

# UMZIMVUBU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



**UMZIMVUBU**  
— LOCAL MUNICIPALITY —

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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## 1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **"Council"** means the municipal council of Umzimvubu Local Municipality established in terms of the Municipal Systems Act, no. 32 of 2000 and Provincial Notice.
- 1.2 **"Councillor"** means a member of the council.
- 1.3 **"Local community" or "community"** in relation of the municipality, means that body of people comprising of:-
- The residents of the municipality;
  - The rate payers of the municipality;
  - Any civic organization and non-governmental, private sector or labour organization or bodies which are involved in local affairs in the municipality;
- 1.4 **"Municipal Manager"** means the person appointed in terms of Section 54A of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, Act No. 32 of 2000.
- 1.5 **"Municipality"**, when referred to as "an entity" means municipality as described in section 2 of the Local Government: Municipal System Act, Act No 32 of 2000; and when referred to as a geographic area, means a municipal area determined in terms of the Local Government: Municipality Demarcation Act, 1998 (Act No.27 of 1998).
- 1.6 **"Developmental Communication"** is founded on the principle that citizens/the community should participate actively in communication activities with direct impact on their lives.
- 1.7 **"Development communication"** refers to the use of communication to facilitate social and economic change.
- 1.8 **"Policy"** means is a set of rules that guide decision-making in any organisation and provide the blueprint for how an organisation will operate.
- 1.9 **"Internal communication"** is the effective exchange of communication/information, both vertically and horizontally between internal stakeholders within an organisational space in the context of government across a variety of platforms.
- 1.10 A **"crisis"** is an unforeseen or unexpected event that threatens institutional operations and can have extreme negative consequences. A crisis can be man-made and can impact public safety, lead to financial loss or even reputational damage for the institution.
- 1.11 **"HoC"** means Head of Communication.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1** The communication policy sets the rules, processes and procedures for communication for all of government and serves as a framework for government's communication strategy.
- 2.2** This policy is developed to ensure that processes, procedures and deliverables are consistent across in the municipality.
- 2.3** Communication is key to effective and efficient governance for implementation of government policies, projects and services. Communication is also key especially for proper planning & coordination as government has to consult, listen and give feedback to the public.
- 2.4** Effective communication builds public trust and confidence in the integrity of the Council.
- 2.5** Communication is the key strategic service to ensure that information is widely accessible within the public space, to engage citizens in conversation around critical issues and to empower citizens to participate in not only shaping government policies but also in taking up opportunities that affect their lives.
- 2.6** Communication is an integral process in any organisation, a good dialogue and other interactions contribute to an organisation's culture and successes.
- 2.7** Communication serves as a two-way interaction and the sharing of information between parties. Good communication nurtures relationships thereby improving the understanding of the needs of all stakeholders and enabling the Umzimvubu Local Municipality to respond appropriately.
- 2.8** It is critical that communication both internally and externally be managed in a professional and co-ordinated way.
- 2.9** Accordingly, all communication needs should be channelled through the Office of the Municipal Manager and messages conveyed need to be aligned with the mandate of the municipality.
- 2.10** It is important that the information to be disseminated be accurate, consistent and timeously.
- 2.11** Furthermore, given the information and communication needs in the modern working environment, it is essential that all communication must comply with certain requirements, these include being relevant to the target audiences, adhering to all legislative prescripts, being reliable and accurate and achieving optimal target by reaching all intended recipients.

### **3. APPLICABILITY OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1 This policy shall apply to municipal HoC, Communicators, Accounting Officer, Political Principals and All Councillors
- 3.2 The policy shall be binding to Council, Councillors, Management & Staff
- 3.3 All municipal communicators will have to become familiar with this policy and apply it within their immediate communication environment.

### **4. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION**

- 4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) which provides framework for communication.
- 4.2 National Development Plan (NDP), the NDP identified a growing distance between citizens and government that needs to be reduced if South Africa is to achieve its developmental goals. Government therefore needs to actively communicate and share information with citizens.
- 4.3 National Communication Strategy Framework, which outlines a communications vision and approach for government.
- 4.4 Cabinet Memo of 1997, 1998 and Cab Memo: 16 of 2000, emphasising the importance of having communication strategies and that communication should be recognised as a strategic function and communication
- 4.5 The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (IRFA), Act 13 of 2005, the key role of the Act is to enhance intergovernmental coordination and cooperation between national, provincial and local government as well as all organs of state in support of the principle of corporate governance, as set out in Chapter 3 of the Constitution.

### **5. AIMS OF THE POLICY**

- 5.1 To establish norms and standards to professionalise and strengthen the government communication system so that the municipality can deliver on its mandate.
- 5.2 To set out rules, processes and procedures on how communication will operate.
- 5.3 To ensure that all Communicators operate from a developmental communication paradigm.
- 5.4 To advocate for communication as a strategic function
- 5.5 To ensure that communication is well-integrated, coordinated, consistent and coherent.
- 5.6 To ensure that communication caters for all official languages.
- 5.7 To create an effective feedback mechanism between municipality and communities.

