

CAPE AGULHAS MUNICIPALITY

DRAFT LANGUAGE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides for eleven official languages and recognizes the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of the people of South Africa (Section 6).
- 1.2 It further provides that everyone has a right to use their own language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice (Section 30).
- 1.3 Municipalities are ordered by the Constitution and the Municipal Systems Act to take the language usage and preferences of their residents in consideration with their communication, including the special needs of people who cannot read or write.
- 1.4 The National Language Policy Framework states that in determining the language usage and preferences of communities, local government, in broad consultation with their communities, must develop, publish and implement a multilingual policy.
- 1.5 According to the results of the last census, the languages of the Western Cape, in order of predominance, are Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English, while the predominant language of communication in government is English.
- 1.6 It is in this spirit that the Cape Agulhas Municipality has compiled this language policy.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy include the following:

- 2.1 To promote the fair use of the two main official languages of Cape Agulhas, name Afrikaans and English, while isiXhosa is promoted in relevant circumstances.
- 2.2 To provide access to government services, knowledge and information.
- 2.3 To redress the imbalances of the past in the languages used.
- 2.4 To support and encourage citizens to learn languages other than their own to promote national unity and cultural diversity.
- 2.5 To promote equitable language use by the promotion of language management.
- 2.6 To give effect to the provisions of the Constitution and the Batho Pele principles as well as related laws and policies.
- 2.7 To determine the working languages for Cape Agulhas Municipality's official communication.
- 2.8 To give preference to the working languages of the municipality.
- 2.9 To remove all language barriers and thereby promoting equal access to municipal programs and services.

3. SCOPE

The provisions of this policy applies to all organs of the municipality, including entities.

4. PROVISIONS FOR THE USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

4.1 MEETINGS

- 4.1.1 Any of the two working languages of the municipality may be used in any debates and other proceedings of the Council, Municipality and its committees.

4.1.2 During the sessions of Council, the Municipality and its committees, interpreter services must be provided in one of the working languages. When someone requires interpreter services other than the working languages, such person must give adequate notice of the need for interpretation to the Presiding officer of the proceedings.

4.1.3 Sign Language must be arranged on request.

4.1.4 A public meeting or hearing or any public participation event should be done in either of the two working languages, depending on the language preference of the audience. Members of the public, who do not understand the language of preference, must indicate that they require interpretation prior to the engagement.

4.2 POLICIES AND LAWS

Policies, laws and resolutions of the Council, Municipality and its committees must be written in both working languages of the municipality, subject to financial constraints.

4.3 NOTICES AND ADVERTISEMENTS

All official notices and advertisements published for general public information must be done in Afrikaans and English.

4.4 CORRESPONDENCE

4.4.1 Afrikaans or English may be used for the purposes of internal written communications. If the addressee do not understand the language used, he / she may request that communication with her / him take place in a language he / she understands.

4.4.2 Circulars must be issued in both working languages.

4.4.3 Internal oral communication may take place in English, Afrikaans or isiXhosa, depending on the preference of the individuals in that conversation.

4.4.4 External communication should take place in one of the working languages, considering the preference of the recipient. Response to external communication must match the language of the original communication subject to it being one of the official languages of the Western Cape and subject to the provisions of item 4.4.5

4.4.5 Due to the high costs and time associated with translation and taking into account that English is used as the language of government; the following documents will be available in English only:

(a) Annual Report

(b) Oversight Report

(c) Financial statements

(d) Spatial Development Framework

(e) Master Planning Documents

(f) Employment Equity Plan

(g) Any document indicated by the Municipal Manager

4.4.6 Outgoing correspondence should include an indication that the recipient of the correspondence may request the communication in one of the other official languages of the Western Cape as the one in which it was written.

4.4.7 Citizens have a right to communicate in the language of their choice, but it must be done with consideration of the available resources of the municipality.

5.5 INFORMATION SIGNS

Information signs and directions to the municipal offices or facilities must be in the official languages of the Western Cape.

4.6. CUSTOMER SERVICE

All customers must be served in the language of their choice, with the help of interpreters where necessary and in recognition of the available resources of the municipality.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 STRATEGIES

- 5.1.1 The municipality must ensure that both councilors and staff are sensitive to the value of multilingualism and language use and preferences of the residents / clients and must promote the accommodation of multilingualism.
- 5.1.2 The Municipality must actively encourage, support and develop the language skills of both staff and councilors.
- 5.1.3 When recruiting new staff the Municipality must inform the staff member concerned about the language policy of the government.

6.2 TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.2.1 Unless otherwise stated in this policy, or by a resolution of Council, the provisions of this policy will come into effect after final approval by the Council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The different directorates of Cape Agulhas Municipality must make provision in their budgets for the implementation of the language policy, including the development of the language skills of staff and councilors, investing in translation and interpretation.