

A FOLLOW -UP SURVEY ON LANGUAGE PLANNING AND POLICY AT MUNICIPALITIES IN THE WESTERN CAPE

BY Isabel Cilliers
Chairperson: Western Cape Language Committee

1. BACKGROUND

An empirical study of language policy and planning at local authority level in the Western Cape was done during the third quarter of 2000. The Western Cape Language Committee decided to do a follow -up study of the recently constituted municipalities after the local government elections in December 2000.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The assumption during the first survey had been that local authorities apparently had no clear vision of how the official language provision (section 6) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) should be applied at local authority level. Clear supplementary policy directives had, however, been made available to all the local authorities during the first survey. These policy directives were provided in terms of section 5 of the Constitution of the Western Cape (Act 1 of 1998), sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Western Cape Provincial Languages Act (Act 13 of 1998) and the Draft Language Policy of the Western Cape.

During the follow -up survey, the above -mentioned legal framework was again brought to the attention of the municipalities and they were also provided with appropriate documentation. It is clear from the response that the municipalities are now thoroughly aware of their legal obligations regarding multilingualism. The onus rests on the municipalities to administer the constitutional and legal language provisions and guidelines of the Western Cape Language Policy. The Western Cape Language Committee gladly supports them in this regard.

3. STUDY OBJECTIVE

The objective of the follow -up study is to gain information on the following aspects:

- Policy decisions on language policy and planning and the handling of trilingualism at municipalities
- The existing external and internal oral and written language usage at municipalities
- The question whether and how municipalities have determined the language usage and preferences of their residents and employees
- The utilisation of language resources such as translators and interpreters at the municipalities
- Language barriers;
- Encouraging the use of Xhosa, Khoi and San languages and Sign Language
- The promotion of trilingualism in the community and business sector.

4. METHODOLOGY

On 28 March 2001, letters were sent to each of the 30 municipalities in the Western Cape, according to the language preferences of the chief executive officers or municipal managers as determined telephonically beforehand. The letters were sent with a copy of the Western Cape Provincial Languages Act and the Draft Language Policy of the Western Cape. See annexure 1.

The letters contained unstructured questions to which a reply was requested before 31 March 2001 on the following ten matters:

- Policy decisions regarding the working languages at the municipality
- Information on the language composition of the community and how it had been determined
- Decisions on the working languages for oral and written **internal** communication (council meetings, agendas and minutes, communication with personnel)
- Decisions on the working languages for oral and written **external** communication with the community
- Removing language barriers in the provision of services
- Language usage on signposts and direction signs
- Utilisation of language resources such as translators and interpreters
- Promotion of Xhosa and Sign language
- Attempts being made to make the business sector and the community aware of multilingualism
- Budgeting for trilingualism.

Replies were received from the following 12 municipalities: Beaufort West, Breede River/Winelands, Cederberg, George, Knysna, Laingsburg, Overstrand, Central Karoo, Swartland, Swellendam, Witzenberg and Worcester. The 40% response can be regarded as representative of municipalities in the Western Cape.

It is disappointing that the larger municipalities and especially the City of Cape Town with all its substructures did not respond. The Language Committee is aware of the fact that the City of Cape Town accepted an interim trilingual language policy in December 2000, but the policy is currently under review.

5. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Municipalities' policy decisions on working languages

Three of the 12 municipalities, namely Beaufort West (1995), George (1995) and Witzenberg (1996), follow the language policy that was formulated in the late nineties. See 5.2 in this regard.

Two municipalities, namely Knysna and Swellendam, refer in general to the existence of a municipal language policy. Swartland Municipality has laid down interim policy measures until such time as the Western Cape Language Committee provides final guidelines so that a language committee of the council can formulate a language policy.

Overstrand Municipality has compiled a comprehensive communication strategy containing the Western Cape Language Policy in February 2001. Clause 10.5.2 of its communication strategy provides that the Western Cape Language Policy must be followed and that all written and oral communication has to comply with the provisions contained in the policy. Overstrand Municipality has not yet formulated a clear language policy.

Breede River/Winelands Municipality accepted its language policy on 19 March 2001. The policy provides that council reports must be submitted to the council on the basis of 50% Afrikaans and 50% English, that municipal notices in the public press must be placed in the three official languages and that the costs involved in using a Xhosa interpreter must be investigated.

Four other municipalities, namely Cederberg, Central Karoo, Laingsburg and Worcester have no formal language policy.

