

context

BUFFALO CITY: A CITY IN TRANSFORMATION

As a result of the Municipal Elections held on December 5, 2000 the transformation process led to the municipal area of Buffalo City being formed where, the two cities of East London and King William's Town with their respective hinterlands amalgamated to form one unitary city servicing a population of approximately 701 890 people.

THE AMALGAMATION PROCESS

The months following the amalgamation, huge challenges lay ahead for the new Council, staff and citizens of Buffalo City. However, the main aim of the new Council was to ensure a smooth transition with a minimum hampering of service delivery to its citizens.

STEP 1: Establishing the Municipality (December 2000 – June 2001)

The months leading up from December 2000 to June 2001, the Municipality was involved in the processes of staff integration, transferring of assets, liabilities and records, establishing the new governance structure and developing the capacity to participate in a successful amalgamation and transformation process.

STEP 2: Amalgamation and Transformation (July 2001 – June 2002)

Like all other municipalities, the next step in the amalgamation and transformation process involved the transformed municipal administration forging ahead to render effective developmental local government, based on the requirements of the Municipal Structures and Systems Acts. Besides the challenges of a new Municipal structure, the new Council had to go through the processes of the Integrated Developmental Plan (IDP). Despite the complexity of issues to be dealt with, the Municipality finalized its IDP priorities and adopted its first IDP Review in April 2002. It also set about appointing its management team, placing staff into the new organizational structure and aligning its service delivery initiatives with priority areas, as well as putting its administrative and financial systems in order. This process however was not easy, and the Municipality had to come to terms with some problem areas due to the rushed nature of the IDP process, one of the key concerns being limited public participation.

STEP 3: The Municipality in a Process of Consolidation (July 2002 – June 2003)

The main thrust of Municipality was to ensure that the newly amalgamated structures and systems function according to plan. It was also essential that Buffalo City Municipality achieve full legislative compliance in relation to Municipal Legislation, as well as sectoral legislation which directly impact on all service delivery functions. More importantly it was a phase where the Municipality was given opportunity to address its PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS and new service strategies and plans. Buffalo City prior to its amalgamation enjoyed good external partnerships with the public and private sector, the emphasis was to now improve and strengthen these partnerships.

STEP 4: The Municipality Integrating for Higher Performance (July 2003 – June 2004)

Still a relatively new amalgamated local government entity the Buffalo Municipality has now finalized structures, and is fine tuning systems, processes and procedures. The municipality has now a more strategic focus, and the signs of integration in all areas of the municipality, is very prominent. More adaptable work programmes and initiatives, service technologies and the creation of a municipality that is constantly learning, is also encouraging continuous improvement. This improvement is therefore prominent in the municipality's performance.

STEP 5: The Municipality on the Road to Sustainability

Implementation and ongoing performance improvement will further enhance service levels and quality service delivery thereby contributing to a sustainable framework. Buffalo City Municipality initiated many of these processes since the transformation and the challenge now will be to maintain the sustainability.

THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In compliance with Section 34 of the Municipal Systems Act (Act No.32 of 2000) read with Chapter 2 of the Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, No. R.796/2001, the Buffalo City Municipality Integrated Development Plan (IDP) was first completed in 2002 and was then reviewed in 2003 and 2004.

The IDP is Buffalo City Municipality's strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning and development within the municipality. It is also the key tool that enables the municipality to work towards achieving its development goals as outlined in the Constitution. The IDP informs and is integrally linked and co-ordinated with the municipality's budgeting and performance management process.

Buffalo City Municipality's long-term vision details the development priorities, and cross cutting issues which contribute towards achieving the vision, strategies, programmes and projects; which are linked to a detailed budget and are all contained in the IDP.

Buffalo City Municipality has developed its objectives, strategies, projects and programmes in terms of IDP themes. These are:

- Infrastructure and Spatial
- Social
- Environment
- Local Economic Development
- Finance and Institutional

The Buffalo City Municipality IDP community consultation process was extensive during the 2004-2005 Financial Year. This was used as a comprehensive feedback gathering session where approximately 30 budget presentations were held across the municipality which was attended by approximately 5500 people.

THE 2ND GENERATION IDP

In order for Buffalo City to practice developmental local government, one of the first steps taken by the municipality in response to the enormous challenge presented by the IDP 2002 was a series of strategic planning sessions by senior management, primarily intended to identify actions needed to transform the municipality into a developmental organization, as opposed to merely a one-dimensional "deliverer of services"

This new focus on a more dynamic approach to the facilitation and management of development processes culminated in the Revitalisation Plan for the Municipality in April 2003. The Buffalo City Revitalisation Plan resulted in the adoption of seven strategic programmes, where the municipality intended to focus its activities and resources. The seven programmes are as follows:

1. Effective Organisational Management
2. Customer Care
3. Service Improvement
4. Financial Management
5. Improving Health
6. A sustainable city
7. Growth and Incomes

In addition, Buffalo City Municipality actively engaged in a series of Sector Plans which focused on meeting the requirements of sectoral legislation.

- The Draft Buffalo City Water Services Development Plan
- The Buffalo City Public Transport Plan
- The Buffalo City Spatial Development Framework
- The Buffalo City Housing Strategy
- The Buffalo City Integrated Waste Management Plan
- Work done for the Buffalo City Integrated Environmental Management Plan
- Local Economic Development (LED) Strategic Initiatives
- The Mdantsane Urban Renewal Programme

In October 2003, the Buffalo City Municipal Council approved the IDP Process Plan and Budget Schedule, detailing the process for the IDP Review and Budget development was undertaken in accordance with a Process Plan.

The key themes arising out of these strategic processes and informing the development of the draft IDP Review (2004/05) were a focus on service delivery, including the way existing services are delivered and maintained, with emphasis on the four focus areas of the Revitalisation Plan:-

- A new approach to service delivery;
- Expanding the resource base;
- Improving effectiveness and;
- Building partnerships.

One of the key goals of the IDP review was to ensure that the Reviewed IDP (2004/05) was aligned to the Budget and the Performance Management System. The link between the IDP and the Performance Management, with this process assisting with:

- Focusing on core functions; and
- Concentrating on the "core business" of the municipality.

Similarly, the reviewed IDP (2004/2005) is linked to the Budget, with this process ensuring that:

- Buffalo City Municipality's IDP is implementable; and
- Buffalo City Municipality makes the best use of its resources.