



George Municipality Communication Policy, Strategy, Action Plan 2015/16

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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 policy	Provides the institutional framework in which the communication plan is implemented. It covers division of responsibilities and general guidelines for communicating with various target groups and as to who can act as spokespeople for the municipality.
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 communication manager 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.

Acronyms used

IDP: Integrated Development Plan

RDP: Reconstruction and Development Programme

COMMUNICATION 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 who should communicate. It provides an overarching institutional framework for communication from and within George 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).

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.

Key communicators

Everyone at the municipality is effectively a communicator; however, those holding positions as the Executive Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Municipal Manager, Directors, Ward Councillors and the Communications Manager/Media Liaison Officer can be considered 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.

Policy application

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

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.

- Communication with other spheres of government should be done through the office of the Mayor or the Municipal Manager and/or 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.

2. Roles and responsibilities

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

- The Executive Mayor, or Deputy Mayor in his/her absence, is the official spokesperson on any official political matters. This responsibility may be delegated to the Municipal Manager or Communications Manager/Media Liaison Officer when required. The Mayor is responsible for annual communication priorities, objectives and requirements contained in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), as well as matters of a 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 annual 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 Councillor, 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 Councillor. Comment will go out in the name of the Portfolio Councillor unless otherwise stipulated.*

- Each director is a spokesperson on matters of a technical or specialist nature in relation to his or her directorate – they should attend to media enquiries through the Communications Unit. This authority may be delegated to a person standing in officially for the director. Comment will go out in the name of the director unless otherwise stipulated.
- 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.
- 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 roles of Council and the municipal administration. ***Non-Portfolio Councillors will refrain from corresponding with the media or the public on matters of an administrative nature.***

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, Councillors can assist in communication 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.

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 twitter accounts. The individual directorates must provide information for their respective web pages. The Communications Manager must approve the creation of links on the municipal website and the acceptance of a link from the municipal website to another website. All website maintenance and development must be done in consultation with the IT Department.

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
 - Mobilisation of communities
 - Posters, brochures/pamphlets
 - Invitations and photography
 - Any promotional material and branding
 - Programmes.
- Dealing with the press:
 - 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."
 - Have a regularly updated briefing sheet on municipal positions on topical issues that can be issued without clearance to enable a quick response time.
 - 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.
 - Prepare short case study overviews of successful projects – water management systems, the GO GEORGE bus services – and send to relevant academic institutions.
 - Create photo opportunities that illustrate the message when organising news conferences.

- Offer officials to speak on open-line radio shows where the public can call and ask questions on specific issues.
- Negotiate with local radio stations to launch regular shows and newspapers to host dedicated space for local government 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 followup is deemed necessary, this must be done through or in conjunction with the Municipality's Communications Manager / Media Liaison Officer.
- Working closely with municipal leadership:
 - The communications officer 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, meet with the Mayor and the relevant director the next day with a fixed agenda to discuss the advice and finalise the communication strategy.
 - Use platforms such as intranets to exchange information easily between relevant parties.

3. 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.
- Circulate a calendar of public activities on a monthly basis.
- 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.
- Build a communication profile of each ward and develop targeted communication strategies and action plans for each.
- Brief the ward committees via the Ward Councillors on relevant national, provincial and local government programmes and projects.

4. 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 external funds.

Should external funding not be forthcoming, the Communications Unit must implement the most effective communication channel available within the budget.

5. Policy for media interaction

The George 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 operatives. The following procedures apply to media liaison:

- All municipal officials must refer media enquiries to the Communications Unit.
- *If this is not possible, the relevant director must sign off on the response and obtain approval from the Municipal Manager to release.*
- The response to be approved prior to release by the Municipal Manager for administrative matters and the Executive Mayor for political matters.
- The Communications Unit will engage with relevant line functionaries and Portfolio Councillors prior to issuing a response.
- 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:

- Two key messengers, the Municipal Manager and/or the Executive Mayor, 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.

6. Policy on 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 Western Cape provincial government is developing a comprehensive guideline on social media usage, which can be adopted by George Municipality on conclusion. The following can be used as a guide in the interim.

This policy applies to:

- Municipal employees using social media for official communication purposes.
- 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 (Refer to the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy and Procedure Manual).

General principles that apply to social media use include:

- Being credible
- Being respectful
- Being honest and professional at all times.

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.

- In terms of Item 2 of the Code of Conduct for Municipal Employees, an employee must at all times, *inter alia*, act in the best interest of a municipality and in such a way that the credibility and integrity of the municipality is not compromised.

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.
- 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.

7. Policy for public participation communication

Active citizen participation rests on the effective dissemination of information as well as access to information that enables informed participation (see Appendix 3: Public Participation Policy for George Municipality). 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. A notice must be published once a year in the local media, setting out the programme of meetings for the year.

- 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:
 - 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
 - By means of radio broadcasts covering the area of the municipality.
 - Through notices displayed on all official notice boards.
- Sections 21 (2) to (5) place obligations on a municipality relating to language preference, points of publication, conditions for written representations from the public and reasonable assistance from Council to the public to aid with submissions.
- 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.

Public participation process

The following outlines the mandated steps to be taken for any public participation process. The Communications Unit will provide departments with guidance regarding these steps and assistance in terms of design and editorial services for published material. **Note that the implementing directorate remains responsible for budgeting, distributing and displaying any materials.**

1. Subject to budget, advertise in the *George Herald*, *George Mini-Ads* and *Die Burger* in all three languages. (Any new publication or newspaper subsequently published in George to be reviewed and considered for this process subject to distribution and readership.)
2. Subject to retaining contract with local community radio station, use weekly half an hour radio slot and 30-second radio adverts *as scheduled by the Communications Unit*.
3. Supply the Communications Unit with the relevant details to upload to the municipal website under News and Events Calendar.

4. Supply the Communications Unit with the relevant details to upload to the municipal Facebook page and Twitter.
5. If required, request the Communications Unit to assist with design and in-house printing of posters to be displayed in public libraries, tourism offices and area offices, and on official municipal notice boards and visible public entrances to the municipal building.
6. If required, request the Communications Unit to assist with design of flyers/leaflets.

8. 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 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 Executive Mayor.
- The Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager act as official spokespersons.
- **No media statement from or interview with any other officials is allowed.**
- Staff members are kept informed of the situation *via the Office of the Municipal Manager or Communications Unit*.

A long-term crisis, such as a potential ESKOM blackout, requires this policy to be amended where necessary to reflect the nature of the crisis.

9. Policy for 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 George Municipality's corporate identity:

- 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 font, the use of logos and corporate identity.
- The official municipal logo used as prescribed in the corporate-identity manual

A policy for branding and corporate identity is best developed with an advertising agency. *The sourcing and appointment of such an agency will be researched and budgeted for in the new financial year.* This policy would specify graphic elements and details, and when and how they are to be used.

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. The Communications Unit can provide input in this regard.

10. 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.

11. Language policy

The Constitution of South Africa provides that municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of the community. The three primary languages spoken in George Municipality are Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English. All important and/or mandated communication (for example notices of application for indigent status, IDP meetings and so on) must be published in all three languages. The audience may determine the choice of language used in communications. The cost implications to developing and implementing a language policy that encompasses all three languages have acted as a barrier so far.

An addendum to this policy (See Appendix 4: The Minutes: Executive Mayor in Committee Meeting 21 July 2004) provides clarity on the decision to maintain current language practice.

12. Rules of Council for media

The Rules of Order, established in terms of Municipal Act 117 (1998), aim to allow free and constructive debate during Council meetings. The Council must conduct its business in an open manner and may close its meetings only when it is reasonable to do so.

However, the members of the public and media are subject to the authority of the Speaker and may not at any time:

- Address the meeting unless s/he is a member of a deputation.
- Obstruct the business of the meeting.
- Make any interjections.
- Make unwelcome suggestions, innuendoes, remarks or advances of a sexual nature.
- Use threatening, abusive or insulting language or display such signs.
- Make unwelcome or obscene gestures.
- *Request permission from the Speaker prior to recording, videoing, or photographing any events during the Council session. The Speaker to ensure that all Councillors are aware that they are being recorded, videotaped or photographed.*

In the event of the above occurring, the Speaker may request the removal of the member of the public or media.

Policy review

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

Executive summary

A communication strategy provides a profile/framework for planning communication activities against which the Communications Unit can test its decisions. A communication strategy identifies the right problems to solve, the areas to prioritise and issues that need a planned approach. It also determines what should be communicated and to whom, in support of the municipality achieving its strategic objectives.

Clarity Editorial, commissioned by the Department of Local Government to compile a communication strategy in conjunction with George Municipality's Communications Unit, has undertaken both desktop and on-the-ground research to ascertain how the municipality's communication efforts are perceived by key stakeholders and whether these align with the municipality's strategic goals.

The findings indicate that on the whole residents perceive the way (quality and quantity) in which the municipality communicates as good to very good. In addition, our assessment indicates that current communication activities align with and support the municipality's strategic goals. For this reason, the strategy addresses weak points (identified through surveys, one-on-one interviews and a media scan) that could be improved upon through communication activities. These weak points were selected on the basis that they undermined the municipality's attainment of its strategic goals. For example, a strategic goal is to grow George's economy. This rests on the inclusion of business. According to the research, business perceives the municipality as exclusively pro-poor and feels marginalised. The strategy therefore identifies as one of its key objectives that "private business should feel acknowledged and supported by the municipality" and through the action plan provides recommendations on how to do this.

The Communications Unit has capacity and budget constraints and therefore the strategy and resultant action plan focus primarily on activities that will align existing communication activities to the objectives, on those which do not incur additional costs and on those that can be implemented easily. Campaign ideas generated through a workshop with senior municipal officials will require budget sourced from elsewhere and will rest on interdepartmental cooperation and additional capacity for the Communications Unit.

