COMMUNICATION POLICY

MOHOKARE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Document control:

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POLICY CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND

Developmental Local Government as prescribed by legislation seeks to forge a partnership between Government and the Citizens for effective service delivery. Communication therefore becomes central to the work of Local Government, the sphere of government closest to the people. Local Government has been entrusted with the responsibility to deliver basic services and implementation of programmes aimed at enhancing Local Economic Development in line with IDP priorities.

Various Government legislations has positioned Local Sphere as a critical agent in integrated planning and service delivery, economic growth and social development , for the local sphere to fulfill this mandate effectively consultative , democratic, integrated, participatory and developmental communication become central to the developmental agenda of Local Government.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS DOCUMENT

This communication policy seeks to ensure that Mohokare Municipality acknowledges the importance of communication as a strategic management function and an integral part of its daily functioning. It demonstrates that the municipality is committed to a transparent and effective leadership 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 internal and external stakeholders of identified issues, progress made and results achieved in addressing its mandate.

The communication unit has the responsibility to ensure that all communications activities are done in accordance with this policy, this therefore requires all communication and communication related activities to be coordinated and recommended by the unit.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the communication Policy is to encourage a culture of community participation in governance and improve the Councils public image.

The Municipal Vision

To be a community driven municipality that ensures sustainable quality service delivery applying principles of good governance

Mission Statement

A performance driven municipality that utilizes its resources to respond to the community needs.

4. OBJECTIVES

- To manage and maintain a correct image of Mohokare Municipality

- To inform the public about the overall functions and activities of Mohokare Municipality

- To enhance maximum public participation

- To improve the quality of information and frequency regarding the current and planned activities of the municipality

- To disseminate the correct and reliable information to Mohokare Municipality communities

- To comply with all relevant statutory prescripts making available information held by the municipality

- To ensure an accountable , open , transparent and responsive local government

- To coordinate internal and external communication.

5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This Policy is necessitated and complies with the following pieces of legislation:

a. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996
b. The Local Government : Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000
c. The Local Government : Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998
d. Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000
e. Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 13 of 2005
f. Media Development and Diversity Act 2002

6.TIMEFRAMES

The Policy comes into operation immediately upon its approval by the Council sitting on or at a date determined by Council resolution. The Policy is reviewed annually or upon dictates of a national or provincial legislation.

7. EXISTING COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES

Mohokare Municipality is currently using the following techniques:

- Newspapers
- Newsletters
- Notice boards
- Loud hailing
- Secure radio slots to promote the municipalities activities
- Suggestion box

8. COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

8.1 MAYOR

The Mayor is the chief communicator for the municipality. He/she can delegate this responsibility to the Municipal Manager whenever required.

8.2 MUNICIPAL MANAGER

The Municipal Manager is the spokesperson on strategic and operational issues. The Municipal Manager ensures the integration of the communications function with the municipality`s decision-making processes and the integration of the strategic communication planning in the overall planning of the municipality.

8.3 HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS (HOD)

Head of departments are responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with the municipality`s communication policy.
- Attending to media enquiring through communication unit.
- Ensuring that key communication issues and priorities are identified annually.
- That their programmes have a communication action plan, this must be done in consultation with the communication unit.

8.4 MUNICIPAL SPOKESPERSON

The municipal spokesperson serves as a Councils spokesperson. He/She is responsible for coordinating liaison with media, arranging media conferences, the issuing of media statements and handling media queries. He/She is responsible for writing Mayor and other office bearer`s speeches.

8.5 COMMUNICATION UNIT

Communication unit is responsible for coordinating all communication activities in the municipality. The communication unit shall support and coordinate all communication efforts with the aim of enabling the Mayor and the Municipal Manager to perform their functions as Chief Communicators; shall provide advice with regard to communication policy development, programme planning and programme implementation.

9. EXISTING COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES

9.1 Mohokare provides information through:
- Public meetings
- Public participation programmes
- Newspapers
- Newsletters
- Notice boards
- Loud hailing
- Secure radio slots to promote the municipalities activities
- Municipal events

- Municipal website
- Written reports

9.2 The municipality must use a range of communication tools that are appropriate for both the target audience and the occasions.

9.3 Communication tools may be divided into written and oral communication.

10. COMMUNICATION MESSENGERS

The following institutions/ councilors and officials have distinctive roles to play in ensuring that every opportunity is provided for the community to become involved in the affairs of the municipality.

10.1 **Political Messengers**
- The Mayor
- Councillors

10.2 **Municipal Messengers**
- The Municipal Manager
- Heads of Departments
- The IDP Manager
- Unit managers
- Communication Officer
- Public Participation Officer
- Youth Development Officer
- Special Programmes Officer

10.3 **Other Messengers**
- Ward Committees
- Community Development workers
- Ward Assistants
- Officials from sector departments
- Religious Leaders

11. TARGET AUDIENCE

Mohokare Municipality has an assortment of stakeholders that it considers central.

