



## **LANGUAGE POLICY 2023/24**

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## **1. DEFINITIONS**

In this policy, unless the context otherwise indicates ‘

**“administration”** refers to the administrative arm of the Garden Route District Municipality.

**“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 Garden Route District.

**“interpreter”** refers to a person providing an oral or visual in the case of South African Sign Languages.

**“Municipality”** refers to the Garden Route District Municipality (established by Provincial Notice 497 dated 22 September 2000, as amended).

**“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 6 of the Constitution of the Western Cape.

**“Translator”** provides a written transmission of what is written in one language into another language.

**“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 Garden Route District Municipality.

## **3. PURPOSE**

To give effect to -

- a) Sections 6 and 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996).
- b) Sections 18.2 and 21.2 of the Municipal Systems Act, (Act 32/2000).

c) the principles of Batho Pele as contained in Government Gazette No 18340 of 1 October 1997.

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

#### **4. SCOPE**

The scope of this policy includes all employees of the Garden Route District Municipality (GRDM).

#### **5. GOALS**

- a) to establish the language preferences of the Municipality's residents and give effect thereto.
- b) to support impartial service delivery by promoting equal access to municipal services and programmes by removing communication or language barriers.
- c) to promote multilingualism amongst the municipality's staff and communities within the municipal areas of jurisdiction.
- d) subject to Section 4(a), to, in the interim, promote the use of the three official languages in the affairs of the municipality.
- e) to give optimum effect to the equal status of the three official languages of the Western Cape.
- f) For Council to make provision to address the needs of people who are differently abled.

#### **6. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

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.

### **6.1 Official Communication**

All official communication will be done in English, including memorandums, reports, plans, policies, letters and others.

### **6.2 Informal Communication**

This is outside the scope of this policy.

### **6.3 Disciplinary Hearings**

All disciplinary hearings must be able to be conducted in any of the three official languages of the Western Cape. If an employee's mother tongue is in a language not widely spoken in the Western Cape, the Municipality would need to utilise a service provider to provide the relevant interpretation.

## **7. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

### **7.1 Communication to the Municipality**

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

### **7.2 Communication by the Municipality**

- a) As far as possible and within the available resources of the Municipality, all external written correspondence must be in the language in which the original communication was received.
- b) When the Municipality engages in service delivery and communicates to the public, it must do so in the language preference of the community. If this is not possible, the municipal employee must explain his or her difficulty in communicating in the member of the public's choice of language and request for one of the remaining official languages of the Western Cape to be used.
- c) All municipal notices by the Municipality to the public must be done in all three languages of the Western Cape.
- d) Jobs that require Grade 12 as a minimum requirement, must be communicated in English, but if translations are required from members of the public, it may be done depending on availability of capacity.

- e) Identification signage and direction of municipal offices or facilities must be in English.
- f) Communication during Inter-Governmental Relations engagements will happen in English.
- g) Communication during Public Participation engagements must cater for all three official languages of the Western Cape. A translator may be present during these engagements if available. If a person who is deaf, needs to be accommodated, the municipality would be required to arrange for such interpretations or translations.
- h) Media-related communication issued by Communicators will be done in a language that is catered to its target audiences. It is important to note that communication by the GRDM to the broader public travels far and beyond the local language preferences, which must be taken into account too.
- i) It is the policy of GRDM to ensure that education sessions with the public are conducted in the language of their choice. This includes instances where Environmental Health Practitioners conduct awareness sessions, such as on the topic of hand washing, in a setting where a predominant language other than English is spoken. To effectively communicate important information to all members of the public, it is necessary to provide education in a language they fully understand.

### **7.3 Council Communication**

- a) The Speaker of Council must ensure that all Councillors accommodate the language use and preferences of other officials and Councillors with courtesy.
- b) Any of the three official languages may be used in any debates and other proceedings of the Council and its Committees. The Municipality must make provision for interpreting services for members from and into the three official languages during sittings of the Council and its Committees. Sign language interpreting may be provided if available.

- c) A notice of motion or a formal motion in the Council or it's Committees must be submitted in English.
- d) All by-laws and resolutions of Council must be available in the official languages of the Western Cape.
- e) Notices of all meetings and indexes to agendas must be in all three official languages of the Western Cape.
- f) Minutes of Council meetings must be published in English, however the headings of the minutes must be published in the official languages of the Province.
- g) All resolutions must be published in the official languages of the Western Cape.

**Reports serving at Council must conform to the following:**

- headings in all official languages of the Western Cape;
- "Purpose" in English;
- "Delegated Authority" in English;
- "Executive Summary" in English;
- "Recommendation" in the official languages of the Province;
- "Background" in English;
- "Discussion" in English;
- "Financial Implications" in English;
- "Legal Implications" in English;
- "Staff Implications" in English;
- "Previous / Relevant Council Resolutions" in English;
- "Risk Implications" in English;
- "Annexures" in English;

## **8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### **8.1 Awareness**

- a) The municipality must continuously create awareness about the importance of multilingualism. For example, International Mother Language Day on 21 February is one of few days that serve to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.
- b) The Municipality must take a firm position on multilingualism and promote its position accordingly.

### **8.2 Development and Education**

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.

### **8.3 Translation and Interpreting Services**

The Municipality must make available translating and interpreting services of where and when it is required.

### **8.4 Main/General Telephone exchanges**

The main/general telephone reception system must be set up in such a way that those contacting the Municipality must be helped in the language of their choice.