# COMMUNICATION POLICY 2023/24

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Version 1    Approved 23 June 2016 | Resolution: DC/12/06/16

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AFS | Audited Financial Statements |
| AR | Annual Report |
| BTO | Budget and Treasury Office |
| cc | Carbon copy |
| CM | Communication Manager |
| CI | Corporate Identity |
| EPWP | Expanded Public Works Programme |
| FC | Fire Chief |
| GRDM | Garden Route District Municipality |
| HR | Human Resources |
| IDP | Integrated Development Plan |
| JDMA | Joint District Metro Approach |
| MDM | Municipal Disaster Management |
| MPAC | Municipal Public Accounts Committee |
| MM | Municipal Manager |
| SDBIP | Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan |
| SMME | Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises |
| SMS | Short Message Service |

## DEFINITIONS

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| Branding | Brandinsg refers to the process of creating and maintaining a unique identity for the GRDM and its products and services. This identity includes visual elements, such as logos and color schemes, as well as intangible elements, such as brand values and messaging, to name a few. |
| Communication policy | Provides the institutional framework in which the communication strategy and plans are implemented. It covers the division of responsibilities and general guidelines for communicating with various target groups and as to who can act as spokespersons of the municipality. |
| Crisis communication | The process of communicating with stakeholders and the public during a crisis or emergency situation that could potentially cause damage or lead to loss of life of communities, or an incident that could damage the reputation of the GRDM. |
| Media liaison | Media liaison refers to the process of managing communication between the GRDM and the media. It involves establishing and maintaining relationships with journalists, editors, and other media professionals, to ensure that the GRDM's message is communicated effectively to the public. |
| Media queries | Media queries refer to requests for information or comments made by journalists or other members of the media. |
| Media release | A written statement issued to media outlets to announce news, events or promotions related to the GRDM. |
| Multimedia | Multimedia refers to the use of multiple forms of media to communicate a message or tell a story. This can include text, images, audio, video, and interactive elements, such as animations or games. |
| Public Relations | Public relations refers to the practice of managing communication between the GRDM and its stakeholders, including employees, the media and the general public. The goal of PR is to build and maintain a positive image of the GRDM, and to communicate its values, goals, and achievements effectively to key audiences. |

Reputation management    The process of monitoring and responding to online and news feedback and reviews to maintain a positive image and address any negative comments or feedback.

## 1. SCOPE

The scope of this policy includes all individuals who are involved in or partnered with the Garden Route District Municipality (GRDM), including:

**Employer** and employees: This policy applies to the GRDM as the employer and the employees of GRDM and sets the expectations for their role in communication within the organisation and with external partners.

**Partners**: This policy applies to all individuals or organisations that partner with the GRDM, and it sets expectations for their communication about the GRDM and its employees.

### 1.1 Policy Statement

Garden Route District Municipality (GRDM) is committed to two-way communication, building and nurturing relationships with its internal and external audiences. The municipality has to form partnerships and nurture its relationship with all spheres of government, public sector institutions and the private sector. Communication is an essential strategic service – to ensure that information is widely accessible within the public space, engage citizens in the conversation around critical issues, and empower citizens to shape government policies and take up opportunities that affect their lives.[1]

The purpose of this policy is to regulate GRDM's communication with all stakeholders and to ensure that communication is well-coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of personnel and the public of the Garden Route and whoever has to be informed about what the municipality does. The policy also seeks to ensure that all municipal information is communicated in a coordinated and coherent manner, accurate, timeous, understandable, and catering to the district's cultural diversity. Listed in this policy are the responsibilities of all officials who play a role in communicating about the institution. This means that the scope includes the employer, employees and those who enter into contract with the GRDM.

This policy is informed by the national communication policy approved by Cabinet on 22 August 2018.[2] The national communication policy is currently under review.

Any media communication emanating from government employees in their private capacity (blogs, social media posts, letters to the editor) must subscribe to the Public Service Act (Act 103

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[1] Department of Communications, Communication Policy. Approved by Cabinet (22 August 2018), p. 7

[2] Department of Communications, Communication Policy. Approved by Cabinet (22 August 2018), p.20

of 1994) and the Code of Conduct for Public Servants. Information acquired while on duty must not be used when voicing personal opinions, and inappropriate media engagement is prohibited.[3]

## 1.2 Purpose

This policy sets the expectations and manages the flow of communications within and outside the GRDM. It also facilitates meaningful and necessary communication for employee productivity and morale without restricting communication.

## 2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The communication policy is in line with the following:

* the Code of Conduct for Municipal Employees;
* the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996);
* Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002;
* Local Government: Municipal Structures Amendment Act 3 of 2021;
* Local Government: Municipal Financial Management Act 56 of 2003, Section 75, which requires that municipalities place key documents and information on their websites, including their Integrated Development Plan (IDP), annual budget, adjustments budgets and  budget-related documents and policies;
* Regulation 30 of the Municipal Financial Management Act and the Municipal Budget  and Reporting Regulations, published in Government Gazette 32141, General Notice,  on 17 April 2009;
* Sections 21(a) and 21 (b) of the Municipal Systems Act, no. 32 of 2000, also oblige  municipalities to convey specific documents and information to the public, displaying these files on the municipality's official website;
* Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 25 of 2002;
* Films and Publications Amendment Act 11 of 2019;
* Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005;
* Department of Government Communication and Information System Policy, 2018;
* Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000;
* Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000, Act 3 of 2000;
* Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013;
* Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012); and
* Western Cape Road Infrastructure Act & Regulations.

