BITOU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Communication Strategy approved under resolution C/3/62/10/22 on 31 October 2022

Content

1. OVERVIEW

The local Bitou Municipality has a responsibility to communicate effectively and efficiently with all its stakeholders and to ensure that the public is continuously provided with opportunities and platforms to engage the municipality on:

- Policies and procedures
- Budgeting and implementation of the budget
- Activities and events
- Resolutions and decisions taken thereof
- Staff establishment and movements
- Audit outcomes
- All other matters

The Bitou Municipality have a fully functioning Communications Department which is tasked with all communication functions and ensures these are taken care of in a timely manner. The Head of the Communications Department currently reports to the Director of Corporate Services and is afforded resources to execute the function of communicating with all stakeholders.

The Action Plan as an addendum to the municipal communication strategy, this will be reviewed on annual basis.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

There is a legal and policy framework that compels all municipalities to create an environment that promotes communication and public participation in all its affairs. The following different policies of legislation outlines how the Bitou Municipality communicates

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1993)
- The Municipal System (Act 32 of 2000)
- Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2000 (Act 2 of 2000)
- Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998)
- Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013)
- Municipal Finance Management Act 2003
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3 of 2000)
- Copyright Act (Act 98 of 1978)
- Electronic Communications and transactions Act (Act 25 of 200 of 2020)
- Use of Official Language Act (Act 12 of 2012)
- Public Service Act (Act 103 of 1994)

with its stakeholders.

VISION STATEMENT

VISION 2030

"To be the best together"
"Om saam die beste te wees"
"Sobalasela Sonke"

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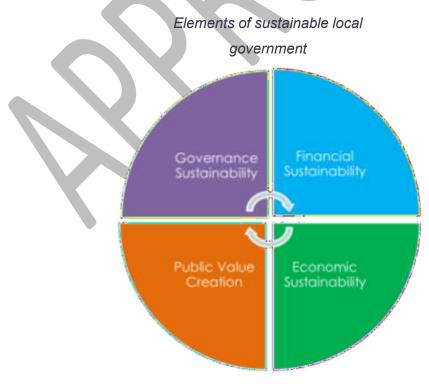
MISSION STATEMENT

"We partner with communities and stakeholders to sustainably deliver quality services so that everyone in Bitou can live and prosper together"

VALUES

- o **Ubuntu** – working together, respect for each other and caring for all citizens regardless of race, gender, creed or political affiliation.
- o **Integrity** – honesty, commitment to good governance, truthfulness, honour and uprightness by all employees.
- o **Accountability** – for performance.
- o **Responsibility** – professionalism and excellence.
- o **Innovation** – inspired leadership that seeks excellence and creative solutions to challenges in a resourceful way.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Elements of sustainable local government

MUNICIPAL KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

The Bitou Municipality is faced with key challenges as it endeavors to address the spatial, socio-economic and environmental development gaps. The Municipality endeavors to develop the knowledge and skills   to adapt and plan for change.

The Bitou Municipality has adopted seven strategic objectives to deliver on its Vision and to help realise the objectives of the district economic development, provincial strategic goals and national development plan   which eventually will contribute to the global sustainable development goals. The aim of these strategic objectives is to streamline municipal planning and resource use for effective and efficient service delivery.

These objectives are supported by several programs that Council will implement to effect job creation, economic transformation, and institution capabilities and reduce inequality.

The chart below gives detail of the Municipal strategic objectives and priority areas. It is prudent to mention upfront that Community and Social Development (priority number 3) is very complex and most of its variables fall outside of the municipal scope, these will require extensive and high-level partnerships. The objectives include issues of morality, health, education, safety, and security.

MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

KEY PERFOMANCE AREA	• OBJECTIVES
1. Strategic Planning for Transformation	• spatially integrate areas separated by apartheid, promote access for poor to work, recreational and commercial opportunities
2. Economic Development	• grow local economy, create jobs, empower previously disadvantaged, transform ownership patterns
3. Community and Social Development	• eradicate poverty and uplift previously disadvantaged communities, and promote social cohesion
4. Infrastructure Development	• universal access to decent quality of services
5. Institutional	• build a capable, corruption-free administration that is able to deliver on developmental mandate
6. Financial Sustainability	• manage expenditure prudently, grow revenue base and build long term financial sustainability so as to invest in social and economic development
7. Public Participation	• an active and engaged citizenry, able to engage with and shape the municipality's programme

All the above taken from the IDP (2016-2022) provides guidelines that are important to develop the strategic plan for the Bitou Municipality's Communications Department.

