



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

EXPANDED CONSTITUTION FRAMEWORK OF GARDEN ROUTE FIRST (GR FIRST)

This document provides detailed insight into the Constitution as approved by the General Assembly on 3rd February 2026

Preamble

GARDEN ROUTE FIRST (GR FIRST) is founded on the conviction that local governance must be by its people, for its people — rooted in transparency, justice, service excellence, and community participation. GR FIRST affirms its commitment to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and applicable municipal legislation.

It advances citizen led governance, ethical leadership, and sustainable stewardship, recognising that environmental degradation and governance failure disproportionately affect the poor and future generations.

GR FIRST affirms its commitment to:

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

The Municipal Structures Act and Municipal Systems Act

The Municipal Electoral Act, 2000 (Act 27 of 2000)

The Electoral Commission Act, 1996 (Act 51 of 1996)

GR FIRST rejects dominance of traditional party-political structures in local government. It believes in citizen led governance, ethical leadership, and non-partisan collaboration that restores integrity and trust in public life.

Recognising that effective local governance is strengthened through principled cooperation, GR FIRST affirms that, in pursuit of accountable representation and enhanced participation in municipal affairs, it may contest elections through an electoral cooperation agreement with any IEC registered independent political party or movement whose values, governance standards, and constitutional principles align with those of GR FIRST.

Such cooperation shall not affect the independent identity, values, objectives, or organisational autonomy of GR FIRST, which remains a distinct movement rooted in the aspirations and development priorities of the Garden Route community.

For the avoidance of doubt, GR FIRST shall not be deemed a branch, affiliate, or subdivision of any organisation with which it enters into electoral cooperation. GR FIRST retains full authority to nominate and put forward its own candidates for Ward and Proportional Representation (PR) seats, whether contesting under its own name or under the banner of a cooperating independent party.

GR FIRST affirms that communities flourish when righteousness, justice, and humility form the foundation of governance.



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance


GR FIRST affirms that sustainable service delivery and development must always remain within the carrying capacity of available resources. Population growth and land use expansion may not exceed the limits of water supply, infrastructure readiness, or environmental resilience, ensuring that communities thrive without compromising future generations.

GR FIRST recognises that environmental degradation and climate risks disproportionately affect the poor and future generations and commits to governance choices that advance intergenerational justice.

GR FIRST envisions a community revitalised through transparent governance, reimagined through inclusive participation, and regenerated through sustainable stewardship — where every resident flourishes with dignity, agency, and hope.

Local Chapters within the Garden Route District — George, Knysna, Bitou, Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn, Hessequa, and Kannaland — and Chapters beyond the District may adopt this Constitution with localised mandates, provided they uphold the foundational values, governance standards, and electoral integrity outlined herein.

Integration with Logo Symbolism

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Human Figures (Unity and Participation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolism: Raised arms and interlinked forms represent the people as sovereign agents. • Constitutional Link: Embodies popular sovereignty and participatory democracy. • Interpretation: Signals collective agency, inclusion, and civic celebration. <p>Mountain Outline (Oversight and Endurance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolism: The angular peaks evoke the Outeniqua range, anchoring the region’s identity. • Constitutional Link: Reflects checks and balances, institutional resilience, and long-term stewardship. • Interpretation: Positioned above the people, it suggests vision, protection, and elevation of civic values. <p>River (Flow of Rights and Justice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolism: A vibrant, winding river flows through the landscape. • Constitutional Link: Represents access to justice, procedural fairness, and adaptive governance. • Interpretation: Its movement reflects the dynamic nature of rights and responsibilities. <p>Sun/ Semi sphere (Hope and Dignity)</p> |
|---|---|



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symbolism: The golden arc evokes sunrise and shared prosperity.• Constitutional Link: Anchors the triad of human dignity, equality, and freedom.• Interpretation: Positioned beneath the people and river, it grounds in lived experience and aspiration. <p>Colour Palette (Trust, Clarity, and Civic Depth)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dark Navy Blue: Constitutional professionalism and clarity• Bright Blue: Flow, transparency, and vitality• Golden Yellow: Dignity, warmth, and shared prosperity• White Background: Openness and accountability |
|--|---|