An action plan is also presented, along with a budget for one municipal year, a communication policy and a monitoring and evaluation framework.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1. Overview

The Western Cape Department of Local Government commissioned Clarity Editorial in late 2014 to work with the George Municipality's Communications Unit to draft an integrated communication strategy. This strategy document is a product of four months of desktop research, a media audit and perceptions audit conducted with key stakeholders in the town, one-on-one interviews held with opinion setters and municipal management, and an interactive workshop held with key municipal officials.

The strategy provides a brief background to the municipality, with a particular focus on its changing demographic profile and the way in which this affects a communication strategy. It then summarises the municipality's strategic goals, as outlined in the September 2014 Mayoral Lekgotla report, before outlining the research process and key findings. The strategy presents a SWOT analysis of the current capacity in the municipality for communication activities before outlining key strategic communication issues and stakeholders. It then presents an overview of the recommended key messages and aligned communication channels. It also provides an action plan with budget for one municipal year and a monitoring and evaluation tool to measure the effect of the strategy over time.

2. George's changing demographic profile

George Municipality, a category B municipality with 25 wards, is about 440 kilometres to the southeast of Cape Town. It is part of the Eden District Municipality, which has the third-largest economy in the Western Cape and is the third-largest geographical area in the province. The district is informally known as the Garden Route. The George municipal area extends over 5 000 square kilometres, encompassing the city of George, the villages of Wilderness and Herolds Bay, coastal resorts such as Victoria Bay and Kleinkrantz and rural areas such as Rondevlei, Geelhoutboom, Herold, Hansmoeskraal, Waboomskraal, Uniondale and Haarlem. It enjoys a strategic location on the N2 highway and facilitates the movement of people, goods and services between Cape Town and the Eastern Cape.

The city began life as a Dutch East India Company outpost in the late 1700s. A European manager oversaw the timber outpost, manned by 12 woodcutters, a blacksmith and a wagonmaker and their families who, along with the small wandering bands of the original Khoi-San inhabitants, settled the region. The outpost produced wagons, timber for houses and furniture from the abundance of natural forest in the region at the time.

The first slave arrived at the Cape from Malaysia in 1653, followed by many more until the abolition of importation of slaves from Asia and the abolition of slavery in 1807. The “Slave Tree” in George stands as testimony to the use of slaves as cheap labour in the early years of the region’s history. The British occupied the Cape in 1795 and appointed their own caretaker of the regional forests. Following Britain’s second occupation in 1806, colonial authorities divided the region into smaller units and demarcated George as a separate district in 1811. The town is named after King George III of England. George gained municipal status in 1937.

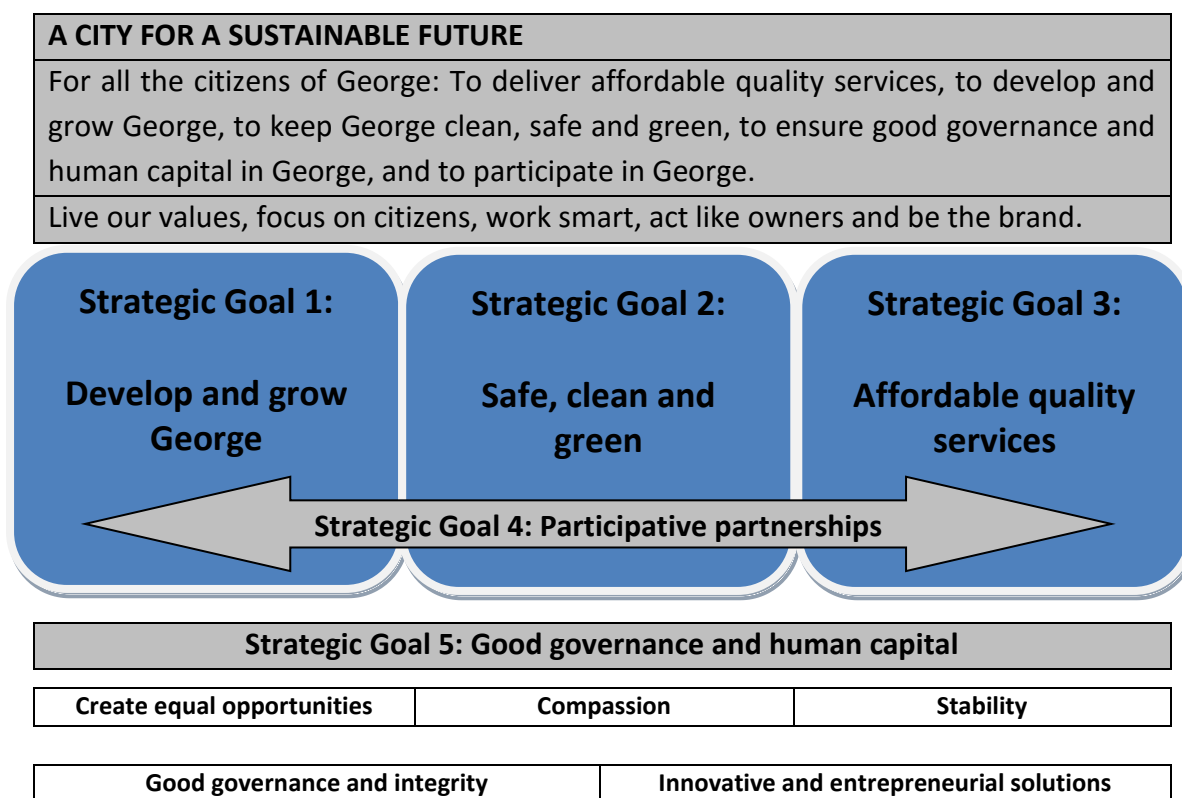
Early European settlers in the town from the late 1700s onwards were of Dutch descent. Most worked in the timber industry. The railroad built in 1907, along with improvements in roads and communication, led to unprecedented growth for the town. These settlers were joined in the early 1900s by Afrikaans “bywoners” living over the mountain in the Oudtshoorn region who had lost their livelihoods during the slump in the ostrich feather industry and drought. These settlers also sought to make a living from the forests. In 1922, official forest settlements were built and the government moved trouble-making working-class whites, including those of British descent, from Johannesburg here. In addition, a small number of Italian immigrants had moved to the area in the late 1800s. By 1939 all woodcutters had been removed from the forest and given a government pension.

George’s population grew steadily, with the first population boom in the 1960s, attributed to improvements in the local economy, occurring mainly among coloured residents. A second population boom occurred between 1980 and 1986 as apartheid pass laws were relaxed and many black Africans from the Eastern Cape began moving to the region. The biggest increase in population has occurred post-1996 as black Africans increasingly leave the economically depressed Eastern Cape searching for better opportunities. High numbers of white retirees moving to George from Gauteng further contribute to population growth. These trends show no signs of slowing down. The population increased by 29% between 2001 and 2011.

The 2011 census indicates that the population of George comprises just over 50% coloured, nearly 30% black African and nearly 20% white people, totalling 193 672. The most widely spoken language is Afrikaans (65.6%), followed by isiXhosa (21.25%), English (8%), Sesotho (0.54%) and Setswana (0.35%). This shift in demographics has implications for a communication strategy as different cultural groups will have different “memories” (internal histories) of George. They also speak different languages, have different expectations and have different methods and experiences of interacting with government.

3. The municipality's vision, mission and strategic goals¹

George Municipality's vision is to build a "city for a sustainable future" that will "live on its values", "focus on citizens", "work smart", "act like owners" and "live the brand". Giving effect to this vision, the September 2014 Mayoral Lekgotla report outlines five strategic goals.



Source: Mayoral Lekgotla report, September 2014

4. The municipality's communication mandate

Municipalities are the level of government closest to the people with the responsibility of communicating with them about the issues that affect their lives the most – service delivery, safety, transport infrastructure, economic development and so on. The Constitution mandates local government to ensure that citizens participate actively in policy formation and that the results of their participation and feedback on implementation are provided in an effective and easily understood way, in all of the relevant languages. George Municipality's 2014/15 *Integrated Development Plan* (IDP) emphasises the importance of increasing public input into strategic decision-making and of establishing a culture of participation. It also notes that communication should be viewed as a strategic management function and form an integral part of the municipality's daily functioning.

¹ Note that the vision, mission and strategic goals were still subject to Council approval at time of publication of this communication strategy.

This communication strategy aims to enable the delivery of high standards of communication and information provision aligned with the municipality's mandate and strategic goals. It reinforces the notion that communication must be open and transparent and that information channels must be accessible to all residents. It is an expression of the municipality's vision, mission and strategic objectives.

Effective communication at a municipal level has the benefit of increasing public participation in local strategy and decision-making processes, such as the IDP. It can encourage the public to share in the vision of the town, decrease tension between groups with political or economic differences and empower individuals to embrace and enforce the shared values of their town.

Simple, yet powerful, communication is the primary element of a strong relationship between a municipality and its citizens. It is only this strong relationship built on the trust brought about by effective communication that will bring about meaningful social change.

4.1 Existing communication capacity and landscape

Communication as a function is assigned to the Acting Director: Strategic Services and is supervised by the Municipal Manager. Within this department, a dedicated media liaison officer, with one assistant, manages the communication portfolio.

