

Eden DM pilots a 'paperless' system

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Eden District Municipality (Eden DM) piloted its first 'paperless' agendas and minutes for all Committee meetings on 10 May 2018. This additional step to 'go green' has been one of the 2016/17 - 2021/22 Council's proposals since their term in office started. The Corporate Services Department at Eden DM has been hard at work strategising, designing and now, after blood, sweat and tears, rolled out a promising concept an unique 'paperless' model. According to the Executive Manager, Corporate Services, Ms Trix Holtzhausen: "This digitised working environment will resolve logistical issues (time driving, delivering and printing agendas and minutes), lower our carbon footprint, ensure that a seamless digital system is implemented."

It is no secret that the delivery of printed agendas cost municipalities an exuberant amount of money. Eden DM Agendas and minutes have always been distributed from its Head Office, which is based in George, to 35 Councillors who reside in a wide geographic area (23 331 Km²). This resulted in employees required to deliver agendas over weekends and late at night. Councillors are not often at home due to their ongoing community-based projects, which resulted in many instances where delivery receipts for agendas could not be signed. Those responsible for delivering agendas were left with no option but to ask Councillors' neighbours to keep agendas with them until their return.

Eden DM Councillors and employees during the Corporate Services Committee meeting showcasing their new Samsung tablets.

Another highlight is that Councillors will now be able to make use of the 'tools of the trade' which include a Samsung Galaxy Tab A6 with 2 Gigabytes of day-data and 2 Gigabytes of night-data per month. Wi-Fi at Eden DM will be available to Councillors and when they are at a Telkom hotspot, they will be able to access an additional amount of up to 10Gb per month. All agendas and minutes will be sent to Councillors via a digital system that tracks the receipt and downloading of documents by Councillors. The current Sharepoint system (also known as Collaborator), has also been enhanced and will enable Councillors to access older agendas, council items and even resolutions.

During a meeting with the Corporate Services Committee members, the Eden DM Speaker, Cllr Mark Willemse shared a vote of appreciation and gratitude to employees who worked tirelessly to make the lives of Councillors easier. "We appreciate your effort, the system that you have created and the paperless route which will make us prudent and fiscally aware. We aim to make this a 'best practice' model for other municipalities in the Western Cape and South Africa," said Cllr Willemse.