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Definitions of Foundational Principles | 6 |
| Name and Nature of GR FIRST | 9 |
| Vision (Our Dream) | 9 |
| Mission (Why we exist) | 9 |
| Core Values and Foundational Principles (What drives our behaviour) | 10 |
| Objectives | 12 |
| Good Governance (Co-Governance) | 12 |
| Service Delivery Excellence | 12 |
| Sustainable Service Delivery, Growth Management and Resource Stewardship | 13 |
| Community Participation and Co-Governance | 13 |
| Economic Development | 14 |
| Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience | 14 |
| Safety and Social Well-being | 15 |
| Ethical Leadership | 15 |
| Governance Structure | 16 |
| Nature and Authority | 17 |
| Composition | 17 |
| Powers and Functions | 17 |
| Meetings | 17 |
| Reporting Obligations | 17 |
| Executive Committee (EXCO) | 18 |
| Mandate | 18 |
| Composition | 18 |
| Powers and Responsibilities | 18 |
| Meetings | 19 |
| Accountability | 19 |
| Sub-Committees | 19 |
| Establishment | 19 |
| Standard Sub-Committees | 19 |
| Composition | 19 |



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Powers and Functions | 20 |
| Meetings..... | 20 |
| Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) | 20 |
| Establishment | 20 |
| Purpose and Functions..... | 20 |
| Composition..... | 21 |
| Authority and Relationship to Other Structures | 21 |
| Meetings and Procedures | 21 |
| Accountability..... | 21 |
| Code of Conduct and Compliance..... | 22 |
| Record-Keeping | 22 |
| Leadership Terms..... | 22 |
| Interpretation..... | 22 |
| Strategic Engagements: Revitalisation, Reimagination, Regeneration | 22 |
| Commitment to the People of LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES | 23 |
| Integrated Councillor Commitment: Legal Baseline + Community Stewardship Standard | 24 |
| Amendments | 26 |
| Dissolution | 27 |
| Dispute Resolution | 27 |
| Language | 27 |
| Adoption..... | 27 |



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

Definitions of Foundational Principles

For purposes of this Constitution, unless the context indicates otherwise, the following terms shall have the meanings assigned to them below:

Table of Definitions: Foundational Principles of GR FIRST

| Term | Definition |
|--|--|
| Accountability | Willingness to accept responsibility for actions and decisions, and to be answerable to the community and oversight structures. |
| Candidate | A person nominated by GR FIRST to stand for election as a Ward Councillor or Proportional Representation (PR) Councillor, whether contesting under the name of GR FIRST or under the banner of a cooperating Independent Political Party. (Referenced in: Preamble; Electoral Cooperation Clause; EXCO responsibilities) |
| Common Good | The shared benefit and flourishing of all members of the community, above individual or partisan interests. |
| Constitutional Compliance | Adherence to the provisions, values, governance standards, and procedural requirements set out in this Constitution, including compliance with applicable legislation and IEC regulations. (Referenced in: EXCO duties; RCC authority; Sub-Committee mandates) |
| Courage | The strength to speak truth, challenge injustice, and act with conviction in the face of adversity. |
| Electoral Cooperation Agreement | A formal agreement between GR FIRST and an IEC-registered Independent Political Party that sets out the terms, conditions, and governance arrangements under which GR FIRST may contest elections under the banner of that party while retaining its organisational autonomy and the right to nominate Ward and Proportional Representation (PR) candidates. (Referenced in: Preamble; Section 7.1.1) |
| Ethics / Ethical | A moral framework guiding conduct, rooted in honesty, fairness, and respect for others. GR FIRST upholds ethical leadership that serves the common good. |
| Executive Committee (EXCO)” | The executive leadership body responsible for day-to-day administration, strategic implementation, organisational oversight, financial compliance, and execution of General Assembly resolutions. (Referenced in: Section 7.2) |

| Term | Definition |
|------------------------------------|---|
| General Assembly (GA)” | The highest decision-making body of GR FIRST, composed of members in good standing and accredited delegates, responsible for constitutional amendments, strategic decisions, approval of electoral cooperation agreements, and organisational oversight. (Referenced in: Section 7.1) |
| Human Dignity | Recognition and respect for the inherent worth of every person, regardless of background or status. |
| Humility | A posture of modesty and openness in leadership, acknowledging the limits of power and the value of collective wisdom. |
| Independent Political Party | A political party registered with the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) that is not affiliated to, controlled by, or subordinate to any national or provincial political party, and which operates autonomously in accordance with its own constitution, values, and governance structures. For the purposes of this Constitution, an Independent Political Party is one whose principles and governance standards align with those of GR FIRST, enabling voluntary electoral cooperation without compromising the independence, identity, or candidate-nominating rights of GR FIRST. |
| Integrity | Consistent adherence to truth, justice, and moral principles, even when inconvenient or unpopular. |
| Justice | Fair treatment and equitable opportunity for all, especially the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized. |
| Local Chapter | A formally constituted local structure of GR FIRST operating primarily within but not limited to the Garden Route District (George, Knysna, Bitou, Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn, Hessequa, or Kannaland), established in accordance with this Constitution and accountable to the General Assembly and EXCO. (Referenced in: Preamble; Section 7; RCC composition) |
| Member in Good Standing | A registered member of GR FIRST who complies with all membership obligations, including adherence to this Constitution, fulfilment of any prescribed requirements, and participation in organisational processes. (Referenced in: Section 7.1.2) |
| Non-Partisanship | A commitment to community-driven decisions free from party-political agendas or factional interests. |