Existing external communication activities and channels

Currently external communication activities focus on informing stakeholders of available services and programmes, as well as mandated events (for example, IDP meetings and registration dates for indigent status). Communication channels currently in use include:

- Print media (newspapers and magazines)
- Social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter)
- Online platforms (website and community sites)
- Brochures, posters and flyers on an *ad hoc* basis
- Complimentary editorial space in the local newspaper
- Paid advertorials and adverts in local newspapers
- Community radio (weekly radio slot and 4x30-second radio adverts daily on Eden FM, Suidkaap Radio, Algoa FM (Garden Route 15:00-19:00) and SABC)
- Newsletters (45 000 quarterly two-page newsletters sent with service accounts plus a further 8 000 by email)
- Newspaper (15 000 copies of a quarterly tabloid distributed)
- Corporate documents (IDP report and the municipal annual report)
- Public meetings, such as housing imbizos and service delivery indabas

- Dedicated meetings, such as police forums, ward committee meetings and community meetings
- Complaint channels
- SABC television
- Bulk SMS (Finance Directorate, Traffic Department and the Speaker's Office; the political office that communicates with ward committee members, councillors and MAYCO (Portfolio Councillors))
- Use of loudhailer when necessary.

Existing internal communication activities and channels

Internal communication focuses on human resources, government programmes, birthdays and colleagues' 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. Communication channels currently in use include:

- Departmental newsletters
- Posters
- Notice boards
- Emails
- Training sessions
- Staff meetings
- Informal channels – personal interaction and WhatsApp and SMS messaging.

5. Drafting the communication strategy

Drafting the strategy involved undertaking desktop research, a perceptions audit with key stakeholders in George, a media scan of press coverage of the municipality and conducting one-on-one interviews with individuals representing the business and tourism sectors, the media and non-governmental organisations, as well as an interactive workshop conducted with senior municipal officials.

5.1 The research process

The desktop research encompassed reviewing all relevant materials including George Municipality's revised IDP to understand the policy environment the municipality operates in and its strategic direction. The team reviewed the most recent report from the Mayoral Lekgotla, held in September 2014, to align the strategy with the increased emphasis on improving the municipality's service offering. It audited the media coverage given to the municipality over the last 12 months before conducting one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in the town, including those working in the tourism and business sector, the municipality itself, Ward Councillors, media and members of the public, from restaurant owners to street traders.

To gain a deeper sense of the public's perception of the municipality, the team undertook a survey with Ward Councillors to understand how they communicate with their constituents and how the municipality communicates with them. It also conducted an email survey with over 60 key stakeholders in the town, including tourism operators, hotels and guesthouses, mall managers, conference facilities and legal firms to understand how these sectors perceive the municipality's communication efforts and to gather their views on how the municipality could improve in this regard. Finally, Clarity Editorial hosted an interactive workshop with senior municipal officials to gauge their knowledge of existing communication channels and gather information on how they could use these more effectively. The workshop also aimed to elicit a deeper understanding by participants of the multi-layered nature of communication.

5.2 The research results

The research revealed, without a doubt, that George Municipality has a good reputation among its key constituencies. While there is room for improvement in terms of its communication activities, the overall perception is that the municipality is fulfilling its mandate. In addition, it is at the forefront of some exciting initiatives, such as the GO GEORGE bus service and has an excellent reputation regarding financial management.

The municipality has been awarded prizes across a range of focus areas over the past five years including the Wilson Award for best Waste Water Treatment Plant in South Africa and the Kamoso Award for Best Municipal Maintenance Project. It also won six Diamond Arrow Awards from *Professional Management Review Africa* for having proactive mayors; doing the most to attract foreign and local investment, as well as tourism, to the region; and doing the most to clean the environment. In 2014, it was given the prestigious Western Cape and National Govan Mbeki Award for Best Informal Settlements Upgrading.

There is strong and proactive leadership in the municipality that aims to raise the bar even further in terms of service delivery and move from "good to great" as indicated in the September 2014 Mayoral Lekgotla report. This communication strategy aims to support the implementation of the municipality's IDP and to align with the latest strategic direction provided by the Mayoral Lekgotla.

Overall, groups across a broad socioeconomic spectrum perceive the municipality as being well run and reasonably responsive to the needs of its citizens. On average, respondents rate the municipality's communication efforts as good to very good. In particular, 90% of respondents commented on the cleanliness of the town and the effort put in by the municipality to keep it clean. The most common complaint was around vandalism and maintenance issues regarding Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses.

All residents have access to sanitation and running water and 99% have access to legal electricity services, even in informal settlements. The perception of how people are dealt with by the municipality differs: some have experienced very friendly and prompt service, some feel sidelined and unimportant – these tend to be poorer residents. The Council will soon adopt a Service Delivery Charter and Service Standards, drafted by Corporate Services, for the municipality that will address customer relations.

5.3 Key findings

Note that these findings were drawn from the responses of a sample group and a more extensive survey would reveal more in-depth information, particularly regarding how residents receive and would prefer to receive communication from the municipality. However, for the purposes of this strategy, the data compiled from the sample group highlights key issues that are relevant to municipal communication efforts.

Participation in municipal events, such as IDP meetings

Participation at IDP meetings increased last year due to an expanded communication drive using flyer drops and posters in the poorer areas. Reasons for poor attendance include lack of transport, working hours and needing to be home with the children; a lack of concern from some as their basic service needs were met; and some were disillusioned as to whether participation at these meetings has any real effect. Wealthier residents tended to be unaware of IDP processes and that they had a right and were welcome to attend.

Residents' perception of municipal communication efforts

Most respondents rated the municipality's communication efforts as good to very good. However, there is a marked difference in how residents and businesses want the municipality to communicate with them. Most respondents would prefer that the municipality communicate with them once a month.

While posters and flyers are effective and relatively cheap and the radio is ubiquitous, many of those that work and return home late in the evening do not access these communication platforms. In addition, working and single parents can often not attend evening meetings.

The favourite channels for communication are SMS (note that close on 85% of residents have access to a cellphone), email (for those with access), the *George Herald* and *Die Burger*, Umhlobo Wenene radio station, Facebook, the municipal website and newsletters. Note that survey participants were asked to rank their favourite means of communication and for that reason existing mediums such as Eden FM might not appear on this list.

There has been a move towards building a comprehensive municipal SMS system, but there are cost challenges to rolling this out to the entire town for all communication purposes. Currently bulk SMS messaging is used by the Finance Directorate, Traffic Department and Political Office. There are severe cost implications for its use as a messaging medium for Eskom alerts, for example, as these are ongoing and change rapidly.

Media's perception of municipal communication efforts

Relationships with media organisations and individuals are long-term ones and need to be nurtured. Currently the municipality has a relatively good relationship with local newspapers and the radio stations. However, there is a perception that the municipality is defensive towards the media and that there is sometimes a delay in issuing the required information prior to print dates. This becomes particularly problematic when dealing with online news mediums. There is also a perception that the municipality is crisis driven as opposed to proactive regarding incidents that might receive negative coverage. In addition, there is a sense that the same people are profiled repeatedly in the media and this could lead to the municipality losing credibility.

Businesses' perception of municipal communication efforts

There is a perception that the municipality has a predominantly pro-poor approach. Businesses report that they find it difficult to meet with municipal officials and access funding or support for initiatives not directly related to social development, particularly in the tourism and environmental fields. This has negative implications for accelerated economic growth.

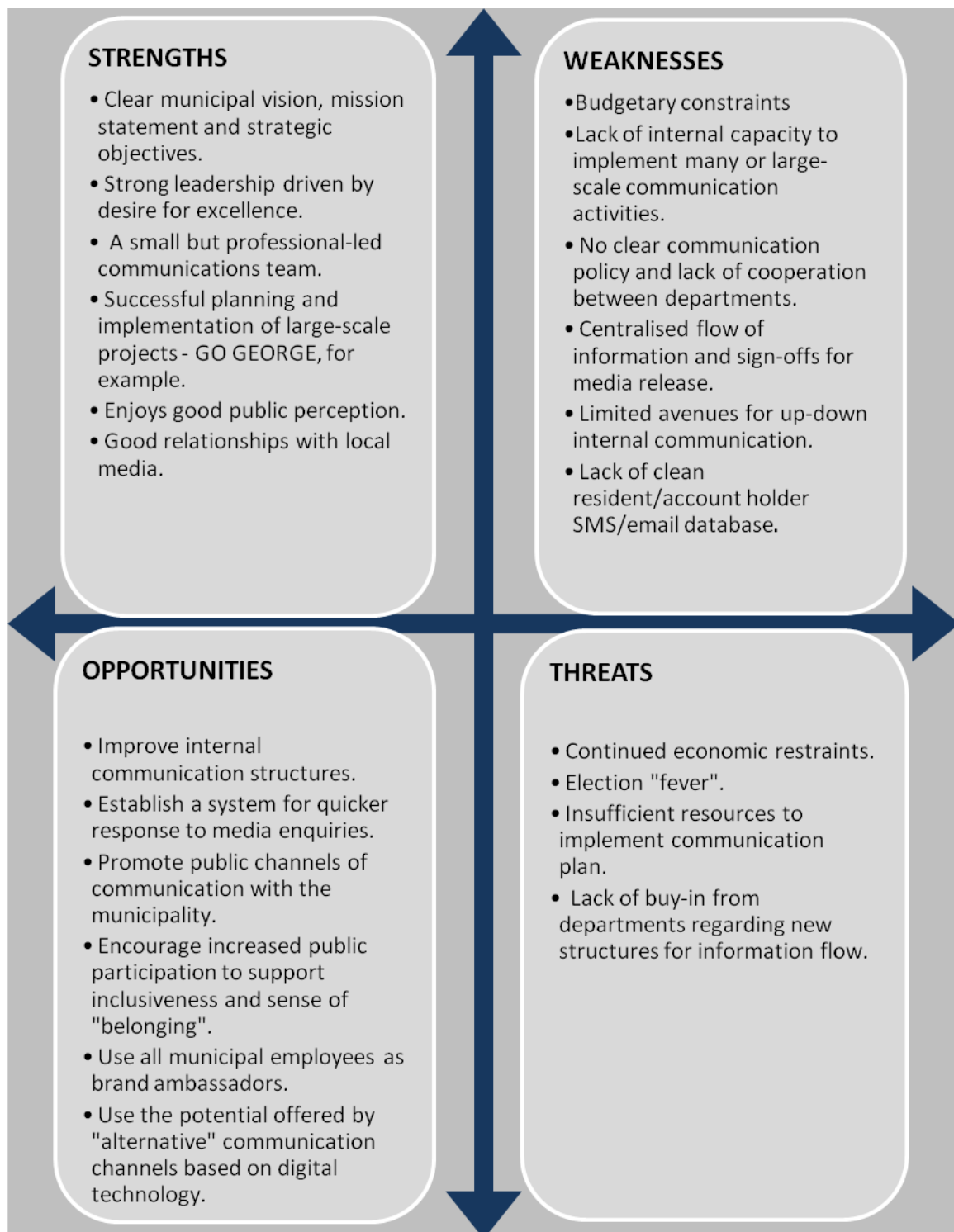
Perception of internal communications

While there are many meetings (perhaps too many), information seems to flow sideways as opposed to up and down and lower-level workers are not empowered with the information they need to become brand ambassadors or front-line information vendors for the municipality. Each department sends out their own newsletter, and there is a lack of consistent messaging and branding in communication outputs across all departments. These newsletters are not always supplied in all three languages.

