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DRAFT

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2023

APPROVED FOR CONSULTATION BY:

EXECUTIVE MAYOR..... 12/9.

SPEAKER.....

MUNICIPAL MANAGER.....

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1. INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure synergy, coherence and consistency in its messaging, this strategy serves as a blueprint as to how Overstrand Municipality should communicate with its diverse stakeholders for the duration of the current local government's term of office. Given the dynamic nature of the communication environment, this communication strategy is flexible and will be subject to annual review as and when necessary.

Moreover, the intention with this communication strategy for Overstrand Municipality is to set a strategic communication agenda and plan that is aligned with and supports the achievement of Council's strategic objectives as captured in the 2023/24 Integrated Development Plan.

In essence, the various elements contained in this strategy will ensure that the Municipality communicates in a coordinated and planned manner that serves to strengthen its image and credibility. Planned communication not only increases confidence in the Municipality's performance, but is also a demonstration of strong leadership and credible governance.

In the main, the communication function at local government level involves:

- Managing the Municipality's communication with the public;
- Coordinating internal communication; and
- Reinforcing the Municipality's reputation.

Affecting sustainable behavioural change is a long-term proposition and involves, in addition to issues of communication, other factors such as the availability, accessibility and quality of services; the socio-cultural and political context; and the level of education and socio-economic circumstances of citizens.

For that reason, in developing this communication strategy, particular attention was paid to the core principles that underpin the realisation of the **Batho Pele** (i.e. "People first") vision.

To that end, Overstrand Municipality recognises:

That all residents should have **equal access** to the services they are entitled to and that they should be **consulted** about the nature, quantity and quality of the services they are to be provided with.

In instances where residents are dissatisfied with the **standard of the services** provided to them or are of the opinion that they are not getting **value for their money**, they must be able to **seek redress** and to have their complaints attended to speedily and efficiently.

Of particular concern for this strategy are the principles of **openness and transparency**, implying that **full and accurate information** must be available to all stakeholders (external as well as internal) and that these stakeholders should always be treated in a **courteous and considerate** manner.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This communication strategy was developed in accordance with Chapters 4 and 6 of the **Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (32/2000)**, stipulating that a municipality must evaluate:

- the needs of the community;
- the municipality's priorities;
- the processes employed to involve communities;
- the municipality's organisational and delivery mechanisms; and
- its overall performance in as far as achieving objectives is concerned.

3. MUNICIPAL OVERVIEW

Overstrand's municipal area covers approximately 1 708 square kilometres and, according to the latest projections, it is estimated that its population stands at around 114 680. Divided into three administrations (i.e. Hangklip-Kleinmond, Greater Hermanus and Gansbaai/Stanford), the municipality has its head office in Hermanus,

but municipal services are delivered on a decentralised basis from offices in Gansbaai, Stanford, Hermanus and Kleinmond.

3.1 Political governance

The area is demarcated into fourteen wards, each with a directly elected councillor. Currently, the municipal Council is comprised of twenty-seven councillors, fourteen of which proportionally represent six political parties: the Democratic Alliance (DA) [majority], the African National Congress (ANC), the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), Freedom Front Plus (FF+) and the Land Party.

Each of the directly elected councillors is assisted by a ward committee comprised of ten members. Ward committee members are elected democratically, and provision is made for representation by both organisations and individuals. These ward committees play an important role in the drafting and reviewing the Municipality's Integrated Development Plan, a plan that serves to identify priorities and to inform the budget.

3.2 Vision, mission & values



We belong



We care



We serve

Overstrand Municipality's **vision** is to be the centre of excellence for the community.

To this end, our **mission** is to create sustainable communities by delivering optimal services to support economic, social and environmental goals in a politically stable environment.

At the heart of this mission, lies our core **values** expressed as follows:

- **Opportunities for all**
- **Value the input of our communities**
- **Economic growth for the benefit of all**
- **Recreational activities in a safe environment**
- **Sustain service excellence and productivity**
- **Teamwork in achieving success**
- **Recognising the needs of our diverse society**
- **Acknowledge the need to conserve our biodiversity**
- **No to corruption and maladministration**
- **Development within a sustainable environment**

4. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

4.1 By way of background

Given that companies and organisations, even top-level government, have to explain the value of what they do, the products and jobs they provide, and their contribution to society, the need for effective communication has never been more pressing.