5.2 Information on the language composition of the community

To date, no municipality has conducted a language audit to determine the language preferences of its community, although Swartland Municipality is planning to conduct an audit by means of its monthly accounts. The municipality currently relies on the results of the 1996 population census: 90% Afrikaans, 6% English, 4% Xhosa.

Beaufort West Municipality (Afrikaans 84%, Xhosa 13,7% and English 0,8%) and George Municipality (Afrikaans 71%, Xhosa 19% and English 8%) also rely on the results of the 1996 population census. Swellendam Municipality consists of Afrikaans and English -speakers and 90 Xhosa-speaking households as determined by a survey.

The following municipalities accept that the language composition of their communities is as follows:

Cederberg: Afrikaans 96%, English 18%, Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho 2%

Knysna: Afrikaans 60%, English 20%, Xhosa 20%

Laingsburg: Afrikaans 99,9%

Central Karoo: Afrikaans 83%, Xhosa 15% and English 2%

Witzenberg: Majority Afrikaans -speaking, specific Xhosa -speaking communities, minority English-speaking

Worcester: Afrikaans -speakers in the majority, followed by English and Xhosa -speakers.

The voters' list of the Overstrand Municipality indicates that 64% of the voters are Afrikaans speaking, between 24% and 40% are Xhosa -speaking and 12% are English -speaking.

Breede River/Winelands has no information regarding the language composition of its community.

5.3 The working languages for oral and written internal communication

Beaufort West, Cederberg, Laingsburg and Swartland Municipalities use mainly Afrikaans for internal communication. At Beaufort West Municipality, Afrikaans is accepted as basic language medium for official documents such as agendas and minutes. Any matter originally addressed in English is submitted and minuted in English. Councillors use the language of their choice in council or committee meetings if it is generally acceptable. When necessary, specific explanations may be requested in English. Cederberg Municipality's working language for correspondence, council agendas etc. is mainly Afrikaans, but inquiries and correspondence received in English are answered in English. A municipal worker who has command of the language also handles Xhosa inquiries in English.

A council decision was taken that Swartland Municipality would use Afrikaans as language medium at council and committee meetings, provided that debates and decisions should be translated and interpreted on request. Officials are also requested to make a special effort to accommodate Afrikaans and English on a 50/50 basis in agendas and council reports.

Although English is the working language of Knysna Municipality, members are allowed to use the language of their choice. This seldom happens, as all the members understand English. Internal communication is in English, and correspondence is received and answered in Afrikaans and Xhosa in exceptional cases.

The Breede River/Winelands, George, Overstrand and Central Karoo and Worcester Municipalities use mainly Afrikaans and English for internal communication. The Breede River/Winelands Municipality applies a 50/50 division of the use of Afrikaans and English for council reports and council decisions. At the George Municipality, external communication is in the language that the speakers or writers can comfortably express themselves in and which is understandable to the receiver or listener. Council agendas are prepared in the language in which they are received and recommendations are written in Afrikaans and English. Short English summaries are made of Afrikaans items that have to be considered by the council.

At the Central Karoo Municipality debates are held in Afrikaans and English mainly and the internal communication is in Afrikaans and English. At Worcester Municipality internal memorandums are written in Afrikaans and English, but all documents and reports for the council agendas are prepared in English in order to make it more understandable to Xhosa-speaking councillors, whose second language is generally English. According to the comprehensive communication strategy of the Overstrand Municipality, the trilingual language policy of the Western Cape must be followed and all written and oral communication must comply with the provisions of the language policy.

Swellendam Municipality's working language for oral communication is Afrikaans, but it is the only municipality where written communication with personnel is in the three official languages, namely Afrikaans, Xhosa and English. Agendas and minutes are, however, only compiled in Afrikaans and English. Witzenberg Municipality's internal communication is based on the language preferences of the personnel.

5.4 The working languages for oral and written external communication

The languages for external communication at Beaufort West Municipality are determined by the language preferences of the community. Notices to the community regarding service delivery are in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. The Breede River/Winelands Municipality uses the three official languages for notices in the press. George Municipality uses the three official languages for notices inviting members of the public to workshops. Knysna Municipality's external communication is in the three official languages where practical. At the Swartland Municipality, external communication is in the language of the client. Information brochures, notices and newsletters are issued in the three official languages.