Perception of communication ability of Ward Councillors

Conducting the survey among the Ward Councillors revealed that many do not answer their phones. They were repeatedly called over the space of a week, with no success. Very few have voicemail messaging options. One out of 22 returned a missed call. Most do not have easy access to email, do not check it regularly and do not respond. In short, they have poor communication skills, which is concerning given that they are a direct communication line to residents.

5.4 SWOT analysis of the municipality's communication abilities



6. Key communication objectives and messaging

Based on the data gathered throughout the research process and the SWOT analysis, the team identified key communication objectives within a broader framework focused on supporting the strategic objectives outlined in the Mayoral Lekgotla report.

Factors taken into account when determining the key objectives included the budget limitation for the Communications Unit, the potential to contribute towards cost savings for the municipality and the need to use existing channels and cost-effective, easily implemented means of communication given the staff capacity constraints in the unit.

Note that the Communications Unit currently conducts extensive communication activities using all available channels (including print, radio, SMS, posters, community newspapers and newsletters) to communicate to residents. The overall perception of residents of municipal communication methods is good to very good. In short, the work already being done addresses the municipality's strategic goals effectively and caters to all residents of George. Current communication activities speak to the municipality's goals of delivering affordable quality services; developing and growing George; keeping George clean, safe and green; ensuring good governance and building human capital.

For this reason, the research aimed to identify weak points in current activities that if resolved would help the municipality achieve its strategic goals and improve its communication offering. The communication objectives address these weaknesses and opportunities directly.

On using intermediaries

The strategy relies heavily on using intermediaries (respected members of the community, Ward Councillors, municipal employees and so on) to convey information to residents. This is more cost- and time-effective than engaging in mass campaigns at broad target groups.

Intermediaries often have captive audiences and mass support, and have insider knowledge of the group's worldviews and patterns of behaviour. There is a risk in that the municipality cannot control the manner in which the intermediary approaches the target group or conveys the message; however, clear, concise and targeted messaging mitigates this risk.

The Communications Unit will need to direct the key communication messages derived from the objectives towards strategic stakeholders to have the most effect.

6.1 Identification of strategic stakeholders

Stakeholders are those that the municipality affects with its decisions and whose decisions can affect the municipality. Strategic stakeholders are those that are crucial to the municipality achieving its strategic objectives. The Communications Unit must focus its efforts on planning and budgeting for communication activities with these groups.

The national and Western Cape government and the Eden District Municipality are enabling strategic stakeholders. They are, however, not included in the list below as there are existing functional communication channels between them and George Municipality that fall outside of the mandate of the Communications Unit. Those with diffused linkages to the municipality (those individuals not associated to scale in a group) are also excluded from the list. All George residents and ratepayers are obviously key stakeholders; however, current communication activities already reach this group in an effective manner, and residents are happy with the quantity and quality of the messaging they receive from the municipality. This messaging is already aligned with the municipality's strategic goals. For this reason, the strategy selected key stakeholders on the basis that by targeting these groups, weaknesses in current activities would be mitigated.

PRIVATE BUSINESS - A functional linkage – uses and contributes to municipal offering.

- Encompasses financial services, tourism sector, retail, construction and catering.
- Contributes to strategic goals 1: Grow George, 3: Affordable quality services and 4: Participative partnerships.
- Potential for participative partnerships to develop human capital, expanding tourism offering, sponsorship for municipal initiatives, etc.

MEDIA - A normative linkage – can contribute to solving shared problems.

- Encompasses newspapers (print and online), radio channels, television and websites.
- Contributes to strategic goals 1: Grow George, 2: Safe, clean and green, 3: Affordable quality services, 4: Participative partnerships and 5: Good governance and human capital.
- Plays a role in promoting awareness of strategic goals and vision and progress.
- Potential to elevate municipal profile on local and national level, encourage participation in municipal initiatives, mitigate against negative perceptions, etc.

EMPLOYEES/WARD COUNCILLORS/LABOUR UNIONS - Functional and normative linkages.

- Encompasses all municipal employees, as well as the Ward Councillors and labour unions.
- Contributes to Strategic Goal 5: Good governance and human capital.
- Potential to elevate municipal profile on local level, act as cost-effective information channels, mitigate against negative perceptions, act as brand ambassadors, raise awareness of vision, mission and strategic goals.

COMMUNITY LEADERS & ORGANISATIONS/ GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS - Normative link.

- Encompasses school principals, clinic staff, social workers, bus and taxi drivers, ratepayers associations, NGOs, as well as those working in government departments.
- Contributes to Strategic Goal 5: Good governance and human capital.
- Potential to increase participation at IDP meetings, mitigate against negative perceptions, act as cost-effective communication channels, raise awareness of vision, mission and strategic goals.

6.2 Messaging to key stakeholders

Messaging should be simple and direct. It 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.

The message must reflect the communication objective of changing knowledge, attitude and behaviour. These objectives require different approaches – informative, emotional or action orientated. **Note that the messages highlighted below are illustrative of the recommended tone and need to be adapted to the context in which they are used: language, educational attainment, cultural values, and so on.**

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.

Message: *George – a city with a sustainable future.*

Action:

- Mandate that all correspondence from the municipality (email signatures, rates bills, newsletters, etc) should carry the slogan "A sustainable city for all" and the relevant goal.
- Brand municipal offices, vehicles and uniforms with the vision, mission and strategic goals.
- Investigate the options for "advertising" on the GO GEORGE buses and bus stops.
- Investigate the options of branding clothing for purchase by municipal staff, for example warm jackets for winter at reduced prices and T-shirts for casual Fridays.

Communication objective 2: Residents should be able to easily communicate with the municipality about their concerns

This objective supports Strategic Goal 4: Participative partnerships and Strategic Goal 5: Good governance and human capital.

Often people use the words "information" and "communication" interchangeably, but they mean very different things. Information is giving out – it is a one-way flow – while communication is getting through to people, implying 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, Twitter, IDP and general public meetings). Some of these are one-way channels for

distributing information. Promoting the use of two-way channels (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) is a prerequisite to beginning and continuing to have a conversation with residents.

Residents feeling heard and that their concerns are important to the municipality, mitigates the finding that ratepayers often feel that they are not appreciated and that there is a lack of municipal presence in some communities.

Message: *Speak to us. We are listening. Take part in the conversation.*

Communication objective 3: Empower municipal employees as brand ambassadors

This objective supports the mission statement and values outlined in the Mayoral Lekgotla report of “acting like owners” and “being the brand” and Strategic Goal 5: Good governance and human capital.

Empowering municipal employees, at all levels, with the information they need to be brand ambassadors and information conduits to George’s various communities is the most cost-effective and powerful way for the municipality to reach out to residents.

A special note on Ward Councillors

Given the direct access residents have to Ward Councillors and the valuable role they play as information conduits between residents and the municipality, it is imperative that they are trained in effective communication techniques.

Message: *Love your work, live the brand. You speak for us. You embody our strategic goals.*

Mediums: Meetings, WhatsApp messages, newsletters (in all relevant languages), change management workshops.

Support: A set of more detailed messages supports the primary message. These are communicated over time and could include:

- Municipal employees are front-line ambassadors for the municipality.
- The municipality values all employees and the important role they play in communicating with residents.

Communication objective 4: Increase involvement in public participation processes

This objective aims to support Strategic Goal 1: Growing George with a focus on its citizens and their needs, Strategic Goal 4: Participative partnerships and Strategic Goal 5: Good governance and human capital.

The municipality wishes to increase public participation in municipal processes, in particular the IDP meetings. The increased and collaborative communication efforts (more pamphlet drops, posters and flyers and interdepartmental funding) in 2014 led to higher numbers participating in the meetings, indicating that the communication efforts were successful. However, sustaining long-term involvement in public participation processes, such as the IDP, rests on instilling a culture of participation around these types of processes. The IDP process is used as an example below; this can be extended to all public participation processes.

The municipality needs to educate around the IDP purpose and process to engender a sense of inclusiveness and ownership of this important collaboration platform between the municipality and residents, the results of which shape the future of the city. This requires a shift in knowledge, which will change attitudes and then behaviour over time.

Message: *You matter to us. Your voice counts, not just your vote. Join the IDP conversation and help shape George's future as a sustainable city.*

Mediums: Editorial space in newspapers, radio shows, posters, flyers, website and Facebook.

