

## **WEST COAST DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY LANGUAGE POLICY**

### **1. DEFINITIONS**

In this policy, unless the context otherwise indicates –

“Administration” refers to the administrative arm of the West Coast District Municipality

“Municipality” refers to the West Coast District Municipality (established by Provincial Notice 500 dated 22 September 2000);

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

“Council” refers to the Municipal Council of the West Coast District Municipality

“Province” refers to the Western Cape;

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

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

### **2. NAME OF POLICY**

Language Policy of the West Coast District Municipality

### **3. PURPOSE**

To give effect to –

- 3.1 Sections 6 and 9 of Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108/1996);
- 3.2 Sections 18(2) and 21(2) of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32/2000);
- 3.3 The principles of Batho Pele as contained in Government Gazette No. 18340 of 1 October 1997;
- 3.4 The Western Cape Language Policy (P/N 369 of 27 November 2001);

### **4. GOALS**

- 4.1 to establish the language preferences of the Municipality's ratepayers and residents and give effect thereto;
- 4.2 to support impartial service delivery by promoting equal access to municipal services and programmes by removing communication or language barriers;
- 4.3 to promote multilingualism amongst the Municipality's staff and communities within the municipal area of jurisdiction;
- 4.4 subject to 4.1 to, in the interim, promote and encourage the use of the three official languages, namely Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, in the affairs of the Municipality;
- 4.5 to give optimum effect to the equal status of the three official languages;

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

## **5. POLICY PROVISIONS FOR THE USE OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BY THE COUNCIL**

5.1 Afrikaans, English and Xhosa 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 must be provided if and when considered necessary;

5.2 All policies introduced/adopted, by-laws and Resolutions of the Council and its Committees must be available in Afrikaans and English. If there is a difference in interpretation, the Afrikaans version will prevail.

5.3 A notice of motion or a formal motion in the Council or its Committees must be available in two (2) official languages. Practical arrangements may be made to cause motions drawn up in one official language to be available within a reasonable period, in the other two official languages;

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

5.5 Notices of all meetings and indexes to agendas must be in Afrikaans and English;

5.6 Minutes of all meetings of Council and its Committees must be in Afrikaans and English, but that, as a result of practical considerations, this policy be phased in over a period of a few years (say 3 years).

## **6. DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS**

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

## **7. OFFICIAL NOTICE AND ADVERTISEMENTS**

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

## **8. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

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

8.2 All internal staff communiqué, eg. circulars, may be in Afrikaans and English;

8.3 The Municipality must take every effort to ensure compliance with this language policy.

## **9. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

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

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

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

## **10. IDENTIFICATION SIGNS**

- 10.1 Identification signage and direction in municipal offices or facilities must be in the three official languages;
- 10.2 Where the law permits, the three official languages must be used equitably on local road and direction signs. For street names, due regard must be given to the various communities' language usage and preferences.

## **11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### **11.1 Code of Conduct**

- 11.1.1 The Municipality must continuously ensure the Councillors and staff are sensitised to the value of multilingualism as a tool for building social cohesion, promoting economic development and consolidating democratic government through respect for cultural diversity;
- 11.1.2 The municipality must ensure that notices are placed in all its buildings/offices informing the public that it promotes multilingualism and that officials will make every effort to use the language(s) of the client(s);
- 11.1.3 The Municipality must ensure that all officials and Councillors accommodate the language use and preference of other officials and Councillors with courtesy.

### **11.2 Development and Education**

- 11.2.1 Officials and Councillors must be encouraged to learn the three official languages and training programmes must be organised to assist in the development of their language skills;
- 11.2.2 Services/Directorates/Branches/Sections must play an active role in promoting multilingualism in an equitable manner and also to identify the language skills required in order to render an effective and efficient service to its communities;
- 11.2.3 When filling vacant posts, Services/Directorates/Branches/Sections must take cognisance of the Municipality's language policy when advertising, recruiting, selecting and appointing staff.

### **11.3 Translating and Interpreting Services**

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

### **11.4 Main/General Telephone Exchanges**

The main/general telephone reception at all administrative buildings and within all Services/Directorate/Branches/Sections must "welcome" its clients in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa.

## **11.5 Language Audit**

- 11.5.1 In terms of Section 6(3)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Municipalities must take into account the language use and preference of their residents. Therefore, the language use in the area of jurisdiction of the Municipality must be determined by means of a language audit, performed with every census audit;
- 11.5.2 The Municipality must conduct regular language proficiency audits within its Directorates to determine the linguistic needs as well as the linguistic capabilities of officials in the organisation and tap other appropriate methods to improve the language skills in the Municipality.

## **12. DISPUTES**

In all disputes arising from the interpretation of this policy document, the English version will be regarded as authentic.