POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:

2024 - 2026

"Reaga Polokwane"

Draft Communications Strategy 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

We operate in an environment that is influenced by different interests in which daily personal needs play a significant role in how the public view, approach and respond to certain issues. We therefore need to be able to read and understand the public mood so that our communication strategy and messages are relevant for the target groups. What is also important is for the municipality to communicate with one voice and avoid sending conflicting messages to the public.

"The big problem with saying too many things is that your positioning gets weaker." – Julian Stubbs, City branding guru.

This communication strategy is intended at setting a foundation for bolstered and well-coordinated communication plan during the current term of Council – until 2026. It identifies priorities for the municipality's communications programmes. The communications action plan and the environmental analysis should be reviewed on a continuous basis.

This communications strategy provides a framework for communication to all audiences and stakeholders of the Polokwane Municipality and highlight direct and regular communication with local communities. The messaging thereof should be complemented by proper messaging driven by the political leadership.

Developmental local government as prescribed by national legislation seeks to forge a partnership between government and the citizenry for effective service delivery. Communication therefore becomes central to the work of local government, the sphere of government closest to the people.

The White Paper on Local Government state, "Integrated Development plans are planning and strategic frameworks that serve as a basis for engagement between local government and the citizenry at the local level, and with various stakeholders and interest groups. Participatory and accountable government only has meaning if it is related to concrete issues and plans, by serving as a basis for communication and interaction."

The Polokwane Municipality's Integrated Development Plan itself calls for greater community involvement in decision-making and for the Council to take on a community leadership role. The Council has committed itself to effective communication to fulfil these requirements and meet the information needs of the community and our own organisation as stipulated by the Local Government Municipal Structures Act in section 44.

Communication has a significant impact on how local residents judge their local council. It is proven that well-informed residents are more likely to be satisfied with council services and to be supportive of its work. Furthermore, people are unlikely to participate actively in the development agenda unless they:

a) Have information;
b) Can access information and their local council via a range of media; and
c) Opportunities have been created by the council for people to receive information, give feedback and know how they can get involved.

Research also shows a direct link between good internal communication and the high performance and motivation of staff. Effective communication is therefore vital to the successful implementation of the Council's Integrated Development Plan.

This communications strategy provides a framework for communication to all audiences and or stakeholders of the municipality as guided by the Local Government Municipal Systems Act in Section 18(1) where it states, "a municipality must communicate to its community information concerning the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation".

The Local Government Turnaround strategy implementation priorities also highlight direct and regular communication with local communities. It goes further to say there should be proper messaging driven by political leadership.

1.1 Legislative Framework

The strategy derives its mandate from the following policy directives:

- The National GCIS framework – Government Communicator's handbook
- The Provincial Communications Strategy
- The District Communications Strategy
- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,
- Municipal Systems Act of 2000
- Municipal Structures Act of 2000
- Resolutions taken at the Provincial Communicators Conferences.
- 2021 – 2026 Integrated Development Plan.
- Principles of Batho Pele

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2.   OBJECTIVES

This strategy's objective is to support and translate into reality the vision, mission and objectives of the City of Polokwane as aligned to its vision statement: "The Ultimate in innovation and Sustainable development" and **its communication theme "Reaga Polokwane"** which aims to bring the municipality's stakeholders together. This is in order to visualize the future of the municipality and to ensure that the municipality works together with all stakeholders.

The intention is also to allow members of the community an opportunity to engage with the municipality and contribute into its decision-making processes such as the budget and IDP consultation processes.

In line with the purpose of the strategy, its aim is to:

- Lay the framework for the work of the Communications and Marketing Unit;
- Provide a basis for communication to advance Council's development agenda;
- Lay the basis for the promotion of the political leadership of council;
- Encourage all employees and representatives of the municipality to communicate the strategy, vision and action plans of the municipality,
- Heighten communication between the municipality and its stakeholders;
- Promote the municipality and its activities in a coherent manner;
- Promote integrated communication and planning with other spheres of government;
- Establish partnerships with business sector and civil society organizations;
- Create and maintain a positive public perception;
- Establish and maintain interaction between the Municipality and the communities through outreach programmes and
- Allow participation of communities in policy development and management.
- The communications strategy should be updated annually to ensure it is relevant, and that it promotes the council's strategic direction and therefore the Executive Committees priorities each year.

3.   ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

3.1   Political

Led by the African National Congress, the Polokwane Municipality Council is characterized by the presence of a number of political parties and other organs of civil society including the traditional leaders. With the incorporation of the Aganang Cluster, the political landscape has wider dynamics.

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By implication, communication of service delivery programmes and activities in the municipal area remains a much more contested terrain. The political battle to create and maintain positive perception from the people in the municipal area is intensified, particularly during elections period.

3.2 Socio-Economic

Polokwane exhibit many of the prerequisites for economic growth making it the Limpopo Province's logistics and economic hub. Any aspect of economic growth brings about better living conditions for the people of Polokwane.

Unemployment forms part of the daily challenges affecting most young people.

The culture of none payment of services by households, business and government departments is a serious threat and there must be continuous implementation of measures to protect and maximize revenue collection and call upon all to continue paying for services.

3.3 Media Agenda

3.3.1 Important concepts to understand:

Understanding of these concepts will assist in providing proper assessment of media agenda in Polokwane and the entire Limpopo Province. The concepts are:

Negative coverage: Coverage that has potential to create negative perception on the part of the stakeholders (citizens of Polokwane and others)

Unfair coverage: Coverage that is done without proper consultation between the media and the municipality. (Reflection of just one side of the story)

Unfavourable coverage: Coverage that may be fair and correct (with proper consultation) for public consumption but of bad taste to the Municipality. The coverage the municipality does not like while it is correct.

Positive coverage: Coverage more likely to contribute on the creation and maintenance of positive perception on municipal programmes and other activities.

Objectivity and influence on coverage: While trying to be fair and accurate, reporters still report as per the various media houses ownership and their editorial policies.
This demand of the municipal (Local Government) communicators to put more emphasis in knowing the media they operate with in full.

3.3.2 Analysis of the media environment

Relationships with media organizations and individuals are long-term ones and need to be nurtured. Currently the municipality has a relatively good relationship

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with local and national newspapers, radio stations and to some extent with television.

- Currently the municipality enjoys a fair share of balance between positive and unfavourable coverage from the local media. However, the tone of the local media tends to be more on the unfavourable path especially during the run towards government elections when service delivery issues are put under the spotlight. However, the municipality always gears itself up to initiate and participate in interviews with national, regional and local media.