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

| Term | Definition |
|--|--|
| Oversight | Mechanisms that monitor, evaluate, and guide governance to ensure ethical conduct and effective service delivery. |
| Participation | Active involvement of citizens in governance through forums, assemblies, and budgeting processes. |
| Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) | The intermediate governance structure responsible for inter-municipal coordination, strategic alignment, dispute resolution, and regional communication across Local Chapters within the Garden Route District. (Referenced in: Section 7.4) |
| Servanthood | Leadership that prioritizes service to others over personal gain, status, or power, including the active protection and regeneration of environmental systems entrusted to the municipality. |
| Stewardship | Responsible management of resources, authority, and influence for the benefit of the community and future generations. |
| Sustainability | Development and governance that balance social equity, ecological integrity, and economic resilience, ensuring that present actions do not undermine future generations’ rights, resources, or well-being |
| Transparency | Open and honest communication, financial reporting, and decision-making that allows public scrutiny and builds trust. |
| Values and Foundational Principles | The ethical, governance, stewardship, and leadership principles that guide all actions, decisions, and conduct within GR FIRST, as set out in Section 5 of this Constitution. (Referenced throughout) |



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

Name and Nature of GR FIRST

Name: GARDEN ROUTE FIRST (GR FIRST)

Nature:

GR FIRST is a values-driven, independent collection of residents, ratepayers, and associations accountable to the people of the Garden Route District and any community that adopts this Constitution.

It is:

- Rooted in democratic and ethical principles
- Committed to ethical leadership, justice, and societal renewal
- Independent of national or provincial political parties
- Free to enter electoral cooperation agreements without subordination
- Accountable to the communities it serves

Vision (Our Dream)

A revitalised, reimagined, and regenerated Local Municipalities — where governance is ethical, services are reliable, the economy is inclusive, communities are safe, and natural systems are protected for future generations.

GR FIRST dreams of a GARDEN ROUTE that is:

- **Revitalised:** A municipality where livelihoods are strengthened, governance is restored, and prosperity flows to every home.
- **Reimagined:** A community shaped by inclusive participation, servant leadership, and shared responsibility.
- **Regenerated:** A society rooted in ecological balance, social equity, and transparent stewardship for future generations.

Mission (Why we exist)

GR FIRST exists to restore trust in local government through ethical leadership, competent administration, reliable service delivery, inclusive economic participation, environmental stewardship, and meaningful community co-governance.

Guided by the Three R's — Revitalised, Reimagined, Regenerated — GR FIRST exists to:

- Restore trust in local government through clean, transparent, and inclusive governance
- Promote ethical leadership and integrity in public life
- Ensure competent, effective and productive municipal administration and service delivery



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Deliver quality municipal services and infrastructure that is sustainable
- Empower citizens through participatory structures and open forums
- Advocate for justice, protect the vulnerable, and uphold human dignity
- Embed environmental stewardship as a binding governance ethic, requiring the protection, restoration, and responsible management of natural systems for the benefit of present and future generations
- Create a climate in which people and businesses can thrive

Core Values and Foundational Principles (What drives our behaviour)

Integrity, accountability, non-partisanship, human dignity, participation, stewardship, sustainability, servant leadership, and transparency guide all actions and decisions of **GARDEN ROUTE First**.

- **Guiding Philosophy**

GR FIRST is rooted in the belief that values drive behaviour, and behaviour creates the climate and culture in which people can thrive and want to live. Our values are not abstract ideals—they shape how we govern, serve, and build trust with our communities.

These values are grouped into four thematic pillars to enhance clarity and emotional resonance.

- **Ethical Governance**

These values ensure that leadership is principled, transparent, and accountable.

| Value | Description |
|----------------------|---|
| Integrity | Uphold truth, transparency, and moral consistency. |
| Accountability | Embrace oversight and responsibility at all levels. |
| Courage & Truth | Speak truth to power with boldness and clarity. |
| Non-Partisanship | Reject political factionalism in favour of merit-based, community-driven decisions. |
| Oversight | Monitor and guide governance to ensure ethical conduct and effective service delivery. |
| Financial Management | GR FIRST shall maintain proper financial records, an audited bank account, and comply be financial relegated Acts |

- **Human Dignity and Inclusion**



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

These values affirm the worth of every person and promote inclusive participation.

| Value | Description |
|---------------|--|
| Human Dignity | These values are expressed in an inclusive manner, respecting freedom of religion, belief, and conscience. |
| Humility | Govern with modesty, wisdom, and moral authority. |
| Participation | Ensure active involvement of citizens in governance. |
| Justice | Advocate for fairness, equity, and protection of the poor and marginalized. |
| Common Good | Promote unity, stability, and shared responsibility. |

○ **Stewardship and Sustainability**

These values guide responsible development and care for future generations.