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[3] Department of Communications, Communication Policy. Approved by Cabinet (22 August 2018), p.27

## 3. OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

### 3.1 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to

a) Contribute to the GRDM's achievement of its institutional vision and strategic objectives;

b) establish and entrench a strategic, integrated and measurable institutional communication approach that is aligned with institutional strategies and messages;

c) operationalise a quality-control framework for communication that defines institutional communication processes, as well as communication roles and responsibilities;

d) promote the implementation of effective and integrated institutional communication best practices across the institution;

e) align institutional communication with GRDM's brand positioning and institutional brand identity guidelines;

f) facilitate best practice and govern the utilisation of digital communication channels (websites), including social networking platforms, for interactive and inclusive engagement with stakeholders;

g) facilitate integrated institutional communication to optimise GRDM's issues management approach and processes;

h) cultivate a values-based and consultative approach to communication, including participation in debate and commentary on internal and public platforms; and

i) enable the integration of institutional communication with marketing initiatives and marketing communication.

These objectives are informed by the district's values of:

- Integrity;
- Excellence;
- Inspired;
- Caring (Ubuntu);
- Respect; and
- Resourceful.

### 3.2 Principles

The Communication Policy is based on the following principles which guide the interpretation and implementation of this Policy:

a) The Communication Policy is underpinned by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, specifically the rights to privacy; freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media, academic freedom, freedom of scientific

research and artistic creativity; and the freedom to receive or impart information or ideas. These freedoms are accompanied by concomitant responsibilities and limitations [Subsection 16 (2) of the Bill of Rights].

b) The governance and oversight of institutional communication is the primary responsibility of the owner and curator of the Communication Policy and is predominantly implemented by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit.

c) Institutional communication is subject to this policy and it is a shared responsibility which is undertaken by a broad range of departments, sections and divisions across the institution. Other forms of communication undertaken at/by the GRDM are guided by this policy.

d) All institutional communication must be timeous, transparent, credible, accurate and relevant, and be distributed through the appropriate channels.

e) Institutional communication must be responsive to the needs of the GRDM's internal and external stakeholders and should promote effective stakeholder engagement, trust and beneficial relationships.

f) Institutional communication is aligned with GRDM's Communication Strategy

g) Institutional communication is always guided by GRDM's institutional values.

h) Institutional communication must be context appropriate; sensitive to people who are differently abled; cognisant of racial, gender and cultural diversity; promote equity and fairness, and is further guided by human resources policies of the institution.

i) GRDM values and promotes critical thinking, and respectful, open debate, as well as specialist commentary in their respective fields of expertise by employees in the public domain. GRDM furthermore supports and encourages responsible communication activities inherent in Local Government, guided by the relevant GRDM policies, protocols, codes and guidelines.

## 4. AUDIENCE

The GRDM audiences include:

- businesses;
- community-based organisations;
- international audiences;
- investors;
- local and regional community members;
- Local Government representatives;
- media representatives (print, broadcast, electronic);
- municipal employees;

- National Government representatives;
- Non-Government Organisations;
- Provincial Government representatives;
- special and vulnerable groups (youth, women, people with disabilities and the elderly); and
- tourists.

## 5. ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

To evaluate and address the needs, manage expectations and anticipate issues that may arise, the Communication and Graphic Design section, working with other departments, should routinely monitor and analyse the communications environment. A communication representative should attend IDP and community engagements. Communicators can source feedback from the public in this way.

Other sources used to obtain feedback and opinions from the public include:

a) broadcast media;
b) conferences, forums, indabas and other events;
c) informal discussions with internal and external stakeholders;
d) social media mentions;
e) portfolio committee meetings, council and other committees; and
f) scanning of news media channels.

## 6. MESSENGERS

### 6.1 Executive Mayor

The Executive Mayor is the chief political spokesperson for the municipality. He/she may delegate these responsibilities to any official of choice whenever required. The Executive Mayor is accountable to all councillors.

He/she is also responsible for communicating annual communication priorities, objectives, and requirements in the IDP. As far as communicating on matters of a political nature is concerned, the chief political communicator (i.e., Executive Mayor) will be assisted by the communication and graphic design section and the public participation units to get municipal-related (non-political) messages delivered to the public and the media when required.

### 6.2 Speaker

The Speaker ensures that order is maintained during council meetings and that compliance in the council and council committees occurs. All conduct should be in line with the Code of Conduct for Councillors as set out in schedule 1 of the Municipal Systems Act. The Speaker should

encourage the participation of communities and community organisations in the municipality's decision-making process.

He/she should develop mechanisms to ensure that public participation is monitored. It is also his/her duty to ensure that communities and community organisations are educated on their rights and responsibilities to participate and give input to the municipality's policy development processes, planning and budget processes.

### 6.3 Council and Councillors

Council's role is to ensure '...the peace, order and good governance...' of its municipalities. Council's focus should be high level/strategic, and policy orientated rather than operational. The Council sets the overall directions and goals for the municipality and monitors the implementation and success.

Councillors represent ratepayers and residents; secondary messengers communicate to the public. Councillors also facilitate community participation in municipal decision-making.

### 6.4 Municipal Manager

The Municipal Manager (MM) is the spokesperson for the municipality on strategic and operational issues. He/she decides who is allowed to speak to the media about the municipality and on behalf of the municipality. The MM promotes a positive culture of good governance in the Council and administration. In cases where the media raise controversial issues, the MM is notified. If needed, he/she will respond via the Communication and Graphic Design Unit or directly to the press.

### 6.5 Executive Managers

Queries from journalists will be referred to executive managers / managers for comment / clarification / information. Each executive manager must approve all content produced or communicated by their teams to the Communication and Graphic Design Unit.

### 6.6 Strategic Manager: Office of the Municipal Manager

The municipal manager's strategic manager oversees the Communication and Graphic Design Unit communication efforts and supports the Unit on strategic and policy-related matters. When the MM is not available to answer controversial media enquiries, the Strategic Manager will step up to fulfil this role in collaboration with the Communication and Graphic Design Unit.

