



PIXLEY KA SEME DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Communication Policy

Table of Contents

	PAGE
Introduction	3
1. Local Government Communication	3
2. Legislative Framework	4
2.1 Constitution of The republic of South Africa, 1996	4
2.2 <i>The White Paper on Local Government, 1998</i>	4
2.3 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000	4
2.4 Promotion of Access to Information Act, (paia), no 2 of 2000	4
3. Guiding Principles of This Policy	5
4. Key Objectives	5
5. Communication Roles and Responsibilities	5
5.1 Executive Mayor	5
5.2 Municipal Manager	5
5.3 Communications Manager	5
6. Procedures and Regulations	6
6.1 Media Relations	6
6.2 Internal Communication	6
6.3 External Communication	7
7. The Role of Councillors and Personnel	7
8. Addressing Communication Challenges	7
9. Communication Crisis Management	8
10. Media Steering Committee	8
11. Monitoring	8
12. Contravention of Policy	9
13. Review of Policy	9
14. Terms of Reference	9

INTRODUCTION

The Pixley ka Seme District Municipality is committed to two-way communication, building relationships with the internal stakeholders, external stakeholders and the media, in all spheres of government. The Pixley ka Seme District Municipality acknowledges that our biggest clients are the category B municipalities and the purpose of this communication policy is to provide clear principles and guidelines for communication in the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality.

The different roles and responsibilities within the municipality are made clear, what is communicated and by whom. This policy will ensure that communication takes place in a coordinated and uniformed way.

The difference between strategy and policy is that policy is a set of guiding rules intended to influence decisions and actions that reflect agreed practice in terms of power while strategy is a high level of approach to an issue that is designed to deliver change by implementing policies. Hence the need to have both a policy and a strategy.

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

Local government communication must form part of and strengthen the official voice of the South African government, through the Government Communication and Information System. The GCIS releases regular media statements, through which it keeps the South African population and external stakeholders informed about the programme of government, as well as the decisions taken by the Executive and individual members of the Executive, including the President. Local Government communication must therefore serve to create the same atmosphere of information sharing between municipalities and communities, as well as all other stakeholders operating at local government level.

In South Africa, local government operates as an autonomous sphere of government within a highly defined and complex legal environment. As such, communication services as municipalities need to comply with a policy framework development in accordance with the prevailing local government legislation, but considering precedents set by the norms and standards guiding the system of government communication in general.

Political leadership and management of the local communication function is a critical success factor ensuring healthy communication with communities. It is only when communication functions are properly reported on, accounted for, monitored and evaluated that municipal communicators are able to effectively support the implementation of a municipality's programme of action (POA) as contained in the legislative framework and the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). As such, a municipality must have a dedicated capacity which puts in place an intention and planned communication programme.

There is also a need for institutional arrangements and intergovernmental systems to be in place to ensure an integrated and coherent system of government communication: thus

ensuring that communication messages and information reach all spheres. Therefore, the municipal communication programme needs to be adequately co-ordinated and synergised with the provincial and national programmes.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Different pieces of legislation give effect to the importance of communication at all spheres of government, including at the local government-sphere. These pieces of legislation serve to inform and to direct the manner in which government must communicate with the citizens of the country, as well as with all stakeholders.

2.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. (Source Government Gazette, 20 November 2000)

Chapter 7, Section 152(1)(a)(e), states the following:

The objects of local government are....

- (a) to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities,
- (b) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

2.2 The White Paper on Local Government, 1998.

Section C: 1.2, dealing with Intergovernmental Relations, states the following: A system of intergovernmental relations has the following strategic purposes.....

- To coordinate and align priorities, budgets, policies and activities across interrelated functions and sectors.
- To ensure a smooth flow of information within government, and between government and communities, with a view to enhancing the implementation of policy and programmes.

The abovementioned mandate as encapsulated in the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, will be only be achieved through proper and effective communication between the different spheres of government.