- With the 2024 national government elections on the doorstep, it is expected that the municipality's service delivery performance that is core to its mandate, will come under intense scrutiny from the media as representatives of the community.

- Independently owned community print media and community radio stations generally portray positive image of the municipality, but still work under constraint budget. The task to influencing media agenda faces the challenge that a number of journalists or media practitioners operating within the jurisdiction of the municipality are not adequately capacitated as most work on freelance basis and have very little or no influence to their own media editorial policies.

- Polokwane Municipality continues to enjoy more positive coverage from independently owned newspapers and community radio stations. However, this is not sustainable as the papers often disappears from production due to lack of resources and skills. Community media require consistent support from the municipality in order for it to be sustainable.

- Most of the journalists working for daily and weekly newspapers also publish articles written about Polokwane on various online news services and therefore providing an opportunity for exposure to the global community. This is assisting the municipality to also pitch its communications programmes at a national level.

- Polokwane Municipality is taking advantage of the opportunity to venture into the online and social network utilities like Facebook and Twitter and YouTube to further its communication objectives.

3.4 Public mood

- The challenge at local government level has over the past years been the alleged unavailability of some councilors by different community representatives and stakeholders to meet with their constituencies and give feedback reports on council resolutions, municipal services and programmes. As a result, the municipality has to contend with some form of protest marches and demonstrations demanding services and also complaining about lack of interactions with the councilors. There is

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therefore a need for councilors to strengthen their interaction with the communities as most of the criticism emerges from the wards – the heart of delivery processes.

- Although Polokwane is coming up with more service delivery oriented outreach programmes, the perception that political leaders visit the people only towards the elections seem to linger on and misused in some instances for political de-campaigning. There is need for an intensified programme on outreach activities in order for the municipality to continue to restore the trust within its communities.

3.5   Demographics

Polokwane meaning "Place of Safety" in N.Sotho, is the Capital City of the Limpopo Province; Polokwane is South Africa's largest urban centre north of Gauteng, located in the central part of the Limpopo Province. Polokwane Municipality is located within the Capricorn District in the Limpopo Province and accounts for 3% of the Province's total surface area of ±124 000 km2.

In terms of its physical composition, Polokwane Municipality is 23% urbanised and 71% still rural. The remaining area (6%) comprises smallholdings and institutional, industrial, and recreational land.

The Municipality is demarcated into seven clusters namely Aganang, Moletjie, Molepo/Chuene/Maja, Mankweng and Sebayeng which includes both rural and urban-based, City and Seshego clusters with totally urban-based population.

Traditional leaders are an important stakeholder in the community and continuing with involving them in communications programmes is highly emphasized and so are other stakeholders such as the faith groups, business and civic associations.

The youth also form an integral part of the community and take active role in communications activities.

The elderly exists in numbers and are a very important constituency within the communities.

3.6   Outreach programme

Central to the Reaga Polokwane value, is that the local people develop a sense of ownership to the communication programmes if they feel they are part of the process. It has become important and imperative for the municipality to work together with all external and internal stakeholders.

The Rapid Response public participation and outreach programme must be intensified.

There is a need to communicate with communities on the developments following the interventions by community consultations on concerns raised.

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The majority of city residents do not take active role, participation in local municipal activities such as IDP and Budget Review consultative meetings, any other outreach programmes, or any other events as they appear on annual calendar. They only participate when there are service delivery issues like water shortage.

The Reaga Polokwane platform presents an opportunity for a communication mechanism focusing on getting this sector of the community to take active role in local government activities/programmes.

4. COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES PLAN

To promote and enhance public awareness and understanding of municipal programmes, services and achievements. In order to guide implementation of this Communication Strategy, the Communications and Marketing Unit will develop an annual Action Plan for each respective communications objective for the period 2023 to 2025 in line with the budget allocation to the communication function.

The Action Plan will be developed on an annual basis to ensure alignment with any revisions of the IDP and environmental factors. The Action Plan will therefore set out communication initiatives and will be aligned to priorities identified in the municipality's IDP.

Communication plans based on the IDP and other programmes will be developed with full involvement of the plan owners on an annual basis with clear indicators of how these will be communicated to the public. This will ensure that our communication is proactive and that the citizens are better informed about council activities and programmes.

4.1 Economic development and job creation

a) Communicate economic opportunities to all communities.
b) Create awareness about job opportunities created through municipal programmes.
c) Create awareness around economic development projects and programmes.
d) Promote Polokwane as a fast growing destination nationally and internationally.
e) Promote development support programmes aimed at transferring skills of business management to entrepreneurs
f) Promote the City's initiatives to support and grow tourism and related industries.
g) Promote interventions to attract new foreign direct investment and expansion of domestic businesses.

4.2 Quality living environments

a) Communicate Municipality's commitment to meet the community service needs and address backlogs
b) Raise awareness about the scarcity of water as a resource and the need to use it wisely.
c) Create awareness of infrastructure development plans for water, sanitation, electricity, housing, solid waste and transport
d) Create awareness about access to household and community facilities
e) and services.
f) Communicate programmes about human settlements

4.3 Financial viability and sustainability

a) Communicate budget priorities
b) Communicate the municipality's programmes to secure sound and sustainable management of its financial affairs.
c) Maximise the Municipality's financial resources to ensure long-term financial viability and sustainability.
d) Ensure transparency, responsibility and accountability of the financial affairs of the municipality

4.4 Celebrating our cultural diversity

a) Communicate opportunities and benefits of participating in sports, arts, culture and heritage activities.
b) Promote Municipal sport programmes to increase the level of sporting and recreational activity within communities.
c) Promote the City as a sport hub
d) Promote interaction of people from different cultures, ethnic groups, upbringing and religions.
e) Encourage unity through sports.
f) Promoting local talent in the performing arts industry

4.5 Sustaining our natural and built environment

a) Educate communities on how to sustain our natural and built environment.
b) Create awareness around what the municipality is doing in terms of projects and programmes to sustain and preserve the environment.
c) Create awareness about climate change and its effects

4.6 Safe, healthy and secure environments

a) Promote and create awareness about safe, healthy and secure environment.
b) Create an understanding and receive feedback of preventative programmes and an understanding of the municipality's commitment to promote the establishment of safe/disease free healthy environments for all vulnerable groups.