3. COMMUNICATION OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The primary goal is to ensure that all stakeholders are encouraged to be empowered with information to participate fully in the activities of the Bitou Municipality and that of other spheres of government and our strategic partners.

To achieve this goal, the department has identified the key requirements needed as outlined below:

➢ Create and manage a central Communications Department in the Municipality with a clear vision and mission as well as communication objectives.

- ➢ Develop and present to council a Communications Framework that will assign roles and responsibilities to the different role players.
- ➢ Develop a Communications Strategy that will cover the following issues:
  - ▪ Communication Plans for all activities
  - ▪ A crisis communication framework
  - ▪ Campaigns and events
  - ▪ Municipal events like the IDP Roadshows
  - ▪ Internal and external communication
- ➢ Ensure that the Department is adequately capacitated with staff, budgets and other resources to promote effective communications by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.
- ➢ Build partnership with the district, provincial and national government communicators to ensure the public is informed about "government" on an ongoing basis. This is in line with the Intergovernmental framework (IGRF).
- ➢ Create, manage, and maintain a good set of platforms through which the Municipality can effectively communicate with its stakeholders within the current 5-year term ending 2026.
- ➢ Coordinate all communications coming out of the Municipality; this requires inculcating a spirit of communication throughout the organization and remove the silos which are normally a barrier to effective communication within institutions by the end of 2024
- ➢ Procure the relevant tools to communicate effectively by the end of the 2023/24 financial year.
- ➢ Create platforms that will make it possible for the public to engage with the Municipality on various topics and matters of interest on a continuous basis.
- ➢ Align the Communications Department to trends within the communication environment including social media and legacy media on a continuous basis.

These objectives will only be effective if the following communication principles are adhered to:

- ➢ Each communication must have specific intent. Each communication will be categorized as one of the following:
  - ▪ Warning *e.g., Warning the residents of a Road Closure, Fire warning, possible flooding*
  - ▪ Notice *e.g., Notice of a Council Meeting or a Planned Power Outage*
  - ▪ Advertisement *e.g., Advertisement of a job, Auction*
  - ▪ Inform *e.g., Passing of a by-law, resolution*

- Call for Comments
- Announcements

➢ Communication is a "two-way street". There should be adequate platforms that enable residents to engage the municipality *e.g., Customer Care Call Centre, social media, website, etc.*

➢ Effective communication mediums should be used to ensure specific target audiences are reached. *E.g., all wards, except Ward 2, prefer Loud Hailing to announce meetings. The younger, more technologically savvy would prefer social media as a preferred medium whilst the majority of older generations prefer more traditional forms of communication like e-mail, and print media.*

➢ Communication should have a specific intent. If the intent is to warn residents of a potential danger of drinking water from a certain source it should be straight and to the point, without causing confusion with the audience.

➢ Communication should be accurate and precise. It is important that the message distributed is accurate and precise. The message becomes diluted if it contains incorrect or non-essential information. It should be factual and should not contain spelling, grammatical or other errors as this can badly damage the reputation of the institution.

➢ Communication must be persuasive. The audience must be persuaded to follow a certain cause of action after the message has been delivered. If the call is for residents to pay for services, then the message must be so strong that they are persuaded to pay.

➢ Use visuals as much as it is possible. It is much easier to communicate using more visuals *e.g., using diagrams and charts*.

➢ Stories are often more effective.

