

Public participation strategy for budgeting in local government: the case of Tlokwe Local Municipality

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ABSTRACT

Before the historical democratic elections of 1994, South Africa did not have a culture of actively engaging communities in local government affairs.

Democracy brought emphasis to transparency in municipal activities, and greater public accountability. It is legislated in South Africa that local governments should interact with communities in an endeavour to carry out the responsibilities of service delivery to ensure growth and development in a manner that promotes and enhances community participation and accountability. However, integrated municipal development planning, budgeting, local economic development projects, and various forms of municipal partnerships, are all issues which require effective community participation processes.

Local government as a sphere government closest to the people is now expected to engage communities through exploring sustainable strategies as mechanisms which, within the context of this study, bring about effective public participation. In this regard, an effective, efficient, vibrant and innovative local government system that is accountable to local communities is of obvious importance. The local government has a key role to play in ensuring that people receive quality leadership and a sound and stable local democracy. Section 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) spells out two important developmental duties of a municipality:

- To structure and manage its administration and budget planning process so as to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the environmental and socio-economic development of the community: and
- To participate in national and provincial development programmes.

The purpose of this study was to determine a variety of effective channels or mechanisms and processes for public participation in the integrated development planning (IDP) and budget process in the Tlokwe Local Municipality. It also focuses on the policy and legislative framework underpinning public participation in the IDP and budget processes. The study further considers that legislation requires that the IDP process of Tlokwe Municipality should structurally incorporate the voice of the community which will be affected by planning. The researcher used a qualitative method to determine how Tlokwe Local Municipality addresses the needs of the local community to enhance participatory democracy. The study established that there are a number of challenges facing the municipality which are barriers to effective participation. Several of these challenges relate to the poor and the marginalised groups which still have far too little influence in the affairs of the municipality.

Key terms: local government, public participation, municipality, community, integrated development plan (IDP), budget, Tlokwe Local Municipality, democracy, transparency, service delivery

UITTREKSEL

Voor die geskiedkundige demokratiese verkiesing van 1994 was daar in Suid-Afrika nie 'n kultuur van aktiewe deelname deur gemeenskappe in die ontwikkeling van plaaslike regeringsake nie.

Die koms van demokrasie het klem geplaas op deursigtigheid in munisipale aktiwiteite, en ook op groter openbare verantwoordbaarheid. Die wet in Suid-Afrika bepaal dat plaaslike regerings met gemeenskappe moet saamwerk in 'n poging om hulle verantwoordelikhede van dienslewering na te kom ten einde groei en ontwikkeling te verseker op 'n wyse wat gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid en – verantwoordbaarheid sal bewerkstellig. In hierdie verband is dit ongetwyfeld van die uiterste belang dat 'n effektiewe, lewendige, doeltreffende en innoverende plaaslike regeringstelsel wat verantwoording doen aan plaaslike gemeenskappe, in plek is. Die plaaslike regering het 'n sleutelrol te speel om seker te maak dat die gemeenskap kwaliteit leierskap binne 'n goeie en stabiele demokrasie ervaar. Artikel 153 van die Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, 1996 dui twee belangrike ontwikkelings-pligte van 'n munisipaliteit aan:

- Om die administratiewe en begrotingsbeplanningproses sodanig te struktureer en te bestuur dat die basiese behoeftes van die gemeenskap prioriteit geniet, en die omgewings- sowel as die sosio-ekonomiese ontwikkeling bevorder word; en
- Om deel te neem aan nasionale en provinsiale ontwikkelingsprogramme.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om 'n verskeidenheid doeltreffende meganismes en prosesse te bepaal om sodoende openbare deelname te verseker in die geïntegreerde ontwikkelingsbeplanning (IDP) en begrotingsproses in die Tlokwe Plaaslike Munisipaliteit (TLM). Die studie fokus verder op die beleids- en regsraamwerk wat openbare deelname aan die IDP en begrotingsprosesse ondersteun. Die studie ondersoek ook die wetgewing wat vereis dat die IDP-proses van TLM die stem van die gemeenskap, wat geraak sal word deur beplanning en wysigings, struktureel moet inkorporeer. 'n Kwalitatiewe metode is gebruik om te

bepaal hoedat TLM die ware behoeftes van die gemeenskap aanspreek ten einde deelnemende demokrasie te versterk. Verder stel die studie vas dat daar 'n aantal uitdagings vir TLM bestaan in die vorm van hindernisse tot publieke deelname. Heelwat van hierdie hindernisse hou verband met die uiters behoeftige en gemarginaliseerde groepe wat steeds hopeloos te min bydra tot munisipale aangeleenthede.

Sleutelwoorde: plaaslike regering, openbare/publieke deelname, munisipale gemeenskap, geïntegreerde ontwikkelingsplan, begroting, Tlokwe Plaaslike Munisipaliteit (TLM), demokrasie, deursigtigheid, dienslewering.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ORIENTATION

Local government is a key role-player in the socio-economic development of South Africa. The transformation process to establish non-racial and viable municipalities is a crucial strategic move towards enabling local government to fulfil its developmental role. Municipal institutions affect the lives of all people living within the territory of the state, and are rightly regarded as the backbone of a balanced democracy and as essential service providers. See for example the White Paper on Local Government (RSA,1998b: 20).

An effective, efficient, vibrant and innovative local government system is therefore of obvious importance. Local government has a key role to play in ensuring that people receive quality leadership and a sound and stable local democracy. The developmental duty of local government provided for in Section 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, is an important mandate to be acknowledged by every municipality.

Section 153 of the Constitution spells out two important developmental duties of a municipality, namely:

- To structure and manage its administration and budget planning process to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the environmental and socio-economic development of the community; and
- To participate in national and provincial development programmes.

The White Paper on Local Government (RSA,1998b:17) defines developmental local government as follows: “Developmental local government is local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the

community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives". The implied emphasis pertaining to public participation as developmental local government as defined here, is of specific importance for this study. As Pieterse, Parnell, Swilling and Van Donk (2008:14) argue that: "Under the DLG (developmental local government) rubric,... a strategic municipal planning system has to be underpinned by a consistent and transparent financial management system and effective citizen participation mechanisms to legitimise it" and further that: "In terms of the imaginary of the White Paper on Local Government, democratic participation in priority setting, performance reviews and service delivery are constituent aspects of DLG" (RSA, 2008b:15).

See further also Pieterse and Van Donk (2008) as well as Van Dijk and Croucamp (2007) on developmental local government.

In order to effectively ensure a developmental role and to improve participation of the community, Bekink (2006:286-287) argues that all municipalities will need to develop at least some crucial capacities. They will have to:

- Become more strategic in their orientation. They should be open and flexible to new or unforeseen demands;
- Maximise integrated capacity, both inside and outside the municipal jurisdiction;
- Become much more community orientated.

Based on the above arguments it is argued that Tlokwe Local Municipality, situated in Potchefstroom in the North-West province and which forms the empirical research focus of this study, needs to develop mechanisms to interact with community groups and to identify service needs and priorities. Without the capacity to strategise, integrate and interface with non-municipal groups, many local governments, including Tlokwe Local Municipality, are unlikely to be sustainable in future.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) emphasises that municipalities have to encourage active participation of their communities in implementing strategies.

This study strongly contends that local government budgets must reflect the needs of the people and plan their participation and resources to meet those needs. This meets statutory requirements, which place a strong and formal expectation on local authorities to consult with local communities and to reflect community needs in their budgets. Van der Waldt (2004:119), in view of the strategic role of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (see also Venter, 2007:95-96 in this regard) within local government and the emphasis on citizen-participation, recommends that local government draw up a citizen-participation policy plan to avoid an *ad hoc* incremental approach to development management. Such a plan must do the following:

- Spell out citizen participation procedures;
- Be adopted by citizens in a specific community;
- Encourage and define avenues for citizen participation;
- Provide for public hearings;
- Spell out the technical assistance provided to citizens for participation;
- Describe the procedures for citizen complaints; and
- Provide access to public institutions.

It is suggested that citizen participation in budgetary decision making is typically minimalist and yields few, if any, directly observable results. In this regard, this study also argues that municipal officials, including those of Tlokwe Local Municipality, must understand and refine the priorities of the community in order to educate their public about, amongst others;

- Fiscal priorities, and
- To enhance trust and transparency.

However, it is insufficient to only gather and consider policy preference information that will grace the municipal offices. Taking time and effort to involve citizens during resource allocation decisions, is an invaluable strategic move that the local municipality has to consider.

Local municipalities cannot exist apart from their local residents. In this regard, a public participation strategy is essential to participatory democracy. Strategy formulation for public participation, municipal financial administration and management remain critical challenges for many municipalities, including Tlokwe Local Municipality. The former Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, in his 2001 Budget Speech, supported this view:

“For Local Government, the challenges of transformation largely lie ahead. We have to merge different local authorities with diverse needs, financial systems and procedures, and must build a new ethos of financial responsibility. It is important, however, not to think of the challenges ahead only in fiscal or monetary terms. There are larger challenges of developing capacity and governance systems. Improving the credibility of municipal budgets, adapting strategies to meet local needs and circumstances and enhancing the quality of service within affordable bounds are immense projects” (Manuel, 2001). Pauw *et. al.* (2002:253) also suggest that local government has to be developmental in nature, which indicates that municipal budgets have to focus on and be geared to meet the developmental needs of local communities.

Participation of the public in municipal budgeting is therefore critical. In terms of publication of the annual budget, the municipal manager as the accounting officer of the municipality is required in terms of Section 22(a) and Section 23(3) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act 53 of 2003) (“The Municipal Finance Management Act”) to make public the annual budget with relevant documents and invite the local community to submit representations in connection with the budget.

When the annual budget has been tabled, the municipal council must consider any views of:

- i) The local community; and
- ii) The National Treasury, the relevant provincial treasury and any provincial or national organs of state or municipalities which made submissions on the budget.

The implementation of IDPs is further supported by the Constitution and the Development Facilitation Act, 1995 (Act 65 of 1995) (“the DFA”) that gives primacy to local government as the vehicle for the reconstruction and development of the new society. The DFA also mandates municipalities to have a developmental focus in their areas of jurisdiction as opposed to sheer provision of services (Malefane, 2004:118).

In this study it is argued that the IDP and the municipal budget are separate processes that are closely linked, interacting together and informing each other. In other words, they are tools that help municipalities achieve their developmental responsibilities. Compare also Khalo (2007:187) in this regard.

Malefane (2004:108) argues that the IDP has become the pivotal point around which the whole of local government operates. It is the main pillar of the budget and the main interface with the community, which is of specific relevance to this study. It was introduced to make municipalities more proactive and sensitive in the way they deliver services and manage their responsibilities. It is a comprehensive and sophisticated planning tool for assessing municipal service delivery and infrastructure development.

Considering what has been discussed above, the nature and extent of a public participation strategy for budgeting in local government in the Tlokwe Local Municipality is the main focus area of this study. The new system of local government was introduced through the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) (“the Systems Act”), which provides the

principles, mechanisms and processes to provide essential service delivery to address the needs of the community.

It specifically highlights the use of integrated development planning in defining and detailing the municipality's priority delivery programme and its crucial function in shaping municipal budgets. The legislation provides the framework for the integrated development planning methodology.

The methodology binds the process for integrated development planning with the municipal budget and links it in restructuring programme and project financial management. The Systems Act specifically states that the IDP forms the policy framework and general basis upon which the annual budgets must be based.

The Systems Act furthermore identifies the uses of both the IDP and budgeting to provide the public with the opportunity to participate in the implementation of strategy in budgeting in order to determine the community needs.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In view of the above background, the main problem to be addressed is based on the following question:

Does the Public Participation Strategy pertaining to Tlokwe Local Municipality's IDP and Budget, and considering the resourcing, application and coordination of public participation mechanisms in the Integrated Development Planning and Budgeting processes ensure active and meaningful participation of the Potchefstroom Community in the way in which it is required to ensure optimal delivery of services?

