

Ons verw nr / Our Ref No
Isalathiso Sethu

Navrae / Enquiries: N.E. Mdluli
Imbuzo

Date: 23 April 2024

Ms. Melissa Jones
Robertson Neighbourhood Watch
Email: mjones@langeberg.gov.za

Dear Ms. Melissa Jones

RE: LANGEBERG MUNICIPAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024/2025, COMMENTS RECEIVED

Langeberg Municipality as part of the Disaster Management Plan Review process requested written comments, inputs or recommendations for the review of the Disaster Management Plan. Assistance was also offered to transcribe comments, inputs or recommendations to any person who cannot read or write as indicated in the advertisement. Comments received were also sent to the Strategic Management Team for their perusal and comments.

Herein below are the comments received from your self and comments in response to the comments received:

Comments from email address: mjones@langeberg.gov.za

From Ms. Melissa Jones

Good day Mr Mdluli,

As my inputs toward the disaster management plan – the Contact List of internal role-players need to be updated and as a Manager Communication has been appointed, could this position be included on a JOC platform? As communication to the community as well as internal staff, during crises, is of utmost importance.

1. I then refer to an extraction (below in blue) from the approved Communication Strategy that also speak to Communications role in time of Crises/Disaster to see that these plans speak to each other and that Comms should be included to the JOC/Internal Contact List.

Departmental Comments: Manager: IDP, Performance and Communication Department of Strategy and Social Development will be added to the Disaster Management Contact List and the JOC

2. The external contact list could include GCIS (Peter Titus), and the Cape Winelands District Communication Manager (Jo-Anne Otto) and Head of Communication at Local Government (Rowena Van Wyk).

Departmental Comments: GCIS -Peter Titus, the website indicates that he is in Robertson, therefore communication will be made with him to find out if he will be able to play an active role in our JOC.



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Head of Communications and CWDM communications manager-they will only get involved when the issues are escalated to the district and the department of local government, therefore, they cannot be a direct part of the local JOC. Langeberg Municipality Disaster Plan makes Provision to escalate disaster management issues to the district, province and national in line with the disaster act.

3. I am also reminding you about a Disaster Management for prolonged power interruptions plan as part of a business continuity management process that could be considered to be linked or mentioned in this Disaster Management Plan if there was an approved version and have relevance.

Departmental Comments: Internal Audit have indicated that they are still busy finalising the plan.

Extraction of Langeberg Municipality Communication Strategy:

8. CRISIS/DISASTER MANAGEMENT

A crisis is an unforeseen or unexpected event that threatens institutional operations and can have extreme negative consequences. A crisis can be man-made and can impact public safety, lead to financial loss or even reputational damage for the institution. If it is not effectively managed, a crisis can lead to an emergency.

To deal with crisis situations effective and efficiently, the Langeberg Municipality Crisis Communication procedure provides key officials, role players and departments within the municipality with a procedure for the expected initial response to a crisis and an overview of their responsibilities during a crisis or disaster.

Communicators should be made aware of any potential crisis and should manage communication activities to avert or limit a potential crisis. Any crisis – be this an emergency and/or a disaster – requires immediate communication intervention. Effective communication management in a time of crisis and/or emergency provides an opportunity for government to show leadership and for the institution to maintain or restore the public's confidence.

Key communication actions and processes that should follow in the event of a crisis:

This process should complement the relevant national/provincial disaster management strategies and the Langeberg Municipality Disaster Management Plan.

8.1 Crises is declared by

- the Mayor and/or through a decision of Council
- a decision of Rapid Response
- a War Room
- a Disaster Management Committee
- a Joint Operations Centre

8.2 Once a crisis has been identified,



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- establish a Communication Crisis Committee to manage communication collectively,
- formulate a crisis management plan and a communication strategy that is aligned to this. This crisis communication plan must be attached to the national, provincial or local disaster management plan so that there is a clear understanding of what should happen when there is a natural or man-made disaster.
- A comprehensive set of crisis communication resources that can be used at the discretion of communicators to build, manage and maintain an effective crisis management capability must be available.
- Assign communication leadership to a specific department in the case of a cluster response, with the GCIS playing a supporting role.