Communication at the Central Karoo Municipality is in the three official languages, depending on the person, community or organisation involved. The majority of Xhosa-speaking in the Central Karoo Municipality are quite fluent in Afrikaans or English. Circulars regarding service delivery are issued in the language of preference of the community concerned.

At Swellendam Municipality oral communication with the members of the public is in Afrikaans and English, while written communication is in the three official languages. If letters are sent to individuals in the community, the language of preference of the individual concerned is used.

Witzenberg Municipality has not taken a decision on the language usage for external communication, but newsletters and information are sometimes sent to the Xhosa-speaking community in Xhosa. All external communication at Worcester Municipality takes place in the language in which enquiries are received.

Job advertisements and tender notices at Cederberg Municipality are published in Afrikaans and English. Laingsburg Municipality's external communication is in Afrikaans and English. The Overstrand Municipality delivers services in Afrikaans and English, and does not yet have the

capacity to meet the needs of the fast -growing Xhosa community. This matter does, however, enjoy high priority in its communication strategy. See 5.5.

5.5 Language barriers

Five municipalities, namely Breede River/Winelands, Cederberg, George, Central Karoo and Swellendam did not respond to this question.

Beaufort West Municipality publishes notices on the provision of municipal services in Afrikaans, Xhosa and English. Knysna Municipality has paid no attention to overcoming language barriers, with the exception of external communication such as accounts, which are issued in the three official languages where practically possible. Laingsburg Municipality experiences no language barriers. The broader personnel corps at the Swartland Municipality has a command of Afrikaans and English and provision is also made for Xhosa -speaking clients visiting the office. Most of the personnel members at Worcester Municipality are fluent in Afrikaans and English, and Xhosa-speaking officials are used to overcome language barriers in the delivery of services. Witzenberg Municipality does not have a policy on handling language barriers.

Overstrand Municipality is thoroughly aware that structures had been developed through the years to deliver services in Afrikaans and English, but does not yet have the capacity to satisfy the needs of the Xhosa -speaking community. See 5.4. Purposeful attempts are being made to establish interpreting and translation services. Management is attempting to provide interpreters at council and committee meetings so that each individual can understand and participate in the deliberations.

The Municipality has set up a comprehensive communication strategy supported not only by the Constitution of the RSA, the Constitution of the Western Cape, the Western Cape Languages Act and the Western Cape Language Policy, but also by the principle of Batho Pele, section 19 of the Local Government Act: Municipal Structures (Act 117 of 1998), chapters 4, 5, 6 of the Local Government Act: Municipal Systems (Act 32 of 2000) and chapter 3 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act 2 of 2000).

Overstrand Municipality has acknowledged the fact that section 4(2)(e) of the Local Government Act: Municipal Systems obliges the municipal council to consult the community on services and different options available for service delivery. "The local community is defined as residents, ratepayers, organisations involved in local affairs as well as visitors and other people residing outside the municipality who make use of services and facilities provided by the municipality. They have the right to submit written or oral recommendations, representations and complaints to council, any other political structures or the administration of the municipality. They also have the right to be informed of council resolutions and other decisions affecting their rights, property and reasonable expectations. * **The administration of a municipality must facilitate communication between it and the local community.** In terms of section 8(2) of the Municipal Systems Act municipalities are enabled to do anything reasonably necessary for the effective performance of its functions and the exercise of its powers. * **In terms of section 16(1)(b) a municipality may use its resources and may allocate funds in its annual budget to achieve the above -mentioned goals.** The Act also instructs municipalities to take the special needs of people who cannot read or write as well as other disadvantaged groups into account. When communicating a municipality must also consider the language preferences and use of the local community."

*Emphasis by researcher

The Municipality is therefore attempting to overcome the language barriers by means of providing interpreting and translation services. Management interprets the Municipal Systems

Act as empowering the Municipality to deliver services and to allocate funds to that end in the annual budget.

5.6 Language use on signposts and direction signs

Four municipalities, namely Breede River/Winlands, George, Overstrand and Central Karoo did not respond to the question.

At the Beaufort West, Laingsburg and Swellendam municipalities signposts and direction signs are erected in Afrikaans and English. The Swartland and Witzenberg municipalities' signposts and direction signs are in Afrikaans and English and, in exceptional cases in informal settlements, signposts are put up in Xhosa. Worcester Municipality uses standardised signposts and direction signs.

At Knysna Municipality only English is used on signposts and direction signs.

Cederberg Municipality has budgeted for trilingual signposts and direction signs for the 2001/2002 financial year.