2.3 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000

Chapter 4(18)(19)(20)(21)(21A)(21B), deals with the importance of municipalities communicating information concerning community participation, public notice of meetings, admission of public to meetings, communications to local community, documents to be made public, official website, etc.

2.4 Promotion of Access to Information Act, (PAIA), No 2 of 2000

The Act operationalises Section 8 and 32 of the Constitution. It aims to foster a culture of transparency and accountability and to promote effective access to information to protect an individual's rights. The Act applies to the records of public and private bodies, regardless of when the record came into existence.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS POLICY

This Draft Communication Policy seeks to ensure that the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality acknowledges the importance of communications as a strategic management function and as an integral part of its daily functioning. It demonstrates that the municipality is committed to a transparent and effective relationship with its internal and external stakeholders and will do so by a process of consultation and information dissemination.

4. KEY OBJECTIVES:

- To enforce and increase accountability through the communication process;
- Provide accessible, cost effective service delivery and to communicate this message to our stakeholders;
- Establish communication platforms where the category B municipalities needs are communicated to the district and vice versa;
- Adopt an integrated approach, involving all stakeholders to bridge the communication gaps;
- Create awareness of the role of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality plays amongst its stakeholders;
- Improve and encourage good media relations;
- Promote and encourage productive intergovernmental relations;
- Promote the Corporate Brand of the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality;

5. COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

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

5.1 EXECUTIVE MAYOR

The Executive Mayor is the chief communicator on political and **broad policy matters** and the Accounting Officer is the spokesperson on the administrative performance and **operational matters** of Pixley Ka Seme District Municipality.

5.2 MUNICIPAL MANAGER

The Municipal Manager is the spokesperson on strategic and operational issues. The Municipal Manager ensures that the integration of communications function within the municipality's decision making process and the integration of strategic communication planning in the overall planning of the district.

5.3 COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

The Communications Manager serves as the municipality's authority on communication issues. The Communications Manager is responsible for coordinating all communications activities. The communication unit should create platforms for the Executive Mayor to promote the goodwill of the institution and ensures that of the organisation accomplish its mission and vision. The Communications Manager also

serves as Municipality's and Council's spokes person only when delegated by the Municipal Manager. He\she is also responsible for coordinating liaison with the media, arranging media conferences, the issuing of media statements and handling of all media queries.

6. PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

The following procedures and regulations are the rules that will govern and inform the implementation of the communication policy.

6.1 MEDIA RELATIONS

The Communication Unit is the municipality's first line of contact with the media and is responsible for coordinating all media relations. The following procedures have to be followed with regards to media liaison:

It is advisable that before responding to media queries, the communication unit must be consulted. In a situation where this is not possible the response must be signed off by the Municipal Manager and copied to the Manager of Communications, we cannot afford to have too many voices in the media. The Manager Communications, Executive Mayor, MM or the officials or councillors should consult with the communication unit before they respond to media queries.

All media enquiries must be channelled through the Communications Unit. The Communications Unit will consult with all relevant internal stakeholders before releasing a media statement on any matter. Any media statement to be released must be signed off by the Municipal Manager.

The communications unit should ideally coordinate interactions with the media. All media queries must be referred to the communications unit who will then engage with the relevant line functionaries for an adequate response.

Media queries are to be dealt with within the stipulated deadline or otherwise within 24 hours (and media representatives must be informed of the inability to respond immediately with the reason being further researched / facts not readily available etc). Enquiries received after hours will be dealt with during office hours unless there is an obvious urgency or instruction to do so. Enquiries from the media should be in writing and responses should also be in writing unless it is for radio or television interviews.

6.2 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The main purpose of Internal Communication is to facilitate and manage the flow of information within the municipality in order to create and informed workforce. Internal communications involves information about the municipality's programmes, relevant HR information and other useful information that staff may have an interest

in. Other units within the municipality must provide the communication unit with information that they package and distribute internally. The following internal platforms will form part of the internal communication, eg staff meetings, unit and departmental meetings, management meetings, council meetings, council committee meetings, Local Labour Forum and mayoral committee meetings, etc

6.3 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The main purpose of external communication is to inform stakeholders of services and programmes of the municipality. Different communication tools and mediums are used to communicate with stakeholders: Radio, Television, PKS News, Road Shows, Exhibitions, Workshops, Website and News Papers. Other units within the municipality must provide the communication unit with information that they package and distribute externally. The Communication Unit is solely responsible for all external communication, after internal consultation has been exhausted.

7. THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS AND PERSONNEL

Councillors and personnel play an important role in facilitating communication and promoting access to local government. Councillors should be empowered to communicate effectively and personnel should provide councillors with the necessary support. The protocol line that the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality will follow is:

The Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager both individually and collectively are the principal spokesperson for the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality. It is their role to provide leadership in establishing the priorities and overall themes of the Pixley ka Seme DM's Communications. No staff member is allowed to provide any response or comment on any internal matter to the media, in fact staff members when approached for comments on Pixley ka Seme DM's internal matters must direct such enquiries to the Communications division Unit.

8. ADDRESSING COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES:

- To capacitate and empower councillors of PKSDM on how to interact with the media
- Address the need to engage with local municipalities via District and Relations Forums;
- Develop a working relationship with the media;
- Ensure accurate reporting of PKSDM;
- To channel all PKSDM reports to the media through one person;(the Communications Manager
- Communication process to be guided by the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 and Promotion of Access Information Act 2 of 2000

9. COMMUNICATION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

A crisis is every organisation's worst nightmare. However it is important that a framework for such a situation exist. An organisation's reputation can be damaged by criminal or unethical activities, poor performance, perceived unsustainability, etc.

In the event of a crisis the following should be adhered to:

- The Manager of Communications must first inform the Municipal Manager in the event of any emergency, after which the senior manager responsible for the department must be informed.
- The Manager of Communication should be copied in all communiqué (this only applies to written and electronic communication; what about in cases of verbal communication?) and be part of all information sessions;
- A crisis committee will consist of the Municipal Manager, relevant senior manager and Manager of Communication;
- The Executive Mayor is to be informed immediately;
- A plan of action is to be drafted; the crisis committee will manage the issue, communication thereof and release the necessary statements with the involvement of the Municipal Manager.
- The Executive Mayor and MM will remain spokespersons unless they delegate a specialist of the matter in question;
- No media statement or interview is allowed from any other official;
- The relevant staff members must be kept informed of the situation;

10. MEDIA STEERING COMMITTEE:

There is a need to establish a media steering committee. The purpose of this committee will be to ensure that the Council's Communication Policy and strategy are fully implemented.

The Media Steering Committee will be led by the Municipal Manager, and the Manager Communications will provide the secretarial and administrative support to the committee.

The Media Steering Committee consists of:

- Municipal Manager
- Manager of Communications
- Senior Managers
- Manager in Office of Executive Mayor

11. MONITORING

The Municipal Manager will monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy throughout the Pixley Ka Seme District Municipality.

Evaluations will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the Communication division (Unit) in meeting the policy requirements and to assess the effectiveness of the policy in helping Municipal Council to meet its objectives.

12. CONTRAVENTION OF POLICY

Any official employed by the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality is expected to abide by the provisions and regulations as contained in this draft Communication Policy. In the event of any contravention of this policy, the employer reserves the right to invoke the applicable disciplinary procedures as agreed upon by the SALGBC.

Contravention by elected councillors of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality and representatives from local municipalities will be dealt with in accordance with the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Standing Rules of Council.

13. REVIEW OF POLICY

This draft Communication Policy will be subject for review on an annual basis by the Municipal Council as well as in the event when amendments are made to the referred Acts which constitute of the legislative framework of this draft communication policy.

14. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following pieces of legislation serve as Terms of Reference for this draft Communication Policy.

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- White Paper on Local Government, 1998
- Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000
- Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2, 2000

EXECUTIVE MAYOR



DATE APPROVED :

30 AUGUST 2017

RESOLUTION :

R 2017 – 08 – 30 (9.5)

