

BATHO PELE AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1. PRE-AMBLE

When the new South African Government was elected to power in 1994 it had a special mandate to provide appropriate services to all the people of the country. Government made a promise to the people of South Africa that they would serve the people without discrimination, respecting the dignity of all and ensuring that the needs of the majority of the population, who were disadvantaged in the past, are met effectively and efficiently. This promise is spelt out in the South African Constitution of 1996, which stipulates that the public service “must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. In an effort to transform from an apartheid system of government to a democratic government, the South African Government adopted the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) in 1997, as a policy framework for the provision of services.

The Batho Pele White Paper signalled very strongly government’s intention to adopt a citizen-orientated approach to service delivery, informed by the eight principles of Consultation, Service Standards, Access, Courtesy, Information, Openness and Transparency, Redress and Value for money. The KwaZulu Natal Province saw the need to add three more principles, namely, Encouraging Innovation & Recognising Excellence, Leadership and Strategic Direction as well as Service Delivery Impact.

As part of the vision to create a developmental citizen oriented public service that delivers services effectively and speedily, municipalities in compliance with Chapter 4 section 17(2)(a) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, must maintain a reputation of aiming to deliver the highest quality of services. Municipal processes, systems and procedures must therefore allow for the establishment



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of mechanisms to enable local communities to participate in affairs of the municipality and for this purpose provide for the receipt, processing and considering of petitions, and complaints lodged by members of local communities.

In addition to this, when challenges arise, and citizens' expectations are not met in a timely manner, citizens need to be given avenues to communicate with the municipality to resolve their complaints and dissatisfaction with any of our services. Citizens also need to be given an opportunity to compliment public servants when they have experienced outstanding service delivery from government in order to assist organization to strive for continuous excellence, acknowledgement of outstanding performance and contribute to continuous improvement of services.

In line with the above, the Municipality believes that if a service user wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. The complaints management mechanism seeks to ensure that complaints are managed properly and that all complaints or comments by service users are taken seriously. The district municipality also strongly believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, service user dissatisfaction and possible litigation hence it welcomes complaints and looks upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services.

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2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

“Municipality”

King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

“DMM”

Deputy Municipal Manager

“Batho Pele”

In terms of the 1997 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Government Gazette No. 18340, 1 October 1997:14-15), the concept of Batho Pele was first introduced in October 1997. The words Batho Pele are from Sesotho origin meaning ‘People First.’

“Customers” means residents and businesses whose main contact with the Municipality is through the consumption of municipal services, and it is here that municipality needs to begin to build relationships with citizens and communities. These include Councillors, municipal officials and other stakeholders.

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“Customer Service” means the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase. The perception of success of such interactions is dependent on employees "who shall adjust themselves to the personality of the guest.

“Customer Care” means the task of looking after customers and ensuring their satisfaction with one's business and its goods or services. Modern consumers are aware of their rights to a high standard of customer care thus making Customer care very important to us.

“Service Standards” means the level and quality of the municipal services that Municipal customers will receive and are informed of such so that they are aware of what to expect.

“Service Commitment Charter” means a framework for defining service delivery standards, how they are delivered to customers, the rights of customers, what are the expected outcomes from a customer’s perspective and how complaints from customers will be handled.

“Complaint”

A complaint can be defined as an expression of discontent by citizens about the level of service, actions or lack of action by the department or its staff.

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“Complaints Management System”

A framework to enable the organisation to understand and to be aware of what could cause Citizens to Complain, before complaints actually arise.

“Redress”

A remedy offered in instances where the promised standard of service is not delivered.

“Stakeholder Management”

The framework within which the Council identifies, recognises and engages with stakeholders as a key process to open the doors of communication with our communities and achieve transparency and accountability

“Monitoring” means the continuous collecting, analysing, and reporting data on inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts as well as external factors, in a way that supports effective management and continuous improvement in performance.

“Performance monitoring” means a formalised system for measuring the performance or a service of the Municipality;

“Evaluation” means the periodic and systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organizations to



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assess issues such as relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency) and value for money, and recommend ways forward. Evaluation is critical for generating in-depth evidence for improving performance and decision-making.