8.3 Crisis Protocol

The Head of Communication must:

1. be notified immediately of any crisis that is emerging or breaking.
2. gather and verify information about the crisis, assess its severity and consider whether it should be escalated to the GCIS for leadership (emergency/controversial issues) or managed at an institutional level.
3. given the need for urgent communication, be given the authority to take action immediately under guidance, until a broader decision can be made about how the institution must proceed.
4. form part of the Crisis Committee, Crisis Command Centre and establish permanent representation.
5. be responsible for developing the strategy and tactics on how information is to be released, who must speak for the department on the issue, and the audiences with whom will be communicated.
6. identify the target audience, the multiple communication platforms, appoint a spokesperson and draft a holding statement.
7. communicate facts quickly, accurately and be open and accessible to all audiences, although mindful of confidentiality, and legal and privacy considerations.

8.4 Crisis Spokespersons:

The political principal are the official spokespersons during a crisis. At local government level this would be Executive Mayor.

The political principals as well as the Municipal Manager in consultation with the Head of Communications must identify departmental managers or staff with the knowledge and/or technical expertise to provide specialist input to media responses or to speak as official representatives of the department.

Designated spokespersons must make themselves available to:

- participate in communication planning and the preparation of key messages relating to the crisis.
- respond to media enquiries in a prompt and professional manner, using all possible communication tools, including the Crisis Command Centre.



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When communicating during a crisis, there is a need to strike a balance between presenting the relevant facts in the public domain without causing unnecessary panic.

No spokesperson or employee will divulge to the media any findings or determinations in relation to organisational internal enquiries, reviews or investigations, irrespective as to whether such processes are ongoing or considered concluded, unless there is a specific approval by the Municipal Manager.

8.5 Working with the media:

- In instances where a crisis is transversal, no government institution should issue media statements in the public domain that contradict what other departments are saying.
- All media enquiries must be directed to the Municipal Manager.
- The receipt of all media enquiries must be acknowledged.
- A formal response on a letterhead that is signed off by the Municipal Manager must be provided as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours.
- Media releases and other written media interventions should be produced and distributed in English.
- Communication issued to the media should be presented in plain language, without detracting from the accuracy of the message, and should be presented in a way that is understood by the target audience.
- All requests received by an organisation employee for a media interview must be referred to the Municipal Manager.
- Submission times for actual provision of content to address a media enquiry should be mutually agreed with the reporter concerned but with due regard for the guiding principles of transparency, accuracy and efficiency of the organisation's response.

In any crisis, regular media briefings are strongly recommended, accompanied by regular interviews. Depending on the severity of the crisis, the Crisis Committee must decide on the frequency of the media briefings, whether hourly, daily, weekly or monthly.

After releasing information, the Head of Communications or an appointed external service provider must monitor the news coverage and respond appropriately, where necessary. The procurement and appointment of service providers will be done in accordance with the organisation's procurement processes. The Head of Communication must monitor and evaluate the quantitative and qualitative performance of media coverage achieved at least every six months, using the coverage and data received from the media-monitoring supplier.

8.6 Inappropriate Media Engagement:

It is regarded irresponsible of staff members to engage with the media in any activity or comment, which is designed to:

- Bring the organisation, constituencies or stakeholders into disrepute;



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- Undermine the integrity and reputation of the organisation, its leadership or stakeholders;
- Present a personal viewpoint as a position which is held by the organization;
- Disclose organisational information without proper authority;
- Comment on pending or current legal issues relating to the organization.
- No employee of the organisation will speak to the media “off the record”.

8.7 Communication approval processes:

The Head of Communications and Crisis Command Centre should establish an approval process that will fast-track decision-making during a crisis. All approvals should adhere to a strictly agreed turnaround time, bearing in mind the quality and accuracy of information that must be made available.

8.8 Televised or in-person speaking engagements by employees:

Any employee who accepts a public speaking engagement representing the organisation will notify the office of the Head of Communication. The HoC will provide guidance on the approach and whether the platform will be beneficial.

8.9 Employee Communication:

The accounting officer/ Head of Communications, working with Human Resources, must inform departmental employees of the issues relating to the crisis using established internal communication channels. This should happen before or at the same time as details are being released to external audiences.

8.10 Informing other government stakeholders:

The Head of Communication will arrange a stakeholder forum to keep all abreast of the crisis and the way it is being managed.

Yours faithfully



Mr. M. MGAJO

DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY SERVICES



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