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For purposes of conducting research for the study, the following questions are posed:

- i. What is meant by public participation and what are the principles and theories relating to this concept?
- ii. What are the statutory and regulatory requirements of developmental local government to facilitate public participation with specific reference to the budgeting processes and the IDP?
- iii. What are the perceived challenges facing Tlokwe Local Municipality in facilitating public participation in the budgeting and IDP processes?
- iv. What should the Tlokwe Local Municipality include in the participation strategy to enhance public participation?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Provide a theoretical exposition of public participation concepts and related principles for budgeting.
- ii. Describe the current statutory and regulatory framework requirements for developmental local government in order to facilitate public participation in the budget process and the IDP.
- iii. Establish the nature and extent of a public participation strategy for budgeting and IDP manifested in the Tlokwe Local Municipality.

- iv. Suggest recommendations that may propose solutions to Tlokwe Municipal Management on improving a strategy for the public to participate in the IDP and the budget process.

1.5 LEADING THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS

The following are the preliminary statements that can be made:

- i. The public participation process must be transparent to ensure that people are afforded the opportunity to take part in the elaboration and control of the municipal budget (Ababio, 2004:287).
- ii. Public participation strategy in the changing social and political environment is indispensable within the management practices of Tlokwe Local Municipality (OECD, 2001:4).
- iii. Management practices of Tlokwe Local Municipality need to contend with a severe lack of skills and capacity in fulfilling their role to be able to manage new changes effectively. (Van der Waldt, 2007:34).
- iv. Accountability must be provided within a municipal administration so that the developmental nature of local government with its greater emphasis on participation and accountability could affect significant changes in the manner in which municipalities function (Bekink, 2006:483).

1.6 LITERATURE AND RESEARCH METHOD

To meet the research objectives stated above, information was acquired from both secondary and primary sources. This was done through a literature review and an empirical study. Both interviews and questionnaires were employed in conducting the empirical study.

1.6.1 Literature

A literature study was done in which primary as well as secondary literature was used to analyse current statutory and regulatory framework requirements pertaining to developmental local government in respect of facilitating public participation in the budget process and the IDP. Similarly, journals, books and articles were used to understand the arguments, concepts, methodologies and strategies in relation to the topic of the study. Relevant legislation includes:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
- The Local Government White Paper (1998).
- Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000).
- Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act (Act 56 of 2003).

Databases

The following databases were also consulted to ascertain the availability of research material:

- i. Catalogue of dissertations and theses of South African Universities (Nexus).
- ii. EBSCO, Emerald, Jstor and Google Scholar.
- iii. Catalogue of books: North-West University, Potchefstroom.

1.6.2 Method

This study utilizes a qualitative research technique. Babbie and Mouton (2001:53) describe qualitative research as “describing and understanding (Verstehen) rather than the explanation and prediction of human behaviour”. Sarantakos (2005:50) further states that: “Some of the main criteria of qualitative methods are lack of strict structure, loosely planned designs geared to capture reality in action, expressive language, collection of thick descriptions, presentation of data in the form of words and pictures, close

contact with the respondents, and context sensitivity". Face to face (mainly semi-structured) interviews were conducted with selected respondents to establish the nature and extent of a public participation strategy for budgeting in the IDP as manifested in the Tlokwe Local Municipality. Municipal officials were selected on the basis of their knowledge on the research topic. These are the head of the communications department, IDP assistant manager and the manager from the Office of the Speaker. Such interviews require the researcher to be attentive to the responses in order to be able to identify new emerging lines of inquiry. If that happens one can explore and probe for further information. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of data to be collected in these interviews, the necessary preparation will be made, such as preparing draft interview questions coherent with the research objectives.

An empirical study was undertaken in which a set of self-constructed questionnaires were formulated to gather information from relevant political office bearers and officials of Tlokwe Local Municipality as well as members of the community. These included senior members of the Tlokwe Local Municipality and ward committee members who largely represented the community of Tlokwe Local Municipality.

These questionnaires facilitated the obtaining of information from a wider audience than the interviewees and also served to ensure the validity of information gathered from different audiences.

On the basis of the research objectives, the researcher also attended Tlokwe public participation meetings in order to obtain first hand information. All information relevant to the research conducted was continuously analysed and evaluated against the research objectives.

1.6.3 Ethical consideration

The conduct of this study adheres to ethical guidelines in terms of how data were collected and analysed as well as the treatment of participants.

Respondents were informed that participation in the study would be voluntary and that confidentiality would be maintained.

1.6.4 Significance of the study

The study contributes to the improved understanding of the role of a public participation strategy in the effective functioning of municipalities, highlighting the shortcomings experienced with reference to the case study. These shortcomings provide the basis for specific recommendations pertaining to the improvement and/or development of a public participation strategy in respect of the Tlokwe Local Municipality specifically, but also broadly pertaining to municipalities in general, as they relate to integrated development planning and budgeting specifically.

1.6.5 Outline of Chapters

Based on what has been said above, this research is organised in accordance with the following chapters:

Chapter 1. Introduction, which includes the Orientation and Problem Statement.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Overview of a Public Participation Strategy for Budgeting in Local Government.

Chapter 3. Statutory Framework and Regulatory Requirements Governing Participation in Tlokwe Local Municipality.

Chapter 4. Empirical Research on Public Participation in Relation to Budgeting and Integrated Development Planning (IDP) at Tlokwe Local Municipality.

Chapter 5. Summary, Research Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion.

The next chapter deals with a theoretical overview of a public participation strategy for budgeting that underpins the study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY FOR BUDGETING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1. INTRODUCTION

It is manifestly true that the election in April 1994 enabled South Africa to be a fully democratic country. This has also required a total transformation of all public institutions and services rendered by the Government in democratising the system of governance. South Africa was not alone in the search for a new understanding of “development”. In the same week that Mandela was released from prison in 1990, a major international African Charter conference was held in Arusha, Tanzania. At the conference, Africa’s unyielding decade of long economic catastrophe was identified as the result of the lack of participatory processes within societies (Walters, 1991:5). The conference adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation which asserts that:

“There must be an opening up of political process to accommodate freedom of opinions, tolerate differences, accept consensus on issues as well as ensure that effective participation of the people and their organisations and associates in designing policies and programmes” (Arusha, 1990:6).

The Charter calls upon governments in Africa to yield space to the people, and calls on people themselves to press for democratic participation and to establish organisations that are genuinely grass rooted, democratically administered and self-reliant.

The new democracies, including South Africa, understand and realise that their greatest resource is their people and that it is through their active and full participation that the very benefits of development should and must accrue. Mosana (2005:27) argues that knowledge of, or being informed about, the goings-on in one’s local government or municipality is often an essential part

of daily survival. Ebdon and Franklin (2006:438) also argue that there is a need for more rigorous theorizing, using empirical evidence to model causal relationships. The incessant theorising about the worth of participation continues without acknowledging the gap between theory and practice and without taking any pro-active steps to make participation more beneficial to practitioners searching for ways to reach out to the public, or to do so more successfully than they have done in the past.

Public participation is indispensable for proper municipal planning to ensure effective and efficient municipal governments.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical overview of the concept of public participation strategy in budgeting within the context of South African local government. This chapter will also focus on the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and budget concepts. As a prelude to the above work, definitions and explanations of concepts used in this chapter and the entire study will be highlighted.

Various writers on public participation as highlighted in this chapter have emphasised the need for strategic planning that will enable effective and efficient services to be rendered by municipalities and promote participatory democracy.

2.2 DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

2.2.1 Conceptualising democracy : Definition

Questions which are related to the “who, what, where, why and how” of public participation are closely linked to the approach to democracy within which such questions are asked. According to Axford *et al* (2002:163) the concept as well as the term “democracy” originates from the Greek concept of Demos as the people and Kratos means “to rule, hence the rule of, by and for the people”. In a democratic country it is expected that all citizens should be involved in the democratic process through debate, deliberation and

participation. This model of democracy is often suggested as both an ideal and also an example of how democracy should function.

The concept of democracy emphasizes participatory decision making by the people, and that such people should have equal rights to take part in the decision making process (Bolaji, 2007:1408). In other words, democracy should be understood to represent a process of decision making that involves people, especially those who will be affected by those decisions.

However, Bolaji (2007:1408) argues that democracy has frameworks for safeguarding the interest of the excluded and marginalised as their competition for offices, participation in decision making and civil liberties is guaranteed. In this regard, one of the means through which inequalities against which the Constitution rules can be corrected, is through the institutionalization of democratic governance. It is argued, however, that the Constitution provides both the opportunities and a framework for the marginalised and voiceless community members to leverage their influence in the municipal decision making process.

2.2.2 Participatory democracy

What is often most important about it, is the participation of people in the process to influence decision making. According to Ababio, quoted by Mafunisa & Xaba (2008:453), participatory democracy means the provision of services based on the existence of a legislative framework that facilitates consultation, involvement and mobilization of civil society in the formal processes of policy making and implementation. In other words, participation through inclusiveness and empowerment of citizens should be an underlying principle in decision making and implementation. In this regard, it can be argued further that political decentralisation at local level should be seen as an important component of democratisation where there is an appropriate combination of representative and participatory democracy. Comparing the views of Bauer (2006: 32) with those of Held (2007:215) in terms of this study, it is clear that participatory democracy takes place in a society which fosters a

sense of political efficacy. Hence it can be seen as the extent to which all people are active in politics. For example, the more people participate in democracy, the more influence they exercise on the outcomes of elections and voting. When people participate in elections, change can be brought about and decision making influenced. Bauer (2006:32) further argues that participatory democracy can also be referred to as direct democracy, and entitles the participation of the entire community and not only certain identified members of the community.

Heywood (quoted by Bauer, 2006:32) views the merits of participatory democracy as follows:

It heightens the control that citizens can exercise over their own destinies; it creates a better informed and more politically sophisticated citizenry; it enables the public to express their own views and interests; and it ensures that rule is legitimate in the sense that people are more likely to accept decisions that they have made themselves.

Thus this study argues that participatory democracy nurtures a concern for collective problems and contributes to the formation of a knowledgeable citizenry capable of taking a sustained interest in the governing process.

The Constitution of South Africa can be referred to as one of the most progressive in the world and it can be argued that public participation is one of the fundamental principles enshrined in virtually all aspects of the Constitution. According to Naidu (quoted by De Villiers, 2008:83), the intention of the crafters of the Constitution was clear: to ensure that South Africa is a people-driven democracy that creates spaces for the voices of ordinary people, especially the marginalised, to be heard and acted upon in ways that can be seen and felt as improvements in the lives of many.

It would be a tragedy for our democracy if this principle were to remain nothing more than words on paper and did not translate into concrete and tangible participation that actually affects policy at all levels, starting in the

communities where people live and where their everyday lives and livelihoods are at stake.

This section therefore examines the concept of democratic participation as a prerequisite for democracy in a post apartheid environment, with reference to the local sphere. This sphere should comprise vehicles that allow citizens equal and transparent opportunity to exercise their democratic rights in the affairs of their municipality.

When one considers the issue of democratic participation, the perception of what is articulated by various studies, public and policymakers, is a formalistic understanding of the concept of democracy. To support this view, Heydenrych (2008:704) asserts that, generally, reference is made to voting in elections, taking part in referenda, interest group participation, as well as the type of structures that are established within a legal framework for the purposes of public participation. He further suggests that this formalistic understanding needs to be challenged in the minds of policymakers and all citizens. On the other hand, Stoker (2004:10) warns that local authorities would not be able to act as effective community leaders if they lacked a base of popular support. The challenge is to find ways of engaging people on their own terms. Voting could be made easier and more meaningful. Consent beyond the ballot box can be obtained through various methods of public consultation and deliberation.

Heydenrych (2008:705) refers to the model of participatory democracy as that it may be considered as the closest to a practical model of direct democracy. In this regard Magstadt (quoted by Heydenrych, 2008:705) highlights that it is necessary to consider the aspects pertaining to the relationship between democracy and public participation, and argues that a different way of thinking about democracies is to focus on the role of the people under different models – after all, democracy is by definition a form of rule by the people.

This study, therefore, defines democratic participation in its purest form as the free and equal right of citizens to participate in a system of government,

especially in decision making processes at local government level. Kroukamp (2005:76) states that “good and democratic local government means that ‘a social subcontract’ between citizens, the government, NGOs and private sector interests can be achieved”. It might mean that both private organisations and NGOs take a more active role in the production of public services.