3. PURPOSE

The Batho Pele and Complaints Management Policy Framework is developed to assist the Municipality in putting the processes, mechanisms and structures in place to facilitate the effective, efficient and sustainable provision of public services to all citizens in a manner that is compliant with the Batho Pele Principles.

4. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES: BATHO PELE POLICY & COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

- To guide implementation of Batho Pele Principles
- To ensure the entire council and staff adhere to Batho Pele Principles
- To provide a procedure for managing complaints
- To ensure that the Municipality has a feedback mechanism whereby citizens can communicate to the Municipality when services are not being delivered in line with the expectation as espoused within the eleven (11) Batho Pele Principles;
- To afford clients with an opportunity for redress should standards fall below expected standards;
- To highlight areas of improvement that lead to customer satisfaction; and

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- To ensure service users feel confident that their complaints, compliments and suggestions are resolved and listened to promptly and fairly.
- ensure service users are aware of how to complain and provide ease of access to opportunities for them to register their complaints

4.2 MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BATHO PELE

- a) To obtain buy in from top management to effectively implement Batho Pele within the district municipality.
- b) To have a customer centric approach to service delivery and build effective relationships with end users of public services.
- c) To coordinate the implementation of various BP initiatives / activities / programmes to enhance service delivery within the municipality.
- d) To get staff committed to serving people equally, with dignity, and be more accountable to citizens.
- e) To ensure there are effective and efficient mechanisms of dealing with complaints.
- f) To move the municipality from a rules-bound approach that hinders the delivery of services to an approach that encourages innovation and is results driven. E.g. instead of looking for reasons why government cannot do something, solutions and better ways must be found to deliver what people need.

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- g) To ensure managers establish an active culture of Batho Pele and excellence in the organization.
- h) To ensure managers have a key role to play in creating an environment for their staff to become effective in the way they interact with customers.
- i) To ensure staff remain motivated at all times; have the right tools to do their work and they display Batho Pele in the way they render services to citizens.

5. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The legal framework that informs the development and implementation of this policy is all relevant legislation with specific references to the following:-

- a) Constitution of RSA, Act 108 of 1996
- b) White Paper on Transformation of Public Service of 1995
- c) White Paper On Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997 (Batho Pele White Paper)
- d) Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998)
- e) Municipal Systems Act 32 Of 2000
- f) Promotion of Access To Information Act.No.2 Of 2000
- g) Promotion of Administrative Justice Act. No.3 of 2000
- h) Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act. No.4 of 2000.
- i) The protection of Personal Information Act, 2003 Act No 4 of 2013
- j) Public Service Regulations, 2016

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6. BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES

The **1996 Constitution** stipulates that public administration should adhere to the following key principles:

- Promote and maintain a high standard of professional ethics;
- Provide services in an impartial, fair and equitable way;
- Use resources in an efficient, economic and effective way;
- Be responsive to people's needs;
- Encourage the public to participate in policy-making; and
- Be accountable, transparent and development-oriented.

In addition to these principles, the Bill of Rights in the Constitution sets out a wider range of procedural and substantive rights that the State must pursue, ensure or endeavour to achieve in and through its actions.

Founded on the above principles, the **Batho Pele Policy Framework** identifies eleven principles on which the transformation of public service has to be built. These are:

- **Consultation** which emphasises that *citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of public services they receive and wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered;*

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- **Service Standards** which requires that citizens are told of the level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect;
- **Access** where all citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled;
- **Courtesy** where citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration;
- **Information** ensuring that citizens are given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive;
- **Openness and Transparency** for citizens to be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge;
- **Redress** in instances where the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response; and
- **Value for Money** where the public service should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.
- **Encouraging Innovation and Rewarding Excellence** municipality will ensure that an environment conducive to the delivery of services is created to enhance their staff's capacity to deliver good services.
- **Leadership and Strategic Direction** all leaders in the service delivery chain will provide direction, create alignment, engage staff, create effective partnership and demonstrate ethical and sound values.
- **Service Delivery Impact** the municipality will measure and report regularly, using the sum total of Batho Pele initiatives, the impact of the Batho Pele based service delivery on the lives of the citizens of KwaZulu-Natal, in the first three year and thereafter every five year.

