual has been drafted to ensure the standardisation of all branding and a unified image of the corporate identity.

6.6 Radio

Community radio stations provide an excellent platform for the Municipality to communicate from and engage with the public. Communication via radio can take place by means of paid-for advertising as well as free airtime.

Paid-for airtime should focus on educating the public on local government programmes and opportunities. It can be used successfully as a public participation tool. At all times it must drive the positive message of the Municipality and present solutions to challenges.

Free radio broadcasting airtime should focus on promoting the activities of the Municipality, keeping the public informed about events, projects and service delivery. It can also successfully be used as an emergency communication platform in the event of a disaster.

6.7 Social Media

Social media platforms have been created as part of keeping the Municipality up to date with technological innovation. Social media platforms are increasingly being used as tools in local government. The Municipality's social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) disseminate service delivery news and good news stories, and contribute to reinforcing the vision of Drakenstein Municipality.

The platforms aim to be places of positive conversation and engagement. To guide this process, the Municipality's Facebook page features a set of house rules to discourage users from:

- 6.7.1 *using offensive or violent language;*
- 6.7.2 *using hateful or discriminatory comments regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or political beliefs; and*
- 6.7.3 *posting anything that is spam, advertising of outside sources or links, a violation of intellectual property or law, abusive, profane or defamatory toward a person, entity or belief. Content that falls into these categories will be removed and anyone with repeat violations will be banned from the page.*

Social media is an effective tool for direct and free communication. Careful management thereof must be implemented with a dedicated staff member monitoring it throughout the day.

6.8 Mobile Communication

Messages that have a sense of immediacy should be communicated via the Municipality's bulk SMS system. The strength of this system is that it is a personal form of communication reaching targeted groups of residents.

The development and acquisition of a municipal application or app should also be researched. The notable growth of mobile communication necessitates the formulation of an app that can capitalise on this. Apps are becoming standard practice for public and private businesses as a means of interactive communication with their stakeholders.

An app can dramatically increase the amount of persons directly accessing information provided by the Municipality. It can accommodate two-way communication by means of sending notifications and messages, and allows the public to communicate and respond accordingly.

The possibilities of what can be achieved with an app are very broad and a set of parameters should be drafted to make sure it complies with the needs of the Municipality and its stakeholders.

6.9 IDP Roadshows and Ward Committee meetings

Scheduled IDP Roadshows and Ward Committee meetings take place throughout all 33 wards. These provide an opportunity for communities and the Municipality to directly interact with one another, to give active input into projects and budget appropriation for each financial year, and to discuss challenges and solutions.

Communication takes place proactively and reactively directly to and from stakeholders in organised meetings to which all stakeholders are invited. Meetings are conducted by way of information sessions, followed by question-and-answer sessions where the community can raise concerns, provide feedback and give input into planned projects. The Municipality utilises these opportunities to address concerns raised by the public, provide information on plans and Council decisions, and directly converse with members of the public.

Ward Committee meetings also allow for elected community representatives to participate in a dialogue between the Council and the public. This facilitates a communication channel which is governed by rules and regulations determined by the Council as well as the Municipal Structures Act.

In the event of a disaster or where community meetings cannot take place, the Municipality will use online communication channels such as social media, messaging applications and emails to communicate with and receive input from the community.

7.0 Customer Care Services

The Customer Care Services unit consists of employees who interact directly with members of the public, with the purpose of enhancing the level of service delivery. They communicate with the public on matters of service delivery via telephone, email and letters. This communication is captured on an electronic customer care service – as stipulated by an SOP. Queries are then relayed to the relevant departments within the Municipality, which aim to resolve the issues and send feedback to the Customer Care Services unit.

7. COMMUNICATION IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

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

7.1.1 The manager whose area of responsibility is involved, informs the relevant Executive Director, Executive Mayor, City Manager and Manager: Communication and Marketing;

7.1.2 A Crisis Committee or Joint Operations Committee (JOC) must be constituted, consisting of the City Manager, Executive Mayor, relevant Executive Director, Manager: Communication and Marketing and relevant officials;

7.1.3 The Crisis Committee or JOC drafts a plan of action, manages the issue and communication, and releases the necessary statements – via social media platforms, SMSs, the municipal website and the media - in consultation with the Principal Spokespersons. The Executive Mayor and City Manager act as spokespersons, unless delegated otherwise. No media statement from, or interview with any other officials, is permitted without prior approval by the City Manager and/or Executive Mayor; and

7.1.4 Staff members, especially the Customer Care Services staff, are kept informed of the situation.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** The Communication Policy is meant to guide the communication processes of Drakenstein Municipality horizontally and vertically, and seeks to establish good relationships between Drakenstein Municipality and its various internal and external stakeholders. Throughout the communication process a united message must be communicated with the vision of a city of excellence at its core.

It is important that all communication from all stakeholders within the Municipality is done with the Batho Pele principles in mind. These are:

- Consultation;
- Service Standards;
- Courtesy;
- Access;
- Information;
- Openness and Transparency;
- Dealing with complaints; and
- Giving Best Value.

Communications must be done in a helpful and professional manner, be of the highest quality and be properly edited, spell-checked, fact-checked and proofread.

- 8.2** The implementation of this policy will assist all active role-players at Drakenstein Municipality in recognising his/her role in the organisation in terms of his/her communication abilities.
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