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c) Provide communities with information on road safety education.
d) Provide communities with information on fire safety education.
e) Support programmes and initiatives which address issues of crime prevention

4.7 Empowering our citizens

a) Promote municipality's skills development programme to both internal and external stakeholders.
b) A need for communities to participate in the processes of the municipality.
c) Create awareness about Mayoral Awards for excellence

4.8 Good Governance

a) Promote and market corporate identity of Polokwane Municipality.
b) Profile processes and procedures that support and promote community participation in municipal activities.
c) Profile, promote and market the offices of the office bearers.
d) Empower citizens with information to make them part of the city's decision-making process.
e) Promote transparency in pursuit of good governance.
f) Communicate programmes and policies of the municipality
g) Create awareness about Mayoral Awards for excellence

5. COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

a) Though the CDW and Ward Committees are in place, reaching all communities through conventional communication means remains a challenge due to ineffective ward committee system in some areas.
b) Communicating in all languages and various forms (e.g. sign and braille for people with disabilities) remains a challenge in some cases due to financial constraints.
c) Winning over or converting staff to become communications ambassadors remains a challenge because of inadequate flow of information internally to all levels of staff.
d) Enhancing and maintaining positive relationships with the media.
e) Intensifying and promoting the Anticorruption strategy and whistle blowing policy may assist to convert negative perceptions related issues such as corruption.
f) The messages of Municipality do not get same amount of media coverage as compared to those from the public and opposition parties.
g) There is need to consider municipal community communications liaison officers in clusters in order to intensify communication at cluster level.
h) Some of the weaknesses include budgetary constraints and lack of internal capacity to implement large-scale communications and marketing activities.

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i) Existing threats includes insufficient resources to implement sustainable communications and marketing activities.

6. EXISTING COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY LANDSCAPE

Communication as a function is assigned to the Manager Communications and Marketing and under the supervision of the Municipal Manager. Within this department there is a media liaison service that manages the communications portfolio.

6.1 Existing external communication activities and channels:

Communication channels currently includes the following:

- Print media (newspapers and magazines)
- Social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter)
- Mobile integrated service app (to be introduced)
- Online platforms (municipal website)
- Brochures, posters and flyers
- Free advertorials and paid adverts in local newspapers
- Radio interviews and adverts
- Newsletters
- Corporate documents
- Public meetings, such as ward councilor meetings, imbizos and Mayoral roadshows
- SABC and other television stations
- Bulk SMS
- Use of loudhailer when necessary.

6.2 Existing internal communication activities and channels

Internal communication focuses on human resources, government programmes, colleagues' achievements, municipal achievements, training opportunities and other relevant staff information. Currently, communication appears to flow sideways between those on the same management level, with up-and-down flow restricted to executive and senior management.

6.2.1 Communication channels currently in use

- Electronic newsletters
- Posters
- Notice boards
- Emails
- Training sessions
- Staff meetings

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7. THEMES AND CORE- MESSAGES

The core message for this period expresses the themes of building a better and smart municipality, intensified, united in action for faster progress towards the goals set by government. It emphasizes that there has been good service delivery, but not enough and if people continue to work together they can do more.

The core message for Polokwane Municipality is: **"Reaga Polokwane"**

Other messages supporting the Reaga Polokwane communications theme include:

- Basic service delivery programmes have been pursued to restore the lives and dignity of its people.
- Citizens have the democratic right, as contained in the bill of rights to express their grievances. However, this right is accompanied by a responsibility to ensure that the Rights of others are not infringed.
- A Sustainable City
- A Caring City
- A Smart City
- An Equal and Democratic City
- A Financially-viable City
- Togetherness
- The Warmest Place to Be.
- A Resilient City

7.1   Key Principles

7.1.1 People centered approach

- All the communication programmes of the municipality should be people centered.
- All municipal communication programmes to be effectively coordinated.
- Enhancement of integrated communication throughout all spheres of government including the parastatals.

7.2   Strategic Communications

The strategy should place the political principals correctly and in the center (political leaders become the voice – main messengers) of communication campaigns and activities as prescribed by the Government Communicator's Handbook. Municipal communicators must ensure facilitation of the municipal communication programmes.

The Executive Mayor and Councilor's programmes should be coordinated in a manner that does not divide the audience and the objectives of local government communication. "One Municipality, one voice and a consistent message at all times".

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All spheres of government should work together in communication activities.

7.3   Messaging to key stakeholders

Messaging should be simple and direct. The language used must also be simple. Messaging defines the key issues and sets the framework for the conversation between the municipality and residents. It must be targeted towards a particular group in terms of language and the group's existing knowledge, attitudes, levels of education and their involvement in the problem and possible solutions.

7.3.1 **Communication objective 1:** All residents should know the municipality's vision, mission and strategic goals. This objective aligns with the ethos of the municipality's vision and mission and serves to support attainment of all of its strategic goals.

Messages:
"Re Aga Polokwane"

Action:
Mandate that all correspondence from the municipality (email signatures, rates bills, newsletters, etc) should carry the slogan.

7.3.2 **Communication objective 2:** Residents should be able to easily communicate with the municipality about their concerns. This objective supports participative partnerships and good governance goals.

This implies that the exchange of information goes both ways. There are a number of ways that residents can interact with the municipality (through the offices, telephone, radio, email, website, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), IDP consultation and general public meetings. Some of these are one-way channels for distributing information.

Promoting the use of two-way channels (Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), mobile application to be introduced etc.) is a prerequisite to beginning and continuing to have a conversation with residents.

8.   MESSENGERS AND AUDIENCES

8.1 Primary Messengers

- Executive Mayor
- Speaker
- Councillors (MMC's)
- Municipal Manager
- Municipal Spokesperson

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Principal messenger: Executive Mayor
Support messengers: Mayoral Committee Councilors

8.2 **Primary Audience**

- Residents / Ratepayers
- Civic organisations
- Tourists
- Investors
- Municipal employees
- Stakeholders
- Media

10.2.2 Secondary Audience
_ Municipal employees

8.2 Spokespersons and their responsibilities

In the spirit of being a transparent organisation, we should not seek to prevent people from speaking to the media but should give clear guidance on areas for comments. This should be done in line with the municipality's media policy.

Council will have spokespeople who can give comment at varying levels, for example:

Executive Mayor	- All aspects of Council policy and programmes - Matters of policy yet to be adopted/enacted - All political comment must come from the Executive Mayor - Is key person for all public participation unless delegates otherwise
Speaker	All comment relating to Council "housekeeping" must come from the Speaker
Mayoral Committee members	- All aspects of Council policy and programmes related to their portfolio - May be delegated spokespersons on an issue by the Executive Mayor
Councillors	Comment on all activity in their ward except for matters that are policy still to be adopted/enacted

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Municipal Manager	• Any area of the municipal administration. • Matters of policy yet to be adopted/enacted • Information around any legal processes the City might be engaged in. • Any matter that relates to the running of the city as a whole and is not specific to existing policy, programme or activity of a specific department.
Municipal Spokesperson	• Co-ordination of media communication • Media conferences • Media statements and handling media queries • Writing Mayor's speeches. • Commenting in issues that they have been delegated to give comment on

8.2.1 Rules for comment:

The rule is that no delegated official of the Municipality will ever respond with "no comment" to a media enquiry. They must refer issues to the correct and authorised persons.