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7. THE VALUES OF BATHO PELE

It is important to understand that Batho Pele is not a plan in the sense that one has strategic plans, operational plans, action plans and human resources plans, but rather an attitude that shapes the character of the public service. However, the municipality may develop a Batho Pele Implementation Strategy as a guideline for implementation.

The eleven principles of Batho Pele, have more to do with human values and dignity than operational processes. Batho Pele is a way of conducting oneself in the presence of others, it is a preparedness to acknowledge their rights and needs and a willingness to help them add value to their lives. Batho Pele is a commitment to other people that echoes through the ages of human compassion.

It also acknowledges the fundamental vulnerability of the human condition, which unites the end-user with the service provider in their mutual quest for recognition, which can only be achieved through respect for the other's dignity as a person. The real power and beauty of Batho Pele is that it embodies the values that are enshrined in the Bill of Rights, namely each person's inalienable right to their dignity as human beings. From this fundamental right to be treated with dignity come all other "rights", such as the right to information, the right to access, the right to service, etc.

While it is true to say that Batho Pele is not a separate, bolt-on activity or just another management intervention, it is equally true that the mandate to implement certain

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activities can encourage and promote a change in behaviour that espouses the values and principles of Batho Pele.

8. THE CITIZEN AS THE CUSTOMER

Citizens receiving public services should be treated as customers. This concept is integral to the whole notion of Batho Pele and each of the eleven principles reinforces and encourages the perception of the end-users of public services as customers, rather than simply as citizens. Knowing what the customer wants and being able to provide it quicker, better and more cost effectively than the competition, is essential to Municipal business success. The fundamental principle of “putting the customer first” holds as true today as it ever did and this is precisely what Batho Pele advocates, namely, “**put the people first**”.

To treat citizens as “customers” implies:

- listening to and taking account of their views and paying heed to their needs when deciding what services should be provided (**Consultation**);
- ensuring that they are able to access the services provided easily
- and comfortably (**Access**);
- treating them with consideration and respect (**Courtesy**);
- making sure that the promised level and quality of services are always of the highest possible standard (**Setting Standards**);
- providing them with good information on the services available to them (**Information**);

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- allowing them to ask questions and responding to their queries honestly and frankly **(Openness and Transparency)**;
- responding swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised level **(Redress)**;
- adding value to their lives **(Value for money)**;
- provide direction and implement strategic goals of the municipality **(Leadership and strategic direction)**
- motivate and provide platforms for staff to come up with ideas to serve as solution to challenges faced **(Encouraging Innovation & Rewarding Excellence)**
- monitor and evaluate service delivery **(Service delivery Impact)**

9. MUNICIPAL CODE OF CONDUCT

The behaviour of Municipal officials influences the perceptions and experiences of citizens of local government. Municipal officials are expected to be polite and helpful to citizens and to further display the following behaviour:-

- take pride in their profession and the effective execution of their daily responsibilities;
- uphold the democratic principles that South Africa is built on; and
- respect the Rule of Law.

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The Code of Conduct as prescribed in the **Municipal Systems Act (2000)** and the **Public Service Regulations (2001)** form the cornerstone of the required behaviour of municipal officials, and provide the following guiding principles in this regard:

In relation to **the Municipality in general**, a municipal official must:

- be familiar with and abide by all statutory and other instructions related to his/her daily tasks in the execution of the policies of the Government of the day;
- cooperate with other public institutions in promoting the public interest;
- acts in the best interest of the Municipality, and in such a way that the credibility and integrity of the municipality is not compromised;
- execute his or her duties in a professional, competent and timely manner, while striving to achieve the objectives of the institution in an innovative but cost-effective manner through commitment to on-going training and self-development; and
- be honest and accountable in dealing with public funds and recuses him/herself from any decision-making processes that may result in improper personal gain.