### 6.7 Communication Manager

The Communication Manager (CM) must ensure that the GRDM conforms to the requirements of this policy. The CM develops and implements communication initiatives to advance the institution's goals with his/her team. When required the institution requires the CM to coordinate

joint communications initiatives. These are supported by solid relationships with the media, key stakeholders, including local municipalities, Provincial and National Governments, and private the private sector.

## 6.8 Communication and Graphic Design Section

The Communication and Graphic Design Unit is responsible for executing all communication activities of the municipality, which include communicating educational materials, public relations, advertising and marketing. The Unit also manages the CI, runs the municipal website, and may assist with planning of events.

The Unit carries out all duties associated with the communications function; they advocate for those who will or should receive information and ensure clarity and utility of information for the end-user. They work collaboratively with other employees to provide communications support and advice.

## 7. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

### 7.1 Internal Communication

When efficiently and effectively implemented, internal communication facilitates and manages the flow of information within the municipality to generate an informed workforce. Internal communication includes formal and informal communication.

Mediums and methods used to communicate inside the organisation:

Answering machines, cellular phones (SMS, WhatsApp), council agendas, e-mails, exhibitions, internal newsletters, intranet, invitations, payslips, presentations, programmes, reports, memoranda, plans, policies, posters, reports, SMS, standard operating procedures, strategies, telephone (landline), contracts, social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter), suggestion boxes, surveys, websites.

### 7.2 External Communication

When information is shared with an external audience, it should be done to indicate sensitivity to the needs of the receptive audience. An audience should not be seen as passive but also active, which means that if there are issues raised via any of the municipality's communication platforms by the community, they must be addressed.

Information should always be presented in an understandable format and not over-complicated. The primary purpose of external communication is to inform stakeholders of the municipality's services, programmes, and build relations.

**The following communication tools and mediums can be used to communicate with stakeholders:** Answering machines, banners, billboards, brochures, by-laws, cellular phones (SMS, WhatsApp), e-mail, exhibitions, external Newsletters, facsimile, invitations, Internet, notice boards, pamphlets, presentations, programmes, reports, plans, posters, reports, SMS, Radio, strategies, telephone (landline), television, social media (WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter), surveys, websites.

### 7.3 Garden Route District Communicators' Forum

The district communicators' forum, chaired by the CM, is the official platform where communicators from all three spheres of government and other sectors, discuss essential matters relating to communication, share information and discuss technical communication-related issues. Members of the forum include:

- Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa
- Local Municipal Communicators (Hessequa, Mossel Bay, George, Knysna, Bitou, Greater Oudtshoorn and Kannaland)
- Go George Bus Service
- Government Communication and Information System
- Nelson Mandela University
- South Cape College
- South African Police Service
- South African National Parks
- Western Cape Department of Health (Garden Route and Karoo Regions).

### 8. THE COMMUNICATION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN FUNCTION

The section is expected to adapt to the framework set out by the Department of Communication's communication policy. It is stated in the document that local government should adjust to national policy to suit their immediate communication environment. This counts for all three government (national, provincial and local) spheres, including government agencies and entities.[4]

The Communication and Graphic Design unit mainly works with four types of communication:

- developmental/educational;
- public relations;
- advertising; and
- marketing.

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[4] Department of Communications, Communication Policy. Approved by Cabinet (22 August 2018), p.10

All of the above functions are executed by using print, online or broadcast media platforms.

## 8.1 Developmental/Educational Communication

Development communication refers to communication to facilitate social and economic change. Citizens should be able to participate in communication activities that directly impact their lives actively. The approach must be educational and not instructional.

Nora Quebral, a pioneer in the discipline of development communication in Asia (often referred to as the "mother of development communication"), defined development communication as:

"The art and science of human communication linked to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one of dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equity and the target unfolding of individual potential." (Quebral, 2001)

## 8.2 Public Relations

Public Relations processes serve to persuade the public, media, investors, partners, employees and other stakeholders. Through content creation, a communicator can influence public perceptions and clarify the municipality's position on a specific matter.

### 8.2.1 Media Liaison

The Communication and Graphic Design Unit is the municipality's first contact with the media and must manage, coordinate and execute all media liaison activities.

### 8.2.2 Media Queries

All media enquiries should be sent to the Communication and Graphic Design Unit. The official who is requested to provide information to the Communication and Graphic Design Unit must ensure that the answers are verified and approved by his/her executive manager. The managing of media queries is done via Collaborator, which means every step of the process is captured on an electronic system. During a disaster declaration or emergency, media queries will be in the most time-efficient manner. The Incident Commander (IC) might choose to speak directly to the media if he/she wishes to, but communicators have to be informed of such a decision.

Media enquiries must be treated as a top priority and finalised within two working days unless arranged otherwise by communicators with a reporter. Both media queries and responses must be in writing.

| Category 1 | Category 2 |
|---|---|

| |
|---|
| <table><tr><td>• Audit outcome reports<br>• By-laws<br>• Environmental pollution (disaster level – long-term), health epidemics<br>• Financial matters<br>• Job creation (EPWP, HR)<br>• Legal matters<br>• Performance Management<br>• Policy issues<br>• Regional Landfill facility<br>• Service delivery performance<br>• Theft (council property)</td><td>• Air quality<br>• Contracts<br>• Environmental pollution (quick-fixes)<br>• Human Settlements<br>• Intergovernmental relations<br>• Municipal health (quick-fixes)<br>• Plans<br>• Property Development<br>• Servicing of roads<br>• SMME development<br>• Strategies<br>• Tourism<br>• Veldt and mountain fires which have not affected infrastructure<br>• Waste Management</td></tr></table> |

| Category 3 |
|---|
| • Environmental pollution (disaster level – long-term)<br>• Emergency communication (natural disasters, pandemics, national, provincial or local state of disasters, etc.)<br>• Loss of life because of negligence Local, provincial and national state of disasters • Air Quality incidents. |

| Category 4 |
|---|
| • All political matters. |

**Category 1:** All topics listed under category one (1) must be communicated to the following internal role players for a response:

- Strategic Manager or Municipal Manager;
- any Executive Manager whose department might be directly affected by the issue
- an official from the Legal Services unit;
- Communication Manager;
- Senior Communication Officer(s) dealing with the issues; and
- any other manager whose knowledge and insight is required.