The Executive Mayor and delegated spokespersons will be the ultimate spokespeople, having been briefed and supported by the Communications Unit and the relevant director and the Municipal Manager.

Each Communication Officer when approached for media comment will approach the relevant department and the designated spokesperson, the Municipal Manager and or the MMC in whose portfolio the issue resides.

Comment will be given in reasonable time taking note of reasonable deadlines and with an understanding of how news media works.

8.3 Communication during crisis situations including service delivery issues

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

- The manager whose area of responsibility is involved informs her/his director and copies the manager of the Communications Unit.
- The Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager are informed immediately.

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- Subject to the level of crisis, a crisis committee is formed comprising the Municipal Manager and/or relevant director, Communication Manager/Media
- Liaison Officer and other relevant officials.
- The crisis committee drafts a plan of action, manages the issue and communicates about the issue, and releases the necessary statements with the involvement of the Municipal Manager and the Executive Mayor.
- The Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager act as official spokespersons.
- No media statement from or interview with any other officials is allowed unless authorized by the Executive Mayor.
- Staff members are kept informed of the situation via the Office of the Municipal Manager and Head of Communications.

9. STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

9.1 Local Communicators Forum – (Roles and Functions)

- The Local Communicators Forum (LCF) is a strategic meeting of government communicators in Polokwane area.

- The LCF shall be used for information sharing and ironing out communication problems or issues at a local level. As the spirit of the LCF is coordination and sharing, some aspect of the agenda shall include:

- Assessment of the communication environment, both the public mood and the media agenda.

- Provision of feedback from the National Government Communication Forum (GCF), the Provincial Communicator's Forum and other forums.

- Distribution of communication and information resource material.

9.2 Senior Management, MAYCO and Council Responsibilities

The Executive Mayor and the MAYCO set the tone for Council and are the ultimate spokespeople and role models for Council.

Councillors have the key role in setting the overall goals for the Council and leading communication and consultation internally and externally.

Example of tools to apply when communicating with different stakeholders:

AUDIENCE	TOOLS
MEDIA	Media briefings Media tours Media alerts/releases Soundbites
EMPLOYEES	Intranet Internal newsletter Structured induction programme Notice boards Workshops Loo messages Social Networking Management briefings Roadshows Information cascading
COMMUNITY	Community meetings called by ward councillours Municipal Newsletters Ward Committees Council website Mayoral road shows, Public Participation events like IDP consultations Use of local commercial and community media both print and radio. Social media like Facebook, WhatsApp chat groups, X (formerly Twitter) Video clips/podcasts
OTHER STAKEHOLDERS AND SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT	Council Website Municipal Newsletters Stakeholder Forums Government communications forum Intergovernmental Relations forums
EXTERNAL TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Investment marketing and tourism marketing strategies Council Website Polokwane Tourism Association sessions Networking Sessions

10.   COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

10.1. Outreach programmes

Programmes such as the quarterly feedback sessions, mayoral outreach and other forms of communication should be strengthened and put more focus on meeting the communities.

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10.2. Communication with internal stakeholders.

- There should be updated notice boards strategically placed for internal stakeholders. There is need to transcend transmission of internal messages by using innovative approaches supported by the IT systems.
- There should be information sessions (meetings) regularly conducted by SBU managers to relay all resolutions of Council and Exco, projects and other internal messages to the employees.
- There should be meetings with all staff hosted by the Executive Mayor through the Municipal Manager to provide feedback on critical Council resolutions, Council's vision towards growth and development and other internal messages to the employees.
- There should be quarterly directorate meetings hosted or facilitated by the by the Municipal Manager to provide feedback and other internal messages to the employees.
- Effective use of intranet for information dissemination.
- Effective use of electronic internal publications
- Reporting sessions within the different sections/directorate should be used also to communicate other relevant information, particularly to those who cannot access "modern" technology because of both the nature of their jobs and inabilities to read and write.

10.3. Production of information materials

- The Municipality should regularly produce newsletters (printed and electronic) for both external and internal stakeholders.
- The Municipality should also produce other information material as well as promotional material as per municipal programmes.
- The municipality should produce video podcasts, documentaries and campaigns to market the city, to display municipal achievements, and to empower the communities with relevant information.
- Key municipal campaigns should be visible around the city and the seven clusters.

10.4   Use of Cluster Offices

The Municipality has built Cluster Offices with the view to bring municipal services closer to the people. These centers must be used as one-stop service and information centers for municipal services and information dissemination.

10.5   Inter-Governmental scenario

Communication within the spheres of government is strengthened through the inter-governmental structures.

- **Provincial Government Communication Forum (PGCF)**: the forum provides a platform for both information sharing amongst all communications   and   integrated   approach   to   communication

programmes. This forum is chaired by the head of communication in the office of the Premier (GM) or the senior manager (SM) per delegation.

- **District Communicators Forum:** The district Forum consists of communicators from the office of the executive mayor, municipalities in the district, GCIS in the district, all government departments in the district and the parastatals within the district. It is chaired by the office of the Executive Mayor of the district municipality with GCIS in the district providing secretariat services.

- **Local Communicators Forum:** The local Forum consist of communicators from the office of the executive mayor, GCIS, all government services like police stations, hospitals operating in the local municipality. It is chaired by the office of the Executive Mayor of the local municipality with the district providing support.

10.6 Types of events

- Mayoral Public Participation Programme
- IDP and Budget consultations
- Ward Committee meetings
- Media Networking Sessions
- Council meetings
- Internal Briefing sessions with the Municipal Manager/Executive Mayor
- Budget Speech and the passing thereof
- Mayoral Awards for Excellence
- Batho Pele Service Campaign
- Long Service Awards
- Mayoral Matric Awards
- Polokwane City Marathon
- Annual Mayoral Golf Challenge
- Festive lights event
- Mayoral Rapid Response roadshows

11. OPERATIONAL PLAN

11.1 Outreach Programmes

- Mayoral outreach programmes involving various strategic business units should be carried out at least quarterly and in a coordinated manner.
- All outreach programmes should be coordinated through the Executive Mayor's Office, Public Participation Unit, Communications and Marketing Unit and Ward Councillors.
- Directors, Managers and Project Managers should be part of the outreach programmes such as the IDP/Budget consultative meetings to be able to respond to concerns raised by communities and also to have an understanding of the issues as they are raised so as to be active on intervention plans.