GR FIRST affirms that all policy positions, budget priorities, infrastructure decisions, and development approvals shall be guided by the precautionary principle, intergenerational equity, and the avoidance of irreversible environmental harm.

| Value | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| Stewardship | Manage resources and authority for the benefit of all. |
| Sustainability | Protect natural resources and promote responsible development. |
| Environmental Care | Actively protect biodiversity, ecological corridors, rivers, wetlands, and green spaces, and oppose developments that pose material, cumulative, or irreversible harm to environmental integrity or community well-being |

○ **Servant Leadership**

These values shape how leaders engage with communities—with humility, service, and vision.

| Value | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| Servanthood | Lead through service, not power or prestige. |
| Ethical Leadership | Promote a culture of humility, courage, and moral clarity. |
| Transparency | Communicate openly and build public trust. |



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- **Closing Affirmation**

- GR FIRST affirms that these values are not optional—they are foundational. They shape the climate of governance, the culture of service, and the dignity of every resident. They are the heartbeat of a revitalised, reimagined, and regenerated LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

“Values drive behaviour, and behaviour creates the climate and culture in which people want to live.”

Objectives

GR FIRST commits to good governance, service delivery excellence, community co-governance, inclusive economic development, environmental stewardship, safety and social well-being, and ethical leadership, implemented through enforceable policies, oversight, and public accountability.

Good Governance (Co-Governance)

GR FIRST commits to restoring accountable, transparent, and people-centred governance by:

- Giving full effect to Section 152 of the Constitution through lawful, transparent, and responsive municipal decision-making.
- Establishing and strengthening independent oversight mechanisms, including functional audit committees, performance review panels, and citizen watchdog structures.
- Separating political oversight from administration, ensuring merit-based appointments and professional municipal management.
- Reducing undue political interference by limiting caucus dominance in oversight bodies and enforcing clear governance protocols.
- Institutionalising performance accountability, with measurable targets for councillors, committees, and senior officials.
- Publishing governance and performance reports quarterly, enabling public scrutiny and community oversight.

Service Delivery Excellence

GR FIRST commits to restoring reliable, equitable, and sustainable municipal services by:

- Ensuring uninterrupted access to basic services, with priority focus on water security, sanitation, roads, waste management, and public safety infrastructure.
- Introducing performance-based management contracts for senior officials, directly linked to service delivery outcomes.



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Accelerating maintenance and renewal of existing infrastructure before approving new capital expansion.
- Aligning infrastructure investment with the IDP, SDF, and community-identified priorities.
- Publishing service delivery standards and response times, with clear escalation mechanisms for failures.
- Using data, technology, and preventative maintenance systems to reduce losses, downtime, and service interruptions.

Sustainable Service Delivery, Growth Management and Resource Stewardship

GR FIRST is committed to ensuring that population growth and development occur within the sustainable limits of available resources, including water, energy, land, and municipal infrastructure by:

- Managing the pattern of growth that may not exceed the capacity of infrastructure, resources and systems or compromise the long-term viability of service delivery.
- GR FIRST promotes planning, budgeting, and development practices that align human settlement expansion with verified resource availability, environmental protection, and infrastructure readiness.
- GR FIRST advances transparent governance, community participation, and evidence-based decision-making to ensure that Local Municipalities grow responsibly, equitably, and within the carrying capacity of its natural and built environments.

Community Participation and Co-Governance

GR FIRST commits to deepening democratic participation by:

- Institutionalising ward-based forums, citizen assemblies, and participatory budgeting as binding elements of municipal decision-making.
- Establishing community centres of excellence to support informed participation, planning literacy, and public oversight.
- Ensuring inclusive participation, with targeted mechanisms for youth, women, persons with disabilities, informal settlements, and rural communities.
- Embedding civic education programmes to build understanding of municipal processes, rights, and responsibilities.
- Requiring councillors to report back quarterly to their communities on decisions, budgets, and service delivery performance.
- GR FIRST may, where strategically appropriate, contest elections under the banner of a cooperating IEC-registered independent party, provided that GR First:



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Retains the right to nominate Ward candidates
- Retains the right to nominate PR candidates
- Maintains its own governance structures, branding, and organisational autonomy
- Any cooperation agreement is approved by the General Assembly
- May withdraw from any cooperation agreement that conflicts with its Constitution or values

Economic Development

GR FIRST commits to actively building an inclusive, resilient local economy by:

- Adopting and implementing a Local Economic Development (LED) Framework within the first 12 months of council tenure, prioritising township, informal, youth- and women-led enterprises.
- Unlocking local value chains by requiring large economic sector contributors to participate in supplier development, skills transfer, and local procurement programmes.
- Identifying, developing, and enabling priority economic sectors where residents of Local Municipalities can meaningfully participate as workers, entrepreneurs, and owners.
- Facilitating job creation through sector-specific growth strategies in tourism, agri-processing, construction, renewable energy, and the care economy.
- Reducing regulatory and infrastructure barriers faced by SMMEs through streamlined permitting, serviced trading spaces, and municipal procurement reform.
- Monitoring and reporting annually on inclusive growth indicators, including employment, enterprise participation, and geographic equity.

Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience

GR FIRST commits to safeguarding the natural systems that sustain life, livelihoods, and future generations by:

- Embedding environmental stewardship as a binding governance obligation, ensuring that all municipal policies, budgets, infrastructure decisions, and development approvals comply with environmental law, the precautionary principle, and intergenerational equity.
- Protecting and restoring critical ecological systems, including rivers, aquifers, wetlands, catchments, biodiversity corridors, and green spaces, through active monitoring, enforcement, and rehabilitation programmes.



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Strengthening water security by prioritising water-sensitive urban design, demand management, infrastructure maintenance, leak reduction, reuse, and climate-resilient planning.
- Aligning land-use planning and development approvals strictly with the IDP, SDF, environmental legislation, and cumulative impact assessments, and opposing developments that pose irreversible environmental or community harm.
- Advancing a circular local economy, including waste reduction, recycling, composting, and resource recovery, supported by municipal by-laws, infrastructure, and local enterprise participation.
- Accelerating the transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency, within municipal powers, to reduce costs, emissions, and long-term risk.
- Partnering with civil society, communities, and research institutions to co-manage conservation initiatives, environmental education, and community-based monitoring.
- Reporting annually on environmental outcomes, including water security, biodiversity protection, climate resilience, and compliance with environmental obligations.

Safety and Social Well-being

GR FIRST commits to strengthening safety and social cohesion by:

- Establishing formal community safety partnerships with SAPS, law enforcement, neighbourhood watches, and civil society to coordinate prevention and response.
- Implementing crime-prevention through environmental design (CPTED), including street lighting, safe public spaces, and maintenance of high-risk areas.
- Prioritising youth development infrastructure and programmes as a crime-prevention strategy, including youth centres, libraries, sports, and skills hubs.
- Strengthening municipal law enforcement capacity, oversight, and accountability to ensure visible, ethical, and community-centred policing.
- Integrating safety planning into the IDP, budgeting, and spatial planning processes, with measurable safety outcomes reported annually.

Ethical Leadership

GR FIRST commits to cultivating ethical leadership by:

- Recruiting, training, and mentoring leaders grounded in servant leadership, constitutional values, and ethical governance.
- Enforcing a zero-tolerance approach to corruption, conflicts of interest, and abuse of power.



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Requiring mandatory ethics training for all elected representatives and senior officials.
- Establishing clear ethical codes and disciplinary mechanisms, with consequences for breaches.
- Encouraging whistleblowing and protection mechanisms to expose wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.

Governance Structure

GARDEN ROUTE FIRST (GR FIRST) is governed through a values-driven, transparent, and participatory governance architecture that ensures accountability, ethical leadership, and community-centred decision-making. The governance structure comprises the **General Assembly**, the **Executive Committee**, and **Sub-Committees**, each operating under clear mandates, democratic principles, and the foundational values of GR FIRST.

This governance framework gives effect to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Municipal Structures Act, the Municipal Systems Act, the Municipal Electoral Act, and the Electoral Commission Act.

Schematic view of the Governance Structure



7.1 General Assembly (GA)



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

Nature and Authority

The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body of GR FIRST. It embodies the principle of popular sovereignty and ensures that all major decisions reflect the collective will of members. It approves electoral cooperation agreements, including agreements with any IEC-registered independent party or movement aligned with this Constitution, and determines the terms under which GR FIRST may contest elections under such arrangements while retaining the right to nominate its own Ward and PR candidates.