Support: A set of more detailed messages supports the primary message. These are communicated over time and could include:

- The IDP process is used to determine what the municipality spends its budget on.
- Everybody is welcome to attend and participate at IDP meetings.
- Residents have a right to know progress towards IDP goals and budget allocations.
- The more input people give at IDP meetings the more the plan will be relevant and responsive to resident's needs.

Communication objective 5: Private business should feel acknowledged and supported by the municipality

This objective supports attainment of Strategic Goal 1: Grow George and Strategic Goal 4: Participative partnerships.

Private business plays an integral role in helping to develop and grow the economy of George. There needs to be a visible balance between attention given to business, particularly given the focus on increasing economic growth, and the needs of the poor in the city.

Message: *Business matters. Partnering for growth.*

Mediums: Targeted press releases, annual reports, business forums, business breakfasts, dedicated time with the Mayor and Municipal Manager.

Support: A set of more detailed messages supports the primary message. These are communicated over time and could include:

- The municipality appreciates the role played by business in developing George.
- The municipality acknowledges business as an important partner in achieving its strategic goals.
- The municipality is open to public-private partnerships that align with the strategic goals.

Communication objective 6: Improve flow of internal communications, particularly between senior levels, administration and general workers

The objective aligns with Strategic Goal 5: Good governance and human capital.

There is a lack of up-down communication in the municipality and often those working for the municipality are the last to know of important events or decisions. There is also a lack of consistent collaboration regarding communications between departments and between departments and the public and hence a missed opportunity for strengthening the municipal brand and messaging opportunities.

Message: *We are all on the same team. Help us help George.*

Mediums: Staff meetings, notice boards, WhatsApp (informal channel), newsletters, training sessions, emails.

Support: A set of more detailed messages supports the primary message. These are communicated over time and could include:

- Regardless of what role you play in the municipality, you are part of the team.
- You are a front-line representative of the municipality.
- Be informed about what the municipality's plans are for George.

Communication objective 7: The media should provide balanced and informed views on municipal activities

This objective aligns with Strategic Goal 4: Participative partnerships and Strategic Goal 5: Good governance and human capital.

Relationships need to be nurtured over a long time. To this end, the municipality should consider “embedding” journalists in some of its activities, processes and initiatives to ensure that the journalist has a balanced understanding of what happens behind the scenes. Given the shift to digital media and the immediacy with which it operates, it is important to ensure that all municipal officials understand at all times what projects, initiatives and policies the municipality is initiating and its official stance on important issues.

Message: *Transparent governance. Inclusive leadership. Proactive municipality.*

Mediums: Press releases, press briefings, invitations to launches, invitations for behind-the-scenes excursions, interviews with key officials, annual media brunches, training sessions.

Possible campaign ideas

A series of campaign ideas emerged during the research process. These would have to be aligned with municipal capacity and have the buy-in from departmental directors to ensure a sustainable and long-term effect. The campaigns listed below address several issues simultaneously: they align with the strategic goals, they have multiple benefits and they present an opportunity to reduce costs. In addition, the research indicates that existing campaigns run by individual departments and allied to the IDP could be better coordinated by harmonising the themes each month to ensure a wider reach, while minimising budget requirements.

It must be noted that the potential scenario of an Eskom blackout provides the opportunity for an integrated campaign focused particularly on water and waste management, as well as managing electricity demand.

Keep George safe, clean and green

Waste management is a key problem area for the municipality as illegal dumping and littering incurs additional costs. However, the problem also provides an opportunity to shift George towards a sustainable future, particularly given the building of a new dump site, the shift to moving waste by rail to Mossel Bay instead of road, the proposed plans to incorporate the current “pickers” into recycling initiatives, and the existing recycling programme run in the town.

Waste is a priority environmental issue and running a campaign around waste and recycling aligns with Strategic Goal 2: Keep George safe, clean and green. It also feeds into the vision statement of a “city for a sustainable future” given the up- and downstream impact that waste has on the environment. An integrated campaign around waste management would serve to educate and include all residents in the vision of a clean, green George.

Build George, don't break it

Vandalism of private and public property is also an issue for the municipality. Many of the complaints made by residents are about vandalism, and there are cost implications to the municipality for vandalism of public property, in particular cable theft. An integrated campaign around vandalism would lead to cost savings and to building a culture of inclusiveness and belonging.

Planting for the future

Linking a tree-planting initiative (particularly fruit trees) with environmental awareness initiatives around climate change, for example, and to the Botanical Garden serves multiple purposes. It speaks to Strategic Goal 1: Develop and grow George in terms of building tourism offerings, Strategic Goal 2: Keep George safe, clean and green and Strategic Goal 5: Good governance and human capital.

ACTION PLAN

1. Introduction

The action plan focuses on aligning existing communication channels with the strategic objectives of the municipality and of the communication strategy. This is to provide a consistent base for messaging across all channels. It also provides recommended actions based on the strategic objectives outlined in the strategy document. The action plan does not impose a rigid structure to activities given that the Communications Unit is already running a full communications function. The recommended actions deal primarily with internal communication and key stakeholders, with additional recommendations around building long-term communication relationships and those for action by the Mayor and the Municipal Manager.

A separate section is dedicated to campaign communication, in particular the opportunity offered by the potential Eskom blackout.

Please note that given the budget and staff capacity constraints faced by the Communications Unit, these actions should be implemented as and when possible. Some of them will require commitment by municipal leadership and additional funding from outside the communication budget. The recommendations serve as “big picture” actions to guide communication activities.

2. Current communication commitments

This action plan acknowledges that much of the work done by the Communications Unit is of a planning nature and that much time is spent in meetings. In addition, the unit deals with media enquiries, issues press releases, produces quarterly newsletters and newspapers, implements social media updates, updates the website and manages specific communication activities for GO GEORGE.

2.1 A special focus on events

The Communications Unit spends a lot of time at pre-event and event meetings and is often tasked at late notice to provide communication assistance for different departments. Departmental planning for activities around annual events appears either *ad hoc* or is not communicated in advance to the Communications Unit. This places an unnecessary burden on the unit, which is then not able to deliver coordinated and effective messaging aligned with the strategy. The unit currently attends pre-event meetings and events, organises media and promotion, and publicises events on social media and online platforms.

Appendix 1 contains a draft events calendar comprising the annual events calendar supplied by the Communications Unit and relevant events drawn from the official national government calendar. This calendar acts as a base template for the municipality's official events calendar and should be updated regularly. The calendar will also be sent as an Excel spreadsheet to enable updating.

Recommended actions for events

- Send the calendar of events to all directorates and ask them to reply with an indication of activities they will be planning aligned with any events. Also ask them to indicate if they will require assistance from the Communications Unit and what form this assistance will take. If preferable, this can be done on a monthly basis; however, having a broad overview of what is expected during the year would be beneficial in terms of long-term planning for the Communications Unit.
- Use social media software tools (such as TweetDeck) that enable preloading of Facebook and Twitter messages with automated release on designated dates. This task can be delegated to the media assistant with sign-off responsibilities remaining with the media liaison/communications manager.

Note that while it might stretch the capacity of the Communications Unit to be involved in detailed planning and support for departmental event activities, this is a crucial point of intervention to ensure consistent municipal messaging aligned with the strategic goals. Taking into account the limited capacity of the unit, it is recommended that the unit designs an information pack for each department regarding event planning and management. Such an information pack could include the following:

- The official municipal stand on issues such as women's rights, water issues, environmental policy and so on.
- The official logo, vision, mission and strategic goals.
- A copy of the communications policy.
- A checklist of actions:
 - Notify the Communications Unit of planned activities.
 - Send the Communications Unit a list of planned invitees.
 - Request an official press release for such activities.
 - Request any additional support envisaged regarding communication.

It is hoped that being proactive in this manner might formalise the way in which individual departments organise themselves regarding events in terms of advance planning, the need to include the Communications Unit from activity initiation and implement consistent messaging and branding within their individual campaigns and events.

3. Recommended activities

As noted previously, most of the actions listed below serve to align messaging and the municipal brand. Some of these are once-off actions and serve to provide a consistent base for communication. They should be implemented as soon as the Council has approved the new vision, mission and strategic goals for George.

The activities have been grouped according to the capacity and resources needed to implement them. Those in the first tier are within the current capacity of the Communications Unit and will need to be actioned within time restraints imposed by the current schedule. Budget allocations for each are given in the recommended budget associated with the communication strategy and action plan.

Those in the first and second tiers aim to update information and standardise channels for internal communication, to reach the key stakeholders identified in the strategy, to build up long-term media relationships on a local and national level, to increase the profile of George on a regional and national level and improve internal communication levels. Others are intended to galvanise communication with all residents and the key stakeholders outlined in the strategy document. They should be implemented as capacity and budgets allow. Some will require municipal leadership buy-in and budget allocated from outside that of the Communications Unit. Please refer to the key for the table below, which indicates the tiered approach, which is detailed in the recommended budget.

Key: Possible within current budget Possible with additional capacity and increased budget Possible with additional capacity and budget Not within the ambit of the Communications Unit.

Table 1: Actions aligned with the communication objective and strategic goals

Communication objective	Aligned with strategic goals	Action	Capacity & resources
Increase involvement in public participation processes.	1: Grow George 4: Participative partnerships 5: Good governance and human capital	Identify and train respected community members around public participation processes (church leaders, clinic nurses, teachers, bus and taxi drivers and social workers).	Council approval. Facilitated by Communications Unit. Outsourced to trainer.
		Organise with schools for a slot for a speaker to discuss the IDP process and purpose.	Council approval. Facilitated by Communications Unit. Outsourced to speaker.