2.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

“One of the requirements that the new system of local government had to meet was to promote democracy at the local sphere, it is therefore understandable that the enabling legislation would make provision for the extension of citizen participation in the governing of a municipality” (Thornhill, 2008:71).

Particular provision has thus been made in the enabling legislation concerning local government.

Furthermore, community participation takes place through political structures, through mechanisms such as izimbizo (informal gatherings with councillors where questions can be asked on any issue related to municipal matters), public meetings, consultative sessions and report back sessions with the local community (Thornhill, 2008:71).

In devising such mechanisms, it is also a legal requirement, according to Section 17(3) of the Systems Act, that attention in regard to public participation be given to people who cannot read or write, people with disability, women and other disadvantaged groups. It is further required that meetings of council and its committees (with particular exceptions) must be open to the public. Section 29 of the Systems Act asserts that the community must also be involved with the compilation of the IDP for the municipality.

The Draft Policy Document by the former Department of Provincial and Local Government defines public participation as an open, accountable process

through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision making and considers public participation as a democratic process of engaging people, deciding, planning and playing an active part in the development and operation of services which affect lives (DLPG, 2005:5).

Thornhill (2008:17) argues that it should be obvious that the new approach to democratising local government goes far beyond the normal practice of only elected representatives acting on behalf of the community. Communities are no longer excluded from the governing function and do not merely play a role at elections and are then sidelined. They can (in theory at least) actively participate in a variety of governmental initiatives through formal structures.

Community participation is key to the functioning of local government. The term “community participation” is used in compliance with Chapter Four of the Systems Act. However, terms such as “public participation” or “citizen participation” could equally be used.

Tshabalala (2007:10) refers to public participation as a means (for local authorities) of obtaining information about local conditions, needs, desires and attitudes.

In this regard, through public participation, the Government ensures that it addresses the real needs of the community in the manner in which it is required to.

Public participation is a powerful tool: it informs and educates citizens and therefore enhances the process of democratisation in South Africa. Furthermore, participation is perceived as a way of receiving information about issues, needs and attitudes, and which provides affected communities the opportunity to express their views before policy decisions are taken; it promotes equality, fairness and reasonableness in the allocation and distribution of public resources (Van der Waldt; 2004:117). Through public participation, citizens are also taught to understand the needs and desires of

other citizens in society, and how to resolve conflict by promoting collective welfare.

Van der Walldt (2004:117) also maintains that participation provides citizens with a source of special insight, information and knowledge which add to the soundness of Government policies, thus ensuring that citizens have access to the “tools” of democracy.

Bekink (2006:10) maintains that it is a specific aim of the new constitutional order to create spheres of government where people of all races have equal rights and opportunities and where every citizen can bring a vote for his or her political representative of choice.

According to Bekink (2006:13) municipalities do not exist or function apart from their respective local communities. The main reason for the existence of local government is to provide basic services to their local residents. In order to create and facilitate mutual respect and support; municipalities must work hand in hand with their communities to fulfil their obligations. However, such a relationship can be achieved only if local residents feel that they are consulted on important issues and that they are included in decision making processes.

Governmental accountability and public participation in municipal processes and decisions are constitutionally protected principles and must be provided for within a framework of certain minimum standards.

However, public participation is not exempted from challenges in order to achieve its objectives as alluded to above. Fowler, (quoted by Malefane, 2004:108) refers to the following challenges which have been identified:

- Mechanisms and processes necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively toward the social and economic upliftment of local communities.

- Ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable and cost effective.
- Establish working partnerships with the communities within the municipal areas.
- Resource mobilisation and organisational change which underpin the notion of developmental local government.
- Empower the poor and ensure that municipalities put in place the service tariffs and credit control policies that take their needs into account.
- Establish a framework for support, monitoring and standard setting by other spheres of government in order to progressively build local government into an efficient, front-line development agency capable of integrating the activities of all spheres of government for the overall social and economic development of communities.

2.4 WARD COMMITTEE SYSTEM

The ward committee system, as provided for in legislation and specifically the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) (“the Structures Act”), is a specific mechanism to ensure that public participation is effected. Linked to this are the IDP and budget review processes that will be dealt with in the next section. According to Naidu (2008:85-86), ward committees are important channels of communication for informing municipalities about the needs, wants and problems of their communities. They are mandated to facilitate substantial grassroots participation in the development processes of municipalities, including the IDP, budgeting and municipal performance management processes. They are meant to be non-partisan and to advance the collective interests of the ward. Comparing the view of Shah (2006:62) with that of Naidu (2008:85-86), in all municipalities

ward councillors are expected to work with ward committees in order to give citizens a more direct say in local decisions. Shah (2006:62) contends that ward committees provide scope for participation in integrated development planning, budgeting, and general monitoring of Local Government.

Effective public participation involves true devolution of power to the citizens at grassroots level and this will present a series of challenges for both municipal administration and political representatives. The ward committee system in South Africa was meant to empower local people to be a part of addressing their own developmental needs, but it has been found to be dysfunctional in its present form as a formal mechanism through which communities communicate with municipalities, and this has adversely weakened public participation. According to Steyn (quoted by De Villiers, 2008:87), three broad issues with regard to ward committees as a mechanism for public participation have been identified as present dysfunctions within the majority of the ward committees for effective public participation of the community:

- Participation in ward committees is predicated on a formal, legalistic understanding of participation, which sees those who participate as beneficiaries or clients of government's development interventions. It is based on a technical approach to participation which fails to engage sufficiently with issues of power and politics – people are not part of the actual decision making processes as decision-making power resides somewhere else.
- Ward committee participation mainly benefits organised and well resourced social groupings and local party political actors who do not need any recourse to access local power-holders, thus excluding a large sector of unorganised, mainly poor, voices.
- In this way, power relations in ward communities are shaped by powerful interests, including party political actors, organised groupings

and ward councillors/power-holders. For example, ward councillors together with local party political actors determine the agendas and outcomes of ward committee participatory processes.

There are also a number of other problems with this system of participation as it is presently constituted. In respect of ward committees, these are as follows:

- Ward committees lack clear focus and show a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.
- Ward committees have no real power and are therefore not taken seriously by the community or by the decision-makers in the municipalities.
- In many instances ward committees have become nothing more than extensions of political parties and are easily subjected to manipulation.
- Ward committee members have insufficient training to carry out mandated activities.
- Ward committees lack both administrative and infrastructural support.
- Ward committees have displaced many vibrant community initiatives such as rate payer's associations, resident's associations, cultural groupings, etc. The ward committee system has become a convenient vehicle through which municipalities can say that they have satisfied the public participation compliance that is demanded in the Act (De Villiers, 2008:87).

In this study it is accepted that, in order to curb the above mentioned dysfunctionalities of ward committees, there is a need for a coherent and extensive public participation strategy in municipal governance as an important element in the promotion of local democracy.

2.5 DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It is important to indicate that for effective public participation to occur, a credible strategy is needed. Developing a strategy will draw on all aspects of the environment within which the municipality is active. In this discussion, strategic management and planning theory will be used to relate the need for a strategic approach to public participation.

2.5.1 DEFINING STRATEGY

The phrases 'strategy' and 'strategic planning' are used more frequently or too frequently in organisations. According to Siess (quoted by Baker, 2007:17), a strategy is the outcome of some form of planning – “an organised process for anticipating and acting in the future in order to carry out [organisation's] mission”. Schutte (2003:11), Van der Walddt and Knipe (1998:4) indicate that public organisations (such as Tlokwe Local Municipality) need a suitable plan in order to achieve what the organisation aims for, irrespective of change. They further allude to the fact that any organisation, in formulating its strategy, should be able to identify the following four aspects:

- The mission or overall aim of the organisation;
- The transformation technology used by the organisation;
- The strategic and operational planning to achieve the aims; and
- Strategic control.

Van der Walddt and Knipe (1998:4) maintain that the organisational strategy is the process in which the organisation makes use of certain policies, procedures and resources in order to achieve the main objectives of the organisation.

In order to understand the concept of strategic management and also to apply this, it is necessary to have clarity in respect of the concepts strategic

management, strategic planning and strategy. The following diagram shows the mutual relationship and interaction between these concepts:

The relationship between strategic management, strategic planning and strategy

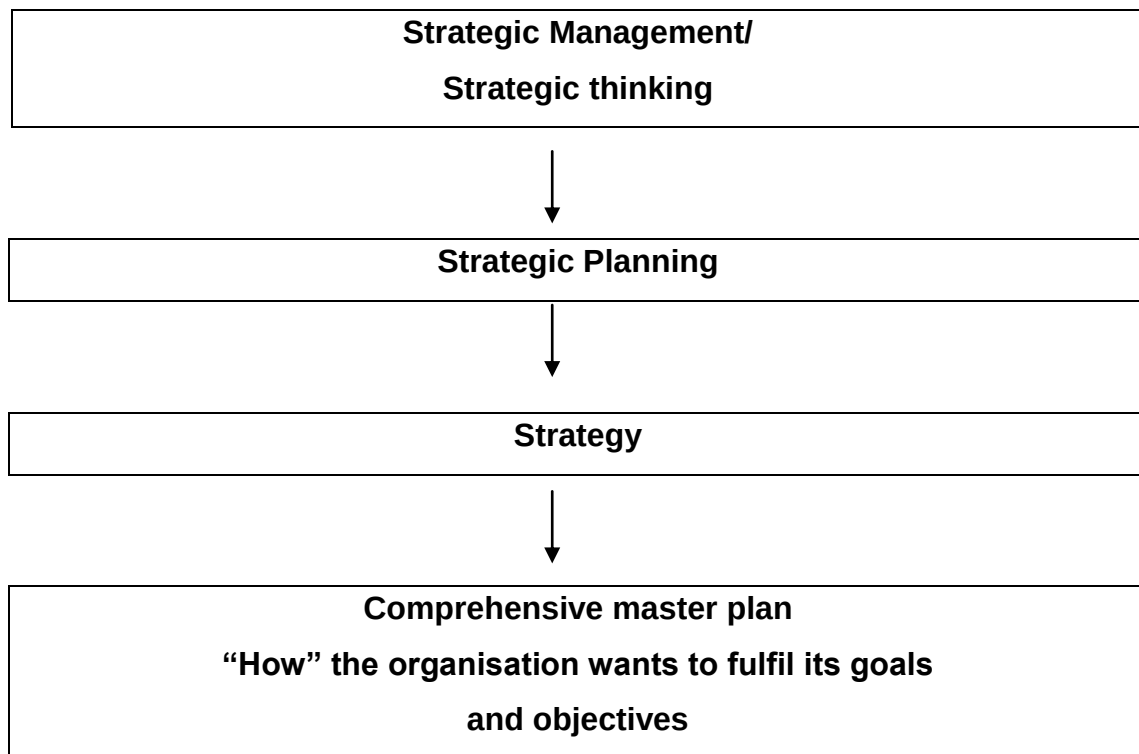


Figure 2.1

Source: De Bruyn and Kruger (1998:2)

(i) Strategic Management

De Bruyn and Kruger (1998:2) refer to strategic thought/management as the continual long-term planning process of top management by means of which to realise the aims and objectives within a changing environment by way of the formulation and implementation of a suitable plan of action.

The concept of strategic thought refers to management's orientation in respect of the long-term directedness for the deployment of the enterprise

within its unique environment. Present day decisions have to be made in respect of the future survival of the industry, and these decisions are not to be taken in isolation, but within a specific changing environment. The application of strategic management provides management with the following:

- Strategic management creates the opportunity to combine experience and sound judgement.
- Assistance towards moving away from intuition and attunement.
- Purposefulness and efficacy.
- Direction and guidance in terms of that which is envisaged and of what has to be realised.
- It contributes in terms of adapting to change, the creation of new opportunities and counteracting threats (De Bruyn & Kruger, 1998:3).

(ii) Strategic Planning

Local municipalities are required to do continuous planning in order to adapt to a changing social, economic and political environment. This will lead to the fulfilment of the changing needs of the community served by the particular local government.