Composition

The General Assembly consists of:

- All registered GR FIRST members in good standing
- Members of the Executive Committee
- Accredited delegates from local chapters

Powers and Functions

The General Assembly shall:

- Approve, amend, or repeal the Constitution
- Elect the Executive Committee
- Approve strategic plans and policy frameworks
- Receive and adopt annual financial statements and performance reports
- Ratify disciplinary decisions and hear appeals
- Approve alliances, coalitions, and major political decisions
- Establish or dissolve governance structures
- Ensure compliance with IEC regulations and the Electoral Code of Conduct

Meetings

- Ordinary GA: at least once annually
- Special GA: convened by EXCO or 25% of members
- Quorum: 50% + 1 of accredited members
- Decisions: simple majority unless otherwise stated

Reporting Obligations

EXCO must table:



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Annual organisational report
- Annual financial statements
- Membership and compliance report
- Electoral and campaign compliance report

Executive Committee (EXCO)

Mandate

The Executive Committee provides **day-to-day leadership, administration, strategic implementation, and organisational oversight.**

Composition

- Chairperson / President
- Deputy Chairperson
- Secretary-General
- Deputy Secretary-General
- Treasurer
- Communications & Media Officer
- Policy & Governance Officer
- Organising & Mobilisation Officer
- Additional members as approved by the GA

Powers and Responsibilities

EXCO shall:

- Implement GA resolutions
- Provide strategic leadership
- Manage administration, finances, and compliance
- Ensure adherence to IEC regulations and the Electoral Code of Conduct
- Oversee candidate selection and electoral readiness
- Establish and supervise Sub-Committees
- Represent GR FIRST publicly
- Prepare annual reports and financial statements



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Maintain proper financial records and comply with the Political Party Funding Act

Meetings

- Monthly ordinary meetings
- Emergency meetings as required
- Quorum: 50% + 1
- Decisions: consensus preferred; otherwise simple majority

Accountability

EXCO is accountable to the General Assembly and must uphold transparency, ethical leadership, and compliance with all applicable legislation.

Sub-Committees

Establishment

EXCO may establish Sub-Committees through formal resolution specifying purpose, mandate, membership, reporting lines, and duration.

Standard Sub-Committees

- Policy & Governance
- Finance & Audit
- Communications & Media
- Mobilisation & Membership
- Elections & Campaigns
- Disciplinary
- Environmental Stewardship & Climate
- Community Engagement & Participation

Composition

- Minimum of three members
- At least one EXCO member
- Members appointed based on expertise and integrity



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

Powers and Functions

Sub-Committees shall:

- Execute delegated tasks
- Provide technical advice and reports
- Ensure compliance with GR FIRST policies and IEC regulations
- Submit monthly reports to EXCO

Meetings

- Frequency determined by mandate
- Quorum: simple majority
- Decisions: simple majority

Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)

Establishment

A Regional Coordinating Council (“RCC”) is hereby established as the intermediate governance structure of GARDEN ROUTE FIRST (GR FIRST) within the Garden Route District. The RCC ensures coherent, accountable, and strategically aligned coordination across all Local Chapters.

Purpose and Functions

The RCC serves as the primary forum for inter-municipal collaboration and regional strategic alignment. Its functions include:

- Strategic Coordination
 - Facilitating coherent inter-municipal strategy across all Local Chapters
 - Ensuring alignment with GR FIRST’s values, policies, and district-wide priorities
- Policy and Governance Coherence
 - Promoting consistency in policy positions, governance practices, and organisational standards
 - Supporting harmonised implementation of constitutional and organisational directives
- Regional Advocacy and Campaign Alignment
 - Coordinating district-level advocacy, mobilisation, communications, and electoral readiness
 - Ensuring unified messaging and evidence-based campaign strategy
- Candidate Alignment



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Supporting and harmonising candidate identification, development, and selection processes for district-level and local elections, in accordance with national and provincial rules

- Dispute Resolution
 - Serving as the first escalation point for inter-chapter disputes or governance concerns
 - Referring unresolved matters to EXCO or the General Assembly (GA)

- Communication Strengthening
 - Enhancing information flow between Local Chapters and EXCO/GA
 - Providing regional insights, risk assessments, and strategic recommendations

Composition

- The RCC consists of:
 - The Chairpersons of all formally constituted Local Chapters within the Garden Route District
 - The Regional Coordinator, appointed or elected in accordance with this Constitution
 - Additional members as approved by the GA or EXCO for functional purposes, provided Chapter representation is not diluted

Authority and Relationship to Other Structures

- The RCC operates between Local Chapters and EXCO as a coordinating and advisory body
- The RCC shall not override Local Chapter autonomy, but may issue binding coordination directives where necessary to protect organisational coherence, electoral strategy, or constitutional compliance
- EXCO may refer matters to the RCC for investigation, mediation, or regional consultation
- The RCC may escalate unresolved matters to EXCO or the GA

Meetings and Procedures

- The RCC meets at least quarterly, and more frequently during election periods or upon request by any two Chapter Chairs
- Decisions are made by consensus where possible, or failing that, by simple majority of Chapter Chairs present
- The RCC maintains minutes and submits quarterly reports to EXCO

Accountability

The RCC is accountable to the General Assembly and operates under the strategic oversight of EXCO, while safeguarding the distinct needs and dynamics of each municipality within the Garden Route District.