In relation to **the public**, a Municipal official must:

- serve the public in an unbiased and impartial manner, while being polite, helpful and accessible within reason, in his/her dealings with the public.
- have the regard for the circumstances and concerns of the public and, through timely service and the treatment of all citizens with dignity and respect, assist in the development and upliftment of all South Africans; and

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- provide honest and impartial advice based on relevant information, while honouring the confidentiality of matters, documents and discussions classified as such.

In relation to **fellow government employees**, a Municipal official must:

- deal fairly, professionally and equitably with other employees and cooperate fully to advance the public interest, while abstaining from favouritism and political activities in the workplace;
- execute instructions by persons officially assigned to give them, and promote sound labour and interpersonal relationships under his/her staff, emphasizing the use of appropriate channels to air grievances;
- participate in the overall performance management system of the municipality, as well as the staff member's individual performance appraisal and reward system in order to maximise the ability of the municipality as a whole to achieve its objectives and improve the quality of life of its residents; and
- report without fear or favour instances of fraud, corruption, nepotism and maladministration to the appropriate authorities.

Key to an effective performance management system is the disciplinary actions taken if a Municipal official is found guilty of a breach of the code of conduct. Without such measures, the Code of Conduct has no power over the actions of employees. In this regard, the **Municipal Systems Act (2000)** provides for the following disciplinary actions:

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- suspension without pay for no longer than three months;
- demotion;
- transfer to another post;
- reduction in salary, allowances or other benefits; or
- an appropriate fine.

It is the responsibility of the Municipal Manager to ensure that all municipal officials have access to and understand the Code of Conduct and are informed of any amendments to it. Municipal officials should clearly understand the purpose, content and consequences of the Code. As such, it should be verbally explained to illiterate members of staff. In addition to this, the Municipal Manager is responsible for communicating the sections of the Code that affect the public to the local community, to ensure that they are aware of the type of behaviour and conduct that they can expect from municipal officials.

10. BATHO PELE PROCESSES

In order for local communities to receive value for money and redress in cases where their rights have been infringed upon, it is critical that key processes in local government are:

- (1) put in place, and
- (2) run effectively and efficiently in accordance with the relevant legislative requirements.

As such, the 'Process' component of this framework focuses on:-

- (1) *Consultation;*

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(2) Setting of Service Standards;

(3) Complaints Procedures; and

(4) Monitoring and Review; as key aspects of the performance management system of local government.

10.1 CONSULTATION

It is only through consultation with communities that local government can:-

- (1) accurately identify, and
- (2) adequately cater for their needs.

The **Municipal Systems Act (2000)** provides extensive requirements for consultation, not only in relation to identifying the needs of local communities during the preparation of the IDP, but also with regards to the:

- implementation and review of the IDP;
- Municipal performance management system; and
- monitoring of municipal performance.

In addition to this, the Act prescribes that communities must participate in the preparation of budgets and the making of strategic decisions relating to the provision of Municipal services. This requires that appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures be set in place to enable communities to participate in a meaningful way in these matters. Such mechanisms, processes and procedures must provide for:

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- the receipt, processing and consideration of petitions and complaints lodged by members of the local community;
- notification and public comment procedures;
- public meetings and hearings by the municipal council and other political structures;
- consultative sessions with locally recognised community organisations and traditional authorities as and where appropriate; and
- a report-back process to communities.

When conceiving of, and setting up these mechanisms, processes and procedures, municipalities must take into consideration

- (1) the language preferences and usage in the local community,
- (2) those individuals in the municipality who cannot read,
- (3) individuals with disabilities, and
- (4) the need to ensure ease of access for women and youth and any disadvantaged groups.

It is also the responsibility of Municipalities to inform communities of these mechanisms, processes and procedures, as well as the matters on which community participation is encouraged, and the rights and duties of the local community members when participating in these processes.

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Although local government must set up the mechanisms, processes and procedures in a manner appropriate to the local context, certain prescriptions are made in the **Municipal Systems Act (2000)** and the **Municipal Finance Management Act (2003)** regarding:-

- (1) *communication to the local community*,
- (2) *the documents to be made public*, and
- (3) *the official Website*.