**Category 2:** All topics under category two (2) can be communicated only to the relevant Executive Manager and Section Manager(s) in his/her department. Final approval will be done by the CM in collaboration in collaboration with the applicable Executive Manager.

**Category 3:** All topics under category three (3) can be approved by the IC (Head of Disaster Management, Fire Services or the Manager: Municipal Health and Environmental Services (or a delegated official), depending on the scale of the incident. However, the Communication and Graphic Design Unit needs to be informed of the media queries and responses to these.

**Category 4:** Political matters

All queries of a political nature will be dealt with by the Executive Mayor.

All media responses by the political office bearers must include the following members:

- info@gardenroute.gov.za (records and archives);
- mm@gardenroute.gov.za (municipal manager);
- mayor@gardenroute.gov.za (executive mayor);
- communications@gardenroute.gov.za (CM); and
- if a portfolio chairperson is implicated, he/she should be included in the response.

Request for personal information: Refer to PAIA manual.

**Mayoral Committee members**

After the administration of the municipality has addressed a media query related to a function linked to the specific portfolio of a Mayoral Committee member, the final media response must be shared with the applicable Portfolio Chairperson to take note of.

### 8.2.3 Media releases and news articles

For the media to consider news from the municipality, it must include fresh content, which has a human interest and speaks to the district community.

At any point in time the CM can request for a draft media release from a department about a certain topic. The feasibility and applicability of the topic or media release must first, however, be discussed with the relevant line manager or executive manager. If there is resistance to provide information, the Strategic Manager will be consulted for his/her inputs and final decision about the approval of the request.

The information contained in media releases must be verified by the Executive Manager of the Unit. Suppose the content includes any political office-bearer. In that case, the information must be verified by the Chief of Staff in the Executive mayor's office, or the Executive Mayor him/herself.

It is the media's prerogative to publish any media release distributed by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit.

If the media release is one-sided or biased against GRDM, (even after the GRDM has responded within the required timeframe), the CM must consider intervening through the correct channels to address the matter, such as lodging a complaint with the Press Ombudsman.

Any changes by the CM and/or Senior Communicator to an original statement by a technical expert of a field, must be clearly marked, using track changes in order for the initiator of the article to verify content and possible contexts changes.

### 8.2.4 Multimedia

The Garden Route District Municipality (GRDM) recognises the risks associated with employees publishing content about their employer on personal social media platforms. Therefore, the following guidelines have been established to ensure responsible content publication:

**Responsibility of Municipal Communicators:** The communicators of the GRDM are responsible for capturing photo, video footage of municipal events, except for union meetings. Due to budget constraints and shortage of staff, local municipal communicators or employees with good quality phones might be utilised in some instances to photograph or videograph events/footage in their respective municipal areas.

**Approval for publication:** All photographs and videos of municipal events, as well as educational materials, must be approved by the Communication Manager or delegated official before release. This ensures that the content aligns with the GRDM's brand guidelines and does not pose any legal or reputational risks to the organisation.

**Employee content publication and production:** GRDM employees may post awareness about environmental health services, air quality, waste management, roads services and any other function of the municipality on their personal social media pages. However, they are prohibited from including the GRDM brand mark in their posts, mentioning the GRDM or creating such content while employed by the GRDM. Furthermore, employees must ensure that their personal content does not misrepresent the GRDM or conflict with the organisation's values, goals, or interests. Employees should also be aware that they are personally responsible for any content they publish, and any legal or reputational risks associated with it.

Multimedia is produced internally by the Communications unit and can consist of photographs, graphic design (motion and static), video, and audio. When content and material are sourced from an external party, it is the responsibility of the Communication and Graphic Design Unit to ensure that copyright laws are adhered to and that no material is used without the consent of the individual or organisation that holds the rights of such content. Furthermore, the unit can make use of material that is not subject to royalties, unless the person(s) or organisation(s) who hold these rights give written permission to use such material. Reliable services can be used to obtain material that is free from any royalties and may be used for commercial purposes.

In accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act No. 4 of 2013 (POPIA), minors may, under no circumstances, be photographed, filmed, or have their voices recorded without prior written consent by a parent or legal guardian. If such written permission is obtained, it must be filed with records.

## 8.3 Advertising

Advertising the municipality has to be aligned to the district's official branding. It involves broadcast (radio and television), print media and online media.

Publishing marketing-related adverts in print, online, and broadcast media is managed, coordinated and executed by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit. The advertising of notices, tenders and vacancies, are managed and coordinated by initiating departments. The approval of official notices, vacancies and tenders, must be done by the relevant Executive Manager after it has followed due course. If an external company is appointed to do work on behalf of the GRDM, an Executive Manager would still be required to sign-off all notices generated by the company that appear in the media. Communicators and the Registry and Archives Unit must also receive copies of any notices.

### 8.3.1 Media sales consultants

All media sales consultants must be referred to the Communication and Graphic Design Unit, who will negotiate pricing and assess the viability of advertising in publications.

### 8.3.2 Radio and television

If interviews are paid for by the municipality, questions must be drafted and approved prior to the interview. In the case of free publicity using a live interview, the topic and draft questions need to be requested by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit. However, it is within the prerogative of the media house to change questions during an interview if it was not paid for by the municipality.

All other radio and television adverts, including but not limited to live reads, news sponsorships, pre-recorded interviews, etc., must be vetted by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit.

