



DRAFT COMMUNICATION POLICY

2017/18

Summary

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Review Date	
Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 • Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 • Promotion of Access to information Act 2 of 2000 • Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	The National Government Communication Framework, the State of the Nation Address, the State of the Province Address, the IDP, the Back to Basics Programme, and Operation Masiphathisane inform the Communication programme development of the municipality.
Replaces/ Repeals (whichever is relevant, if any)	
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Department Responsible	Municipal Manager
Unit responsible	Communications Section

Applies to	(Councillors, All Ngqushwa employees)
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REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision Description

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1. TITTLE

Communications Policy

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The main aim of this policy is to provide clear guidelines for Communication processes within Ngqushwa Local Municipality (LM).

2.2 To further outline different roles and responsibilities of communicators within the institution in order to ensure that communication is properly coordinated.

2.3 To acknowledge that the municipality has a responsibility to inform its internal and external stakeholders of the IDP priorities, identified issues/challenges, progress made and results achieved in fulfilling its mandate.

2.4 To acknowledge the importance of communications as a strategic management function and as an integral part of the daily functioning of the municipality;

2.5 The Municipal Manager and the Communications Manager have the responsibility to ensure that all communications activities, including procurement of services are done in accordance with these policies and procedures.

2.6 This requires all communications and communication related activities to be coordinated and approved by the Municipal Manager.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This policy applies to: All employees and Councillors of Ngqushwa Local Municipality.

4. POLICY DETAIL

4.1 POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Ngqushwa Local Municipality to:

- Provide accurate and timeous information to its internal and external stakeholders about municipal policies, programmes and services using the language that is understood by Ngqushwa communities.
- Ensure that it reports its achievements with regards to its mandate;
- Ensure proper involvement of the public in the development of its policies, integrated development plan and budget;
- Ensure that the municipality is visible, accessible and answerable to its constituency.
- The Chief Communicator of Ngqushwa LM is the Mayor. In this regard, Communications Manager shall support and coordinate relevant information to enable the Executive/Administration to perform its function.

4.2 POLICY REQUIREMENTS

4.2.1 Information and serving Ngqushwa Communities

The goal of the Communications Unit is to improve and sustain good working relations with both internal and external stakeholders.

This policy will assist the municipality to:

- Provide the public with accurate, timeous, clear and complete information about its policies, programmes, services and initiatives (including its IDP and Budget):

- Ensure that its communication caters for all official languages within Ngqushwa jurisdiction;
- Continuously ensure that the municipality is visible and accessible to the public;
- Ensure that it consults with the public, listens to and takes account of people's interests and concerns when establishing priorities, developing policies and planning programmes and services;
- Continue to build public trust and confidence in the integrity of the municipality and government as a whole;
- Ensure that communication is integrated and coordinated within the three spheres of government.

4.2.2 Language and Translations

Ngqushwa LM language has its basis in the National Language Policy Framework. Ngqushwa council has determined that the official language of the municipality is Xhosa and English, however Councillors can take the oath of office in any language they prefer.

Ngqushwa LM translates some official documents such as the Annual Report, the Integrated Development Plan and Community Newsletters subject to budget availability.

The language of Ngqushwa is therefore as follows:

- Plain language and proper grammar must be used in all communication with the public to ensure clarity and consistency of information;
- If a member of the public communicates with Ngqushwa in a language that is dominant in the area, then they must be answered in that language;
- English is to be used as the language in all official internal correspondence;

- Official documents will only be translated subject to capacity and budget.
- In terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, Ngqushwa Local Municipality is obliged to translate any official document into the preferred language of choice of the applicant, at a cost.

4.2.3 Corporate Identity

The Communications Manager are responsible for the overall corporate identity of the municipality, although implementation and budget will be the responsibility of each Department. The Communications Manager is responsible for the following:

- The type of communication material to be used by the municipality e.g. Folders, letterheads, business cards etc.;
- The way communication material is used and produced e.g. The font (Verdana size 12), the use of logo's, corporate identity, branding etc. (Branding manual and Style guide).
- The Coat of Arms is the official logo of Ngqushwa LM with the name of Ngqushwa Local Municipality written in full;
- The outlook of the municipal buildings;
- At all times the Coat of Arms is to be used in the prescribed format as laid out in the branding protocol that should be developed.

4.2.4 Branding and Promotional material

- Promotional material using the corporate identity (coat-of-arms) of the municipality may only be used for official purposes;
- The production of such material must be authorized by the relevant Head of Department with the endorsement of the logo by the Communications Manager.

4.2.5 Public Participation

The Communications Unit and Public Participation are responsible for ensuring that communities are mobilized to attend community meetings/engagements such as imbizos, roadshows, project launches, information sharing days etc. With the assistance of the Ward Councillors, Ward Committees, CDW, Traditional leaders. Communication environmental to identify key needs and issues of concern for each and every ward. In this way a database of information needs is build up and thus allows that the correct information is channelled to the target audiences in the most cost effective and efficient manner.

4.2.6 Communications in a Crisis Situation

A crisis situation is every organisation's worst nightmare. It is important to have a framework in place in such an event. Examples of crisis situations within Ngqushwa could include:

- Natural disasters (tornado damage, floods, fires, drought etc).
- Disease outbreaks (cholera, Diarrhoea etc.)
- Disruption of essential services (water and sanitation)
- Any other event/scenario that may damage the reputation and image of the municipality (involving the legal, ethical, or financial standing of the municipality).