Communication to the local community:

- Notifications must be placed in local newspapers and mainstream newspapers circulating in the municipal area, and communicated by means of radio broadcasts in a language that takes the languages preferences of local community members into consideration;
 - A copy of every notice that has to be published in the Provincial Gazette or in the printed media in terms of
 - the legislation referred to above, must be displayed at the municipal offices; and
 - When written comments are requested by municipalities, it must be stated in the invitation that illiterate individuals will be assisted at a specifically designated place by a municipal official to record and/or transcribe these individuals' comments.

Documents to be made public:

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The following documents, in a format that responds to the composition of the local community, must be made public:

- the Integrated Development Plan (IDP);
- the Annual Report;
- the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP); and
- any other documents informing communities of their rights and Municipal service standards, such as information on the Code of Conduct for municipal employees and Service Standards Charters related to front-office service.

While these documents must be made available at the municipality's head and satellite offices and libraries and on the municipal website, the local community has to be notified of the physical place and website address where detailed particulars concerning specific documents can be obtained.

Official website:

- If affordable, each Municipality must establish its own official website and place the information and documents, as discussed above on it;
- If the Municipality cannot afford setting up its own website, it must provide the information and documents, as discussed above on an organized local government website sponsored or facilitated by National Treasury; and
- It is the responsibility of the Municipal Manager to ensure that
 - (1) the Municipal website is maintained and regularly updated, and



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(2) accurate and timely information is provided to the relevant entity for inclusion on a sponsored website, should the Municipality not have its own website.

10.2 SETTING OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The setting of appropriate and acceptable service standards is crucial if there are to be improvements in local service delivery. However, the setting of service standards is more than identifying services and setting standards for each of these services. Key processes, policies and partnerships needs to be put in place to effectively set service standards:

Firstly, in order to ensure that service standards are set in a consistent and efficient manner across all municipal departments and units, whether front-end or back-office, a *Service Standards Policy* need to be developed and adopted, which outlines the basic process that are to be followed during the setting of service standards.

Secondly, a 'service standards champion and team' need to be established who will be responsible for the setting of service standards. It is important that this team has

- (1) the buy-in from all stakeholders, especially senior management, as well as
- (2) the budget and authority to appoint external specialists if necessary.

Once these key prerequisites have been put in place, it is possible to initiate the process of setting up actual service standards.

Key steps in the setting of service standards are:

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Step 1: Identifying all service beneficiaries;

Step 2: Documenting all services – every interaction of a municipality with the public is linked to the provision of a specific service and should as such have a service standard;

Step 3: Identifying partners – some services are provided in collaboration with partners, and these partnerships should be reviewed at both a strategic and operational level;

Step 4: Assessing current service delivery standards, which entails reviewing the available documented service standards in terms of their appropriateness, as well as current performance with regards to their implementation;

Step 5: Consulting stakeholders through suggestion boxes, complaint analysis, surveys, focus groups, client panels and site visits; and

Step 6: Setting service standards, based on the information gathered, that are smart, measurable, achievable, realistic, empowering and revisable.

Once the service standards have been set, they need to be incorporated into the medium and long-term planning of the Municipality by communicating the service standards to all Municipal officials, and incorporating the service standards into the Municipality's IDP and SDF. In order to ensure clarity with regard to service standards, it is useful to develop a municipal *Service Delivery Charter* or a Municipal *Batho Pele Service Delivery Charter*. Such a Charter would also outline the service standards that the community

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can expect with regard to front-office services when they interact with local government employees.

10.3 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

A complaints system is a key component of performance management and assessment in the municipal sphere, as it provides crucial information regarding frequently queried services and complaints lodged, thus allowing local government to address these issues in a timely manner. The following principles should be followed when setting up such a complaints system:

Accessibility: A complaint system should be well publicized, easily accessible and easy to use. It should allow for complaints to be made in writing (by hand or electronically), face-to-face, or by telephone in the language commonly used in the local community;

Speed: Delays in responding to complaints should be avoided and where possible a full explanation should follow an immediate and genuine apology. Where a delay is unavoidable, the complainant should be kept informed of progress and notified when an outcome can be expected;

Fairness: Complaints should be fully and impartially investigated and wherever possible an independent avenue should be offered if the complainant is dissatisfied with the initial response;