11.1 **Internal target audience**

The internal audience consists of the following:

- Mayor
- Portfolio committees
- Senior Management
- Departments and administrative structures within the municipality
- All officials
- Trade Unions

11.2 **External target audience**

The external audience consists of the following:

- The community at large

- National Government departments
- Provincial Government departments
- Local business
- Parastatals
- Private Sector
- NGO`s
- Media Houses

11.3 Traditional leaders

Government regards traditional leaders as partners in the implementation of its programmes. The establishment of local houses of traditional healers is provided for in the Traditional Leaders and Governance Framework Act. The establishment of local houses of traditional healers will cement the relationship between municipalities and traditional healers on customary law and development initiatives.

12. METHOD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Government's national communication policy calls for a consistent approach to communication across all spheres, it provides the following guidelines in this regards:

11.1 **Publicity campaigns:** the most cost effective way of communicating with the public is to use existing mass media that is local community newspapers and local radio stations.

11.2 **High-level communication:** Municipal communicators should be able to communicate at a high level with opinion formers- the media, academic, community and business leaders etc. This means they need to be able to explain the philosophy behind government policy choices.

11.3 **Grass-roots communication:** The Municipality should be able to communicate with the general public, through community liaison and use the mass media.

11.4 **Advertising campaigns:** They are noted as expensive therefore they must be professionally managed and used carefully.

13. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Mohokare Municipality communicates with the public in order to keep the community informed of its policies and procedures, to comply with the community's requests and to acquire feedback. The following procedures and regulations in relation to the used communication tools are the rules that govern the policy.

13.1 Corporate Identity

Corporate Services is responsible for the overall corporate identity of Mohokare Municipality, although implementation will be the responsibility of all Heads of Departments. The communication unit is directly responsible for the following:

- Advising management of the communication problems, solutions and techniques
- Monitor outside opinion and conveying such to management
- Arranging radio and press interviews
- Writing and distributing press releases, photographs and feature articles
- Handling PR sponsorships
- The type of communication material to be used by Mohokare Municipality: letterheads, business cards, nametags etc.

- The way communication material is used and produced : the font, the use of logos, branding , corporate identity

13.2 Branding and Promotional Material

Promotional material using the corporate identity of the Municipality may only be used for official purposes. Branded merchandise is an integral part of the Municipality and as such cannot be developed without the knowledge and recommendation of the communication unit. The production of such material must be authorized by the Municipal Manager.

13.3 Advertising

Communication unit is responsible for coordinating all advertising activities and must be advised on the need for advertising to ensure approval of all advertising or procurement of advertising services is approved by the Municipal Manager.

13.4 Events Management

The Communication unit must be advised at least in advance of any event that is planned and must be involved right from the start in the planning process. The communication unit shall provide assistance and advise where necessary to plan events including the following:

- Advertising
- Press statement
- Media briefing
- Mobilizing of communities
- Posters
- Photographs
- Speech
- Promotional material
- Programmed
- Loud hailing
- Branding

Councillors and Senior Officials need to be in attendance and it is important to ensure that delegates are available to grace the event.

13.5 Website

The Municipality`s internet site serves as its window to the public and as such the Communication unit and IT unit have the following responsibility:

- Placing of information on the website
- Removing material from the website
- It is the responsibility of the respective departments to provide information to be placed on the website
- The creation of links on the Municipality`s website must be done in consultation of corporate services and the of the link will only be done after approval by the Municipal Manager.

13.6 Newspapers

Mohokare Municipality shall publish activities, programmers, projects, budget related issues and other important issues in community newspapers and any other newspaper as agreed upon by council.

13.7 Radio

Mohokare Municipality may utilize community radio stations and any other radio stations for its broadcasts depending on the nature of the event.

13.8 Television

Mohokare Municipality may utilize any other television broadcasting for the interest of the public.

13.9 Newsletter

- Mohokare Municipality shall publish activities, programmes , projects and other important issues to be published in the Municipal Newsletter.
- Municipal Newsletter to be published four times per year on a quarterly basis.
- Municipal Newsletter to be circulated in English for now and shall consider including other languages within the district.

13.10 Press Statements and Briefings

- Press briefings shall be held on service delivery, developmental issues and any other important matters.
- The Mayor, Municipal Manager and any authorized representative shall address the Media.
- HOD`s will attend the press briefings to assist on clarities.

14. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The main purpose of internal communication is to facilitate and manage the flow of information within the Municipality in order to create an informed workforce. Internal communication involves:
- Information about municipality programmes.
- Relevant human resource information.
- Information on government programmes.
- Other useful information that staff may have an interest in.

The following communication mediums shall be used to communicate with staff:

- Newsletter
- Notice boards
- E-mails
- Staff Meetings
- Workshops

15. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The main purpose of external communication is to inform stakeholders of the policies and legislative matters of the Municipality, its IDP, PMS, information on service delivery issues.

The following communication mediums shall be used to communicate with stakeholders:

- Newspapers
- Radio

- Television
- Newsletter
- Websites
- Loud hailing
- Mass meetings
- Workshops
- Summits
- Notice boards

16. COMMUNICATION THROUGH WARD COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

Ward committees, Community Development Workers are structures that are intended to enhance participatory democracy in local government and should be utilized to strengthen communication and community participation.

17. PROCEDURES AND COMPLIANCE

This policy is intended to ensure that the Municipality engages in a coordinated manner and communicates in a standardized and unified method. Adherence to the policy will result in a coherent image for the Municipality.

18. IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This policy is effective as at the date of approval of Council.