4. SWOT ANALYSIS

Bitou Municipal SWOT Analysis as taken from the IDP of the Municipality.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
a. The municipal geographic location is ideal for economic development and serves as a gateway into the Western Cape. b. Natural environment and diverse natural heritage c. Tourism infrastructure d. Transport infrastructure e. Finance and service industry, wholesale, retail, trade f. Agricultural potential g. Quality infrastructure and service delivery, and stable electricity supply h. Good law enforcement i. Sound municipal administration j. Skilled and qualified workforce k. Good governance, clean audits l. Financial viability and stable rates base m. High value municipal owned properties	a. Over-reliance on one economic driver; very b. limited industry or manufacturing base; lack of resort and hotel environment c. Limited space for development d. High unemployment and inequality, high levels e. of poverty, indigent register incomplete f. No dams, limited water supply, lack of potable water g. Limited bulk infrastructure, no landfill site, challenges with maintenance of infrastructure h. Labour market stability – stepping-stone effect, fixed term contracts for HODs, challenges in filling i. critical positions, attraction of unskilled labourers j. Development of affordable (social and gap) housing k. Poor internal communication l. Working in silos m. No centralised municipal building n. Limited public participation & communication with communities
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
a. Investment through engagement with large investors and developers b. Tourism development and spinoffs, e.g., development of handcraft-based tourism c. Agriculture, Mariculture, forestry, industrial development d. Rejuvenation of quarrying / mining e. Development of airport f. HCD - development of higher education institution (South Cape College), development of satellite campuses g. Conference facilities / sports facilities h. Increase government footprint, attraction of regional government departments i. Health facilities j. Visible law enforcement k. New municipal offices l. Development of social / gap housing	a. Population growth and demographic influx b. Economic instability, low economic growth c. Poverty and high levels of indecency d. High cost of living e. Growth of unemployed youth f. High levels of unskilled labour g. Crime influx h. Security of assets i. Affordable accommodation j. Climate change k. Drought & water scarcity l. Deforestation and veld fires m. Political instability

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Bitou Municipal Communications Department SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
a. A well set-up Communications Department	a. Budget limitations
b. Access to funds through the Department being budgeted for	b. Political interference
c. Committed and enthusiastic workforce	c. Overlap of roles
d. Availability of communication tools and platforms	d. Staff limitations – relies heavily on interns and EPWP
e. A fair level of cooperation between the Communication Department and other departments within the municipality	e. Lack of planning by other departments impact on the Communications Department
f. Good working relationship with other municipalities in the district	f. Skills shortages – need for a graphic designer
g. Partnership with the Communications Department of the Garden Route District Municipality	g. Positioning of the Section in the Corporate Services Department instead of in the Municipal Manager's, create red- tape
h. Good working relationship with Plett Tourism Association	
i. A Communication Policy is in place	
j. A Disaster Communication Framework is in place	
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
a. Political buy-in from Council and Bitou Executive Management	a. Possible political instability
b. Growing importance of new digital platforms of communication and engagements due to Covid-19	b. Staff movement could lead to a loss of skills
c. More calls to increase public participation on various municipal activities, policies, etc.	c. Covid -19 is still a threat
d. Growing interest from the public in matters relating to government	d. Budget cuts
e. An environment of good cooperation between all three spheres of government	e. Poor levels of internal communications
f. The process of reviewing municipal policy, strategies, and procedures.	f. Inadequate communication resources *e.g., loud hailing equipment*
g. The District Model provides an opportunity for integration (JDMA)	

The SWOT analysis for the communications section gives a clear picture of which areas needs to be strengthened and areas of opportunities that can be explored. The Communications Team will use these to effectively develop a communications plan that will enable the institution to drastically improve the communication with all stakeholders.
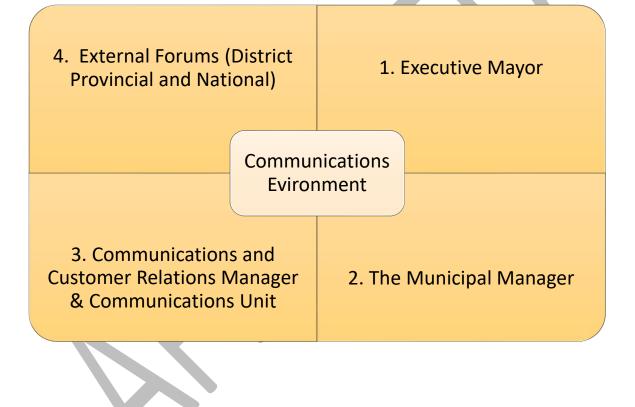
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5. THE BITOU COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT

Communications within the Bitou Municipality takes place within an environment that is influenced by:

a. The Legal and policy framework as described in point 3 of this document (Page 7.) and

b. Structure, policy and procedure of the Communications Department which identifies the role players and their respective roles in the communications environment.