Bryson (2004:6) defines strategic planning as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation (or other entity) is, what it does and why it does it. At its best, strategic planning requires broad scale yet effective information gathering, clarification of the mission to be pursued and issues to be addressed along the way, development and exploration of strategic alternatives, and an emphasis on the future implications of present decisions. Bryson (2004:6) further contends that strategic planning can facilitate communication and participation, accommodate divergent interests and values, foster wise and reasonably analytical decision making, and promote successful implementation and accountability.

2.5.2 THE ABC OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

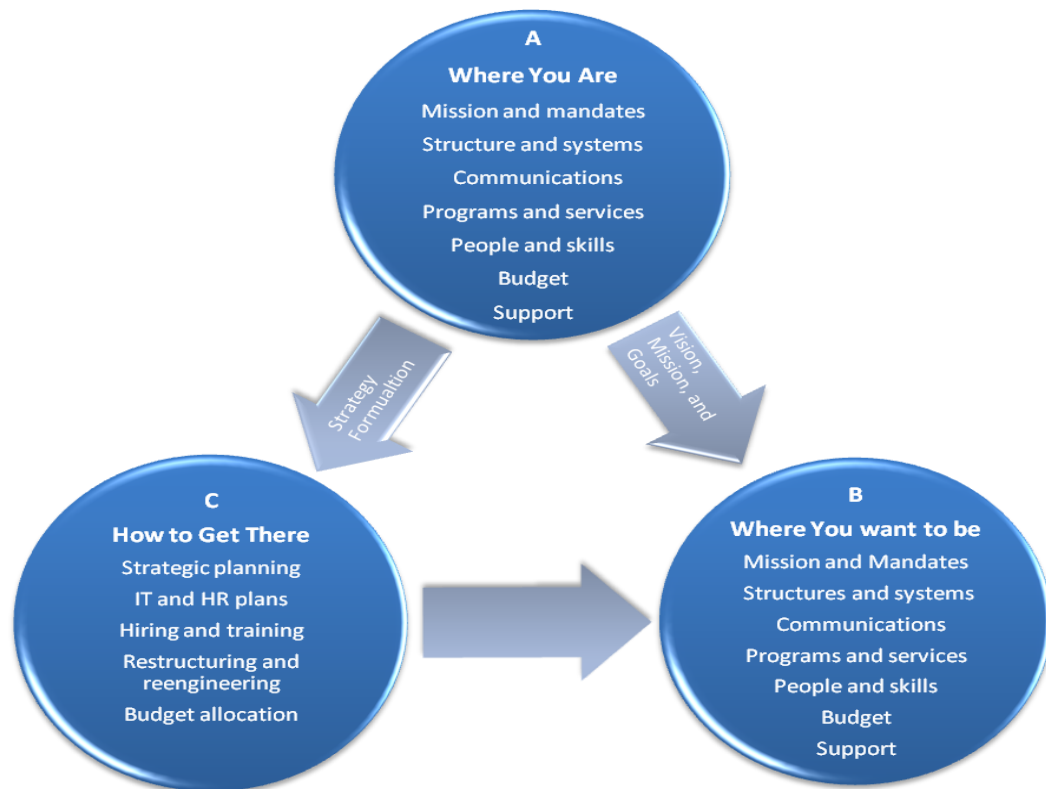


Figure 2.2

Source: Bryson (2004:7)

The above figure presents a capsule summary of what strategic planning is all about in terms of facilitating public participation.

A represents where the organisation and community are;

B represents where they want to go; and

C represents how to get there.

The content of **A** and **B** are the organisation's existing or new mission, structure and systems, communications, programs and services, people and skills, relationships, budgets and other participating mechanisms.

The content of **C** is the strategic plan which includes, amongst others, plans for various functions, ways to redesign, restructure, or re-engineer budget

allocations and other vehicles for change (Bryson, 2006:6-7). As indicated in the figure above, getting from A to C is the process of strategy formulation whereas getting from C to B is strategy implementation. For Tlokwe Local Municipality to do strategic planning well, there is a need to figure out **A**, **B** and **C** and how they should be connected, and their interconnections must address participation effectively.

Baker (2007:18) asserts: “Strategic planning will also need to take account of the organisation’s capabilities, as against those of the rest of the sector”. According to Sutherland and Conwell (as quoted by Baker, 2007:18-19), capabilities are the key skills which allow organisations to utilise and coordinate their resources at an optimum level in order to maximise their productivity and profitability. Strategy then has to be worked out anew for each set of circumstances in which a strategic approach is required.

2.5.3 THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF A PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Participative management is critical and must be broadly highlighted, because of its relevance for this study.

De Bruyn and Kruger (1998:115-116) highlight that the most important principles of a participative management style which will be applied in community participation include the following:

- Definition – Participative management can be defined as the systems, processes and practices in terms of which employees directly or indirectly participate in the decision-making of management. Participative management is also more than merely employee involvement and refers to the real influencing of the decisions of management.
- Approaches to participative management – It is important to distinguish between direct and indirect forms of participation. In direct participation

the employees themselves are directly involved in the activity or process, as opposed to indirect participation where involvement is effected by way of an agent or a chosen representative. It is sometime impossible to obtain direct participation of employees at the lowest levels of an enterprise. It follows that meaningful participation on these levels could be generated primarily with the aid of indirect methods (for instance a shop floor representative).

- Conditions. The following conditions for participative management can be identified:
 - (i) Characteristics of subordinates – should participative management be effectively implemented, the subordinates would have to possess two qualities in particular. In the first place, they must want to participate. Employees should thus be interested in the wider implications of their positions and the influencing of decisions affecting them. Secondly, subordinates should possess certain levels of skills and knowledge to allow any participative management programme to be successful. Subordinates must be able to make a meaningful contribution.
 - (ii) Enterprise Culture – this is the most important determinant of the success or failure of participative management. Should no internal transformation occur within the enterprise, no form of participative management will be successful. The culture in the enterprise must be open to participation of employees.
 - (iii) Dedication of Management – it is difficult for an individual supervisor to lodge a participative management programme on own initiative. Participative management will then only be successful when top management believe in it, when they encourage it and practically execute it in their day-to-day relationships with their subordinates.

- (iv) Training for Participation – it is a fact that management could not overnight transform from an authoritative management system to a participative management system, and then expect employees to respond immediately. Employees should be trained, so that they would know what is expected of them and how they should behave or act.
- (v) A Total Approach – employee participation is usually generated on the work-floor, where management and employees are in direct contact. What often happens is that intermediate levels are ignored, although these levels could be meaningfully influenced by the decisions taken. Employees at all levels should have the opportunity to take part in decisions directly affecting them.

The discussion above pertaining to strategy and strategic management has a clear bearing on the relationship between a municipality as an organisation and engaging the public through public participation in the affairs of the municipality. In terms of the above, it is especially important to take note of the two legged nature of the relationship between strategy and participation, i.e. an internal aspect in terms of the political and official dedication to participatory principles, and also of the engagement of the community itself. The following section will deal with the IDP as a municipality's principal strategic document in relation to public participation.

2.6 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RELATION TO THE IDP

The IDP Guide Pack (2008:4) outlines issues that a municipality must consider for public participation which will operate according to the following principles:

- (i) The elected council is the **ultimate decision-making forum** on IDPs. The role of participatory democracy is to inform stakeholders and negotiate with them on issues, and also to give stakeholders an opportunity to provide input on the decisions taken by the Council.

- (ii) In order to ensure public participation, the legislation requires municipalities to **create appropriate conditions** that will enable participation. This is a minimum requirement, it is not nearly enough. Municipalities also have a responsibility to encourage their community and stakeholder groups to get involved. This should be done in particular with regard to disadvantaged or marginalised groups in accordance with the conditions and capacities in a municipality.
- (iii) **Structural Participation:** Most of the new municipalities are too big in terms of population size and area to allow for direct participation of the majority of the residents in a complex planning process. Participation in integrated development planning, therefore, needs clear rules and procedures, specifying:
- Who is to participate.
 - Who will not directly participate, but must be consulted on certain issues (e.g. adjoining municipalities).
 - On which issues direct participation or consultation should take place.
- (iv) **Diversity:** The way public participation is structured has to provide sufficient room for diversity within the municipal area in terms of:
- Different cultures;
 - Gender;
 - Language; and
 - Education levels.
- (v) **Participation Costs** can be kept at an acceptable level if potential participants are made aware of the fact that it is in their own interest to be involved in the planning process and that it is not a task they have to be paid for. In developing its participation strategy, the

municipality has to ensure that conditions are created which are conducive to proper and successful public participation.

2.6.1 CREATING CONDITIONS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(i) Informing Communities and Stakeholders: The residents and stakeholders have to be informed of the municipality's intention to embark on the integrated development planning process. In doing so, the municipality must ensure that the appropriate forms of media (e.g. community radio stations, information flyers inside the municipal bills, etc.) are utilised in order to reach as many people as possible. No stakeholders should feel ignored or unimportant. In choosing the appropriate form of media, municipalities must consider the cost of using such mechanisms. For instance, it can be very costly to place an advert in a newspaper, therefore this might not be a feasible option. Another mechanism of informing communities is through councillors. Councillors have to inform the people within their wards by means of public ward level meetings.

(ii) All affected and interested parties to be invited to participate: All relevant community and stakeholder organisations must be invited to register as members of the IDP Representative Forum. The municipality must also keep a database of those groupings that will not necessarily participate as members of the Representative Forum, but that will need to be consulted at various stages of the process.

(iii) Use of appropriate language: The use of appropriate language is essential to allow all stakeholders to participate freely. The IDP Steering Committee has to consider the need to identify an interpreter to cater for situations where some participants are uncomfortable with a particular language.

(iv) Choosing the right venue: The venue where public participation events are held can determine the level of attendance. It is crucial that

the venue that is selected can be accessed easily by all stakeholders, e.g. it should be accessible by public transport to enable those participants without private transport to get to it.

(v) Choosing the suitable time for meeting: The times when the IDP Representative Forum Meetings are held should accommodate the majority of the members. The IDP Steering Committee needs to establish the best suitable time for the majority of the members to hold meetings. Weekends should also be considered (IDP Guide Pack 2008:4).

2.7 THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

The mandate for municipalities is vested in the Constitution. In other words, the Constitution instructs a municipality to structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community.

Municipalities also have a duty to participate in national and provincial development programmes.

The most important instrument that a municipality uses to implement these constitutional obligations is integrated development planning.

2.7.1 Integrated Development Planning

Integrated development planning is one of the key tools for Local Government to tackle its developmental role. Chapter 5 of the Systems Act outlines the legal framework for the IDP which is essentially a participatory process of planning through which the municipality assesses needs, prioritises them and then formulates objectives and strategies to address them. As indicated in Chapter 1 of this study, the IDP should consolidate all municipal planning into a comprehensive strategy that is linked to the municipal budget. This strategy

is reviewed annually and monitored by a system of performance management, also legislated in the Systems Act. This argument is supported by Steytler and De Visser (2007:7-3) and they furthermore maintain that integrated development planning as an intergovernmental process articulates national and provincial planning within the municipal arena. According to the White Paper on Local Government (RSA, 1998b:19), the IDP is the method through which municipalities become the epicentre of developmental activities of national, provincial and other actors.

The former Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Sydney Mufamadi, in the 2008 IDP Guide Pack, indicated that in contrast to the role planning played in the past, integrated development planning is now seen as a function of municipal management, as part of an integrated system of planning and delivery.

The IDP process is meant to arrive at decisions on issues such as municipal budgets, land management, promotion of local economic development and institutional transformation in a consultative, systematic and strategic manner. Integrated Development Plans, however, will not only inform the municipal management, they are also supposed to guide the activities of any agency from the other spheres of government, corporate service providers, NGOs and the private sector within the municipal area (IDP Guide Pack, 2008).

2.7.2 The IDP Policy Framework

According to Pauw *et. al.* (2003:318) the inclusion of a financial plan in the integrated development plan is a strategy aimed at regular budgeting and the allocation of resources, and this ensures that a municipality can achieve its development strategies and accompanying objectives.

It is important to further note that as an intergovernmental process, the IDP articulates both national and provincial planning within the municipal arena. In this light, it is appropriate to indicate that any strategic planning by the

municipality must take place within the IDP and should not be considered parallel to or separate from it.