<p>Improve flow of internal communications, particularly between senior levels, administration and general employees.</p>	<p>5: Good governance and human capital</p>	<p>Implement regular briefing systems in a vertical chain to improve employees' understanding of the municipality's vision, mission and goals.</p>	<p>Council approval. Implemented by senior-level staff. Facilitated by Communications Unit.</p>
		<p>Design a newsletter template for use by all departments with consistent branding and dedicated space for key messages and vital information.</p>	<p>Outsourced to designer. Facilitated by Communications Unit.</p>
		<p>Mandate that all email signatures include the vision statement and all five strategic goals – Will form part of the Corporate Identity Manual.</p>	<p>Council approval. Facilitated by Communications Unit.</p>
		<p>Compile and install standardised "letterheads" for all departmental notice boards – Will form part of the Corporate Identity Manual</p>	<p>Council approval. Facilitated by Communications Unit.</p>
		<p>Create a WhatsApp group for staff to convey urgent information.</p>	<p>Facilitated by Communications Unit. The Human Resources Department should be able to provide a database of employee cell numbers.</p>
		<p>Ensure access for all staff to the intranet.</p>	<p>Mayor and Municipal Manager approval. Facilitated by Communications Unit.</p>
		<p>Request time at the meetings of the Executive Council and department heads to introduce and go through the communication policy.</p>	<p>Facilitated by Communications Unit.</p>
		<p>Print posters of the communication policy</p>	<p>Facilitated by Communications Unit.</p>

		to go on all departmental notice boards.	
		Ask departmental heads to send the communication policy to all staff.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
Empower municipal employees as brand ambassadors.	The mission statement and values outlined in the Mayoral Lekgotla report of “acting like owners” and “being the brand. 5: Good governance and human capital	Bi-annual meetings between senior management and general employees.	Council approval. Implemented by senior management.
		Using channels described above to effectively disseminate information.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Use uniforms and municipal vehicles to “advertise” the goals of the municipality.	Council approval. Implemented by department heads. Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Provide Ward Councillors with communication training.	Facilitated by Communications Unit. Outsourced to trainer.
Private business should feel acknowledged and supported by the municipality.	1: Grow George 4: Participative partnerships	Delegate an official to attend business chamber meetings and ensure that feedback is circulated to senior municipal officials.	Executive approval. Communications Unit to facilitate feedback.
		Host an annual business breakfast meeting.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Set up a dedicated time for business to meet with the Municipal Manager or Mayor.	Executive approval. Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Produce a monthly press release focused on the interests of business.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Compile standardised information packs on the municipality for media and potential investors.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.

The media should provide balanced and informed views on municipal activities.	4: Participative partnerships 5: Good governance and human capital	Host annual media brunch with the Mayor and senior municipal officials.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Set up a standardised tour and training session for new journalists.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Provide briefing sheets outlining the municipal stance on topical issues for all departmental heads and senior staff.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Mandate a standard response time and process to media requests for information.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Decide which requests need administrative approval and which need political approval.	Mayor and Municipal Manager to approve. Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Select journalists to embed in ongoing projects to ensure they have a fuller, more balanced understanding of the project's potential, limitations and challenges.	Mayor and Municipal Manager to approve. Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Extend relationships to national media focused on innovative projects: identify "stories", particularly around resource management (wastewater treatment systems, waste systems, water issues, etc.) that would be of interest and send press releases on awards and projects with background information to	Facilitated by Communications Unit. Additional capacity required to build database.

		regional and national publications.	
		Extend relationships to academic institutions focused on innovative projects: identify “stories”, particularly around resource management (wastewater treatment systems, waste systems, water issues, etc.) that would be of interest and send press releases on awards and projects with background information to regional and national publications.	Facilitated by Communications Unit. Additional capacity required to build database.
Residents should be able to easily communicate with the municipality about their concerns.	4: Participative partnerships 5: Good governance	Actively advertise the existing channels through editorial space and adverts, and on the radio show, rates bills, newsletters and posters at clinics, schools and police stations.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Actively promote the online social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Use competitions to drive residents to the social media platforms.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Work towards creating a centralised complaint call centre with a follow-up system.	Council approval. Implemented by executive level.
All residents should know the municipality’s vision,	This objective aligns with the ethos of the municipality’s vision	Ensure that all correspondence from the municipality	Facilitated by Communications Unit.

mission and strategic goals.	and mission and serves to support attainment of all of its strategic goals.	carries the vision and strategic goals.	
		Update all communication platforms (Facebook, Twitter, website, etc.) with the new vision, mission and strategic goals.	Facilitated by Communications Unit
		Brand municipal offices, vehicles and uniforms with the vision, mission and strategic goals.	Council approval. Implemented by departmental heads. Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Investigate the options to “advertise” on the GO George buses and bus stops.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.
		Investigate the options for branding clothing for purchase by municipal staff.	Facilitated by Communications Unit.

A note on recommended actions not within the ambit of the Communications Unit

Actions designated under this heading require approval by the Mayor and the Municipal Manager and will need to be implemented by senior-level staff. The Communications Unit’s role in regard to the following encompasses making municipal management aware of the communication strategy and recommended actions and following up on their implementation, if approved.

Campaign communication

All campaigns should utilise the framework provided by the communication strategy in terms of using intermediaries and thus catalysing the actions recommended for communication objectives 2, 3, 5 and 7; in short, “selling” the municipality’s vision, mission and strategic goal (in terms of the campaign), including the media from the start to ensure balanced and informed coverage, empowering municipal employees as brand ambassadors and ensuring that all municipal staff are given the information they need to act as information conduits to the public.

It must be noted that the potential scenario of an Eskom blackout provides the opportunity for an integrated campaign focused particularly on water and waste management, as well as managing electricity demand. In addition, as funds will need to be allocated to these specific campaigns, which will require interdepartmental collaboration, this is the perfect opportunity to enact the strategy, particularly in

terms of keeping municipal employees fully informed, building up and using a database of intermediaries (school principals, clinic leaders, Ward Councillors and so on), and unifying action across departments.

George Municipality has established a centralised coordinating committee for developing, managing, communicating and executing a contingency plan for prolonged power outages.

RECOMMENDED BUDGET 2015/16

1. A tiered approach

Note that the provisional budget submitted by the Communications Unit was not yet approved on submission of this recommended budget. Tier 1 uses as a base the provisional budget submitted. The tiers correspond to the action plan, indicating what budgetary allocations are required to achieve Tier 1, 2 and 3 outcomes. Note that government's recently released *Back to Basics Communication Approach for Local Government 2014-2019* recommends allocating 1% of the municipal budget to communication.

Directorate: MUNICIPAL MANAGER Department: COMMUNICATION	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
Description:			
SALARIES			
- Communication manager (T15) required	XX	XX	XX
- Media liaison official (T12) in place			
- Assistant media liaison official (T10) in place			
- Assistant social media liaison officer (T10) required	XX	XX	XX
SUBSISTENCE & TRAVEL ALLOWANCE	40 000	40000	40000
INCIDENTAL TRAVEL	5 000	5000	5000
Sub-total			
GENERAL			
TRAINING			
- Ward councillor communication training (*1)			60000
- Identified community leader training (*2)			200000
COMMUNITY OUTREACH			
- Speakers on IDP purpose and process x 20 sessions			40000
ADVERTISEMENTS (Radio/Print/Online)	50000	50000	50000
DESIGN & PRINT			
- Municipal newspaper (x 4)	80000	80000	80000
- Municipal newsletter (x 4)	100000	100000	100000
- Template design		25000	25000
IN-HOUSE PRINTING (PHOTOCOPIER)	10000	10000	10000
PAPER	5000	5000	5000
PROJECTS			
- EDEN FM CONTRACT (12 months)	200000	200000	200000
- MEDIA MONITORING (12 months)	108000	168000	168000
- PHOTOGRAPHY (ad hoc project)	20000	20000	20000
- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (BUDGET AND IDP)	75000	75000	75000
- Flyers / Posters / Radio campaigns / Distribution of flyers / Print adverts			
TRANSLATION COSTS			
- General translation	5000	5000	5000
- Move towards using all three languages in all official communication		30000	60000
RECEPTION COSTS			
- Media breakfast x 4	10000	10000	10000
- Annual business breakfast/lunch		8000	
MISCELLANEOUS: 3G cards, photographic equipment, banners for events, iPads, etc.	4000	45000	45000
MONITORING & EVALUATION: administration, surveys, interviews, audits, etc.		80000	80000
TOTAL:	667000	911000	1233000

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

1. Rationale for a monitoring and evaluation framework

A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for communication activities at George Municipality will enable the communication team to continually test the strategy and activities against the set objectives and realign if necessary to achieve the best outputs. Note that there is currently no budget allocation for these activities and the unit does not have the capacity to implement a monitoring and evaluation system.

While certain indicators can be determined (media audits, number of media requests, etc.) within the capacity of the unit over the course of the municipal year, evaluation of the long-term effects of structured communication activities requires quantitative and qualitative data collected through surveys and one-on-one interviews, which requires additional resources. This has been indicated in the recommended budget.

2. Challenges to monitoring and evaluating communication activities

There are three kinds of expected impacts from a communication strategy and its activities:

- Increased awareness/knowledge
- Changes in attitude/perception
- Changes in behaviour.

While these are desirable results, they can be too vague to quantify or too difficult to link directly to the communication activity. In addition, communication outputs (press releases, publications, conferences and so on) do not reveal anything about the quality, reach, impact or utility of the communication activities.

How the public demands and receives communication outputs can be measured by media clippings, attendance figures, website visits, and so on to provide data on the availability of information and who received it, but these indicators do not supply information on whether this information was retained or led to further action.

It is often difficult to measure the effects of communication activities over the long term and they are often not likely to change public behaviour at large without resources dedicated to behavioural change campaigns. In addition, M&E of communication activities often fails due to unrealistic objectives, incorrect timing or target audience, using the wrong tools and unclear messages.

What makes an effective M&E system?

Effective M&E systems should be proportional to the nature and scope of the intended activities.