4. External Forums (District Provincial and National)	1. Executive Mayor
Communications Evironment	
3. Communications and Customer Relations Manager & Communications Unit	2. The Municipal Manager

Roles and Responsibilities of Communicators

To ensure effective communication and compliance to Municipality Communication Policy, the following roles and responsibilities are adopted:

A. **The Executive Mayor:** The Executive Mayor is the Chief Communicator on all Municipal programmes. He / She can delegate these responsibilities to an EXCO member whenever required. The Mayor together with the Municipal Manager and Head of the Communications Department are responsible for defining the annual communication priorities, objectives and requirements.

B. **The Municipal Manager:** Serves as the spokesperson for the Municipality on strategic and operational issues, he / she can delegate these responsibilities to the Head of Communications whenever required. However, on individual matters the affected Councillor may respond in consultation with the Mayor through the Office of the Municipal Manager. He / she ensures that a communications strategy is approved and reviewed annually to be in line with the Municipality communication objectives and reflects the Municipality's priorities. The Municipal Manager ensures the integration of the communications function within the Municipality's decision-making processes and the integration of strategic communication planning in the overall planning of the municipality.

C. **Communications and Customer Relations Manager:** Serves as the Head of Communication Section and is bestowed with the overall authority in regarding the Municipality's communications function. He / she is responsible for:
- setting up and managing the Communication Department
- co-coordinating all communications activities
- staffing and managing all officials placed within the Communications Department

- procuring of communication products and services

- planning and managing the communications budget

- managing all the municipal communications platforms

- developing and managing the budget of the Communication Department

- appointment of communication service providers

- provides communication advice to the Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager and Directors

- Co-ordinating liaison with the media which includes arranging media conferences, issuing of media statements, and handling media queries

- managing the Bitou Municipal website and social media platforms

- managing the image and brand of the Municipality

- content management of all internal and external communication, including the editing and or translation activities

- managing the assets of the section

- managing media monitoring

D. **Communications Department:** The Communications Department is responsible for co-coordinating all communication activities in the Municipality. In this regard the Communications Department shall support and coordinate all communication efforts with the objective of enabling the Mayor and Municipal Manager to perform their function as Chief Communicators and shall provide strategic advice and direction relating to the communication policy development, programme planning and programme implementation; develop and implement communication plans and produce publications for information dissemination**.**

E. **District and Provincial Communicators Forums:** Provincial and District Communicators Forums have been established and meetings are held quarterly. These forums offer a strategic platform for information sharing and coordination with local

government departments and other government agencies within the district and province. From time to time SALGA Calls Communicators from Local Government together to engage on various communications issues.

A. IDENTIFICATION OF THE BITOU MUNICIPALITY STAKEHOLDERS

STAKEHOLDER	CATEGORY	Internal	External
Councilors of the Bitou Local Council	Primary	✓	
Bitou Administrators (Employees)	Primary	✓	
Ward Committees	Primary	✓	✓
Residents / Consumers / Customers	Primary		✓
Tourism Association	Primary		✓
Other Government Departments	Secondary		✓
District Municipality	Secondary		✓
Other Municipalities	Secondary		✓
Other Government entities *e.g., ESKOM*	Secondary		✓
Business Chambers	Secondary		✓
Media Agencies (Print and Electronic)	Secondary		✓
Community-based organizations / church bodies/ security bodies	Secondary		✓
Early Childhood Development Centre's	Secondary		✓
Schools	Secondary		✓
Organised Labour *e.g., Labour Unions*	Secondary		✓

It is important for the Municipality to clearly categorize its stakeholders to fully understand them. This enables the section to:

- Know what the stakeholders needs.
- Establish how the stakeholder group needs to be engaged.
- Establish what possible barriers to effective communication could be.
- Establish when it is most effective to reach the stakeholders (reach a maximum number of people).