Confidentiality: Complainants' confidentiality should be protected to ensure that they are not deterred from lodging complaints;

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Responsiveness: The response to a complaint should take full account of the individual's concerns and feelings. Where a mistake has been made, or the service has fallen below the promised standard, the response should be immediate, starting with an apology and a full explanation, an assurance that the occurrence will not be repeated, and then whatever remedial action is required. As and where possible, municipal officials who deal directly with the public should be empowered to take action themselves to set things right. However, if the front-office municipal officials cannot address the query, an escalation process should be available to ensure that the issue is dealt with by an official who is suitably qualified and able to do so;

Review: The complaint system should incorporate mechanisms for review and for feeding back suggestions for change to those who are responsible for providing the service, so as to ensure that mistakes and failures are not repeated; and

Training: Complaints handling procedures should be publicized throughout the organisation, and training is given to all municipal officials to enable them to take appropriate action when a complaint is received.

10.4 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Once service standards have been identified through consultation processes and implementation is under way, the complaints system needs to be linked to a comprehensive monitoring and review process.

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It is important to note that service standards should be continually improved, thus the aim of the process is not only to identify gaps or compliance with basic standards, but also to assist municipalities to incrementally improve the standards of the services it provides. It is important that a feedback loop exists between the monitoring and review process and those responsible for providing the service, to ensure that gaps can be addressed and successes built upon.

11. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT MECHANISM

11.1 REASONS FOR COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN THE MUNICIPALITY

This framework will enable the Municipality to understand and to be aware of what could cause Citizens to Complain, before complaints actually arise. The following are some of the reasons that lead people to complain:

- ***Poor communication***

Complaints often arise because of poor communication or inaccessible media used to communicate between the Municipality and the Public. It may also be because information about municipal services is not clearly and widely publicized.

- ***Inappropriate policies and unclear procedures***

Complaints can be minimized if a Municipality has appropriate policies and clear procedures for implementing those policies.

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- *Language barriers, Signage Branding*

It is important to ensure that all communications are in simple and clear non-technical language and not only in English, including accessible formats for people with disabilities and the usage of proper signage. Forms should be properly designed so that they are user-friendly. Help should be readily available for those who have difficulty in understanding procedures or filling in forms.

- *Lack of service delivery according to the expected minimum service standards or no standards have yet being published.*

It may be that the Municipality is not delivering services to the level that the public expects or that the Municipality is inaccessible to people with disabilities.

- *Lack of training of staff dealing with complaints*

Lack of the appropriate training for staff responsible for handling complaints may cause dissatisfaction among the public.

Employees selected as Batho Pele Champions should be trained on the policy to ensure that they are adequately capacitated to provide this service.

11.2 ADVANTAGES OF A COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



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A properly designed complaint/ compliments management system can have the following advantages:

Financial	It enables the departments to address problems before they become costly disputes. Telephone or other forms of communication with the complainant over the same thing for an extended period can also be very costly
Continuous improvement	Using the set performance standards, departments can measure their citizens' complaints against their performance and service standards. This will enable the departments to listen and respond to their citizens' complaints (including all sectors of society) thus providing the opportunity for continuous service improvement.
Citizen satisfaction	A proper complaints management system may result in improved service delivery and citizen satisfaction, thereby enhancing the citizen and government relationship.
Rights protection	A proper complaints management system recognizes, promotes and protects citizens' rights, including the right to complain.
Provide resolution	It provides an efficient, fair and accessible system for resolving citizen complaints.
Provide Information	It provides information to citizens on the complaints management processes of the departments. It also empowers the citizens to know what is expected from the departments and their rights to query



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	deviations. Complaints management systems also serve as useful management tool because management may utilize complaints management information to improve service delivery which is inclusive of all sectors of the society.
Serve as a monitoring system	It serves as a monitoring tool for the departments to improve the quality and accessibility of services to the citizens.