In short, communication is the lubricant that makes it possible for change to take place in an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance.

To be effective, though, the **communicator** must come across as **credible** (someone knowledgeable about the subject matter), **ethical** (someone who inherently believes in what is right and wrong), and **socially responsible** (someone who will protect and address the interests of all role players).

Likewise, a communicator must consider the **audience** the message is intended for, the **content** thereof, and the **means** by which it will be delivered.

4.2 Audience, content & delivery mechanisms – the Overstrand perspective

Within the context of local government, messaging aimed at affecting change is seldom aimed at individuals. Rather, the intention here is to convey a message as cost-effectively as possible to an **audience** broadly representative of the municipality's stakeholders.

- In order to target a **message** at a specific audience, it is important to make it clear from the outset in the content who the message is intended for and by whom it is being conveyed.
- To be heard, understood and believed, the message must be simple, have meaning for the receiver given his/her current circumstances, and have the same value for both the communicator and the receiver.

Likewise, it is important to use the best possible **means** to communicate the message. Here it ought to be kept in mind that in the information age, organisations that best utilise modern communication resources will most likely excel.

Depending on the **audience** being addressed as well as the **intent, content and urgency of the message** that needs to be delivered, Overstrand Municipality should aim to use a mixture of the following **communication mediums** as cost-effectively and as efficiently as possible:

❖ *The spoken word:*

- This is in all probability the most effective method, provided the communicator is fully conversant with the subject matter.
- Good examples would be First Thursday events, ward committee meetings and the public participation processes followed prior to finalising revised IDPs and annual budgets.

❖ *Printed media:*

- Newsletters (both internal and external), press releases and the likes of annual reports, brochures and pamphlets all serve to convey important information in greater detail.

- Note that nowadays, just about anything published in print can be retrieved electronically and is readily available on platforms such as Overstrand's website.

❖ *Social media:*

- In addition to the worldwide web, people nowadays increasingly turn to the likes of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to keep abreast of happenings that concern them.
- Maintaining a user-friendly presence on these platforms is of utmost importance since, all too often, an "official voice" will be necessary to counter the "fake news" notoriously spread via social media.

❖ *Audiovisual media*

- Radio and television broadcasts have the ability to bring the Overstrand "experience" to life, as can videos.
- These are mostly used for promotional purposes, but to avoid sketching a biased picture, the content thereof must be considered carefully.

❖ *Promotional events & conferences*

- As much as it is important for Overstrand to "showcase" its accomplishments, it must also be seen as a proactive participant at local government level who actively addresses pertinent issues such as the alleviation of poverty and food insecurity, the promotion of education and skills development, and ensuring that scarce resources are used in a sustainable manner and conserved.
- The opportunities to communicate one-on-one at events and conferences are invaluable because they also afford an opportunity to listen and learn which, in essence, underpins the concept "open governance".

5. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED DURING CURRENT TERM

From the outset, Council was unequivocal about its commitment to upholding the 3Cs that underpin strategic interventions, required to realise its drive **#overstrand4all** namely:

5.1 Communication

- All decisions taken by Council and the administration will be conveyed in simple language by whatever means to as many people in the Overstrand as possible;
- Members of staff will behave in a respectful and accommodating manner where and whenever they interact with the public or their colleagues; and
- Councillors and senior managers will actively engage with and listen to issues and/or concerns raised by the public and/or the business fraternity.

5.2 Crime prevention and law enforcement

- Issues such as land invasion, irregular building activities and illegal dumping will no longer be tolerated; and
- An end will be made to the unbridled reaping of Overstrand's marine resources by holding the Department of Community Safety, the SAPS and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to account.