B. KEY MESSAGES THAT THE MUNICIALITY AIMS TO COMMUNICATE

The Bitou Municipality aims to effectively communicate with its stakeholders different types of messages that are pertinent to the Bitou Municipality and its strategic partners. These include:

a.   Messages in Relations to the Bitou Council and its Committees

b.   Messages in Relations to the Bitou Administration

c.   Messages in Relations to Council Resolutions

d.   Messages in Relations to Council Policies and Procedures

e.   Messages in Relations to Municipal Strategic Planning (The Integrated Development Plan)

f.   Messages in Relations to Municipal Budgeting

g.   Messages in Relations to Performance

h.   Messages in relations to Internal and External Audit Outcome

i.   Messages in Relations to Service Delivery

j.   Messages in Relations to Socio -Economic Development

k.   Messages in relations to Health and General hygiene

l.   Messages in Relations to Safety and Crime prevention

m. Messages in Relations to Municipal Events and Functions

n.   Messages in Relations to Job Creation and Enterprise Development

o.   Messages to Revenue generation and Debt collection

p.   Messages in Relations to Integrated Human Settlements

q.   Messages in relations to Youth, Arts, Culture and Sports Development

r.   Messages in Relations to Information and Libraries

s.   Messages in relations to the Environment and Beaches

t.   Messages in relations to Disasters and Crisis

u.   Messages in relations to Education and Schools

These message types above are just some of the messages that the Department would be communicating with stakeholders. These messages can be sent in different methods based on the effectiveness of the message reaching the targeted audience.

C. Communications Tools that the municipality uses and its effectiveness

In order for the municipality to be in a position to effectively communicate with all its stakeholders it needs to have the relevant tools and platforms to reach their audience. The municipality utilize the below mentioed

Tool/ Platform	Used For	Effectiveness	Audience	Comments & Suggestion
Website	Used to formally communicate all information relating to the Bitou Municipality and its strategic partners	It is effective to a large extent but is largely used by those who have internet connectivity	**All Residents with access to the internet** • Ratepayers Associations / Civic Bodies • Tourists • Investors • Other government departments and entities • Other interest groups like researchers • Job seekers • Suppliers and businesses who are interested in tenders	Make it more user friendly Add other innovations like an e–based skills development centre
Social Media: Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Podcast	A modern trend to send out quick messages and communication	It is very effective as more residents have access to smartphones and so forth.	• All residents with access to the internet • Young People who are social media savvy	Improve on the use of diverse languages as used in the community

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			• Ratepayers Associations / Civic Bodies • Tourists • Investors • Other government departments and entities • Other interest groups like researchers • Job seekers • Suppliers and businesses who are interested in tenders	
Print Media: Includes - - **Newspapers** **External Newsletters** **Internal Newsletter**	To issue media statements, press releases, advertisements, and etc.	It is fairly effective as more people have access to newspapers and newsletters	• All Residents • Ratepayers Associations / Civic Bodies • Tourists • Investors	Again, ensure that translation into the three languages

			• Other government departments and Entities • Other interest groups like researchers • Job seekers • Suppliers and businesses who are interested in tenders	
Electronic Media (TV and Radio),	Press releases, advertisements, etc.	Not effectively used due to the high cost	• All Residents • Ratepayers Associations / Civic Bodies • Tourists • Investors • Other government departments and entities	Explore local community radio stations as a vehicle to use

Loud hailing	Largely used for announcements and urgent notices	Effectively used in all wards except in Ward 2 (the community is not appreciative of this method)	• All Residents	Acquire one or two more units
Brochures, Posters and Flyers	Largely used to create awareness	Effective and have a very large reach	• All Residents	None
Short Message Services (SMS	Largely used to send bulk SMS for notices, account balances, etc.	Very effective	• Focused groups	More consistency
Banners	For advertising and creating awareness	Very Effective	• General Public	None
Intranet	To engage with internal stakeholders	Effective	• Councilors • All Bitou Officials	None
Virtual Tools / Webinars (zoom/teams, skype)	to facilitate meetings where interested parties can log on from a remote area	Effective, especially when the number of attendees to a meeting is restricted	• All Residents • Councilors and Officials • Media Houses	Make more use of this form
Signage and Branding	Mostly for branding purposes and to put the image of the Municipality	Effective	• All residents • Visitors/ Tourists • Municipal personnel	Ensure that there is emphasis on ensuring facilities and the relevant items are correctly