The legal framework directed at municipal planning also contains specific requirements regulating the adoption of IDPs. According to the Systems Act, each municipal council must adopt a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term. Such plan as outlined by section 25(1)(a)-(e) of the Systems Act should have the following aims:

- (i) to link, integrate and co-ordinate plans and to take into account proposals for the development of the municipality;
- (ii) to align the resources and capacity of the municipality with the implementation of the plan;
- (iii) to form the policy framework and general basis on which annual budgets must be based;
- (iv) to comply with other provisions of the Systems Act; and
- (v) to ensure compatibility with national and provincial development plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislation.

An IDP adopted by a municipal council as mentioned above may be amended, but it remains in force until a new IDP is adopted by the next elected council. A newly elected municipal council may adopt the IDP of its predecessor, but has to comply with certain requirements.

Finally, it is required for all municipalities to give notice to the public of such adoption within 14 days of the adoption of its IDP and also to make copies of or extracts from the plan available for public inspection.

2.7.3 Developmental Planning

The Integrated Development Plan must be developmentally orientated; it must be well-placed in fulfilling the objects and duties referred to in sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution.

Importantly, as indicated earlier, public participation is central to the IDP model. Thus, the IDP must be seen, as highlighted in this chapter, as strategic planning together with the local community. According to the Systems Act, in order to achieve its objectives, a municipality must undertake developmentally orientated planning so as to ensure three purposes according to Section 23(1)(a)-(c) of this Systems Act:

- (i) that municipalities strive to achieve the objects of local government set out in the Constitution;
- (ii) that municipalities give effect to their developmental duties set out in the Constitution; and
- (iii) that municipalities with other organs of state contribute to the progressive realisation of the (socio-economic) fundamental rights contained in the Constitution.

2.7.4 The Contents and Core Components of the IDP

The national regulatory legislation furthermore sets specific core components that the IDP must incorporate. According to Section 26 (a)(i) of the Systems Act, the IDP must reflect the following:

- (i) the municipal council's vision for the long term development of the municipality with special emphasis on the most critical development and internal transformation needs of the municipality;
- (ii) an assessment of the existing level of development in the municipality, which must include an identification of communities which do not have access to basic municipal services;

- (iii) the council's development priorities and objectives for its elected term, including its local economic development aims and its transformation needs;
- (iv) the council's development strategies which must be aligned with any national or provincial sector plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislation;
- (v) a spatial development framework which must include the provision of basic guidelines for a land use management system for the municipality;
- (vi) the council's operational strategies;
- (vii) applicable disaster management plans;
- (viii) a financial plan, which must include a budget projection for at least the next three years; and
- (ix) the key performance indicators and performance targets determined in terms of Section 41 of the Systems Act.

Therefore, it is clear that the IDP has a central and very important function within the local government system. It is used as a guiding document for the short term developmental needs and initiatives of every municipal government in South Africa (Bekink, 2006:499).

2.7.5 Purpose of IDP Review

A council must review its IDP regularly in order to promote effective community participation, transparency and democracy. The Systems Act defines "review" as a process whereby the IDP is assessed/evaluated in terms of the municipality's performance as well as changed circumstances. Section 34(a)(i) of the Systems Act instructs a municipality to conduct an annual review in accordance with its system of performance management. It can further review its IDP to the extent which changing circumstances require.

The IDP has to be reviewed annually in order to:

- Ensure its relevance as the municipality's strategic plan;

- Inform other components of the municipal business process including institutional and financial planning and budgeting; and
- Inform the cyclical inter-governmental planning and budgeting cycle. (DPLG, 1999:119).

For the IDP to be relevant for the municipality, an assessment of implementation performance and the achievement of its targets and strategic objectives are critical. In the light of this assessment the IDP is reviewed to reflect the impact of successes as well as corrective measures to address problems. The IDP is also reviewed in the light of changing internal and external circumstances that impact on the priority issues, objectives, strategies, projects and programmes of IDP (DPLG, 1999:119).

Furthermore, the IDP as the Municipality's Strategic Plan, informs municipal decision-making as well as all the business processes of the municipality. The annual revision of the IDP must inform the municipality's financial and institutional planning and most importantly, the drafting of the annual budget. It should thus be completed in time to properly inform the budget.

2.7.6 Public Participation Model

The Municipal Planning Regulations contain a "contingency" public participation model, which applies only "[i]n the absence of an appropriate municipal wide structure for community participation" (Regulation 15(1)(a) Local Government : Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001, GN R796).

In other words, if the Municipality has not adopted an IDP public participation strategy that includes a structure for community participation that is both municipality-wide and appropriate, the provisions of Regulation 15(1) and (2) apply. In that event, a municipality must establish a forum that will enhance community participation in:

- The drafting and implementation of the Municipality's integrated development plan; and
- The monitoring, measurement and review of the Municipality's performance in relation to the key performance indicators and performance targets.

Before establishing such a forum, the Municipality must invite the local community to identify persons, including representatives from ward committees, if any, to serve on the forum. The forum must be representative of the composition of the local community of the Municipality concerned (Reg 15(1)(b) and Reg 15(1)(c) Municipal Planning Regulations, 2001).

Furthermore, a Municipality must convene regular meetings of the forum to discuss the IDP process, to consult on the content of the IDP and to monitor its implementation.

2.7.7 The Integrated Development Planning Process

The above highlighted core components of the IDP in this chapter, are all part of a holistic IDP process.

The essence of the IDP process, as envisaged by the legislation, is that the municipality must assess its needs and formulate a vision for the long term future (Steyler & De Visser, 2007:7-8). This part of the chapter will also highlight Louw's (2002) IDP cycle in comparison to Khuzwayo's (1999) (as referred to by Malefane, 2004:124-128).

(i) Louw's Model of the IDP Process Cycle

As stated earlier, a municipal council must adopt a document that sets out how it intends to go about planning, drafting, adopting and reviewing the IDP. This document is usually called the "process plan" by which municipalities

prepare 5-year strategic plans that are reviewed annually in consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

According to Louw (cited by Malefane, 2004: 124-128), the IDP process is based on a number of sequential steps that need to be followed by municipalities. Louw's IDP process cycle is presented in the figure below:

The Integrated Development Planning (IDP) Process Cycle

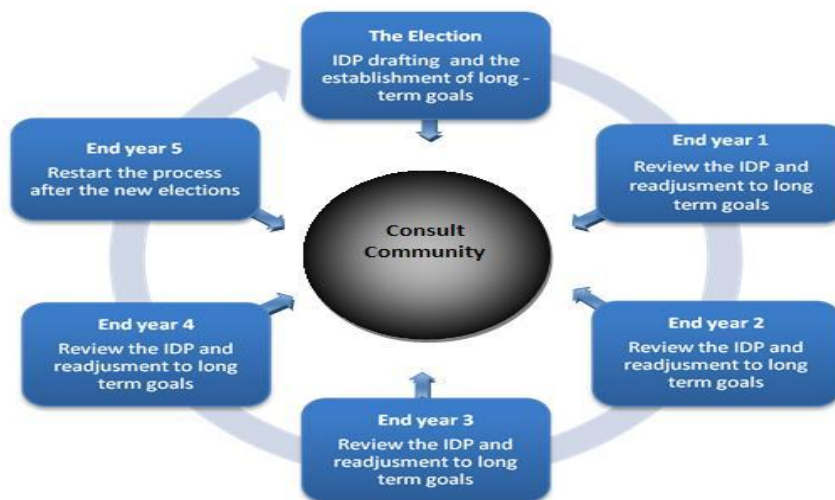


Figure 2.3

Source: Louw, 2002 (cited by Malefane, 2004)

Louw (quoted by Malefane, 2004: 123) state that the IDP process cycle presented in the figure above, starts with the election of a new municipal council. During the first year after the election the IDP is established and workshopped with all the role players of which the community is the most important. The long-term goals are established for the municipality. After the long term goals have been established, objectives on how to achieve these goals are set out. After the IDP has been drawn up and accepted by all the role players, the budget is drawn.

During the second to fifth year, the IDP is annually reviewed and the long-term goals are readjusted, with the budget reflected in the goals of the IDP.

With every election, this process begins anew. A new Council may decide to accept the previous Council's IDP or it might be rejected.

(ii) Khuzwayo's Model of the IDP Process

Khuzwayo's (1999) model, as opposed to Louw's (quoted by Malefane, 2004) focuses on what the IDP planning process entails. It gives some guidelines as to the sequential steps that should be followed by the planners of the local sphere of government. Louw's model, as discussed in the previous section focuses on the timeframes spanning from the time at which the new Council is elected, and its duration in office.

According to Khuzwayo (1999:11), municipalities effectively implementing the Integrated Development Planning process, follow a chronological sequence of steps. According to Khuzwayo's (1999) model, the steps need to be strictly adhered to during the planning process. It is argued that this process is a modern way of addressing people's needs as it takes into cognisance their involvement throughout the planning and the implementation of decisions. The IDP planning process commences with the assessment of the current situation, and the planners identify the real issues that require planning, and begin with an information gathering process. The second step is to prioritise the needs accordingly, which helps in identifying those needs that are seen as urgent by members of the community (cf Malefane, 2001(a)).

The third step involves setting goals that will enable the attainment of prioritised needs of the community. After the goals on how to satisfy the needs of the community have been set, strategies to meet these needs are devised (step four). According to Khuzwayo (1999:12) the fifth step is to develop and implement these strategies. With regard to the fifth step, the development and implementation of projects, there are varying views as to whether implementation comes before or after the budget has been allocated. Since the implementation of development project depends solely on the allocated funding, this study considers budgeting as an important element of the planning process that should be carried out before the implementation

process takes place. During the implementation process, it is important that stakeholder performance is monitored, as it will ensure the achievement of the set main goals. The planning process, according to Khuzwayo (1999:12), is concluded with the monitoring of community members to guide and ensure best practices. Another important criticism that arises from Khuzwayo's (1999) model of the IDP process, might be that although the need for an institutionalisation of a performance management system in the local sphere is emphasised, it is also of critical importance that the development impact arising from the implementation is continually assessed, since the municipalities need to be informed of the impact of development projects on their communities.

An assessment of the impact of development can also serve as an important instrument during the annual IDP reviewing process. Khuzwayo (1999), like many other researchers, omits the importance of the assessment of development impact on the target groups. Khuzwayo's model of the Integrated Development Planning process is presented in Table 2.1 below.

STEPS	DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES
Step 1	During the first step, the Municipality has to assess its current situation. During this step a number of facts have to be considered, i.e. its current profile, the size of its communities, community needs and its capacity to serve and address such needs. In brief, municipalities have to consider both their internal operations and their immediate and extended environment.
Step 2	After the assessment of the current reality, the municipality has to prioritise these needs according to rank of importance and the urgency with which it has to comply in adhering to these needs.
Step 3	The third step entails municipalities setting the goals within a five-year period; how certain activities will have to be conducted. This is done through the establishment of goals that will enable the overall achievement of the main objectives.
Step 4	After the goals have been set, there is a need for municipalities to set strategies with which the goals will be achieved. These include the setting of roles and activities and preparing its manpower on how specific projects are going to be rolled out. Manpower planning and structural adjustment also fit neatly within this activity.
Step 5	After the preparation of all the activities and assigning clearly defined roles to different stakeholders, there is a need to get to the actual work. This step entails the development and implementation of projects and programmes. It is also important to consider an interplay of all the stakeholders during this phase.
Step 6	Implementation is a costly activity, therefore there is a need to organise the necessary financial resources. The budgetary process forms an integral part of the implementation of the IDP process. Without a complementing budget, the IDP process cannot unfold.

Step 7	During the implementation of projects the need for the assessment of stakeholder performance is necessary. This aspect will enable the overall achievement of the main goals that were set at the initiation of the process. Performance assessment will also motivate and bridge those gaps that are identified during the implementation of the projects. However, the performance of stakeholders is a control measure that must be done in an objective manner.
Step 8	Participatory projects, which include members of community, need to be regularly monitored in order to guide and ensure best practices. This as a result will assist in achieving the intended goals that were set at the initial stages of the process.

