EDEN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

LANGUAGE POLICY

1. DEFINITIONS

In this policy, unless the context otherwise indicates ‘

“administration” refers to the administrative arm of the Eden District Municipality;

“municipality” refers to the Eden District Municipality (established by Provincial Notice 497 dated 22 September 2000, as amended);

“committees” refers to the Executive Mayoral Committee, Portfolio Committees and any other committee or forum established by the Council;

“council” refers to the Municipal Council of Eden District;

“province” refers to the Western Cape;

“three official languages” refers to the three official languages of the Western Cape, namely Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, in terms of Section 5 of the Constitution of the Western Cape;

“national language bodies” refers to the bodies established in terms of Section 8(8) of the PanSALB Act, No 59/1995.

2. NAME OF POLICY

Language Policy of the Eden District Municipality.

3. PURPOSE

To give effect to -

3.1 Sections 6 and 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa(Act 108/1996);

3.2 Sections 18.2 and 21.2 of the Municipal Systems Act, (Act 32/2000);

3.3 the principles of Batho Pele as contained in Government Gazette No 18340 of 1 October 1997;

3.4 the Western Cape Language Policy (P/N 369 of 27 November 2001.

4. GOALS

4.1 to establish the language preferences of the Municipality's residents and give effect thereto;

4.2 to support impartial service delivery by promoting equal access to municipal services and programmes by removing communication or language barriers;

4.3 to promote multilingualism amongst the municipality's staff and communities within the municipal areas of jurisdiction;

4.4 subject to 4.1, to, in the interim, promote the use of the three official languages in the affairs of the municipality;

4.5 to give optimum effect to the equal status of the three official languages;

4.6 upon request, from people with disabilities and where practical, Council will make provision to address their special needs.

5. POLICY PROVISION FOR THE USE OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BY THE COUNCIL

5.1 Any of the three official languages may be used in any debates and other proceedings of the Council and it's Committees. The Municipality must make provision for interpreting services for members from and into the three official languages during sittings of the Council and it's Committees. Sign language interpreting must be provided if and when considered necessary;

5.2 All policies introduced/adopted, by-laws and Resolutions of the Council and its Committees must be available in all three official languages;

5.3 A notice of motion or a formal motion in the Council or it's Committees must be available in all three official languages. Practical arrangements may be made to cause motions drawn up in one official language to be available within a reasonable period, in the other two official languages;

5.4 Reports (including attachments thereto) submitted to Council and/or it's Committees and forums must be kept in the original form submitted. However, the recommendations to all reports must be made available in all three official languages;

5.5 Notices of all meetings and indexes to agendas must be in all three official languages.

6. DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

All disciplinary hearings must be able to be conducted in any official language preference of anyone subject to such hearings.

7. OFFICIAL NOTICES AND ADVERTISEMENTS

All official notices, circulars, newsletters and advertisements issued/published by the Municipality for general public information, must be issued in all three official languages.

8. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

8.1 Any of the three official languages may be used for the purpose of communication in the Administration. Provided that if the addressee does not understand the language of use in which he/she is communicated with, he/she may request that such communication takes place in a language understood by him/her;

8.2 All internal staff communique must be in all three official languages;

9. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

9.1 Any member of the public may use any of the three official languages or Sign Language in his/her communication with the Municipality;

9.2 All external responding communication must be in the language in which the original communication was received;

9.3 The Municipality must, in it's communication with and rendering of services to the public, ensure that these are carried out in the most appropriate way with the assistance of professional interpreters and translators and/or technical means.

10. IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

10.1 Identification signage and direction of municipal offices or facilities must be in the three official languages;

10.2 Where the law permits, the three official languages must be used equitable on local road and direction signs. For street names, due regard must be given to the various communities languages usage and preferences.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

11.1 LANGUAGE SERVICES UNIT

11.1.1 The Municipality must establish a Language Services Unit under the auspices of the Manager: Corporative Services, which will be responsible for providing a competent municipal translating and enterpreting service;

11.1.2 Professional and specialised translators and interpreters must be appointed in such a unit, or if not feasible, this service may be outsourced to professional registered company;

11.2.3 The Municipality's Language Committee, PANSALB, the respective National Language Bodies, the National Language Service, lexicograhical units and other revelant bodies regarding terminological development and language norms, with specific reference to the official languages of the Western Cape and Sign Language.

11.2 CODE OF CONDUCT

11.2.1 The municipality must continiously ensure that councillors and staff are sensitised to the value of multilingualism as a tool for building social cohesion, promoting economic development and consolidating democratic government through respect for cultural diversity;

11.2.2 The Municipality must ensure that notices are placed in all it's buildings/offices informing the public that it promotes multilingualism and that officials will make every effort to use the language(s) of the client(s);

11.2.3 The Municipality must ensure that all officials and councillors accomodate the language use and preferences of other officials and councillors with courtesy.

11.3 DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

11.3.1 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;

11.3.2 Services/Directorates/Branches/Sections must play an active role in promoting multilingualism in an equitable manner and also to render an effective and efficient service to it's communities;

11.3.3 When filling vacant posts, Service/ Directorates/ Branches/ Sections must take cognisance of the Municipality's language policy when advertising, recruiting, selecting and apppointing staff.

11.4 TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING SERVICES

11.4.1 The Municipality must make available translating and interpreting services of and when considered necessary.

11.5 MAIN/GENERAL TELEPHONE EXCHANGES

The main/general telephone reception at all administrative buildings and within all Services/Directorates/Branches/Sections must "welcome" its clients in all three official languages prompting clients according to their language preference.

11.6 LANGUAGE AUDITS

11.6.1 In terms of Section 6 (3) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996,(Act 108 of 1996), municipalities must take into account the language use and preferences of their residents. Therefore, the language use and preferences of the residents within the area of jurisdiction of the Municipality must be determined by means of a language audit, performed four to five years, and performed according to accepted relevant norms;

11.6.2 The Municipality must conduct regular language proficiency audits within it's Services/Directorates/Branches/Sections to determine the linguistic needs as well as the linguistic capabilities of officials in the organisation to improve the language skills in the Municipality.

12. ESTABLISHMENT OF A LANGUAGE FORUM FOR THE EDEN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY.

That a forum consisting of the House Committee members be established to consider, monitor and submit recommendations on any language matter pertaining to the Municipality, to Council.

In the event of the Forum not being able to reach concensus or unanimity on matters relating to language usage and/or norms, such cases shall be referred to the respective National Language Body for clarification and/or adjudication. In the event of the English National Language Body not functioning, such cases must be referred to the English Academy of Southern Africa.

13. FINANCING AND APPLICATION

The Council must budget for language planning and training, language policy development and implementation, language recources and language audits in order to meet the requirements outlined above.