### 8.3.3 Print-media
### 8.3.3.1 Billboards

Billboards serve the purpose of informing the public about important messages, especially disaster-related. It is preferred that billboards are placed outside the road reserve. Local municipalities must ultimately approve billboard locations in their towns, but outside cities, the Western Cape Government, should be approached for advice because of the safety impact of signs, especially on proclaimed roads. B-municipalities also have by-laws that speak to roadside signage. More guidelines relating to the displaying of signage are explained by the Western Cape Road Infrastructure Act and Regulations.

### 8.3.3.2 Print publications

When GRDM's budget allows, advertising the municipality's service delivery achievements can be done in magazines, newspapers and publications.

Advertising of vacancies, notices and tenders should be done in accordance to the audience which it intends to reach.

### 8.3.3.3 Newsletters

Newsletter publications are developed by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit. These exist to inform, educate and influence internal and external audiences. Internal newsletters focus on employee-related issues, while external newsletters are aimed at both internal and external audiences. The Strategic Manager in the Office of the Municipal Manager approves the final newsletter publications.

### 8.3.3.4 Booklets, banners, flyers, posters, etc.

All other advertising collateral needs to be produced by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit in collaboration with user departments. Approval will be done by the relevant section head, Executive Manager and CM.

### 8.4 Marketing
### 8.4.1 Website

The municipality's official website serves as the window to the public and is intended to provide the public with educational and informative content. The municipal website is also the portal for the public for accessing municipal opportunities, jobs, news and legislatively required documents.

Other sections will be coached on an incremental approach to upload their own legislatively required documents to the website.

| Section (Owner) | Description | Upload to website |
|---|---|---|
| Air Quality | By-Laws, plans and strategies | Communications |
| BTO, AFS, Assets, PMS | MFMA Section 52 Reports, MFMA Section 75 Reports, MFMA Section 72 Reports | Communications |
| BTO, AFS, Assets | MFMA Section 71 Reports | Communications |
| Committee Services | Council agendas, council committee agendas, minutes | Committee Services |
| Disaster Management | COVID-19 updates, Estuary Management Plans | Communications |
| Environmental Health | By-Laws, plans and strategies | Communications |
| IDP | Annual Reports, Integrated Development Plans, Process Plans and Section 27 Frameworks, notices | Communications |
| Internal Audit | MPAC TOR, Audit Committee Charter | Communications |
| Institution as a whole | All organisational strategies and plans | Communications |
| Legal Services | Policies | Communications |
| Office of the Speaker | Code of Conduct for Councillors | Communications |
| Planning and Properties | Spatial Development Framework | Communications |
| PMS | Frameworks, Performance Agreements, SDBIP, Section 72 Reports | Communications |
| Recruitment and Selection | Job opportunities | Communications |
| Resorts | Policies, Tariffs | Communications |
| SCM | Formal and Informal tender advertisements and notices, cancellation of tenders, awarded tenders, etc. | Supply Chain Management |
| Waste Management | Waste Information System, plans, strategies and general documents, etc. | Communications |

Departments are responsible for ensuring that all documents are provided to the Communication and Graphic Design Unit according to legislative prescripts and deadlines.

Website maintenance, security and development must be done in consultation with the Information Communication Technology unit. Documents must be converted to PDF format before being uploaded to the corporate website.

**List of websites managed by the GRDM Communication and Graphic Design Unit:**

- www.gardenroute.gov.za
- invest.gardenroute.gov.za
- skillsmecca.gardenroute.gov.za

- investmentconference.gardenroute.gov.za
- greenenergy.gardenroute.gov.za
- www.victoriabaycaravanpark.co.za;
- www.swartvleicaravanpark.co.za;
- www.dehoekmountainresort.co.za;
- www.calitzdorphotsprings.co.za

**The Tourism Unit manages the regional tourism website:**

- www.visitgardenrouteandkleinkaroo.com

### 8.4.2 Social Media

Social media platforms provide social media account owners with the opportunity to engage in two-way communication. However, these platforms pose various risks related to digital security, public perceptions, and reduced productivity at work if not properly monitored.

Social media is a modern approach to communication; it provides instant, cost-effective and ongoing, measurable results to social media users and the municipality. This also means that the municipality has an inherent interest in forming part of online conversations whenever it is mentioned to enhance its brand reputation and customer service.

One of the tools used to effectively engage with youth is social media because it increases the quality and appropriateness of service delivery, events, and activities. In short, engaging young people means that programs, services, and policy development will be more relevant, appropriate and responsive to their needs.

**The municipality currently makes use of the following social media platforms:**

- Facebook (Page and profile);
- Twitter (profile);
- Instagram (profile);
- Youtube (channel);
- LinkedIn (page); and
- WhatsApp (multiple groups – refer to Annexure A: Social Media for the standard terms of reference for WhatsApp groups).

Please refer to Annexure A: Social Media, for details of the organisation's social media activities and how it affects employees.

Every official that is employed by GRDM, must conduct themselves, on their private social media platforms, in such a way that it does not bring GRDM into disrepute.

Negative comments by the public on posts made of the GRDM, may only be handled by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit, unless otherwise authorised by the CM. The CM or Senior Communication Officer must first consult with the applicable line manager for his input before responding to the negative comment. If the matter is of a highly controversial nature with political and major reputational damage, the EM and MM must be contacted to source their views on dealing with the issue. The CM will in some instances, request the relevant section head to respond directly to a post if it requires a highly technical response.

## 8.5 Branding

A clear and consistent CI is required to assist the public in recognising, accessing and assessing the policies, programs, services and initiatives of the GRDM. To maintain a recognisable and unified corporate identity throughout the Council, buildings, facilities, programs, services and activities must clearly be identifiable. In identifying contributions or activities, the Section: Communication and Graphic Design must give prominence to the official symbols of the GRDM in all information and communication materials, regardless of medium, for internal or external use.

 These rules apply to the correct use and placement of the various branded goods used at events (gazebos, flags, banners, x-frames, etc.). All material developed by the GRDM, flyers etc., should be proofed for the correct use of logos and language.