The system outlined in this strategy document is designed to fit within the capacity and budget of the communications team at George Municipality and provide initial baseline data. M&E activities outside of the capacity and budget have been marked as such.

As this is the initial year in which communication activities will be monitored, the framework aims to establish a baseline for indicators that can be more specifically directed in subsequent years.

3. Current reporting

The Communications Unit reports on communication activities and feedback at the weekly Directors' and Mayoral planning meetings. These activities and/or feedback are discussed in this forum. In addition, the Communications Unit submits a bi-annual municipal communication report and regular reports to the Department of Local Government. The unit also keeps files of all media coverage of the municipality and its officials from local newspapers and online sites. Budget constraints limit more extensive media monitoring.

4. Developing the M&E framework

The framework design follows an experimental design, which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, to produce an analytical framework. It is designed as a time-series framework that uses both statistical and content analysis. This is useful to show how activities have affected behaviour. Data samples are identified as stratified and random groupings. The framework is designed to be used as pre- and post-evaluation (given budget allocation) or to set a baseline evaluation following the end of the municipal year in 2016. This report recommends that M&E take place on an annual basis with the results shared with Council and to be included in the municipality's annual report, if so desired.

Isolating elements for review

Data is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Qualitative factors: increase in level of satisfaction with service delivery, in-depth articles, etc., while quantitative could be the number of people attending an event, conferences, etc. Communication activities must be evaluated on both levels.

Identifying indicators

An indicator is a characteristic that is specific, observable and measurable (also measurable over time) and one that indicates progress towards achieving a specific outcome. Indicators should be measurable over time, valid, precise and timely. This framework distinguishes between process and result indicators.

Process indicators monitor the number and type of activities carried out, while result indicators evaluate whether the activities achieved the intended objective (these are based on perception audits or surveys).

As communication activities may only affect behaviour over the long term, indicators are used to measure whether the activities are moving towards achievement of the objective, given that communication activities may only affect behaviour over the long term.

5. The M&E framework for George Municipality

The Communications Unit will use 2015/16 to establish quantitative and qualitative baseline indicators for the activities listed below. Targets for increasing these indicators can then be set for the 2017/18 municipal year. Note that while the Communications Unit currently does track some of these activities, to provide a comprehensive set of indicators will require additional capacity within the unit.

Table 2: Establishing a monitoring baseline using process indicators

Activities	Baseline indicators	2015/16
PRESS RELEASES	No. of press releases:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issued by unit - Used by local media - Sent to national media - Used by national media - Sent as article ideas - Focused on business
EVENTS	No. of events:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unit involved in - Provided advice for - Provided pre-publicity - Provided design and editorial services - Provided media briefings - Provided press releases - Provided photography services
	Attendance at events:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Register of media kept? - Register of attendees kept?
	Survey of attendees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Given to all attendees - Given to media
PHOTOGRAPHICAL SERVICES	Requests for photographs/photographer:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From the media - From departments
OFFICIAL INTERVIEWS	No. of official interviews:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requested by media - Given by officials - Requested by business - Given by officials
MEDIA DATABASE	No. of media:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On database - Regularly communicated with - From the local area - From the region - From national publications
SOCIAL MEDIA	Facebook:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of followers - Demographics of followers

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of requests for information - Number of comments from public - Number of shared posts
	Twitter:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of followers - Demographics of followers - Reach through retweeting
MEDIA AUDIT	No. of mentions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of the municipality - Of Council members - Of projects/initiatives
	No. of letters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive about municipality - Negative about municipality
TRAINING	No. received communication training:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of training sessions - Of Ward Councillors - Of intermediaries (nurses, teachers, etc.)
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETINGS	No. attending:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDP meetings - Broken down by ward - Other public participation meetings
	No. requesting information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - About IDP meetings - Source of requests (telephonic, Facebook, etc.) - Other public participation meetings
NOTICE BOARDS	No. of boards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With correct "letterhead" of vision and goals - With emergency and official contact details - Regularly updated with municipal news
INTRANET	No. of people:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using the intranet to receive information - Using the intranet to send information
BRIEFINGS	No. of information briefings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held internally on a vertical chain - Provided by the Communications Unit to directorates in person - Provided by the Communications Unit by print medium - Provided by the Communications Unit by electronic means
BRANDING	Consistency:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All print media (logos, signatures, etc.) - All online media - All presentation material

Table 3: Establishing a monitoring baseline using result indicators

Activities	Baseline indicators	Differentiation within indicator
PRESS RELEASES	Use of press release:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. used from press release - No. of supplied images used by media - No. of media requests for interviews - No. of media requests for additional information
	Type of press releases:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactive messaging - Reacting to incidents - Notification of awards - Mandated messaging
EVENTS	Surveys focused on communication efforts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive feedback - Negative feedback

SOCIAL MEDIA	Two-way interaction:	- Topics with the most interaction - Recurrent topics
TRAINING	Ward Councillors:	- Survey conducted to ascertain level of skills following workshop - Increased awareness or not of communication skills
	Intermediaries:	- Survey conducted to ascertain effectiveness of training and reach into community
BRANDING	Municipal employees:	- Survey to establish knowledge of vision and goals - Survey to establish knowledge of municipal policies and stance on issues
	General public:	- Survey to establish knowledge of municipal vision and goals

Evaluation framework

The framework below serves as an example of how to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken towards a particular communication objective once the baseline has been established and targets set for each indicator for the 2016/17 municipal year.

Table 4: Evaluation: Communication objective 2: Improve flow of internal communications, particularly between senior levels, administration and general workers

Strategic Goal	Actions taken	Indicators	% Change	Comment
5: Good governance and building human capital	- Regular briefing systems - Standardised newsletter template - Standardised branding - Standardised "letterheads" for notice boards - WhatsApp employee group - Communication policy distributed	- Staff baseline knowledge of municipal vision and goals - Staff baseline knowledge of municipal plans and official stance		

Appendix 1: Draft Public Participation Policy for George Municipality

MUNISIPALITEIT	GEORGE	MUNICIPALITY
AGENDA ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 31 MARCH 2008 MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 28 NOVEMBER 2007		
(c)	that the development proposals be invited per public tender.	[BO]
<u>RESOLVED</u>		
(a)	that portion 3 of the farm 216 George be identified for low cost housing in terms of section 14(2) of the MFMA as it is not needed for any other minimum level of basic municipal services;	[BO]
(b)	that the land value be assessed by the Municipal Valuer for low cost housing purposes;	[BO]
(c)	that the development proposals be invited per public tender;	[BO]
(d)	that the 60/40 points system be incorporated in the tender conditions.	[BO]
6.2.4 <u>DRAFT POLICY ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION R RUITERS/rr (10/4/r) [5.7.1]</u>		
<u>PURPOSE</u>		
To consider and approved a draft policy on Public Participation for George Municipality.		
<u>BACKGROUND</u>		
The Speaker requested that a report in order to obtain approval for a draft policy on Public Participation be submitted.		
Attached as Annexure "A" to the agenda is a draft policy on Public Participation.		
<u>OPSOMMING</u>		
Die Speaker het versoek dat 'n verslag ten einde goedkeuring te verkry vir 'n konsep beleid aangaande publieke deelname voorgelê word.		
Aangeheg as Bylae "A" tot die agenda is 'n konsep beleid aangaande publieke deelname.		
<u>RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR</u>		
	that the matter be referred to the Executive Mayor for consideration.	[CORP]
<u>RESOLVED</u>		
	that the draft policy on public participation be approved.	[CORP]

ITEM 6.5 ANNEXURE "A"

POLICY

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides a policy framework for public participation in George Municipality. This builds on the commitment of the municipality to deepen democracy, which is embedded in the Constitution and above all in the concept of local government, as comprising the municipality and the community.

Whereas Section 16 of the Municipal Systems Act requires a municipality to develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance;

And whereas, to this end, a municipality must:

- (a) encourage, and create conditions for, the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including -
 - (i) the preparation, implementation and review of its integrated development plan;
 - (ii) the establishment, implementation and review of its performance management system;
 - (iii) the monitoring and review of its performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performance;
 - (iv) the preparation of its budget; and
 - (v) strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services.
- (b) contribute to building the capacity of-
 - (i) the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality; and
 - (ii) councillors and staff to foster community participation; and
- (c) use its resources, and annually allocate funds in its budget, as may be appropriate for the purpose of implementing paragraphs (a) and (b)

ITEM 6.5 ANNEXURE "A" CONTINUED

The Council of the municipality adopts the following policy:

2. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy:

"budget-related policy" means a policy of a municipality affecting or affected by the annual budget of the municipality, including—

- (a) the tariffs policy which the municipality must adopt in terms of section 74 of the Municipal Systems Act;
- (b) the rates policy which the municipality must adopt in terms of legislation regulating municipal property rates; or
- (c) the credit control and debt collection policy which the municipality must adopt in terms of section 96 of the Municipal Systems Act.

"local community" or "community", in relation to a municipality, means that body of persons comprising—

- (a) the residents of the municipality;
- (b) the ratepayers of the municipality;
- (c) any civic organisation, non-governmental, private sector or labour organisation or body which are involved in local affairs within the municipality; and
- (d) visitors and other people residing outside the municipality who, because of their presence in the municipality, make use of services or facilities provided by the municipality, and includes, more specifically, the poor and other disadvantaged sections of such body of persons;

"municipal council" or "council" means the municipal council referred to in section 157 (1) of the Constitution;

"Municipal Finance Management Act" means the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003);

"municipal manager" means a person appointed in terms of section 82 of the Municipal Structures Act as municipal manager and any employee acting in this capacity;

"Municipal Structures Act" means the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998);

"Municipal Systems Act" means the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 [Act 32 of 2000];

"political structure", in relation to a municipality, means the council of the municipality or any committee or other collective structure of a municipality elected, designated or appointed in terms of a specific provision of the Municipal Structures Act;

ITEM 6.5 ANNEXURE "A" CONTINUED

"political office bearer" means the speaker, executive mayor, mayor, deputy mayor or a member of the executive committee as referred to in the Municipal Structures Act;

"public participation" is defined as an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making. It is further defined as a democratic process of engaging people, deciding, planning, and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect their lives.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- (a) In terms of the roles of national, provincial and local spheres of government the Constitution states:

"Section 151(1) (e) - obliges municipalities to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in local government.