5.7 The utilisation of language resources such as translators and interpreters

Laingsburg and Central Karoo Municipalities rarely if ever use interpreters or translators, as most of the residents can communicate in Afrikaans or English.

Beaufort West and Worcester Municipalities do use interpreters and translators. At Beaufort West interpreters are used to address the public in their language of preference and to convey information contained in public notices to the community. Worcester Municipality uses translators and interpreters – the latter especially at council meetings.

At the Cederberg Municipality, interpreters are used on a part-time basis for the Xhosa-speaking councillors. Freelance translators translate the newsletters and minutes, and a Xhosa interpreter is used on an ad hoc basis during council meetings and public debates. Witzenberg Municipality sometimes makes use of translators to translate newsletters and information into Xhosa. Interpreters are used on an ad hoc basis at specific meetings.

Trilingual personnel members are used at the George, Knysna, Overstrand and Swellendam Municipalities, especially for interpreting, as there are no funds available to remunerate interpreters and translators. Dr Joan Prins identified the clear need for interpreting and translation services at Overstrand Municipality during the Integrated Development Planning Process. Previously, municipal officials or councillors were used to do interpreting and translations for council and public meetings at Hermanus, Stanford, Hangklip-Kleinmond and Gans Bay. A lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch had previously translated the documents of Hangklip-Kleinmond. They are considering creating a post for a Xhosa translator at the head office that will also be able to deliver translation services to other organisations at an hourly rate.

At Swellendam, however, it was found that the use of personnel on a voluntary basis is not sufficient, as the technical and legal terminology is problematic. Translators were approached for cost estimates and it seems that they charge at least R100 per page. The municipality realises that it needs the services of language specialists, but the funds are not available and there is no prospect that the council's financial position will be able to accommodate it in the near future.

Breede River/Winlands is currently investigating the possibility of interpreting into and from Xhosa at meetings. A report in this regard, including a cost estimate, will be submitted to the council.

5.8 Promotion of Xhosa and Sign Language

The following municipalities did not respond to the question: Breede River/Winlands, Cederberg, George and Overstrand.

The following municipalities do not have a policy in this regard and make no attempt at promoting the use of Xhosa and Sign Language: Beaufort West, Knysna, Laingsburg (where it is not applicable according to the municipality), Central Karoo, Swartland (where the matter will receive attention in its prospective language policy), Witzenberg and Worcester (that is of the opinion that officials are free to learn Xhosa through courses).

5.9 Attempts at making the business sector and community aware of multilingualism

Five municipalities did not respond to the question, namely, Breede River/Winlands, Cederberg, George, Overstrand and Swellendam.

The following municipalities indicated that they did not have a policy in this regard and also that they are not attempting to make the business sector and the community aware of multilingualism: Beaufort West, Knysna, Laingsburg, Central Karoo, Swartland, Witzenberg and Worcester. In this regard, Beaufort West mentioned that its official letterhead is in the three official languages of the Western Cape. Swartland Municipality will address the matter in its prospective language policy.

5.10 Budget for trilingualism

The following municipalities did not respond to the question: Breede River/Winlands, Cederberg, George and Overstrand.

Several municipalities did not make provision for trilingualism in their budgets, namely Beaufort West, Knysna, Laingsburg, Central Karoo, Swartland, Swellendam, Witzenberg and Worcester.

However, Knysna Municipality has adopted a decision encouraging officials to learn a third language, but no funds have been budgeted for this purpose. The council is also in possession of official tapes and books for learning Xhosa that were purchased years ago.

According to the Swartland Municipality, municipalities are extremely hard pressed first and foremost to provide the communities they serve with basic services. The council will have to be guided by the available funds in the short term, also with regard to the implementation of the language policy. The implementation of a language policy involves financial expenses and can only be executed with long-term financial planning.

Worcester Municipality is convinced that greater need exists in other areas in the community that will have to be attended to first and foremost.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Language policy

Although a greater awareness exists at municipalities of the need for and scope of a language policy than during the previous survey, no municipality has as yet formulated a comprehensive language policy.

If there is no formal language policy the possibility of misunderstanding increases, the conveyance of meaning decreases sharply, information is effectively withheld because it is not understood, and communication is hampered which in turn contributes to poor understanding, interaction and human relations. On the one hand, people are deprived of their human dignity if they and, by implication, their culture do not receive equal treatment. On the other hand, they feel that they are not respected if they are not communicated with in their language of preference.