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

Code of Conduct and Compliance

All governance bodies must uphold:

- The Electoral Code of Conduct
- Applicable legislation
- GR FIRST's internal Code of Conduct
- Ethical leadership and transparency

Record-Keeping

Each governance structure must maintain:

- Minutes
- Attendance registers
- Financial records
- Compliance documentation
- Reports to EXCO and GA

Leadership Terms

- EXCO members serve a **two-year term**
- Elections must be democratic and transparent
- Leadership rotation is encouraged

Interpretation

Where ambiguity arises, the interpretation that best aligns with the Preamble, Core Values, Foundational Principles, Vision, and Mission shall prevail.

Strategic Engagements: Revitalisation, Reimagination, Regeneration

These three pillars form the heart of GARDEN ROUTE First's agenda. Each invites stakeholders to move beyond compliance toward co-ownership, dignity, and inclusive impact.

- **Revitalisation — Restoring What Sustains Us**
 - Focuses on repairing trust, reclaiming delivery, and reinvigorating civic participation.
 - Anchors efforts in ward-level infrastructure, oversight mechanisms, and transparent reporting.
 - Revitalisation is about making the invisible visible—surfacing neglected timelines, budgets, and community needs.



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- It affirms that stewardship begins with accountability: restoring what was promised and ensuring it reaches those most affected.
- **Reimagination — *Reframing What’s Possible***
 - Invites communities to dream beyond dysfunction, using visual storytelling, inclusive metaphors, and related aligned planning.
 - Reimagination is not cosmetic—it’s strategic hope: aligning data, dignity, and delivery in ways that inspire action.
 - It empowers youth, elders, and persons with disabilities to co-author the future, not just receive it.
 - Through workshops, dashboards, and branded messaging, it reframes governance as a shared canvas, not a distant bureaucracy.
- **Regeneration — *Building What Heals***
 - Moves from restoration to renewal, embedding long-term sustainability, inclusion, and community verification.
 - Regeneration is about systems that nourish—from water access to civic mobilisation, from budget discipline to emotional resonance.
 - It affirms that healing is structural: when governance reflects care, clarity, and continuity.
 - This pillar ensures that GARDEN ROUTE First is not a moment, but a movement—rooted in values, growing through action.

Commitment to the People of LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

- These commitments reflect a revitalised, reimagined, and regenerated GARDEN ROUTE— where dignity, service, and sustainability guide every decision.
 - No corruption, no waste: strict financial controls and transparency
 - Better services, now: restore reliable water, sanitation, roads, and waste management
 - Participation at your doorstep: residents help decide how money is spent
 - Jobs and development: support local entrepreneurs and inclusive growth
 - Safe, inclusive communities: collaborate for safety and cohesion
 - Protect our environment: invest in green projects and future generations



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

Integrated Councillor Commitment: Legal Baseline + Community Stewardship Standard

- **Electoral Cooperation**
 - Partnership for Electoral Participation
 - Garden Route First (“GR FIRST”) may, by resolution of its competent decision-making structures, contest municipal elections through a cooperative electoral arrangement with an IEC Independent political Party. This arrangement enables GR FIRST candidates to appear on the ballot under the Independent Political Party name and emblem for purposes of electoral participation.
 - Preservation of GR FIRST Identity and Autonomy
 - Such cooperation does not constitute a merger, absorption, or subordination of GR FIRST into the Independent Political Party . GR FIRST retains its distinct identity, name, symbols, objectives, policies, internal governance structures, and organisational autonomy at all times.
 - GR FIRST shall continue to campaign, organise, recruit members, and operate publicly under its own name, symbols, and brand, irrespective of the electoral vehicle used on the ballot
 - Mandate and Accountability of GR FIRST Representatives
 - GR FIRST members elected to public office through this arrangement remain accountable to GR FIRST’s constitution, values, and decision-making bodies. Their mandate originates from GR FIRST and is exercised in alignment with GR FIRST’s objectives and the interests of the Garden Route community.
 - Terms of Cooperation
 - The terms, scope, and duration of the electoral cooperation with the Independent Political Party shall be determined by GR FIRST’s highest decision-making body and may be reviewed, amended, or terminated by GR FIRST in accordance with this Constitution.
 - No provision of any cooperation agreement may override this Constitution or diminish the autonomy of GR FIRST
 - Communication to Members
 - GR FIRST shall ensure that all members are informed of the nature and implications of the electoral cooperation with the Independent Political Party, including the preservation of GR FIRST’s independent identity and the strategic purpose of contesting elections under the Independent Political Party’s banner.