Table 2.1: The Integrated Development Planning Sequential process.

Source: Khuzwayo (1999:11)

Khuzwayo's (1999:11) model suggests that in order to guide the success of planning and implementing processes of integrated development, there is a need to follow the steps set out in the model. Khuzwayo's (1999) model also provides for revision every five years as Louw's (2002) model. Both models identify the importance of regular and constant reviews.

It is important that community participation should be central to the process of developing and implementing a performance management system. The community must be made aware of the IDP process plans. This will ensure that the public will meaningfully engage with the subsequent stages in the process.

Having discussed the IDP in the municipal sphere in this chapter, this study argues that the IDP is the main principal strategic instrument guiding all planning, management, and development and implementation decisions, based on the participation of all stakeholders in the municipal area (Tlokwe Local Municipality Communications Department guidelines, 2009: 97).

The IDP promotes the concept of sustainable development and horizontal and vertical integration between spheres of government, departmental line functions and stakeholder groups. It also provides a framework and departure point for the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of development initiatives and the communication of these to all stakeholders (Tlokwe Local Municipality, 2010a: 97).

The participatory nature of the IDP process means that the public must be involved, not only in measuring the performance of the municipality in relation to its development priorities and objectives, but also in the development of the monitoring, measuring and review mechanisms themselves.

The following section will now focus on budgeting in municipalities.

2.8 MUNICIPAL BUDGETING

Public participation in the government budgeting process is a topic that has received attention for many decades. Chapter 1 of this study referred to the municipal budget and the IDP processes that are closely linked, and also to tools that help municipalities achieve their developmental responsibilities. In doing so, they indicate the planning relationship between the municipality's proposed delivery programme and the annual budget. In terms of Section 215 of the Constitution, 1996, the spheres of government are required to have budgets which must undergo processes to promote transparency, accountability and the effective financial management of the economy and the public sector.

The definition of the budgeting concept will be unpacked in the following section.

2.8.1 Municipal Budget : The Concept

Many people including academics, politicians and leaders, more often than not talk about the problem of management of public funds. Underlying their discussions is the assumption that identifying the problem provides the basis for action upon which they will agree. However, the people do not all agree on what the problem of budgeting, especially at municipal sphere, comprises.

According to Ismail *et al* (1997:78) a budget may be regarded as representative of the activities of an organisation for a given period;

expressed in financial terms. It indicates expenditure plans and the anticipated method of financing such expenditure.

Budgets need to be shaped by and linked to plans of the state organ concerned, to be realistic; there is a need to link to a multi-year budget system (Van der Waldt, 2004:101). Van der Waldt (2004:101) further maintains that a budget for the programme has to be specified to show how the financial resources available to implement the programme will be utilised. Linked to the aspects of multi-year budgeting is the fact that a local government's budget will be approved only if it is based on the IDP.

The Municipal Finance Management Act requires every municipality to have a budget and treasury office consisting of a chief financial officer and other persons contracted by the municipality. This officer is administratively in charge of the budget and treasury office, and has to advise the municipal manager on the exercise of powers and duties assigned to the accounting officer in terms of financial matters. It could thus be stated that the chief financial officer is the financial expert in the municipality and assists the municipal manager as accounting officer to perform his or her duties effectively.

This study strongly contends that local government budgets must reflect the needs of the people and their participation and resources to meet those needs. The above mentioned statutory requirements place a strong and formal expectation on local authorities to consult with local communities and to reflect community needs in their budgets. According to Van der Waldt (2004:119), in view of the strategic role of the IDP within local government and the emphasis on citizen participation, it is recommended that Local Government draw up a citizen participation policy plan to avoid an ad hoc incremental approach to development management. Such a plan must:

- Spell out citizen participation procedures;
- Be adopted by citizens in a specific community;
- Encourage and define avenues for citizens participation;

- Describe the procedure for citizen complaints; and
- Provide access to public institution

The empirical studies show that citizen participation in budgetary decision making is typically minimalist and yields few, if any, directly observable results. In this regard, this study contends that local municipal officials, including those of Tlokwe Local Municipality, must understand and refine the priorities of the community, educate their public about (amongst others) fiscal priorities and enhance trust and transparency. It is not sufficient to only gather and consider policy preference information that will grace the municipal offices. Taking time and effort to involve citizens during resource allocation decisions is an invaluable strategic move that the local municipality has to consider.

The following sections will now focus on the elements of the budget and the budget process.

2.8.2 Elements of the Budget

2.8.2.1 Credible Budget

For the budget to be credible, it must contain a comparison between the current and preceding year's budgets. According to Section 17(1)(d) of the Municipal Finance Management Act, the credible budget must set out the estimated (current year) and actual (previous year) revenues and expenditure by vote.

A credible budget must be participatory in nature and can be seen as a new and revolutionary public participation and public accountability instrument whereby people have the opportunity to participate in the elaboration and control of the state budget, thus far only used at the municipal level (Tshabalala, 2007:17). Tshabalala (2007:17) argues that a participatory budget provides citizens with a mechanism for controlling or influencing the government's use of public resources.

The national government should ensure that there are effective monitoring structures to guarantee accountability and effectiveness from government, especially in the municipal sphere. Such monitoring structures should make use of invited and community-created spaces to disseminate information about the budget. The Municipal Finance Management Act requires that a number of documents must accompany the budget to ensure that it is credible, transparent and accurate. A credible budget must have supporting documentation on:

- (i) measurable performance objectives for revenue from each source and for each vote in the budget, taking into account the municipality's IDP; and
- (ii) the projection of the monthly cash flow by revenue source (Steytler & De Visser, 2007:11-17).

2.8.2.2 Community Participation, Key Performance Indicators and the Budget

A municipality must not only allow the local community to participate in the setting of appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), it is also under a duty to ensure that communities are actually involved. It is important that when the KPI's have been set, the municipality must communicate them to the public to be part and parcel thereof, as well as to its internal staff or administration.

The Systems Act authorises the minister to prescribe KPIs that every municipality must report on. These KPIs are compulsory and must be appropriate and should be applicable to local government generally, i.e. they must involve the community at large. Steytler and De Visser (2007:7-22) refer to the following compulsory KPIs that have been set:

- (i) the percentage of households with access to basic levels of water sanitation; electricity and solid waste removals;

- (ii) the percentage of households earning less than R1 100 per month with access to free basic services;
- (iii) the percentage of a municipality's capital budget actually spent on capital projects identified for a particular year in terms of the municipality's integrated development plan;
- (iv) the number of jobs created through a municipality's local economic development initiatives, including capital projects;
- (v) the number of people from employment equity target groups employed in the three highest levels of management in compliance with a municipality's approved employment equity plan;
- (vi) the percentage of a municipality's budget actually spent on implementing workplace skills plan; and
- (vii) financial viability as expressed by a set of ratios determined in the regulations.

However, it is important to note that each of these above mentioned KPIs is applicable to all municipalities. Thus, each municipality must report to the community on these indicators to enhance participation in terms of its performance management system. The report must be published in the *Government Gazette* for accessibility.

It must further be argued that on tabling the budget in the council, it is crucial that the municipal manager must make it and the supporting documentation public, and extend an invitation to the local community to respond and make representations. After receiving the community views, the council must consider them. Section 23(3) of the Municipal Finance Management Act also indicates that the National Treasury may issue guidelines on how to hold public hearings on the budget.

2.8.2.3 Budget Policy

According to Ismail *et al* (1997:82) local authorities may not budget for a year-end deficit on their operating accounts. The council must ensure that the

budget is in accordance with its approved IDP and that the budget related policies with the IDP instruments are mutually consistent and credible.

The local authority should, as part of its budget policy, encourage the involvement of communities, community organisations and the business sector in the various stages of the budget process. The following section will now deal with the budget process.

2.9 THE BUDGET PROCESS

The Municipal Finance Management Act sets three objectives that the budget must meet. The objectives are that the budget must:

- (i) respond to the community needs determined through a consultation process;
- (ii) be consistent with the municipality's other planning and policy instruments; and
- (iii) fit into the country's intergovernmental relations fiscal system through consultation with national and provincial governments and affected municipalities.

The Municipal Financial Management Act prescribes an elaborate process with which each municipality must comply in order to approve the budget. For example, municipalities as public institutions are required to operate according to strictly defined financial processes and practices.

The Municipal Finance Management Act was passed to regulate the financial affairs of municipalities. The Act provides, amongst others, for securing the financial and sustainable norms and standards. The Act promotes sound financial administration by, for example:

- requiring arrangements regarding supervision over local government financial matters by National Treasury;

- requiring every municipality to open a bank account for revenue received and from which payment can be made;
- requiring a budget to be approved for every financial year before the commencement of the financial year to which it applies;
- outlining the responsibilities of the political office bearers such as the mayor/executive mayor;
- outlining responsibilities of officials such as the municipal manager as accounting officer, top management and chief financial officers;
- requiring supply chain management; and
- requiring financial reporting and auditing.

It is important, however, to note that the mayor and the municipal manager are the drivers of the budget process; in other words, they are the key players in the budget formation process. Section 53(1)(a) of the Municipal Finance Management Act requires the mayor to provide general political guidance over the budget process and the priorities that must guide the preparation of a budget. This task includes integrating the municipality's IDP and the budget.

Section 53(1)(b) of the Act maintains that the mayor must co-ordinate the annual revision of the IDP and the preparation of the budget, and determine how the IDP is to be accommodated or revised for the purposes of the budget.

The municipal manager in turn must assist the mayor in performing these budgetary functions and provide the necessary administrative support, resources and information. Cloete & Thornhill (2005:148) contend that a municipal manager may not delegate a responsibility to a political structure. The municipal manager accepts the responsibility as accounting officer and therefore the accountability function cannot be delegated.

The IDP linked to the budget process meets the important principles articulated in national budgeting policy, stating that it:

- Closely integrates the strategic, organisational and financial aspects of the policy process in regards to the dimensions of planning implementation and monitoring.
- Is concerned with budgeting for outcomes and outputs as well as inputs.
- Encourages public participation that helps make the allocation of finances transparent and provides the base for the publication of accessible information on the use of finances (DPLG: IDP Guide 1999:39).

This requires the interactive planning and managing of both the IDP and the budgeting processes within the municipality.

2.9.1 Capital Programmes

The compilation of the capital programme provides the steps which include:

- (i) Capital Needs Survey;
- (ii) Capital Needs Schedule;
- (iii) Prioritising Capital Needs; and
- (iv) Highly-desirable and normally-desirable projects.

The above steps will be briefly discussed (based on Ismail *et al*,1997:82-83) as part and parcel of the budget process in facilitating public participation strategy in budgeting.

(i) Capital Needs Survey

Community involvement is very important for identifying and prioritising capital needs. Key role-players, such as ratepayers and civic organisations, should be heavily involved in the budgetary process through their respective councillors. Councillors need to submit their requests to the chief executive officer, which will then be forwarded to the relevant departmental heads. Once

the departmental head receives the capital needs survey, it is processed into a useful format to form part of the budget process.

(ii) Capital Needs Schedule

A capital needs schedule is compiled after processing the capital needs survey for submission to the chief financial officer. To show its participatory nature, the capital needs schedule consists of all the identified capital needs of the community received from the various departmental heads, together with the starting and completion dates, as well as the expected costs of the items or projects indicated.

(iii) Prioritising of Capital Needs

Here, the budget committee arranges all the capital needs as contained in the schedules in order of priority to comply with the needs of the community. These needs are arranged according to their affordability and the availability of financing, as furnished by the chief financial officer.

(iv) Projects that are Highly Desirable

These are projects that benefit the greater part of the community by means of indirect income, or which a large part of the community insists on having and for which sources of finance are readily available.

(v) Projects that are Normally Desirable

After prioritising all the capital needs in accordance with affordability and the availability of financing, a capital programme is compiled.

Thus, the above steps are useful for this study to identify and discuss basic principles of financial management in the local government sphere and public participation.

2.9.2 Municipal Annual Budget

Comparing the view of Cloete *et al* (2005:145) with that of Craythorne (2006:177) it is clear that they all agree that the municipality should publish in a newspaper of general circulation a notice that the draft annual budget is available for public scrutiny and the submission of written comments within a specified period; and specify the dates set down by the council for public hearings on the draft annual budget.