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- Achievements of the past five years and improved delivery plans should be communicated through these programmes.
- These outreach programmes should be evaluated and improved, with time.

11.2 The use of mass media

- Informed by the demographics and characteristics of the municipal area, it is imperative that the mass media be used to capture all members of the community.
- Priority should be placed on the most commonly used tools of mass media information – social media networks, the press, regional and community radio in particular. The national media should also be used effectively.
- Slots should be organized with radio stations with a view to engage with the community on a more interactive basis.
- Communicators should limit relying heavily on press releases to communicate to the public. Advertorials, letters to the editors and opinion articles should be used on a more frequent basis.
- Communicators should at all times cooperate with media following professional ethics (e.g. Do not hide for media when there is unfavourable issues to be addressed).
- A communication plan should be developed for every campaign/event (Event based communication Strategy) to identify relevant media as per the type of audience targeted.
- Emphasis should be on the use of community media, as these are the most accessible to the communities (where they exist and are functional).

11.3 Production of information materials

- External and Internal newsletters must be produced on regular basis.
- All Strategic Business Units should develop brochures, flyers and leaflets and other information dissemination material.
- The Communications and Marketing Unit should manage and facilitate and take responsibility of all information materials, by editing and ensuring that the final product is of good and acceptable quality.
- The Municipal website must be utilized effectively.
- The Executive Mayor's Budget and Opening of Council speeches should be summarized and be widely publicized through the social media networks, print media and the website. This must also happen on other information material.
- All documents for public consumption including IDP, Annual Report, and Policies shall be uploaded and updated on the website.
- Where possible and resources are available, materials should be developed in all languages as contained in the municipality's Language Policy.

11.4 Public Opinion Research

Public opinion research will be undertaken from time to time as it helps the Council to better understand and identify citizen needs and expectations. It is used to assess the public's response to proposals or to possible changes or initiatives; to assess the effectiveness of policies, programmes and services; to measure progress in service improvement; to evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities such as public notices on service disruptions and to plan and evaluate marketing initiatives, among other applications.

11.5 Language policy

The Constitution of South Africa provides that municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of the community in line with the language policy. All important and/or mandated communication (for example notices of application for indigent status, IDP meetings and so on) must be published in the primary spoken languages in Polokwane in line with the Language Policy.

The cost implications to developing and implementing a language policy that encompasses the primary languages have acted as a barrier so far.

12.   INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

12.1 Background / Scope

Though Polokwane Municipality is making great strides in communicating with the public, there is a need to complement public communication with improved internal communication to inform and mobilise municipal employees towards the understanding around the implementation of its programmes.

When government took the decision that internal communication in government should be strengthened, it was done so to ensure that public service officials are kept abreast of what government is doing to deliver services to the broader public.

Messages from management should filter down to all employees to provide them with a better understanding of the purpose, goals and directions of government. There should also be methods in place for feedback from employees to upper management. Against this background, internal communication should be seen within the context of broader efforts to build a better performing municipality.

Clear, concise and consistent communication educates employees, enabling them to appreciate the value of their institutions' programmes and goals. It is a significant element in engaging employees and keeping them focused, committed and productive and aligning everyone's activities.

For the municipality to communicate effectively with its employees, it needs a well-structured and managed internal communication unit that seeks to continually inform staff members of all the programmes and projects carried out in various service departments.

It is important that the internal communication strategy should involve plenty of two-way communication – ensuring that a pledge to "listen to staff" is backed up by visible action; otherwise the improved communication is likely to be met with cynicism rather than trust.

12.2 Current status of internal communication

Currently, the only activity focus on disseminating information to staff members through emails and noticeboards. There is not enough done to promote the implementation of the municipality's programme of action - the Integrated Development Plan.
There is a need to conduct research on internal platforms trends, media, products and language preferences to deepen employees' understanding of municipal programmes. It facilitates the communication of top management decisions to all staff members.

It is important to not only rely on employees taking action to read internal news. E-mail inboxes are flooded, and only a small percentage of staff remembers to check the corporate website and intranet regularly. The only way to ensure that staff read your vital corporate information is to grab their attention! As it is currently, the key challenge of any communication programme is to attract the target audience's attention.

Distribution coordination remains a challenge in escalating internal communication efforts in the municipality. It is therefore important that the internal communicators should have a distribution plan for the information products (to be) developed.

12.3 Benefits of Internal Communications

- Internal communication provides best-practice tools and techniques for organising the institution to achieve maximum results.

- The municipality would be able to distinguish itself enough to attract and retain the best and brightest employees and therefore develop a strong sense of culture, one that employees help create and want to participate in. Employees feel comfortable enough to not only recognise and accept change and growth, but to participate and lead it.

- Employees at all levels engage in a dialogue to become intimately involved in the institution and its daily interaction with its stakeholders. Employees can readily see they are working for something larger than themselves, some greater cause, and thus can see the effect of their efforts on the bigger picture.

- Clear communication engenders a strategic discussion about the institution and its industry, leading to continuous improvement and innovation that anticipates and addresses market needs.
- Employees who are better informed are more satisfied, feel more involved in the fate of the institution and ultimately contribute more to the success. Institutions that make internal communication a priority are more likely to reach their objectives with motivated employees.

- Employees can make more decisions themselves since they have the tools and knowledge to know the "right" decisions in line with institutional goals

12.4 Internal communication channels/platforms

There are various methods of communicating with employees. It should be remembered throughout that audiences differ and that different techniques may need to be used for different audiences.

Developments in technology, notably web-based technologies, have increased the range of options in recent years. Intranet and e-mail-based communication are probably now more important than traditional methods such as printed newsletters. One of the benefits of electronic communication is immediacy in enabling immediate feedback. However, it needs to be remembered that not all employees – for example, labourers or drivers – have access to e-mail or intranet.

Notice boards/bulletin boards: These are part of the furniture, and as such may be ignored. They can get scruffy unless regularly policed. Not for important announcements. Today there are electronic bulletin boards, but again they may be ignored by some staff.

Newsletters/in-house bulletins: These are regularly produced and may carry features on individual employees and events, as well as organisational news. Nowadays, they may be distributed electronically rather than printed. They can have a role to play in integrated communication policies, but does everyone read them?