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

Elected representatives (councillors) entrusted with the dignity, safety, and prosperity of our communities, will be bound by the **Code of Conduct for Councillors (Schedule 7 of the Municipal Structures Act)**. In addition, councillors commit to a higher **Community Stewardship Standard**, pledging to serve with integrity, transparency, and dedication beyond the minimum legal requirements.

- **Legal Baseline (Schedule 7 Obligations)**

Councillors must:

- Act in good faith, honestly, and transparently, always in the best interest of the municipality.
- Attend all council and committee meetings unless excused; repeated absence results in fines or removal.
- Avoid conflicts of interest; disclose financial interests and withdraw from meetings where such interests exist.
- Not vote for resolutions that conflict with legislation.
- Report back to communities at least quarterly on council performance and service delivery.
- Refrain from using their position for personal gain or improperly influencing staff appointments or contracts.
- Respect municipal property and resources, ensuring they are used only for official purposes.
- Accept sanctions (fines, removal, disqualification) for breaches of the Code.

- **Community Stewardship Standard**

Councillors further commit to:

- Place the needs of ratepayers and residents above party bosses, political pressures, or outside influences.
- Actively oppose and expose corruption in all its forms, including within their own ranks.
- Ensure municipal appointments are based on qualifications, competence, and fairness, in compliance with the Constitution and applicable labour and equality legislation.
- Promote financial responsibility by establishing municipal savings plans and reversing excessive tariff increases.
- Exercise a duty of care toward the natural environment, including water security, biodiversity, and climate resilience, and be accountable to communities for environmental outcomes, not merely compliance



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Prioritize biodiversity protection and oppose environmentally harmful developments, ensuring sustainability as prescribed by law.
 - Guarantee inclusive, democratic participation, ensuring all voices are heard in municipal decision-making.
 - Actively advance community safety by prioritising the protection of women, children, pensioners, and vulnerable persons through policy, budgeting, oversight, and community-based prevention initiatives.
 - Commit to transparent communication, responsiveness to community concerns, and advocacy for local economic growth.
 - The Executive may initiate internal disciplinary processes and may withdraw political support, subject to applicable law.
 - Nothing in this Constitution overrides statutory processes governing councillor removal.
 - GR FIRST shall communicate that the Independent Political Party serves solely as the electoral vehicle and not as the organisational home, authority, or identity of GR FIRST.
- **Integration and Accountability**
 - **Dual Commitment:** Councillors are legally bound by Schedule 7 and morally bound by the Community Stewardship Standard.
 - **Transparency:** Councillors must publish both their legal compliance reports and stewardship actions quarterly.
 - **Community Oversight:** Ratepayers and residents may hold councillors accountable not only to the law but also to the higher commitment.
 - **Removal and Resignation Clause:** Breach of the stewardship commitment will result in the removal of the councillor by the Executive and will require their resignation, while breach of Schedule 7 triggers statutory sanctions.
 - **Closing Declaration**

“I hereby commit to uphold both the Code of Conduct for Councillors (Schedule 7) and the Community Stewardship Standard. I will serve with honesty, transparency, and dedication, ensuring that governance is both legally compliant and rooted in dignity, inclusion, and sustainability.”

Amendments

- Amendments to this constitution require a **special general meeting** and a **two-thirds majority vote** of members present.



Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

- Proposed changes must be circulated in advance to all members to ensure transparency and informed decision-making.
- Amendments must remain consistent with the **Preamble, Core Values**, and the **Governance Structure** to safeguard the ethos of GF.

Dissolution

- If GR FIRST dissolves, its assets, after settling all lawful liabilities, shall be transferred to a **local public-purpose entity** (e.g., a civil society organization) or returned to members according to agreed rules.
- Dissolution must be approved by a **two-thirds majority** at a special general meeting.
- The dissolution process must uphold the principles of **Stewardship, Accountability, and Transparency**.
- Assets transferred to a registered NPO in Local Municipalities Municipality aligned with GF's values.

Dispute Resolution

Internal disputes resolved through mediation committee or arbitration, ensuring fairness and transparency.

Language

GR FIRST shall operate in English and Afrikaans, with inclusivity for isiXhosa.

Adoption

This IEC Constitution was adopted by the founding members of GARDEN ROUTE FIRST (GR FIRST) on the 2nd day of February 2026.