Dedicated team efforts from municipalities are needed to make a significant contribution to satisfying the language needs of employees and members of the public. The Western Cape Language Policy provides clear guidelines to give direction in this regard. The Language Committee will gladly support municipalities in the compilation of their language policy.

6.2 Language composition; internal and external communication

In terms of section 6(3)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), the determination of the language composition of a community is of the utmost importance for municipalities: "Municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents". It appears from the survey that no municipality has as yet conducted a language audit of its officials and community. The statistics from the 1996 -population census that are sometimes used are outdated. What language preferences are taken into consideration in the delivery of services?

Swartland Municipality is planning a language audit by means of its accounts. This is an example worth following. In this regard, the Language Committee can also assist with the compilation of a short questionnaire. Such a language audit should be repeated regularly for researchers to remain knowledgeable of the language composition of the community.

As found during the first survey, the frequency of the use of all three official languages increases with external communication. Attempts are often made to communicate in the language of preference, or to communicate externally in the three official languages. Municipalities like Overstrand feel that they do not yet have the capacity to meet the needs of the fast -growing Xhosa community, but the matter does enjoy high priority in their communication strategy. A language audit should give an indication of the success of municipalities' external communication and whether or not it reaches the target group(s). Guidelines on specific external communication can be found in clauses 4 and 5 of the Western Cape Language Policy.

The current state of internal language management still holds inherent dangers as was found with the previous survey. The accommodation of language is still dependent on the personalities, working relationships and interpersonal language usage. If a significant change in the demographics of a council or municipal workforce should occur, it could drastically change the position of a specific language, especially if there is no existing language policy.

A few municipalities should hold introspection on the following questions:

- Why are Xhosa inquiries at the Cederberg Municipality answered in English?
- Why are Worcester's council agendas written in English only to make it understandable to Xhosa -speaking members?

- Why is the working language of the Knysna Municipality with a language composition of 60% Afrikaans, 20% Xhosa and 20% English, exclusively English?
- Why is communication in George (71% Afrikaans, 13,7% Xhosa, 0,8% English), Overstrand (64% Afrikaans, 24 – 40% Xhosa, 12% English) and Central Karoo (83% Afrikaans, 15% Xhosa and 2% English) mainly in Afrikaans and English, while there are more Xhosa -speakers than English -speakers in the community?

In terms of the Western Cape Languages Act (Act 13 of 1998) and the Western Cape Language Policy, the three official languages of the Western Cape must be treated on an equal basis. Guidelines on the management of internal communication can be found in clauses 3 and 6 of the Western Cape Language Policy. Municipalities should give further attention to the rotation principle as a solution to fair internal language management with regard to, for instance, council meetings, agendas and minutes.

6.3 Language barriers, signposts and direction signs

Little or no language barriers are identified by the municipalities and, where they do exist, especially with regard to service delivery to the Xhosa -speaking community, attempts are made to overcome the problem by for example using Xhosa -speaking officials as in the case of Worcester Municipality. A language audit will also point out further language barriers that municipalities may not be aware of.

Of particular value in this regard is Overstrand Municipality's comprehensive communication strategy that will provide the basis for the development of a trilingual municipality. The strategy is based on the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), which empowers municipalities to deliver services to local communities and to allocate funds to this end in the annual budget.

In most municipalities, the languages used on signposts and direction signs are Afrikaans and English. One exception is Knysna with its signposts and direction signs in English only, although there are far more Afrikaans -speakers and just as many Xhosa as English -speakers. Only Ceres has budgeted for trilingual signposts and direction signs.

In terms of the Western Cape Language Policy, signposts and direction signs identifying libraries and clinics must be trilingual. Direction signs and road signs, as well as street or place names must reflect the fair distribution of the three official languages, taking into consideration the language usage and preferences of the local community.

6.4 Interpreters and translators

It appears from the survey that an expressed need exists for interpreters and translators at all municipalities. In a multilingual community interpreting and translation services are essential in order to offer equal access to services such as health, education, social and emergency services.

The practice that has developed at municipalities to use interpreters and translators from the community or from the personnel corps on an ad hoc basis is unprofessional and counterproductive. For example, it was found that the use of staff members on a voluntary basis at Swellendam Municipality is unsatisfactory, because the technical and legal terminology creates problems.