The following procedures should be adhered to in the event of a crisis:

- Staff should inform their Heads of Departments who in turn must bring this to the attention of the Municipal Manager, relevant Head of Department and the Communications Manager;

If necessary, a communications crisis committee will be set up consisting of the Municipal Manager, relevant Head of Department, the Communications Manager and other relevant officials as may be required;

- A plan of action need to be drafted;

- The Communications Crisis Committee will manage the issue, communication thereof release the necessary statements with the involvement of the Municipal Manager.
- No media statement or interview is allowed from any other official unless delegated by the Municipal Manager;
- Staff members will be kept informed of the crisis situation through their Heads of Department, and/or via the Communications Manager.

4.2.7 Events management

As project managers are required to involve the Communications Unit in the initial stages of the project. This will enable Communications to give proper advice/guidance in the development of the communication plan which will outline use of proper communication channels.

The following are some of the services that the communications unit can provide to departmental activities:

- Advertising (print/radio)
- Press statement
- Media Briefing
- Mobilisation of communities
- Posters
- Brochures/pamphlets
- Information packs
- Speech
- Invitations
- Photography
- Corporate/promotional gifts
- Presentation
- PA System
- Branding
- Exhibition

It is also important to ensure that there is coordination across the various spheres of government to avoid duplication and conflicting dates for events. Thus it is necessary to develop an annual calendar of events within the municipality which is updated monthly.

4.2.8 Internal Communications

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 services, relevant human resource information, information on government programmes and other useful information that staff may have an interest in.

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

- Notice Boards
- Email
- Workshops
- Staff meetings
- Departmental meetings

4.2.9 Confidentiality of Information

All Ngqushwa LM employees must sign a confidentiality clause in order to avoid leakage of information. This will ensure that employees are aware that they are prohibited from releasing any information without the approval of the relevant Head of Department.

4.2.10 Media Relations

Responses to the media should preferably be provided in writing wherever possible.

Primary Messengers

Mayor – Chief Communicator for tabling Council Policy and Programmes.

Speaker - for all comments relating to Council rules of order or as delegated

Executive Committee (EXCO) - all aspects of Council Policy and programmes in their portfolios (only delegated spokesperson on an issue by the Mayor).

Municipal Manager - Any area of municipal administration, all media enquiries and any matter that relates to the running of the municipality.

Directors - on all aspects of their service areas. Queries from journalists will be referred to Directors / Managers for comment / clarification / information for further escalation to the Municipal Managers. All comments to the media are approved by Municipal Manager.

Communications Manager - point of entry/exit for all media queries subject to approval by the Municipal Manager.

4.2.11 Website

The Municipality's Internet site serves as its window to the public. The Communication Unit have the responsibility of placing and removing material from the Municipality website. It is the responsibility of individual Units to provide information for their 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 Communications.

4.2.12 Social Media

5.2 The municipality must create a social media platform as part of keeping the Municipality up to date with technological innovation. Social media platforms are increasingly used as tools in local government. Creating a social media platform to address service delivery will contribute to building the vision of the Ngqushwa Local Municipality. Various social media platforms should be explored (Facebook, Whats App). It is an effective tool for direct and free communication. Careful management thereof must be implemented with a dedicated employee monitoring it throughout the day, every day.

5. WAIVING OF THE POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION PROVISIONS

This policy may be partly or wholly waived in consultation with labour representatives i.e. Trade Unions

6. COMMUNICATION

Circulars, messages and notices on notice boards will be utilized in order to inform all employees and members of the public of the availability of the policy. Copies of the policy will also be distributed to the parties that took part in the consultation process

7. REVIEWAL OF THE POLICY

It will be the responsibility of the Corporate Services Department to consider the provisions of this policy on annual basis. The Corporate Services Department shall request all Departments to submit their proposed changes for submission to it, whereby the Corporate Services Department will make proposed amendments, in consultation with the municipal manager, to Council for approval.

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

A report detailing the progress with the application of this policy with specific reference to achievement of this policy has to be compiled every year by the person with the responsibility of implementation and monitoring. The policy must be made available to all consulting parties for perusal and inputs and must also be circulated to affected parties by means of circular or notice.

9. DEFINITION OF TERMS

“Communication” In the local government context communication is defined as a strategic and planned process aimed at ensuring effective dialogue between government and communities utilizing print and electronic media.

“Print media” Refers to newspapers, newsletters, publications, magazines and all forms of authentic print mediums.

“Electronic media” Refers to all forms of electronically transmitted media such as radio, TV, online (internet), mobile phones as well as social media.

“Social Media” Collective of online or interactive communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. These include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.

“Corporate Identity” Is the institution’s visual presence, which involves corporate logo, colours, values and the coat-of-arms

“Corporate Image” Is the public perception about of your institutional identity. It is largely measured against the manner in which the institution portrays itself in the eyes of the public, its organizational culture, performance, how its’ employees uphold institutional corporate and service delivery ethos.

“Municipality” Ngqushwa Local Municipality

“PAIA” Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No.2 of 2000)

10. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The National Government Communication Framework

11. REFERENCES

None

12. APPENDIX

None