All corporate branded material must, at all times, be routed through the CM before being purchased. He/she will do quality checks on the identity and verify what is planned to be purchased is in line with what the corporate brand guide of the municipality stipulates.  When

there are proposals for new branded materials, they will be captured and included in the next review of the corporate brand guide.

For more details about the municipality's branding collateral, refer to the CI Guidelines of GRDM.

## 8.6 Events coverage and events calendars

A weekly events calendar is compiled and distributed on Monday mornings by the

Communication and Graphic Design Unit, which consists of all the institution's planned events.

Each departmental personal assistant must provide a chronological and collated list of their respective departments' events on the preceding Friday of the succeeding week's events.  This must be provided on the template provided. Events calendars contain dates, times, event names, event venue, and a contact person. Events that are open for public attendance must include the e-mail address of the relevant contact person.

The following items may be provided to the Unit, including the State of the District Address, Council meetings, Committee meetings (Section 79, 80, etc.), conferences, summits, forums, workshops, awareness/training/induction sessions, departmental meetings, meetings with internal and external stakeholders (excl. one-on-one meetings), visits from government/private stakeholders, site visits, open days, exhibitions, festival activities (only information on the role of the representatives must be provided, as the municipality, normally, does not host any festivals). Abbreviations must not be used to avoid confusion by external stakeholders.

The calendar is distributed to the institution's media stakeholder list, as well as executive managers and personal assistants.

Events not listed in the events calendar will not be covered by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit.

## 9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES

External e-mails received from the public or organisations, sent to info@gardenroute.gov.za (official Garden Route District Municipality's e-mail address), will be reviewed for applicability at the Registry. If indeed a record, it will be forwarded and incorporated into the system for recordkeeping. If individuals receive an official e-mail directly via e-mail, it must be forwarded to info@gardenroute.gov.za to be captured and distributed for attention by the appropriate staff.

 Refer to the Records and Archives policy for more reading.

## 10. CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Crisis communication is implemented before, during and after a crisis. It serves the purpose of guiding those assigned to provide information to Communicators and those communicating to the public, media and other stakeholders.

Activities outlined in this document warrants that all communication resources have to be exercised in a short space of time to protect both the municipality and the public. The information has to be disseminated swiftly and effectively to minimise the risks related to the effects of a crisis.

Municipal Communicators are the voice of the municipality and, through their expertise and networks, can influence public perceptions and behaviour.

**The goals of communications during a crisis are to:**

a) Provide accurate information to prevent speculation and inaccuracies in public reporting.
b) Respond promptly and reassure the public that the municipality is actively addressing urgent issues.
c) Act quickly to define and communicate the most appropriate messaging for the municipality.
d) Influence public perceptions of how a crisis is being managed.
e) Utilize the media to reach a wide audience effectively.
f) Prioritise compassionate engagement with the public to establish a positive relationship.
g) Correct any speculation by those who interact with the municipality through writing or interviews.
h) Report both positive and negative issues, and proactively respond to negative issues to avoid being perceived as withholding information.
i) Ensure that the municipality's public statements are based on factual information.

When a District Command Centre (DCC) is established, the CM will lead the communication cluster and represent all communication role players and be the link to the DCC to resolve overarching communication issues. If the CM is not available, the responsibilities will be delegated to a Senior Communication Officer.

Below find a breakdown of the leading role players in the communication of various emergencies.

Do note that tasks can be delegated. All officials identified are allowed to be interviewed by the media, pre-recorded or live.

### 10.1 Disaster management

Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Manager: Municipal Disaster Management, Communication Manager.

### 10.2 Fire Emergencies

Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Fire Chief and Communication Manager

### 10.3 Municipal Health

Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Manager: Municipal Health and Environmental Services, Communication Manager.

*The Corporate Disaster Management Plan can be accessed for more roles and responsibilities of role players relating to disasters and emergencies.

## 11. LANGUAGE USE

The Constitution of South Africa provides that municipalities must consider the language usage and preference of a community. The three primary languages used in the Garden Route District are isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans. Therefore, all important and/or mandated communication must be published in all three languages. More details on Council's language use can be viewed by accessing the "Language Policy" of Garden Route District Municipality.

The target audience will determine the choice of language used in communications. All media queries received will be answered in the language it was received.

## 12. COPYRIGHT

The municipality owns all publicity material and information it has paid for or developed. For consistency, documents will not feature the names of any employee or "produced or edited by" notes. Employees can be given recognition in reports or letters by the municipality confirming that they produced documents. The reproduction of any such material requires the approval by the Communication and Graphic Design Unit. Regulating the use of the Brand Standards Guideline, enables the municipality to prevent the misuse of the material by the producer or anyone else.

It is the responsibility of the Communicators to ensure that content does not violate any copyright laws. When information is handed to the Communications and Graphic Design Unit for publication, it is the responsibility of the originator of the content to ensure that copyright laws are adhered to. Copyright relates to:

- Text (liable)

- Photographs
- Video Material and
- Sound clips and music.

## 13. CONTRACTS

It is important to include the issue of reputational management in Service Level Agreements with service providers who enter into partnership with the GRDM.

"The Service Provider acknowledges and agrees that any unsubstantiated/defamatory statement made, whether directly or indirectly about GRDM, on any platform, shall be a material breach of contract.  In such an event/situation, GRDM may, in its sole discretion, terminate the agreement."

## 14. COMMUNICATION BUDGET

The municipality should make available 1% - 5% of its operational budget (excluding the Roads Services Department) to the communication function.[5] It should include, but not be limited to the following:

- branding (signage, corporate branding)
- advertising (TV, Radio, print)
- printing and stationery
- distribution of newsletters
- internal and external newsletters
- media monitoring
- campaigns.

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[5] Department of Communications, Communication Policy. Approved by Cabinet (22 August 2018), p. 10

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**"Accounting Officer"** is the Municipal Manager of the district municipality;

**"Branding"** the visual representation of the municipality or product, encompassing the municipality's name, logo and visual appeal.