Municipalities are strongly encouraged to use only professional interpreters and translators for Afrikaans, Xhosa and English and Sign Language. The use of untrained and inexperienced

persons undermines effective communication. Although the cost factor is a great consideration for municipalities, the results of such investment, namely more effective communication, increased productivity and work motivation, greater creativity, participation and initiative and better understanding and interaction and eventually better human relations, may exceed expectations.

The Language Committee can also advise municipalities with regard to the establishment of professional interpreting and translation services.

6.5 The promotion of Xhosa and Sign Language and multilingualism in the business sector and the community

As with the first survey, it is still worrying that no municipality attempts to encourage the use of Xhosa and Sign Language if such a need exists in the community. Such needs could also be determined by a language audit.

The encouragement and support of multilingualism in the community and the business sector are also low on the priority list of the municipalities. Municipalities should display the necessary will and fervency to acknowledge the public's language rights, and encourage respect for the languages of others and the acquisition of another language. Municipalities should set the example to the business sector that a multilingual society is built on the corner stones of the indigenous languages and not on unilingualism. In terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and all the other legislation and policies that flow from it, multilingualism is not something that has to be tolerated anymore. It must be actively promoted.

6.6 Budget for trilingualism

It would seem from the survey that municipalities are hard pressed financially and that they do not provide for multilingualism in their budgets. Yet, multilingualism is not an unaffordable luxury; it is a constitutional obligation that has to be budgeted for.

Regarding Worcester's cry of distress that there are other areas in the community where a greater need exists to which attention has to be given first and foremost, the question can be asked: if communication should collapse in the Municipality, if the message that is conveyed is not understood, if the residents find that their culture, their language, their human dignity is not respected, what chance would there be for nation-building, democracy, Batho Pele and economic welfare?

In closing, the Language Committee would like to thank the municipalities for their co-operation. We will gladly assist wherever we can.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Du Plessis, Danie & Schuring, Gerard. 2000 Veeltaligheid in die werkplek; Ukusetshenziswa kwezilwimi ebezini; multilingualism in the workplace. Pretoria: MWU.

Strydom, H.A. & Pretorius, J.L. 1999. Language policy and planning: How do local governments cope with multilingualism? *Journal for Juridical Science*. 24(2): 24 -40

Annexure 1

Dear.....

This is the first time that the Western Cape Language Committee, a statutory body established in terms of section 6(1) of the Western Cape Languages Act (Act 13 of 1998) has the opportunity to communicate with you. We include some documents that will provide you with the necessary background information. From these documents you will notice that section 13 of the above mentioned act provides us with the mandate to monitor the use of the three official languages of the Western Cape, namely Afrikaans, Xhosa and English, and to promote multilingualism and the development of the previously marginalised languages.

We would like to bring two important matters to your attention and trust that you will hold in depth discussions on both matters with your council members, officials, interested parties and the community. We would appreciate your feedback before **31 May 2001**.

1. Language Policy

In terms of section 6(3)(d) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1998, municipalities must take into consideration the language usage and preferences of their residents. Sections 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the Western Cape Provincial Languages Act provide an enabling provincial language policy framework in terms of which municipalities can execute this constitutional provision.

Consequently, a **Draft Language Policy for the Western Cape** is submitted to you with the request that you study it and provide us with your recommendations and comments. The Western Cape Language Committee formulated this document through a process of wide consultation over one and a half years. We submitted it to the previous local authorities in September 2000. We hope to finalise it this year and to submit it to the Western Cape Parliament for promulgation. But your co-operation in this regard is crucial.

2. Language Survey

Arising from the above -mentioned, and taking into consideration sections 151(4) and 154(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, we kindly yet urgently request you to provide us with the following information about the management of language related matters in your local authority:

- Policy decisions regarding the working languages in your local authority
- Information on the language composition of your community and how this was determined
- Decisions on the working languages for oral and written **internal** communication (council meetings, agendas and minutes, communication with personnel)
- Decisions on the working languages for oral and written **external** communication with the community
- Removal of language barriers in the provision of services
- Language usage on signposts and directions signs
- Use of language resources such as translators and interpreters
- Promotion of Xhosa and Sign Language
- Attempts made to create an awareness of multilingualism in the business sector and the community
- Budget for trilingualism

We gladly offer you our co-operation and support in respect of the above-mentioned matters. We look forward to hear from you.

Yours sincerely

Prof. Isabel Cilliers
Chairperson: Western Cape Language Committee