Letters: Addressed to individual employees and perhaps sent to their home addresses, letters should be reserved for issues of major importance, but are more likely to be read than internal memos or e-mails.

E-mails and Intranet: Messages via e-mail can be targeted to particular groups and sent rapidly, but in some non-office environments not everyone has access to e-mail, so other methods may be needed. Feedback facilities can be incorporated in intranets, so there is some opportunity for two-way communication. Employee-attitude surveys may be conducted by e-mail.

Presentations: Presentations directed to the workforce by a senior manager at the level of Directors, the Municipal Manager or the Executive mayor can be powerful. PowerPoint can add to the experience, but should not be overdone.

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Time should be allowed for questions and answers, but this is not full two-way communication – many employees may be nervous about having a full and frank public discussion with "the boss".

Team briefings/group meetings: Messages are delivered by local managers to established work groups. Here, communication can be face-to-face and a proper dialogue is more possible.

Employee-attitude surveys: These surveys are one way in which management can find out about employees' views and concerns, though the right questions need to be asked (because the questions are devised by managers, they may not reflect what employees would like to be asked).

Focus groups: Focus groups are another way of achieving qualitative feedback.

Face-to-face meetings with managers: Individuals can express their views directly to line managers. They are potentially good methods of two-way feedback, but managers need to understand the importance of upward transmission, and success may depend on how consistently they behave in this respect.

Staging of social events: Internal Communication organises the celebration of calendar days. Briefings on topics such as human rights, HIV and AIDS and women's rights are conducted to create awareness among staff.

MEDIA POLICY FOR POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY

Communication and Media Policy

1. Introduction
A communication policy guides institutional arrangements regarding communication in the municipality. It assigns responsibilities for communicating, delineates channels of communication and provides guidelines on how, when and

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who should communicate. It provides an overarching institutional framework for communication from and within Polokwane Municipality, including communication in crisis situations.

The legislative framework that guides municipal communication is outlined in the:
- Constitution of South Africa (1996)
- Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (1998)
- Promotion of Access to Information Act (2000)
- Media Development and Diversity Agency Act (2002)
- Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (2005).

2. Objectives

The objective of a communication policy is to ensure that the municipality communicates in an effective, standardised and coordinated way, which increases public confidence in the municipality.

This policy outlines media protocols, roles and responsibilities, authorisation of media statements and other communication matters.

3. Key communicators

The Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Ward Councillors and the Communications Manager/Media Liaison Officer are considered to be key communicators. It is therefore important that they communicate the same outlook on various issues and promote the same strategic vision and objectives. A communication policy facilitates this process.

4. Policy application

This policy thus applies to the key identified stakeholders as well as municipal senior staff, general employees and ward committee members.

5. Communication protocols

Communication, as a function, should be embedded at a strategic level in decision and policy-making structures.

The Communications Unit should be based within the Strategic Services Unit and report administratively to the Municipal Manager.

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Communication with other spheres of government should be done through the office of the Municipal Manager, the Executive Mayor or may be delegated to the Directorates.

The communication policy should be visibly displayed and available to all. It should be updated after there has been any change in structure or constitution.

6. Roles and responsibilities

This policy describes the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders as well as those working in the Communications Unit.

The Executive Mayor is the official spokesperson on any official political matters and speak on any issue within the municipality with focus on municipal strategy, policy and performance. This responsibility may be delegated to the Municipal Manager or Communications Manager/Media Liaison Officer when required.

The Executive Mayor is responsible for communication priorities, objectives and requirements contained in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), as well as matters of political nature.

The Speaker is the official spokesperson on any official Council matters and comments relating to Council rules of order must come from the Speaker, and any media comment will be through the office of the Communications Unit. This responsibility may be delegated to the Municipal Manager or Communications Manager/Media Liaison Officer when required.

The Chief Whip is the official spokesperson on any human resource issues related to the Portfolio Councillors and other Councillors and any media comment will be through the office of the Communications Unit. This responsibility may be delegated to the Municipal Manager or Communications Manager/Media Liaison Officer when required.

The Municipal Manager, or acting Municipal Manager in her/his absence, is the spokesperson for strategic or operational issues. S/he must ensure that the communication strategy is in line with municipal communication objectives and reflects the municipality's priorities. The Municipal Manager is responsible for integrating the communication function with the decision-making process and for communicating matters of an administrative nature. This responsibility may be delegated to the Communications Manager/Media Liaison Officer or another competent, knowledgeable senior official.

Directors are responsible for ensuring compliance with the communication policy and to ensure, in consultation with the Communications Unit, that their programmes have communication plans in place as part of their strategies.

Each Portfolio Chairperson (MMC), with the assistance of the Director, is a spokesperson on matters of a strategic nature in relation to his or her directorate – they should attend to such media enquiries through the Communications Unit. This authority may be delegated to the Director by the Portfolio Chairperson.

Each director should attend to media enquiries through the Communications Unit. This authority may be delegated to a person standing in officially for the director.

7. Authorised media spokespeople

Only officials authorised by the Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager and Communications Manager may represent the municipality to the media and serve as an authorised point of contact with the media.

Manager Communications may identify and authorise a designate staff member attached to a specialised service like Traffic Services to respond to media enquiries related to the specialised service limited to operational aspects only and not policy.

Any media communication representing an employee's personal opinion as a private citizen, not associated with the municipality, does not require any approval. However, these opinions must subscribe to the Public Service Act, 1994 and the Code of Conduct for Public Servants, and must not use information acquired while on duty to voice personal opinions.

This policy does not restrict the right of elected staff (shop stewards) of recognised labour unions to express their views to the media directly. Shop stewards of recognised labour unions are fully entitled to make comments on behalf of their unions, but they are not permitted to comment on behalf of the municipality or the SBU they are attached to.

8. Role of Communications Unit

The Communications Manager is responsible for overseeing and implementing the communication strategy. The Communications Manager is responsible for coordinating media communication, media briefings, media statements and handling media enquiries as well as the procurement of communications products and services. The head of this unit must also ensure that the Communication Policy is communicated to staff and is adhered to.

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8.1 More detail on the role of the Communications Unit

The policy presents a more detailed description of the role of the communication team. The Communications Unit is responsible, among other functions, for:

• Implementing the communication strategy

• Dealing with all media enquiries

• Liaising with relevant staff for comment when required

• Coordinating all media interactions, such as conferences, briefings, letters and advertising

• Media evaluation and monitoring.

• Updating of Municipality's website, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) accounts. The individual directorates must provide information for their respective web pages.