5.3 Cost and ease of doing business with Overstrand

- The perceived attitude of "sorry, can't help" must change to "let's see what we can do";
- Business processes will be reworked to eliminate duplications and unnecessary approvals and/or interfaces; and
- Turnaround times to attend to objections/representations approve building plans and conclude inspections will be shortened considerably.

As stated from the outset, given the dynamic nature of the communication environment, the issues to be addressed will be flexible and will always be dependent on the most pressing needs.

In general, prioritising those needs will be informed by the 2023/24 Integrated Development Plan given that in this plan, Overstrand's residents voiced their needs and priorities following on an extensive public participation process and because, based on those needs and priorities, mutual agreement was reached on the strategies that should be deployed to reconstruct and develop Overstrand's communities.

The exception here would be **crisis management**.

6. COMMUNICATING AT THE TIME OF A CRISIS

To weather any crisis (e.g. runaway fires, floods, prolonged disruptions of the electricity or water reticulation network, the outbreak of communicable diseases, etc.), it is essential that all communication be vetted by a central command centre before being made public by whatever means.

This to ensure that the public is informed of the true extent of the disaster/crisis and kept abreast of what the disaster/crisis management team is doing to address the situation and to keep them safe.

Given that some telecommunication infrastructure may be damaged and/or not fully operational under circumstances such as these, extensive use should be made of newspapers, local radio stations, the Municipality's website and social media as well as the Municipality's SMS service to broadcast official statements/alerts on a regular basis. In addition to keeping the public abreast of the *actual* state of affairs, the intention here is also to counter any *fake news* and *rumours* that are bound to do the rounds.

It goes without saying that a public enquiry system must be maintained for the duration, while the public must be furnished with the details of who to contact in the case of an emergency and how and where emergency services can be reached.

7. INCORPORATING COUNCIL'S LANGUAGE POLICY

The Constitution of South Africa provides that municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of the community. Council's Language Policy aims to ensure that the three official languages of the Western Cape (i.e. Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English) enjoy equal representation in its communiqués.

To comply with multilingual requirements, the Municipality has introduced trilingual municipal signage and the monthly newsletter is produced in the three official languages. Municipal accounts are rendered in the recipient's language of choice. On the level of spoken language, a number of Xhosa-speaking officials are available to interpret between Xhosa and English/Afrikaans. Note that, in addition to handling their normal line-function duties, these officials are called upon from time to time to also act as interpreters. Currently, all other translations are outsourced.

8. COMMUNICATION PLAN 2023

TARGET GROUP	MESSAGE	PURPOSE	MEANS	FREQUENCY
Rate payers	Overstrand is a centre of excellence	To create pride in the Municipality	<i>Overstrand Bulletin</i>	Monthly
Ratepayers' associations	Issues are handled in an accountable and efficient manner	Reassurance that good governance is practised	Local newspapers	When issues are addressed
Investors and business fraternity	Overstrand is a safe place to invest since its administration does not tolerate corruption and bribery	To ensure economic development and job creation	Annual Report and website	Ongoing
Individual clients	We belong. We care. We serve.	To show that Overstrand cares for its clients and to create mutual understanding	Individual correspondence and/or one-on-one engagements	Daily

9. BUDGET ESTIMATE & PROJECTED TIMEFRAME

<u>Item</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
Council outreach programmes (i.e. public participation) in collaboration with communication department	R70 000	Quarterly
Radio talk shows (up to three per month) organised as needed by communication department	R70 000.00	Weekly and or monthly
Compilation, translation, design, printing and distribution of monthly newsletter (i.e. <i>Bulletin</i>)	R150 000	Monthly
Press releases and notices	R70 000	Weekly and monthly
Procurement of branded exhibition material (e.g. banners, backdrops, pop-ups, feathers, gazebos, etc.)	R70 000	Quarterly

Procurement of branded promotional items (e.g. pens, key rings, USBs, T-shirts, etc.)	R200 000	Monthly and quarterly
Protocol photography	R30 000	July - October 2023
Graphic design of directional signage	R 70 000	End of June 2024
Conceptualisation, design and printing of informative pamphlets, flyers, etc.	R70 000	Quarterly
Upkeep of municipal notice boards	R20 000	Weekly