**"Chief Financial Officer",** a person designated by the Accounting Officer as Chief Financial Officer.

**"Councillor"** means a Councillor as defined in the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act;

**"Communications"** include:

a) oral and verbal utterances of a User in or during a meeting where the business of Garden Route District Municipality or related matters are discussed;

b) the transfer of any information, whether speech, data, text, signals, radiofrequency spectrum, images in any format through Communication Facilities; and

c) access to or use of the services available on the Internet, including e-mail, instant messaging, websites, file transfer, video conferencing, voice over IP, chat rooms and bulletin boards by Users through the Equipment.

**"Communication Share"** is a folder with sub-folders that are used to share content between the those working in the Communication and Graphic Design Unit.

**"Corporate Brand Guide"** is a manual that exclusively prescribes and describes the municipality's official colours, logo, design elements etc.

**"Disaster Management"** means a continuous and integrated multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary process of planning and implementation of measures aimed at preventing or reducing the risk of disasters; mitigating the severity or consequences of disasters; emergency preparedness; rapid and effective response to disasters; and post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation.

**"District Municipality"** refers to Garden Route District Municipality, which is a municipal executive and legislative authority in an area that includes more than one municipality and which is described in section 155(1) of the Constitution as a category C municipality

**"Systems Act",** the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, No. 32 of 2000.

## ANNEXURE A:  SOCIAL MEDIA

**1. Scope**

This document applies to:

- Municipal employees using social media for official communication purposes.
- Municipal employees using social media for personal reasons.
- Public commenting on social media.
- Social media communication made at any time, whether privately or publicly, including outside of office hours, and from anywhere, including away from work or on personal devices, whether to an individual or a group.

**2. Official Use**

All municipal employees (officials and councillors) must comply with the general communication policy regarding official spokespersons and council information. Also, they:

- May only make comments on behalf of the municipality with express approval or authority;
- may not post false or hearsay statements that could bring the municipality into disrepute;
- should not give out personal details, only contact details in line with the POPI and

PAIA Acts;

- may not post municipal information of confidential nature – a summary of the information preferred by the municipality to be kept confidential as opposed to notconfidential are listed below. For more details on what a person is allowed to share with others, refer to the POPI and PAIA Acts.
- may not use logos or vision and mission statements without permission from the

Communication and Graphic Design Unit;

- must only publish municipal information online that can be verified and not that of one's personal opinion;
- must refer all media enquiries to the Communication and Graphic Design Unit; and
- Regarding item 2 of the Code of Conduct for Municipal Employees, an employee must at all times, *among other things*, act in the best interest of a municipality and in such a way that the credibility and integrity of the municipality are not compromised.

| Confidential | Not-confidential |
|---|---|
| • State security matters<br>• Information not confirmed by incident commanders during a Joint Operations Centre activation<br>• In-Committee items (red items), not before, during or after council meetings unless council grants authorisation<br>• Confidential clauses in contracts<br>• No names of people who have died during a disaster or any incident where the municipality is involved | • Council Agenda or anything publicly known<br>• Service Level Agreements (unless confidential provisions are made) |

## 3. Personal Use

Employees are personally responsible for what they communicate on or through social media and they must adhere to the code of conduct for municipal employees.

In addition, municipal employees:

- may not use municipal logos and branding for personal social media posts without explicit permission, but are allowed to share municipal information which the official pages of the municipality have shared;
- could be held legally responsible for comments on personal social media platforms which include language or any pictures or videos that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, harassing, defaming, or which promotes hate speech;
- must not engage in content that supports, fosters, perpetuates discrimination by race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, health, status about public assistance, national original, physical or mental disabilities, or sexual orientation [refer to section 4. Freedom of Speech];
- must respect that computers and resources are reserved for municipal-related business and not for private use;
- must ensure that social media activities do not interfere with work duties and performance;
- must not use social media in such a manner that it is projected to be harmful to the municipality or any project that the municipality is undertaking;
- must not engage in posting content or links to pornography;

- must not conduct or encourage illegal activity; and
- must not post information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems or criminal investigations.

## 4. Public Activity

Content/queries/statements of a political nature will be routed to the Executive Mayor of GRDM. A disclaimer appears on the municipality's social media pages, which explains details about the latter.

## 5. Freedom of Speech

This policy is not intended to limit either freedom of speech or that freedom being exercised within the law. The right to freedom of expression or speech comes with responsibilities; one's views shouldn't be posted online if they harm the reputations and rights of people or organisations.

## 6. Cyber Bullying

The municipality will not accept any form of bullying or harassment of or by employees of the municipality.

The following examples illustrate the types of behaviour displayed through social media communication, which the municipality considers to be forms of cyberbullying:

6.1     maliciously spreading rumours, lies or gossip;

6.2     knowingly distributing 'hate speech' in any medium, which amounts to propaganda for war, incites imminent violence, or advocates hate speech;

6.3     intimidating or aggressive behaviour;

6.4     offensive or threatening comments or content; and

6.5     posting comments, photos, videos etc., deliberately mocking an individual or group with the intent to harass or humiliate them.

According to the Films and Publications Act A person guilty of 6.2, shall be liable upon conviction, to a fine not exceeding R150 000,00 or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years. Hate speech includes words that could reasonably be construed to demonstrate a clear intention to be harmful, to incite harm and promote or propagate hatred against the said person or identifiable group. Hate speech is also prohibited in terms of Section 16(2) of the Constitution.

## 7. Official Accounts

The content and upkeep of official social media accounts are responsible for the Communication and Graphic Design Unit and the Tourism Unit.