The use of the word “hearings” implies that the parent municipality must hold some form of public hearing or forum on the entity’s draft budget and the council’s views on it. In fact, once tabled, the council must consider the views of the parties to whom the draft budget was sent.

It must then give the mayor the opportunity to respond to all the submissions on the budget, and to revise the budget if necessary. The National Treasury, on the other hand, may assist the municipalities by issuing guidelines on how councils should process their budgets, including the formation of a budget committee or council. Thereafter the municipal manager must prepare a draft budget for approval by the municipal council in terms of the Constitution which provides that only a municipal council may approve the budget.

The IDP should link planning to the municipal budget, and integration should attempt to bring the activities of various departments into line with one another so that community participation may be realised.

2.10 PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING: EVOLUTION OR STAGNATION?

Ebdon and Franklin (2006:438) argue that when attempting to aggregate the citizen-participation literature, a number of common elements deemed critical to structuring participation in budgeting emerge. Three commonly reported elements (independent variables) represented are:

- (i) the governmental environment;

- (ii) the design of the process;
- (iii) the mechanisms used to elicit participation; and perhaps
- (iv) a fourth element which represents the goals and outcomes desired from participation in budgetary decision making.

The following section will briefly discuss the above elements of citizen participation in budgeting as highlighted by Ebdon and Franklin (2006:438-441):

(i) Environment

The governmental environment is related to the involvement of citizens in the budgeting process. In this regard, four components of the environment are identified in the literature; viz:

- **Structure and form of local government.** Scholars have considered the influence of variation in the structure and form of local government on the likelihood that participation will be utilized. Kweit and Kweit (quoted by Ebdon and Franklin, 2006:439) found that communities with the council-manager form of government are more likely to seek citizen input.
- **Political culture**, which may also be an important variable in the environment's influence on budget participation, because the history of participation is a fairly good predictor of the forms that participation will take. Government must want to seek participation as much as the participants want to give it, and citizens are less likely to participate if the political environment is not positive and accepting of input.
- **Legal requirements.** Most states impose certain legal budget requirements on local governments (such as public hearings) that may either enhance or constrain participation. In the United States of America, for example, public hearings must be held after publication of the maximum amount of the budget and tax levy, reducing the potential

influence of citizens. Legal requirements can also have unintended effects. This study also advocates that a focus on minimum legal requirements can lead to a gap between advocated and actual participation opportunities of the community.

- **Population Size and Diversity.** Population size and heterogeneity may also affect the participation environment. Participation has been found to be more prominent in larger cities. Larger cities are more heterogeneous, which might lead to increased political conflict because of varying group demands. Citizens in these cities might desire increased access to decision makers. However, heterogeneity as defined by racial diversity was not found to be related to the use of budget participation in council-manager cities.

(ii) Process Design

The literature cites a variety of considerations, such as timing, type of budget allocation, participants, and gathering sincere preferences, when designing the participation process.

Timing is important because input that is received late in the process is less likely to have an effect on outcomes, according to Franklin and Ebdon (2004). This would suggest that budget input is more beneficial during the preparation stage rather than the budget adoption phase to determine objectives, scrutinise alternative courses of action and select appropriate programmes and projects which are aimed at the satisfaction of community needs.

The selection of participants is another important design component. This study argues that participation should be open to large numbers of people. Participants should also be representative of the community in order to give wide access and exclude no one from the process. The participant-selection method might also be critical; for example, city officials could invite individuals based on neighbourhood involvement, or individuals could self-select. Selection methods that purposely seek to include a wide range of

perspectives are better received than cronyism that supports a particular political agenda.

The ability to gain information about sincere preferences of the willingness to pay for public services is also cited as important in the literature.

(iii) Mechanisms

Many methods, each with strengths and weaknesses, have been used to elicit participation in the budget process, including:

- Public meetings;
- Focus groups;
- Simulations;
- Committees; and
- Surveys.

Public meetings are not very good at giving citizens direct influence, but they can be used as forums for preliminary information sharing. Public budget meetings are common; at least one open public hearing is required in most governments before budget adoption. As noted earlier, the timing of these hearings is often a constraint.

Focus groups, on the other hand, tend to be more selective than other methods because they are generally small groups. They have three fundamental strengths:

- Exploration and discovery
- Context and depth; and
- Interpretation.

Each of these can be useful to city officials wishing to determine citizens' preferences. Focus groups can, despite the limitation of falling victim to group

thinking, be used to gain in-depth opinions regarding budget preferences and to come to consensus on specific issues.

Budget simulation reveals sincere preferences because they require participation to make trade-offs to balance the budget.

(iv) Goals and Outcomes

The next element that is important to citizen participation considers both the goals and outcomes of participation. Goals should be set at the beginning of the citizen-participation process, and outcomes should be assessed and compared to what was expected when the goals were established.

Five potential goals for budgeting input have been identified in the literature:

- Informing decision making which is often accomplished through passive participation and in which citizens communicate their level of satisfaction with the proposed budget to decision makers through testimony at public hearings. This activity represents a one-way flow of information because citizens are commenting on a reality that has already been constructed by officials.
- Educating participants on the budget. Education can be an important goal of budget participation as much as the research has stressed. Government budgets can be complex, with multiple funds and inherent trade-offs in decision making. In this regard, Franklin and Ebdon (2004) state that budget participation has been found to be beneficial in educating citizens about these complexities.
- Gaining support for budget proposals, where officials view participation as useful in marketing their proposals to the public.

- Influencing decision making, in which a goal of participation (especially for citizens) may be to actually influence decision making. Input has been found to affect budget decisions in some cases. Multiple authors have reported on citizen participation processes in which public officials said that inputs influenced their final resource allocation decisions (Franklin and Ebdon 2004).
- Enhancing trust and creating a sense of community. Empirical studies found that managers often associate participation with increased public trust, but they do not limit this goal to the budgeting process. In fact, one of the weaknesses of the literature is that trust has not been investigated as it pertains specifically to the budgeting process. Participation as a means to create a sense of community may also be considered important. Few studies have systematically measured the outcomes of budget participation. Citizens in cities with more participation are more likely to believe that agencies are responsive to their concerns and less cynical about local government; but results for budget participation are not as clear.

The foregoing discussion of a typology of elements and variables is important in developing and implementing citizen participation in the budget process.

According to Nkoana (2007:2) public budgeting is about choices among ends and means and although public budgeting shares many features with private sector budgeting, it does require the application of criteria different from those used in a private sector organisation. It is suggested that many of such criteria correspond with the matters raised above.

2.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a theoretical overview of local government and public participation strategy in budgeting. It also focused on municipal integrated development planning (IDP), strategic management and budgeting issues.

It is, however, to be expected that in this new dispensation, local authorities will experiment with various models of local government participation and budgeting process. The objective of this chapter was not to provide a comparative perspective of local government participation and budgeting, nor draw lessons for South Africa. While comparison is useful, the researcher felt that it would be more apt to identify and discuss the basic principles of participation and budgeting in the local government sphere.

It is also worth noting that the legislation on IDP emphasises the need for every municipality to make such planning a constant directive for its policy making and executive activities. It requires municipalities to consider the involvement of local people in their strategic moves, and to consider their financial requirements and policies within a holistic framework. The municipality should also implement the new system of planning for participation of the community in its area of jurisdiction.

The statutory framework and regulatory requirements governing participation in Tlokwe local municipality will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING PARTICIPATION IN TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the past, South Africa did not have a culture of actively involving the public in local municipalities. This was as a result of a system of separate development practice by the apartheid regime. The majority of the African population was excluded from participating in any meaningful local municipal issues as well as from public decision making.

The advent of democracy brought a paradigm shift and an emphasis to transparency in municipal activities, greater public accountability and a shift in how municipalities include all citizens to be active in decision making processes over issues that affect them. Traditionally, it has been difficult to manage development for all South Africans as community information as well as consultation has been limited.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to highlight the statutory and regulatory requirement of developmental local government to facilitate various perspectives on public participation in Tlokwe Local Municipality (TLM) with reference to integrated development planning and budgeting, for effective community participation. However, on the way to achieving public participation in the management of local municipalities, perceived challenges and participation strategies are involved as well.

This study's main focus on a public participation strategy in budgeting requires it to refer to the Constitution of 1996 with regard to budgeting. A constitutional legislative framework determines planning and the implementation thereof on the budget of local municipalities. For example, Section 215 of the Constitution emphasises the significance of and necessity for a budget and budget process in all three spheres of government. It also

states that national, provincial and municipal budgets and budgetary processes must promote transparency; accountability and the effective financial management of the economy, debt and public sector. There will be no transparency if the community or the people do not make a meaningful contribution to the municipal budgeting process. The essence of the concept of participation is giving people, more specifically local residents, a real say in decisions that affect their lives.

As legislated, members of the local community are entitled to regular disclosure of the state of affairs of the municipality, including its finances. It is important to note that public participation creates a better informed and more politically sophisticated citizenry. The more informed people are, the better they will understand what goals government is endeavouring to achieve and what the budget and resource limitations are (Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008:455). This participatory democracy will enable councillors to be accountable if they consult people and have regular interactions with those people that they represent. Consultation will also help the council in making appropriate decisions based on the real needs of people.

Flowing from the discussion of theoretical views on democracy and participation in the previous chapter, it is accepted in this study that transformation of local government defined the path in the early 1990s towards the notion of a developmental local government. This came as a result of the understanding that the local government would play a critical role in transforming people's lives and would be the sphere of government that would give concrete expression to democratic local governance and government's integrated service delivery plans. Therefore, this history of local government must be perceived as a background that has influenced a process of democratisation to instil a culture of participation.

Bauer (2006:30) states that within the framework of co-operative government, the South African government has also passed legislation making public participation a requirement for municipal decision making, planning, budgeting and finances. These requirements are set out in Table 3.1 below:

National Sphere	Constitution (1996): Stipulates that one of the objectives of local government is to encourage the participation of communities and community organizations in matters of local governance. Municipal Structures Act (1998): Section 19(3) determines that a municipal council must develop mechanisms for public participation. Additionally, the Act stipulates that a municipality's executive has to give an annual report on the extent to which the public has participated in municipal affairs. Municipal Systems Act (2000): Chapter 4 determines that a municipal council must develop a culture of participatory governance and must, for this purpose, encourage and create conditions for communities and other stakeholders in the municipality to participate in local affairs. Municipal Finance Management Act (2003): Encourages the participation of communities in the finances of municipalities, including the development of municipal budgets. Municipal Property Rates Act (2004): Stipulates that the public must participate in the determination of municipal property rates.
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TABLE 3.1: *Main legislative requirements for public participation in local government (Davids 2006:52)*

The White Paper on Local Government (1998), Municipal Structures Act (1998), Municipal Systems Act (2000) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) are amongst the most important legislation to be discussed for their relevance to this study. Although aspects of this legislation were discussed in the previous chapter the focus in this chapter is to

contextualise the regulatory framework applicable in Tlokwe Local Municipality.

3.2 CONSTITUTION, 1996

As highlighted in Chapter 2 of this study, the Constitution is the highest or supreme law of the South African State, which has a profound and decisive impact on local government. From the wording of section 2, this study argues that not only municipal by-laws, but also the conduct of executive or legislative bodies must comply with the Constitution.

The Preamble of the Constitution, 1996, further emphasises a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights while section 215(1) states that national, provincial and municipal budgets and budgetary processes must promote transparency, accountability and the effective financial management of the economy, debt and the private sector.

However, it is interesting to note that the Constitution itself does not go into much detail regarding democracy and budgeting. The Constitution merely states in section 152 that all municipalities must strive, within their financial and administrative capacities, to achieve the following objectives:

- A democratic and accountable government;
- The provision of services in a sustainable manner;
- Social and economic development;
- Safe and healthy environment; and
- Community involvement in local government matters.

Tshishonga and Mafema (2008:363) maintain that by providing and promoting social and economic development, the Constitution enables local government to be a forerunner and vanguard in mobilising resources and empowering people as equal partners in development. However, development should be seen as an act of active, accountable and empowered citizenry.