## **6. USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

6.1 All municipal communication will comply with the Use of Official Languages Act, (Act 12 of 2012);

6.2 Municipal communication shall consider all eleven (11) official languages of the segmented and target audience as well as Braille and South African Sign Language.

## **7. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRUCTURES**

### **7.1 POLITICAL PRINCIPAL'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

7.1.1 Take responsibility of municipal communication.

7.1.2 Account to communities/public on municipal policies, feedback on service delivery and other deliverables, municipal objectives/projects/programmes.

7.1.3 Attend trainings to familiarise themselves with how to deal with the media.

7.1.4 Interact with the public to solicit views and inputs in municipal programmes/activities.

### **7.2 MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

7.2.1 He/she is the municipal messenger and must advocate for communication as a strategic function.

7.2.2 Must appoint the Head of Communication (HoC) who will be responsible for ensuring that there is adequate budget for communication & that all other communication functions are adequately staffed.

7.2.3 Ensure that communication strategies are approved by Council and implemented.

7.2.4 Ensure that HoC has the adequate skills and knowledge for the post.

7.2.5 Provide oversight to the HoC functions and ensure that there is adequate budget for communication activities.

7.2.6 Assist with delivery of information to specific forums and general public.

### **7.3 HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS (HOC) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

7.3.1 To ensure that municipal policies and projects are communicated effectively.

7.3.2 To present current affairs of the municipality and advise on the communication implications.

7.3.3 Must take a lead in integrated communication structures to ensure proper coordination and integration of communication policies & programmes.

- 7.3.4 Oversee implementation of the communication strategy and plans.
- 7.3.5 Provide advice and make recommendations on communication to the political principals and Accounting Officer.
- 7.3.6 Manage coordination and implementation of the communication responses to unplanned & urgent communication including crisis
- 7.3.7 Oversee the assessment of annual communication strategic plans and make adjustments where necessary
- 7.3.8 Oversee ongoing training and capacity building of communicators including their induction
- 7.3.9 Monitor communication deliverables and report on progress and impact.
- 7.3.10 Provides overall management of the communications team to support the implementation of effective communications, including but not limited to media engagement, all communication platforms, campaigns, marketing and PR functions, as well as research and analysis to measure the impact of communications;
- 7.3.11 Ensures that the institution is informed and fully aware of the Communication Policy and that communicators are aware of their roles and responsibilities;
- 7.3.12 Oversee the ongoing training and capacity-building of communicators, including their induction.
- 7.3.13 Participate actively in all strategic meetings of the organisation.

## **8. COMMUNICATOR'S FORUM**

### **8.1 THE LOCAL COMMUNICATORS' FORUM**

The Local Communicators' Forum (LCF) comprises of Head of Communication (HoC) of local municipalities, parastatals and other government-related structures at local level. The local communicators' forums among other things need to discuss the following:

- 8.1.1 Strategic government communication issues.
- 8.1.2 Assess implementation of government communication programmes and the strategies for proper alignment.
- 8.1.3 Share information, iron out communication problems, introduce case studies, share lessons learnt and establish best practices.
- 8.1.4 Assist with building capacity and the development of communication strategies.
- 8.1.5 Coordinate and organise a calendar of events and ensure that these activities are streamlined to avoid duplication and a waste of resources.
- 8.1.6 Strategize and plan communication activities for the forthcoming year.

## **9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRUCTURES/FORUMS**

### **9.1 IZIMBIZO**

- 9.1.1 Izimbizo preparations should incorporate research/environmental scanning of area where event will be held around the needs and issues of the community.
- 9.1.2 Political principals and/or Accounting Officers must be briefed prior to attending the imbizo to enable them to respond appropriately to those issues.
- 9.1.3 Role-players in public participation events must include community members as beneficiaries of the public-participation process, sector departments and municipality must avail resources for implementation.
- 9.1.4 Imbizo feedback shall be made available to National/Provincial/Local communication structures so as to inform marketing communication strategies and plans at all levels.

### **9.2 COUNCILLORS'WARD COMMITTEES AND CDW'S**

- 9.2.1 Councillors, through their ward committees, must have communication as their key performance area.
- 9.2.2 Councillors must hold community meetings at least once per quarter. The Speaker should monitor whether these meetings are taking place and provide reports to the council.
- 9.2.3 Local government communicators must provide councillors with the necessary support to enable them to report back to the community on deliverables.