**Twitter**

- Twitter @GardenRoute_DM, www.twitter.com/gardenroute_dm
- Twitter @grandkk1, www.twitter.com/grandkk1

**Facebook**

- @GardenRouteDM, www.facebook.com/gardenroutedm
- @Grandkk, www.facebook.com/grandkk
- Profile: Garden Route District Municipality

**Youtube**

- https://www.youtube.com/gardenroutedistrictmunicipality

**Linkedin**

- Garden Route District Municipality

**WhatsApp**

- WhatsApp: District Communicators
- WhatsApp: Emergency Communications
- WhatsApp: Councillors
- WhatsApp: Garden Route DM Media
- WhatsApp: Staff Alerts

**Instagram**

- Instagram: Gardenroute_dm

## 8. Terms of Reference for Council WhatsApp

Communication in this group is two-way, communication between Councillors and the GRDM Administration.

Notes***

    A.      A councillor must perform the functions of the office in good faith, honestly and a transparent manner; and at all times act in the best interest of the Municipality and in such a way that the credibility and integrity of the Municipality are not compromised.

    B.      Please note that your telephone number will be visible to all within the group, and these personal telephone numbers cannot be shared without consent.

    C.      The Code of Conduct for Councillors remains applicable when engaging on this platform. Access it here: https://www.gardenroute.gov.za/document-category/policies/

1. This group has been set up by the GRDM administration, who will act as administrators. Committee Services manage this group; they are, however, not the "moderators". The Speaker usually makes use of this platform to communicate with all Councillors.

2. This group is intended as a convenient way to distribute information to Councillors quickly and efficiently (not news, the media group is used for that) and for Councillors to communicate easily with each other regarding Council matters.

3. This group is set up in a spirit of informal and formal communication amongst persons sharing the same common interest. In keeping with that spirit, it is not the intention that there ought to be an overly legalistic attitude towards its operation. However, the following ought to be adhered to:

    A.    The group is not to be used to discuss non-council related issues.

    B.    The group should not be used to express personal opinions or post private messages.

    C.    Any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members. Group administrators are not responsible for any comments posted by individual members of the group.

    D.    It is not necessary to respond to every post unless it is requested, e.g. RSVP. When a busy user gets too many notifications, there is the chance that they will turn off the notifications, which undermines the efficiency of the facility.

    E.    If your message is not relevant to most group members, please message the person directly rather than the entire group.

    F.    No inappropriate posts include using inappropriate language, insulting messages, voicing grievances with the Municipality or with individual members of the group or a political party.

    G.    No comments should be made regarding colleagues, management, work policies or events.

    H.    If there is a breach of any of the rules, the Speaker reserves the right to remove the transgressor from the group for a certain period.

I. Participation is not obligatory, and if you are here, you have the option of leaving. We would hope that all participants can see the usefulness of the group and will cooperative accordingly.

J. No posts to promote a political party or individuals will be allowed.

K. do not spam the group with memes, adverts, deals or irrelevant pictures.

L. Do not post in any group between 20:00 and 05:00 unless it is an emergency.

M. Do not send data-insensitive messages. No one wants their last data used up videos, etc.

N. Hit "Mute" on your WhatsApp group (unless you are part of an emergency rescue group). You will still receive all the messages, but your phone will not buzz or make a noise for every one of them.

O. By participating in this WhatsApp Group, you agree to these group rules

2. Respect everyone's privacy – being part of this group requires mutual trust.

## 9. Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| account | A social media' account' or 'user account' is the first step that a person needs to create, engage on social media, and populate a social media profile. Without an account, a person cannot create a profile. |
| follow | When a user chooses to see another user, page or group's posts, the user needs to 'follow' the user, page or group. |
| following | The amount of users' following' a user, page or group. |
| handles | A handle defines a username, page or group name on social media and is, in most cases, preceded by the '@' sign. Examples include @JohnDoe, @GardenRouteDM, @WCGovernment etc. |
| hyperlink | A 'hyperlink' can either be a word, phrase or image used to jump to a new section on a website. Another name for a hyperlink is a 'link'. Hyperlinks can be found on websites, interactive presentations or inside electronic documents. |
| media channels | The methods used to communicate messages, including spoken words, print, broadcast or Internet. |
| network | A network is an interconnected path of communication between various social media platforms, their users (people, businesses or groups). |

| official channel(s) | Communication that is formal, planned, generated by an organisation, impersonal, structured, flowing between different hierarchical structures. |
|---|---|
| online community | A group of people using social media to communicate or share content. |
| post | A 'post' is content (text, video, and photo) <u>shared</u> on a social media platform like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest etc. |
| posted | Once text, a video, a photo, audio or documents have been uploaded (shared on) to the Internet to a social media platform, it has been published publicly (depending on one's privacy settings). |
| profile | A 'profile' contains information related to a user who accesses an online web-based platform, like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram etc. <u>A profile</u> stores details like the name, contact information, pictures etc., of a user. |
| sharing | The act of passing on content (text, video, photo, audio, documents) to and from individuals, groups, pages across social media platforms. |
| social media | A collection of interactive online platforms and tools that individuals, groups and organisations use to share content, market, provide insight and educate others. Social media allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content.<br>Examples include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Google+, WhatsApp, blogs, apps providing comment facilities. |
| <u>social</u> media platform | A tool or mechanism used to facilitate the creation and exchange of content generated for and by users. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram etc. |
| social media presence | <u>This</u> represents an individual, group or organisation on a social media platform. An active presence means that an individual, group or <u>organisation</u> uses social media regularly. Lacking a presence on social media would refer to an individual, group or <u>organisation</u> not engaging on social media enough to create publicity, awareness or a 'voice'. |
| tools | Tools are devices used to access social media platforms. Tools include desktop computers, laptops, cellular/smartphones or tablets. |
| unfollow | A conscious choice by a social media user to stop following an individual, group or page activity. |

| user | An individual that partakes in any engagement or information sharing on a social media platform. |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| username | A registered account name used when logging on to a social media platform. |