The items below provide some indication of the parameters of the role:

- Events: Involved in planning process from beginning
- Provide assistance and advice around Advertising
- Press statements
- Media briefings
- Support Public Participation unit in mobilisation of communities
- Posters, brochures/pamphlets
- Invitations and photography
- Any promotional material and branding programmes.

9. Dealing with the media

It is important to respond quickly to calls or emails from journalists with the appropriate information to avoid printed comments such as "At the time of going to press, the municipality had not issued a response."

9.1 Media liaison

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The Polokwane Municipality is committed to transparency, integrity and service delivery and will endeavour as far as possible to comment or answer reasonable queries from responsible media personnel. The following procedures apply to media liaison:

- All municipal officials must refer media enquiries to the Communications Unit.
- Where necessary, the media response may be approved prior to release by the Municipal Manager for administrative matters and the Executive Mayor for political matters.
- All media enquiries must be dealt with within the stipulated deadline or within 24 hours. Enquiries received after hours will be dealt with during office hours unless there is an obvious urgency or instructions to deal with them after hours.
- Both media enquiries and responses must be in writing, except for radio and television interviews.
- Media enquiries must be treated as top priority.
- Communication and media training should be provided to relevant staff and councillors to ensure that the above-mentioned communication mandate is understood and implemented correctly.

The policy to engage with enquiries from the media is subject to the following:

- Key messengers, the Executive Mayor, the Municipal Manager, Communications Manager/Spokesperson, communicate on behalf of the municipality and liaise with each other or a delegated representative regarding key messages.
- All information released to the media should be approved through the normal approval procedures.

9.2 More on communications and media interaction

- Assist in making arrangements for interviews with the appropriate person.
- Weekly review of other regional and national municipal news.
- Make sure that press releases are newsworthy.

- Prepare press releases on success stories and send them to media as feature ideas, including speciality publications – environmental, scientific and so on.

- Negotiate with local radio stations to launch regular shows and newspapers to host dedicated space for local government/municipal issues.

- When responding to negative coverage, contact the journalist involved and offer an interview with the relevant spokesperson and/or send a letter to the paper clarifying the municipality's position. Find a way to show that the municipality is getting better at what it is doing.

- When an article or broadcast is blatantly misleading or factually incorrect the media must be contacted after publication or broadcast to demand an apology or correction. When such follow-up is deemed necessary, this must be done through or in conjunction with the Municipality's Communications Manager / Media Liaison Officer. Where necessary the Communications Manager may consult with the Municipal Manager or the Executive Mayor to determine the appropriate action.

Working closely with municipal leadership: The Communications Manager and Media Liaison/Spokesperson should attend all meetings of MAYCO to advise on how to communicate decisions made and agreements reached during the meeting to the public. In addition, often meet with the Executive Mayor with a fixed agenda to discuss communication of specific areas.

On technical, specialised or complex matters or services, subject-matter experts may be authorised by the Municipal Manager and the HoC to provide clarity.

10. Televised or in-person speaking engagements

Any municipal employee who accepts a public speaking engagement representing the municipality must notify the Communications Manager immediately. The Communications Manager will provide guidance on the approach and whether the platform will be beneficial to the municipality.

11. Inappropriate media engagement

No spokesperson or employee will divulge to the media any findings or determinations in relation to municipal internal enquiries, reviews or investigations, irrespective as to whether such processes are ongoing or considered concluded,

unless there is specific approval by the Executive Mayor, the Municipal Manager or the Communications Manager.

This policy explicitly regards it as irresponsible of staff members to engage with the media in any activity or comment either by word of mouth or electronically using personal or non-personal systems, which is designed to:

- bring the municipality or its stakeholders into disrepute,
- undermine the integrity and reputation of the municipality, its leadership or its stakeholders,
- present a personal viewpoint as a position which is held by the municipality,
- disclose municipal information without proper authority,
- comment on pending or current legal issues relating to the municipality

12. Language requirements

All media releases and other written media interventions should be produced and distributed in English.

All communication issued to the media should be presented in plain language, without detracting from the accuracy of the message, and should be presented in a way that is understood by the target audience.

13. Off-the-record comments

No employee of the municipality will speak to the media "off the record". The only exception is the Communications Manager or his/her nominee who, in certain circumstances, may be required to do so.

14. Appointment of external media relations support

The municipality may, if required, negotiate with and appoint an external public relations/media relations company or other specialist communications support suppliers to assist with reputation management functions.

15. Public disclosure and right to information

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The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000), provides for requests addressed to the municipality by members of the media to be in writing and directed to the Communications Manager immediately for consideration.

If a representative of the media asks the municipality for information that is already a matter of public record, the municipality should make such information available to the media representative within a mutually agreed time frame. Withholding such information will only force the media representative to develop other sources.

Requests from non-media sources for information under the Access to Information Act, 2000 should be directed to the Municipal Manager.

16. Electronic communication

All e-mail and other electronic text correspondence to the media, whether intended for publication or as a private note to the recipient, should be written in such a way that the correspondence would not bring the municipality into disrepute if published by the media.

The tone, content and standard of language (grammar, spelling, etc.) of electronic correspondence with members of the media should always be constructed from a perspective that the correspondence may find its way into the public domain.

17. Role of Ward Councillors and Ward Committees

Ward Councillors play an important role in facilitating communication and promoting access to local government. The Code of Conduct for Councillors clearly stipulates that councillors must report back at least quarterly to communities on council matters. Through regular ward committee meetings and community meetings, Councillors can assist in communication of Council decisions and policies.

Ward Committees can enable interaction between Council and the citizens of the municipality. The potential exists for ward committees to play a meaningful role in policy formulation. As ward committees have a wide representation they are in the fortunate position of being able to monitor changing citizen needs. This information could be relayed to Council and used in the formulation of policies and strategies.

Ward committees can assist in the sharing of information with citizens. Due to the network and membership of ward committees it is an effective way of communicating the intentions of Council to a wider audience.
Portfolio and other Councillors are entitled to express their own views or those of the political party they represent through the media, subject to the codes of conduct

for councillors set out in Schedule 1 of the Municipal Systems Act (2000), and with due regard for the respective rules and roles of Council and the municipal administration.

18. Internal communications

The Communications Unit should have an interactive relationship with MAYCO, all municipal staff and Ward Councillors on key communication matters, including issues of public participation and current affairs.

In addition, the Communications Unit should:
• Provide information and advice on speeches.

• Develop a programme to build communication skills.

• Assist the Council, senior directors and ward committees with communication advice and by facilitating access to training and providing templates to enable them to conduct effective communication work.