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				branded and that our signage is improved
Email Communication	More a personal form of communication	Effective	• Personal and mostly one-on-one	None
Meetings	Share information, make decisions, engage groups	Effective	• Residents • Focused groups • Municipal personnel	None
Live Streaming	To stream events and meetings to a wider audience	Effective	• All Residents • Focused groups • Media Houses	Need to upgrade equipment and facilities to allow this
Telephone	One-on-one communication with stakeholders	Effective but cumbersome if it is aimed to reach more	• One-on-one and normally focused	
Customer Care Centre	For Consumers to register service delivery complaints and do general service delivery queries	Effective but there is room for improvement	• Customers • Internal	- Ensure that the Toll-Free number is accessible to all - Introduce more Self Help or Do it yourself Applications - Reduce the turnaround time to

				close calls / complaints
Consumer Outreach and Public Participation Campaigns and Drives	Reaching out to Consumers / Residents in the communities or wards they stay in to engage on Municipal activities, service delivery matters, Policies and Procedures	Can be effective if all role players can play their part and be open to reach out to the public. These can be done in: - Public or community centers or halls close within the different communities or wards - Ope-air public spaces like the Kwanokuthula Clinic parking, New Horizon sports field, etc. - Imbizos and jamborees	• All Residents and Focused on specific messages	- Get buy in from Council and Executive Management Team - Ensure adequate budget is available - Ensure a team of officials who are well capacitated in Bitou Municipal Activities, Systems, Policies, etc.
Sectoral Engagements	One-on-one engagements with specific sectors to	- Can be effective	• Sports Clubs • Civic bodies and Ratepayers,	-

		address sector specific issues			economic sectors e.g., Tourism	

Month	Action Plan	Description of Activities	Timing (Daily, Weekly, Quarterly or yearly)	BUDGET	Role Players
January	Back To School	Executive Mayors visit the schools and does an assessment and welcoming	First week of School	R6000	Political Office Bearers, Communications, Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Public Participation and Internal Staff
February	Valentine's Day	(Staff wellness)	14 February	0	Internal Staff, Municipal Manager, Communications
March	Human Rights Day	Celebration of the Human Rights Day	21 March	R15000	Political Office Bearers
	Mayoral Easter Tournament	Various sports codes from our greater Bitou gathered together and showcasing their	March/April	R25000	Political Office Bearers

		talents			
April	IDP Roadshows	Pre-Meeting: Advertising and Mobilizing Loud hailing/ Notices / social media/ Website Actual Meeting: Logistics Branding, Sound System, Photography	Timing (Daily)	R15000	Communications, Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Public Participation and Internal Staff
	Freedom Day	Celebrating Freedom Day	27 April	R15000	Political Office Bearers
May	Worker's Day	Celebrating Workers Day	1 May	0	Communications, Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Public Participation and Internal Staff
	Mother's Day	Celebrating Mother's Day	8 May	0	Communications, Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Public Participation and Internal Staff
	International Children's Day	Celebrating Children's Day	01 June	R10000	Political Office Bearers
June	Youth Day/Month	Celebrating and honouring the youth	16 June	R25000	Office of the Executive Mayor/Youth and Sport Development Desk
	Father's Day	Celebrating Father's Day	Second Sunday in June	0	Communications, Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Public Participation and Internal Staff
July	Mandela Day/Month	Celebrating the Mandela Day	18 June	R10000	Communications, Executive Mayor, Municipal Manager, Public Participation and Internal Staff
August	Women's Day/Month	Celebration of women's	9 August	R20000	Office of the Executive Mayor/Gender Desk

Month					
		contributions to history, culture and society			
September	Heritage Day/Month	Showcasing and celebrating our cultural diversity	24 September	R15000	Political Office Bearers
	National Secretary Day	Celebrations of Secretary Day	7 September	0	HR
	World Tourism Day	Acknowledges Tourism	27 September	R20000	Tourism
October	Customer Service Month	International Customer Service Week	3-7 October	R150000	Customer Care, Communications and Public Participation
November					
	16 Days of Activism	16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, campaign to challenge violence against women and girls	25 November to 3rd December	R25000	Office of the Executive Mayor/Gender
December	World Aids Day		01 December	-	Office of the Executive Mayor/Gender
	Disability Day		03 December	-	Office of the Executive Mayor/Gender
	Plett Rage Christmas		02- 8 December	R5000	
	Day of Reconciliation		16 December		Political Office Bearers

	New Year's Eve	Celebrating the New Year's Eve	31 December	0	Office of the Executive Mayor
	Ward base Public Meetings	Meetings	-	-	User Departments

6. ADOPTION AND REVIEW

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an Annual basis as it is a living document which will also be subject to environmental changes. Review will happen within the June of each year in order to ensure that any changes to the document are presented to Council by August each year.