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ROLE PLAYERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BATHO PELE AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

- a) Municipal Manager
- b) Deputy Municipal Managers
- c) Public Relations Manager & Officer
- d) Batho Pele Coordinators
- e) Frontline staff (Receptionists and PA's)

12. MECHANISMS FOR LODGING COMPLAINTS / IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Complaints against the municipality may be lodged in a variety of ways through mechanisms/platforms such as:

- A verbal expression after the deficient act / action with respect to the service;
- A walk- in by the complainant;
- A telephone to the office or linkage to existing Call Centre
- A fax to the office;
- A letter or e-mail to the office;
- Any other mechanism that is user friendly and that is accessible to people with special needs;
- Inviting citizens to road shows/Imbizo, help desk for members of the public; and

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- Receiving feedback from citizens through establishment of a complaints; and
- Presidential hotline
- E-Ticketing system to be implemented for referencing of email queries

(2) In the absence of an automated or electronic system, all complaints received must be recorded on a Municipal Complaints Register and must indicate:-

- (a) the nature of a complaint,
- (b) date the complaint was logged,
- (c) progress of a complaint; and
- (d) when the complaint was resolved.

13.1 HANDLING COMPLAINTS

(1) Complaints must be dealt with fairly. If a complaint needs investigating, it must ideally be looked at by the DMM of the department in which the complaint arose. **The procedure for investigation must be:**

- (a) open, communicated to and understood by all those involved in the complaint;
- (b) unbiased – not favouring any party;
- (c) thorough – establishing the facts and checking details; and
- (d) consistent – treating people in similar circumstances in the same manner.

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(2) Where the standard of service falls below the promised standard the concerned department must take full responsibility and offer the opportunity for redress ensuring that the issue is not repeated in the future.

(3) The handling of complaints must be done in accordance with the stages listed below although the stages may overlap or not follow the same sequence:

(a) Stage 1 - receiving of complaints

- (i) Frontline service staff must receive, record and refer the complaint to the relevant Department within 24 hours.
- (ii) DMMs must acknowledge all received complaints within 3 working days with a reference number and contact details of the official dealing with the complaint.

(b) Stage 2: - responding to complaints

- (i) All received complaints must be attended to within 3 working days.
- (ii) Urgency of the matter must determine how the complaint must be concluded, however complaints must be, investigated and resolved within 25 working days.
- (iii) The DMM concerned must follow up and ensure that a written notice or feedback is sent, by the relevant party, where the complainant must be advised on the progress.
- (v) In case a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome or progress made in addressing the issue, he or she may escalate the matter to the Municipal Manager.

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(c) Stage 3: dealing with unresolved complaints or dissatisfied complainants

- (i) The Municipal Manager must investigate and review the referred unresolved complaints. At this stage a complaint may not rely on the findings of stage 2.
- (iii) Unresolved complaints must be finalised within 25 working days.

4. Rights of Employees

Issues raised by the community which affect employees will be dealt with fairly in accordance with the following legislation applicable to employees:

- Disciplinary Code Collective Agreement
- Schedule 8 of Labour Relations Act

13.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICIALS HANDLING COMPLAINTS

- (a) Officials handling complaints must be independent of the issue of the complaint.
- (b) To protect confidentiality and privacy, officials involved in complaints resolution must ensure that information is restricted only to those affected by the complaint.
- (c) When necessary, a sensitive complaint that may need to be disclosed to others, must be clarified and consent to do so be secured from a complainant.
- (d) Where conflict of interest arises for an employee involved in the receipt or management of a complaint, the relevant Supervisor must be informed and alternate arrangements be made to deal with the complaint.
- (e) Requests by complainants to remain anonymous must be respected at all times.

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(f) Action must be taken on anonymous complaints and feedback publicized through various media channels.

(g) Issues raised

14. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) The Call Centre Supervisor must:-

(a) on a quarterly basis consolidate complaints into the Municipal Complaints Register;

(b) refer complaints meant for other Departments and/or organizations.

(2) Each Department with the municipality must:-

(a) appoint an official to manage the Department / section complaints;

(3) The frontline service staff must:-

(a) receive, record and refer a complaint to the relevant Department / section;

(b) follow up and ensure that a complainant receives feedback.

15. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The Policy will take effect from the date of approval by the Council.

16. REVIEW OF POLICY

This Policy shall be reviewed as and when is necessary.