

The Mercury
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Stamping out corruption in the city

The Constitution, the Municipal Finance Management Act and the Supply Chain Management Policy have revolutionised the way municipalities do business. They have certainly ensured greater transparency and fairness in the tender process.

But in the end no system is foolproof if the people running it, or, who having oversight over it, do not display high ethical standards. Every week I get reports from people who are either receiving the proverbial brown envelopes from service providers in exchange for "allowing" projects to continue or of people interfering with the procurement processes. I could write a book about people trying to

influence the tender processes and what we have done to stop them in their tracks.

As management, one of the greatest risks we are facing is stamping out potential fraud in the quotation processes and ensuring that officials are not involved in business, particularly in businesses doing work for the municipality.

We are continually trying to revise our processes and policies to put a stop to corrupt practices and ensure greater transparency. Overall, the law compels officials and councillors to make full disclosure in respect of gifts and business in so far as tender processes are concerned.

CODE

Importantly, the legislation outlaws awards being given to councillors or officials working for the local government. A Code of ethical standards has been established for officials and other role players to promote mutual trust and respect, and provide an environment where business can be conducted with integrity and in a fair and reasonable manner.

Officials will have to ensure that they declare rewards, gifts, favors, hospitality or other benefits. They will have to declare details of any private or business interests they or close family, associates or partners may have in any proposed procurement or disposal process, or in any awarding of contracts by the municipality.

Each year we are improving our systems to detect fraud, collusion and corruption, but it does also require that the public assist us in that process.

Call us on our independently managed hotline at 0800 202020, the ombudsman or send an e-mail to reg@whistleblowing.co.za and we will do our level best to investigate and report back on our findings.

The waste of one rand through corruption, inefficiency, uneconomic use of resources and the like is one rand less for us to spend on our service provision.

We are proud that we are moving in the right direction, but we still have some way to go to ensure that our procurement process results in us doing business with a community that is truly representative, but also with one which works efficiently and effectively. Let us all work together in making this transformation a reality.

This in the third and final part of the city manager Michael Sutcliffe's series on the eThekweni Metro supply chain management policy.