19. Communication channels

Communication channels are the methods by which messages are communicated. The audiences determine the channel, and can widely vary depending on factors such as language, literacy, education levels, age, gender and access to technology.

Note that the channels that may best communicate a particular message may have cost implications beyond internal budgetary constraints and may need sourcing of funds. Should funding not be forthcoming, the Communications Unit must implement the most effective communication channel available within the budget.

20. Use of social media

The following policy guidelines are based on national government's social media guidelines. Social media tools provide the opportunity for two-way communication between the municipality and residents and key stakeholders. However, there are risks in that they are also powerful communication tools with the potential to significantly affect institutional and professional reputations.

The following can be used as a guide in the interim.
This policy applies to:
- Municipal employees using social media for official communication purposes.

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- Municipal employees using social media for personal reasons.

The use of social media is also governed by the municipality's Internet and email policies that set out unacceptable online behaviour.
General principles that apply to social media use include:
- Being credible

- Being respectful

- Being honest and professional at all times.

20.1 Protocols governing use of social media in an official capacity

All municipal employees, officials and Councillors must comply with the general communication policy regarding official spokespersons. In addition, they:

- May only make comments on behalf of the municipality with express approval or authority.

- May not engage in online communication activities that could bring the municipality into disrepute.

- Should not give out personal details, only official contact details.

- May not post material protected by copyright.

- May not use logos or vision and mission statements without permission from the Communications Unit.

- Must only publish information online that can be verified and not personal opinion.

- Must refer all media enquiries to the Communications Unit.

The Code of Conduct for Municipal Employees requires that an employee must at all times, act in the best interest of the municipality and in such a way that the credibility and integrity of the municipality is not compromised.

20.2 Protocols governing use of social media in a personal capacity

When using social media for personal use, the code of conduct for public servants applies and should be considered the guiding rule. In addition, municipal employees:

- May not use municipal logos and branding for personal social media posts without explicit permission.

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- Can be held legally responsible for comments posted on personal social media platforms.

- Must respect that computers and resources are reserved for municipal-related business.

- Must ensure that personal online activities do not interfere with work duties and performance.

- Must note that authorised officials have the right to access material on official computers at any time.

- Must not use social media in such a manner that it is projected to be to the detriment of the municipality or any project that the municipality is undertaking.

- That the use of the social media be in a professional manner and not portray any unprofessional or socially unacceptable behaviour as an official of a government institution such as the use of bad language or racially unacceptable comments.

21. Public participation communication

Active citizen participation rests on the effective dissemination of information as well as access to information that enables informed participation. The following protocols apply to communication responsibilities for public participation processes and are mandated by the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000:

- To provide, clear, sufficient and timely information concerning community participation to communities.

- To communicate public notices of meetings to communities in a manner that promotes optimal public participation.

- The Speaker must give notice of Council meetings in a manner determined by the Council.

- Council agendas/minutes are public documents and should be available on request.

- A municipality must communicate to its community information concerning the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation.

- When communicating the information, a municipality must take into account the language preference and usage in the municipality and the special needs of people who cannot read or write.

When anything must be notified by a municipality through the media to the local community in terms of this Act or any other applicable legislation it must be done:

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- In the local newspaper or newspapers of that area.
- In a newspaper or newspapers circulating in its area and determined by Council as a newspaper of record, or
- Through notices displayed on all official notice boards, municipal website and other municipal media platforms.
- Council must take into account language preferences of its community when providing information and/or interacting with the community.
- A copy of every notice to be published in the provincial gazette or the media in terms of legislation must be displayed on the official notice boards of the municipality.

22. Communication in crisis situations including service delivery issues

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

- The manager whose area of responsibility is involved informs her/his director and copies the manager of the Communications Unit.
- The Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager are informed immediately.
- Subject to the level of crisis, a crisis committee is formed comprising the Municipal Manager and/or relevant director, Communication Manager/Media Liaison and other relevant officials.
- The crisis committee drafts a plan of action, manages the issue and communicates about the issue, and releases the necessary statements with the involvement of the Executive Mayor.
- The Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager act as official spokespersons.
- No media statement or interview with any other officials is allowed unless otherwise delegated.
- Staff members are kept informed of the situation via the Office of the Municipal Manager or Communications Unit.

23. Branding and corporate identity

There are many elements to a corporate identity, which encompasses published materials (print, online, packaging, signboard, etc.), the functional items (vehicles, uniforms, buildings and equipment) and the performance of an organisation. A strong corporate identity rests on consistent branding of all elements.

The following protocols apply to Polokwane Municipality's corporate identity:

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- The Mayor's office and the Communications Unit are custodians of the corporate identity.
- The Communications Unit must maintain a corporate identity manual with examples of all approved applications – this must be available in hard and electronic copies.
- This includes the type of communication material used by the municipality i.e. folders, letterheads. business cards, marketing material such as banners, posters etc
- The way in which communication material is used and produced i.e the use of logos and corporate identity.
- The official municipal logo used as prescribed in the corporate-identity manual

As a guideline, use of branding elements (logos, vision and mission statements, etc.) should be used consistently for all communication channels – print and online, email signatures, PowerPoint presentations, memorandums and letterheads, for example.

24. Copyright

The Municipality owns all publicity material and information it has paid for or created. Consequently, the reproduction of any such material requires the Municipality's approval. The fact that copyright belongs to the Municipality gives the Municipality the freedom to allow others to use such material without paying fees to the original producer. It also gives the Municipality the authority to prevent the misuse of the material by the producer or anyone else.

25. Language policy

The Constitution of South Africa provides that municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of the community in line with the language policy. All important and/or mandated communication (for example notices of application for indigent status, IDP meetings and so on) must be published in the primary spoken languages in Polokwane in line with the Language Policy.

The cost implications to developing and implementing a language policy that encompasses the primary languages have acted as a barrier so far.

26. Policy review

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This policy must be reviewed at least every year and be amended annually or as and when amendments to legislation and/or policies necessitate.

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Glossary

Communication campaign: Once-off, multiple or cyclical communication activities with strategic stakeholders. These are time-bound and planned ahead. They normally focus on an immediate objective.

Communication plan: The master plan on rolling out the strategy and a framework for developing programmes and campaigns.

Communication programmes: The continuous communication activities with strategic stakeholders – such as internal and external newsletters.

Communication strategy: The framework for communication planning that allows the communications manager or head of communications to establish a profile/framework against which to test communication decisions. It identifies the right problems to solve and prioritises areas or issues for which to develop communication plans. It determines what should be communicated to support the municipality's overall objectives and should be aligned to local and national government objectives.

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