Section 152 - the Objects of local government (are) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

Section 195 (e) - in terms of the Basic values and principles governing public administration - people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making"

- (b) The White Paper on Local Government (1998) states that the Object of community participation is embedded in the following four principles:
- *To ensure political leaders remain accountable and work within their mandate;*
 - *To allow citizens (as individuals or interest groups) to have continuous input into local politics;*
 - *To allow service consumers to have input on the way services are delivered;*
 - *To afford organised civil society the opportunity to enter into partnerships and contracts with local government in order to mobilise additional resources.*
- (c) The Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 as amended, mandates municipalities to annually report on the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of the municipality. Section 72 states that the object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government.

AGENDA CORPORATE AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING 04 OCTOBER 2017

ITEM 5.5 ANNEXURE "A" CONTINUED

- (i) any other matter prescribed by regulation.
- 5.8 The Executive or Mayoral Committee may, subject to Paragraph 5.7 (a), close any or all of its meetings to the public, including the media,
- 5.9 The Council will, within the financial and administrative capacity of the municipality and subject to its right to take reasonable steps to regulate public access to and conduct of meetings, provide space for the public in the chambers and places where the Council and its Committees meet.
- 5.10 When anything must be notified by the municipality through the media to the local community, it must be done-
- (a) in the local newspaper or newspapers circulating in the area of the Council;
 - (b) in a newspaper or newspapers circulating in the area of the Council and determined by the council as a newspaper of record; or
 - (c) by means of radio broadcasts covering the area of the municipality;
 - (d) by notice displayed on all official notice boards of the municipality;
- 5.11 Any notification in terms of Paragraph 3.10 must be in the official languages determined by the Council, having regard to language preferences and usage within its area.
- 5.12 A copy of every notice that must be published in the Provincial Gazette or the media in terms of any legislation applicable to the municipality, must be displayed on the official notice boards of the municipality.
- 5.13 The Council will erect official notice boards at general municipal offices of the municipality.
- 5.14 When the municipality invites the local community to submit written comments or representations on any matter before the Council, it must be stated in the invitation that any person who cannot write may come during office hours to a place where a staff member of the municipality named in the invitation, will assist that person to transcribe that person's comments or representations.
- 5.15 When a municipality requires a form to be completed by a member of the local community, a staff member of the municipality must give reasonable assistance to persons who cannot read or write, to enable such persons to understand and complete the form.

ITEM 6.5 ANNEXURE "A" CONTINUED

5.16 If the form referred to in Paragraph 3.15 relates to the payment of money to the municipality or to the provision of any service, the assistance must include an explanation of its terms and conditions.

5.17 This policy must not be interpreted in a manner that will permit any public participation to interfere with the Council's right to govern and to exercise the executive and legislative authority of the municipality.

6. AMMENDMENTS

6.1 The Council may from time to time amend this policy.

Appendix 2: The Minutes: Executive Mayor in Committee Meeting 21 July 2004 on the Language Policy

MUNICIPALITEIT	GEORGE	MUNICIPALITY
<u>MINUTES EXECUTIVE MAYOR-IN-COMMITTEE MEETING 21 JULY 2004</u>		
<p>Various financial institutions will have to be approached to facilitate and provide the necessary funding, required to establish such a sport venue. Council has as a point of departure budgeted R200 000,00 for the appointment of a consultant and the due development of a master plan in the 2004/2005 financial year. Such a sport facility needs to be inclusive of women's participation in sport and should be disabled friendly.</p>		
<u>RESOLVED</u>		
<p>(a) that the decision that a portion of the remainder of erf 325, Pacaltsdorp, as identified and set aside for the development of a regional sport complex, be confirmed; [BA]</p>		
<p>(b) that permission be granted to call for proposals from reputable firms, with the view to compiling a master plan; [BA]</p>		
<p>(c) that the said proposals, be scrutinized by the Director Management and Administration and the portfolio councillor and that it then be submitted to the committee for approval. [BA]</p>		
<p>5.1.2 <u>LANGUAGE POLICY (1/2/1/12) AJS/lc [4.5]</u> <i>Toalbekid</i></p>		
<p>The following item was submitted to the Executive Mayor-in-Committee on 15 October 2003:</p>		
<u>"PURPOSE</u>		
<p>To determine a language policy for George Municipality.</p>		
<u>BACKGROUND</u>		
<p>Council, during the past two years received enquiries regarding the language policy of Council. On 23 January 2001, an item regarding the matter was submitted to the Executive Committee.</p>		
<p>In the past items to Council were submitted in the same language in which the correspondence was received. It was also mentioned that the bulk of correspondence received is normally Afrikaans and therefore items were written in Afrikaans with an English summary and recommendation. After discussing the matter, the Executive Committee, at that stage, decided that the existing policy be maintained.</p>		

MINUTES EXECUTIVE MAYOR-IN-COMMITTEE MEETING 21 JULY 2004

6. Any of the three official languages may be used for the purpose of communication in the administration.
7. Any member of the public may use any of the three official languages in communication with the municipality.
8. All external responding communication must be in the language in which the original communication was received.
9. Identification, signage and direction in municipal offices or facilities must be in the three official languages.
10. The municipality must establish a language services unit under the auspices of corporate services to provide a competent municipal translating and interpreting service and that professional and specialized translators and interpreters must be appointed in such a unit or if not feasible, this service be outsourced.
11. Officials and Councillors must be encouraged to learn the three official languages and training programmes must be organised to assist in the development of their language skills.
12. When filling vacant posts, Directors must take cognisance of the Municipality's language policy when advertising, recruiting, selecting and appointing staff.
13. The general telephone reception must welcome its clients in all three official languages.

In terms of section 6 (3)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Municipalities must take into account the language which are used and preferences of their residents and therefore the language used in the area of jurisdiction of the municipality must be determined by means of a language audit performed every five years.

MOTIVATION

The three official languages of the Western Cape is Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. Although the majority of the residents of George speak Afrikaans, the two other languages, Xhosa and English, are also prevalent.

In order to adhere to the stipulations of the Constitution, it has become necessary that a formal language policy for George be considered. The implementation of a language policy, however, will have financial implications and the implementation thereof will have to be done over a period of time.

MINUTES EXECUTIVE MAYOR-IN-COMMITTEE MEETING 21 JULY 2004RECOMMENDATION

- (a) that the current Language Policy of Council be retained, having due regard to the financial implications; [BA]
- (b) that an in-depth investigation/study be conducted by the Director: Management and Administration, with the view of determining the exact implications a new policy might have for Council; [BA]
- (c) that the results of the investigation mentioned in (b) above, be reported to the Executive Mayor in the first instance; [BA]
- (d) that the proposed investigation not be allowed to take precedence over other projects already in the pipeline. [BA]

RESOLVED BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR-IN-COMMITTEE ON 15 OCTOBER 2003

- (a) that the current Language Policy of Council be retained, having due regard to the financial implications; [BA]
- (b) that an in-depth investigation/study be conducted by the Director: Management and Administration in conjunction with Councillors I V Hadley, D W Morkel, P Murray and G L Xesi, with the view of determining the exact implications a new policy might have for Council; [BA]
- (c) that the results of the investigation mentioned in (b) above, be reported to the Executive Mayor in the first instance; [BA]
- (d) that the proposed investigation not be allowed to take precedence over other projects already in the pipeline. [BA]"

DISCUSSION ON 21 MAY 2004

The members mentioned in (b) were invited to a meeting on Friday, 21 May 2004 to discuss the language policy. The discussion were attended only by Councillors Morkel and Hadley and the Deputy Director: Management and Administration (A J Smith). After a lengthy discussion of different possibilities, the relevant Councillors proposed the following:

- (a) that the existing language policy (as explained in the second paragraph of this report) be continued with;
- (b) that all notices at the front and back doors to the municipal offices be done in the three official languages of the Western Cape;

MINUTES EXECUTIVE MAYOR-IN-COMMITTEE MEETING 21 JULY 2004

- (c) that a meeting again be held in November 2004 to further discuss the language policy

RESOLVED

- (a) that the existing language policy (as explained in the second paragraph of this report) be continued with; [BA]
- (b) that all notices at the front and back doors to the municipal offices be done in the three official languages of the Western Cape; [ALL DIRECTORS]
- (c) that a meeting again be held during November 2004 to further discuss the language policy. [BA]

5.2 MINUTES HOMAGE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2004

The minutes of the abovementioned meeting were noted.

5.3 MINUTES OF A SPECIAL FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2004

The minutes of the abovementioned meeting were noted.

5.4 MINUTES OF A SPECIAL FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2004B

The minutes of the abovementioned meeting were noted.

5.5 MINUTES HOUSING AND LAND AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING 17 JUNE 2004

The minutes of the abovementioned meeting were noted with special reference to the following:

5.5.1 EMPOWERMENT: KINGSWOOD GOLF ESTATE (17/7/4/8) HL/adk [4.3]

PURPOSE

To consider future action with regard to empowerment of previously disadvantaged individuals in terms of the Deed of Sale with Acacia Property Development (now Kingswood Golf Estate).

Bibliography

The bibliography below gives an indication of the scope of material accessed during the desktop research phase.

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