## **10. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

- 10.1.1 Municipal media engagement function shall be allocated to HoC and shall lead all media engagement activities and all communication with the media will be undertaken by the Communication Department.
- 10.1.2 Head of Communication (HoC) shall build and maintain relations with Media.
- 10.1.3 Communication tools with media shall include media statements, advisories, statements, interviews, briefings.
- 10.1.3 Media shall be given access to information and all interactions with them be professional.
- 10.1.4 Social media platforms/channels shall be Facebook, Twitter, Instagram as these provide two way communication between the municipality and communities.
- 10.1.5 Communication channels should be kept open at all times and the media updated on any of the pending media enquiries.
- 10.1.6 Authorised municipal Spokespersons are the Political Principals (Mayor/Speaker), Accounting Officer and the Head of Communication and shall communicate all matters that may have an impact on the image of government.



- 10.1.7 All media enquiries relating to the institution must first be brought to the attention of the Head of Communication who will engage relevant departments before comment is provided to the media.
- 10.1.8 Media releases, statements and advisories need to adhere to an agreed standard. All communication issued to the media must be presented in plain language, without compromising the accuracy of the message and in a way that is understood by the target audience.
- 10.1.9 Media photography or videography is expressly prohibited on municipal property without the prior approval of the HoC or his/her nominee.
- 10.1.10 Councillors and employees shall not disclose any information which is not already in the public domain about programmes and mandates of the municipality unless they have obtained guidance and prior approval from the Municipal Manager or Mayor.
- 10.1.11 Unauthorised disclosure of classified information to the public or the media will result in disciplinary action being taken against the government official responsible.
- 10.1.12 Media engagement tools shall be quarterly media briefings, media releases/conferences.

## **11.INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

To encourage the sharing of knowledge and best practice and information in order to promote service excellence. It seeks to create a conducive working environment where all employees and councillors are informed, understand one institutional common vision and are inspired to work towards the same organisational goals.

- 11.1 Heads of departments shall be responsible for information dissemination pertaining to all departmental successes, planned programmes/projects, news for employee/councillors consumption, and it shall be forwarded to the Communications Unit.
- 11.2 Communication unit shall communicate information provided by respective departments to all internal stakeholders as communication is centralised within the unit.
- 11.3 Internal communication shall keep all employees from senior management to general workers and councillors informed about the implementation of municipal programmes/project.
- 11.4 Internal communication platforms shall include circulars, bulletins, notices, emails, memos, intranet, newsletters/magazines, letters/ Circulars, videos/in-house TV, presentations, team-building, group meetings, employee-attitude surveys, face-to-face meeting with managers, social events and general staff meetings.
- 11.5 Municipal Manager shall be responsible for authorising internal communique.
- 11.6 All internal communication for internal distribution is the responsibility of the Accounting Officer and Communications Unit.

- 11.7 The municipality must have a website that is accessible and updated regularly by a designated employee/s. Website content and branding should be managed through the communications division.

## **12. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

- 12.1 External communication shall inform all stakeholders about the services and programmes of the Municipality.
- 12.2 Communication platforms and mediums for external communication shall be Billboards, Radios, Television, Imbizos, Summits, Newspapers/print media, Website, social media.
- 12.3 Communication personnel should have access to all official social media platforms within their sphere of government for the purposes of monitoring and following issues arising in the environment but also to monitor debates and provide informed responses.
- 12.4 The Head of Communication or his/her designate will be authorised to engage in debates arising in the social media environment that require immediate interaction or engagement.
- 12.5 Social media accounts shall be monitored daily and items to be monitored include comments on published content and whether they adhere to social media guidelines.

## **13. CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

Where a matter has been declared a crisis, the crisis communication protocol will come into effect.

- 13.1 HoC to be notified immediately of any crisis.
- 13.2 HoC shall gather and verify information about the crisis.
- 13.3 HoC shall communicate facts quickly, accurately and be open and accessible to all audiences although mindful of confidentiality.
- 13.4 HoC shall develop strategy and tactics on how to communicate.
- 13.5 Communicators should be made aware of any potential crisis and should manage communication activities to avert or limit a potential crisis.
- 13.6 Municipal crisis Spokesperson shall be the Mayor.

## **14. COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY**

The policy shall commence on the date of adoption by Council.

## **15. AMENDMENT/REVIEWAL OF POLICY**

This policy shall be reviewed and updated if there is new legislation, regulations or circulars issued that will impact on the policy.

## 16.COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

It will be the responsibility of all managers, supervisors, Executive Committee and Council to enforce compliance with this policy.

***The Communications Policy was adopted by Council of Umzimvubu Local Municipality on 26 February 2019.***

**Confirmed By:**

  
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**MR GPT. Ntota**  
**MUNICIPAL MANAGER**

26/02/2019  
**DATE**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**COUNCILLOR NGONYOLO**  
**SPEAKER**

26/02/2019  
**DATE**