From the discussion above, this study highlights that municipalities are now constitutionally obliged to provide democratic and accountable governance for all local communities, also in matters of municipal finance.

3.3 WHITE PAPER ON TRANSFORMING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY (1997)

The White Paper, just like the Constitution, also calls for participatory democracy, respecting the nation's history of active participation at local municipality and community levels in the struggle against apartheid.

The White Paper articulates that the public sector, which includes the local government sphere, should be governed by the following ethos (principles) as outlined by Mofolo (2009:434-439).

3.3.1 Consultation preferences/affordability

The principle of consultation means that municipalities should consult with representatives of the communities in which they are situated regarding their preferences, affordability, level and quality of municipal services that are rendered.

To this end, studies on various ways of consulting with Tlokwe Local Municipal (TLM) residents, for example, should be conducted to provide information that would be appropriate to act upon in order to facilitate effective community involvement.

3.3.2 Service Standards (level of quality)

The public should be consulted about the level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect. When new services are introduced, municipalities should inform their communities by following the stipulated procedures to ensure community access to such services. The

municipal officials should hold workshops for ward committees to inform them about their roles.

3.3.3 Access to Services (equality)

All citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.

As shown above, municipalities should ensure that all members of communities have access to their services. Through IDPs and Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plans (SDBIPs), municipalities should ensure that community members, particularly those who are in greater need, have access to services.

3.3.4 Courtesy in Treatment (Politeness to Communities)

In addition to the physical rendering of services, *Batho Pele* principles also require that members of communities should be treated with politeness and consideration when services are provided across the counter. Municipalities should make codes of conduct available to their employees and such principles should accentuate that exhibiting good manners to the members of the communities is one of the most important duties of municipal employees. These codes of conduct should also specify that municipal employees should treat community members as customers who are entitled to receive the highest standards of service.

3.3.5 Customer Information (Accurate and up to date)

This refers to the responsibility of municipalities to ensure that all community members receive detailed information about the public services they are entitled to receive. For example, municipalities could inform communities about budgeting regarding capital projects in their areas or wards in the current and the next financial year. When doing this, municipalities should provide full, accurate and up-to-date information about the services they provide, and stipulate who are entitled to those services. This exercise should

be carried out properly in order to ensure that all those who need information, have access to such information in order to act as expected.

3.3.6 Openness and Transparency (full disclosure)

As part of access to municipal services, members of communities should be informed in which way municipalities operate, and the fees of various services, such as the tariffs for basic services (sanitation, electricity and refuse removal) as well as rates in the proposed budget.

Salaries of councillors and managers in municipalities should be disclosed. In such a way, transparency and openness would be the cornerstone of good governance and management.

Municipal councillors should hold meetings with residents in wards to convey this information as indicated. Annual reports should be made available to members of communities, indicating the following in simple language and user-friendly format:

- Achievements of municipal departments and how the previous year's budget (operational and capital budgets) was spent.
- Municipal departmental priority projects as reflected in the IDP for the following year.
- A name of a contact person in a municipality and contact number from whom they could obtain further information.

The reports issued to community members should be treated as mechanisms through which municipal departments could account to the public, and thus identical information should also appear in municipal annual reports to the provincial and national government departments.

3.3.7 Redress (Communication and correctional measures)

Municipal councillors and employees should make sure that, in an instance where the promised standard of service is not adhered to, community members should be called to attend meetings where the reasons for non-compliance should be explained. A full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy should be provided. It is important that when complaints are made, community members should in return receive sympathetic, positive feedback from either ward councillors or municipal employees. The capacity and willingness to take action if things are not the way they were promised, are both crucial in order to avoid violent protests.

3.3.8 Value for Money (cost-effective)

Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give community members the best possible value for money. This issue requires that public participation be improved and that the public should have access to municipal services, but it should be ensured that cost-effective procedures are created.

This study advocates that local municipalities such as Tlokwe Local Municipality (TLM), should use *Batho Pele* principles to encourage effective public participation in all corporate proceedings as a strategic mechanism to promote local democracy. It should be emphasised that an innovative and flexible municipality should implement this policy as an effective strategy for public participation. However, to ensure that the above principles are adhered to, members of TLM community should be awarded the opportunity to express their opinion in municipal affairs, e.g. to participate in the municipality's budgetary process.

3.4 WHITE PAPER ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT (1998)

Due to the past regime's policy of discrimination and the legacy of apartheid, the White Paper on Local Government does not only lay a policy foundation

for transformation, but also creates pragmatic directives through which new insights into local government could be envisioned (Tshishonga and Mafema, 2008:363). The White Paper (1998b:17) introduces the concept of “developmental local government”, stipulating the central responsibility of municipalities to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. The White Paper (1998b:27) further introduces the notion of integrated development planning which is described as strategic frameworks to help municipalities fulfil their developmental mandates and engage with stakeholder groups and local communities.

The White Paper (1998b:63) also refers to the need for “smaller representative forums” which could be constituted as committees of a metropolitan council to ensure meaningful participation and interaction with elected representative, thus laying the foundation for ward committees.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) further proposes active community participation in local government by defining the four levels through which citizens and community groups may participate and influence municipal functioning.

Van Rooyen (2003:132-133) highlights these levels which concur with Bauer’s views (2006:31-32). The following is a brief discussion of the four levels that municipalities require for active participation by citizens.

On the first level voters have the opportunity to participate in a democratic process to elect candidates to represent them in local government affairs. The citizens are ensured maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for policies they are empowered to promote.

Secondly, citizens should have the opportunity to express their views before, during and after the policy development process to ensure that policies reflect community preferences.

On the third level, as consumers and end-users, they expect value for money, affordable services, and courteous and responsible service.

On the fourth level, community members may participate in local government affairs as organised partners involved in the mobilization of resources for development via businesses, non-governmental organisations and community based organisations.

To achieve some of the above-mentioned ideals of community participation, both the IDP Guide Pack and the White Paper on Local Government (1998) require extended community participation processes and structures in municipalities by proposing the following:

- The establishment of forums of organised formations (especially in the fields of visioning and on issue-specific policies).
- Structural stakeholder participation in council committees (especially ad hoc issue-related committees).
- Participatory action research, with specific focus groups (for in-depth information on specific issues).
- Forming associations, (especially for people in marginalised areas) (Van Rooyen, 2003:133).

In addition to the above exposition, Van Rooyen (2003:133) contends that participation should be a continuous and structured process and it should focus on certain specific processes with particular outcomes in mind. However, the decisions on how to structure and manage the particular mechanisms, processes and procedures to attain effective public participation are left to the individual municipalities. This allows for relevance and appropriateness to accommodate local peculiarities and avoids imposing isomorphic models of stakeholder participation.

According to Parnell *et al* (quoted by Tshishonga & Mafema, 2008:363), municipalities are empowered through the White Paper to employ integrated

development planning, performance management and local economic development as strategic approaches to democratise development while at the same time creating an environment conducive for people and communities to address their needs.

3.5 MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES ACT (ACT 117 OF 1998)

It is important to note that the Structures Act follows the Constitution in emphasising participatory local government and local development in South Africa. Chapter 4 of the Act emphasises community consultation as part of engendering and enhancing participatory democracy in the local government sphere.

Through the Structures Act it can be concluded that municipalities are obliged to promote participatory community needs assessment, and to embark on a needs prioritisation process with the ultimate goal of seeking alternative intervention strategies in dealing with identified problems and challenges. It is legislated that this cannot be brought to completion without constructive engagement with people in their communities through organised structures to meet the needs of the community and achieve developmental objectives (Tshishonga and Mafema, 2008:364).

Napier (2008:170) maintains that the establishment of ward committees specifically refers to the role of ward committees in the review of the IDP for the municipality as well as the council's budget, acting as a mechanism through which council, national and provincial government could consult with communities.

In this regard Napier (2008:170) highlights that ward committees should also act as a resource through which non-political organisations could consult with ward committees, and that ward committees could also invite council officials and other persons with specialised knowledge to advise them on various matters.

Another role of ward committees is to participate in strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services.

Thus, ward committees have several functions allocated to them, which include inter alia the promotion of participatory local democracy and social and economic development, and review, consultative and advisory functions (Napier, 2008:170). Ward committee systems should, therefore, be perceived as a vehicle allowing the public an opportunity to exercise their democratic rights at local government level.

3.6 THE MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT (ACT 32 OF 2000)

Another key piece of legislation governing local government, is the Systems Act, which in the preamble sets out the objectives of a new local government system. According to this preamble, one of the fundamental aspects of the new local government system is the active engagement of communities in the affairs of municipalities of which they are an integral part, particularly in planning, service delivery and performance management.

While the Structures Act places emphasis on consulting communities and endeavours to enhance participatory democracy in local municipalities, the Systems Act re-emphasises the role of municipal councils by facilitating the participation of members of the community in running their own affairs.

The Systems Act also dedicates Chapter 4 to community participation in local government. In other words, the Act reflects the increasing importance given to community participation in municipal planning processes. It states that local government should develop a culture of community participation and municipal governance which complements formal representative government and should encourage and create conditions for local communities to participate in the affairs of municipality in, inter alia:

- The preparation and implementation and review of its integrated development plan.

- The establishment, implementation and review of its performance management system.
- The preparation of its budget.
- Strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services.

Mosana (2005:77) avers that provisions like those mentioned above are aimed at building the capacity of citizens to engage effectively with their local councils on an informed basis.

The Systems Act also specifies that in each municipality mechanisms, procedures and processes for community participation should be put in place. Provisions are made in the Act for people who are unable to submit their comments concerning any local government related issue because of their disability to either write or read. In addition, Section 22 of the Act also states that the minister responsible for local government may issue guidelines regarding community participation in municipal affairs. (Compare in this regard the Ward Committee Guidelines, 2005.)

3.7 THE MUNICIPAL FINANCE MANAGEMENT ACT (ACT 56 OF 2003)

The Municipal Finance Management Act, as has been stated in this study, provides the financial management framework for local government. This Act also encourages the participation of communities in the finances of municipalities, including the development of municipal budgets.

The Act specifically defines the close relationship of the municipal budget to the IDP, as this study has noted. It also stipulates inter alia that the annual budget of the municipality must indicate how it will give effect to the IDP of the municipality over the three approaching budget years, and how the IDP may need to be revised given the budgetary resources and spending commitments.

Tlokwe Local Municipality has been conducting the budget process with the purpose of ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Management Act stated above. What needs to be added here is to emphasise Section 2 of the Municipal Finance Management Act, which stipulates that the objective is to secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of the local government institutions to which this Act applies by establishing norms and standards for:

- Ensuring transparency, accountability and appropriate lines of responsibility in the fiscal and financial affairs of municipalities and municipal entities;
- The management of revenues, expenditures, assets and liabilities and the handling of financial dealings, budgetary and financial planning processes;
- The coordination of these processes with those of the other spheres of government;
- Borrowing;
- Supply chain management and
- Other financial matters.

Therefore, in terms of the co-operative governance framework in South Africa, public participation strategy, especially in budgeting, has become a requirement at local municipalities. It should be worth noting that merely practicing superficial community participation and displaying legal and statutory documents in municipal offices without effective implementation thereof might not be sufficient to attain the objectives of developmental local government, especially from a sustainable point of view.

An objective of this study is to attempt to identify whether statutory frameworks and regulatory requirements are adhered to in the required manner in Tlokwe Local Municipality. The following discussion will focus specifically on Tlokwe Local Municipality.

3.8 TLOKWE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Legislation such as the White Paper on Local Government obliges municipalities to prioritise the needs of residents, communities and other stakeholders as citizens of municipal areas and also as the clients of the municipal services in the performance of their tasks.

In addition to enhancing the understanding of needs, civil society participation also enhances understanding of the impact of policy and programmes, and promotes the development of priorities (Houston, 2001:217). It is through interaction with the public that a local authority can discover what citizens expect from their local government in areas where the implementation of policy and programmes is inadequate, and thereby promote the development of priorities.

Tlokwe Local Municipality, which area of jurisdiction mainly includes the city of Potchefstroom, is situated within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality. The local municipality covers an area of approximately 2 500 square km and is divided into two parts by the N12 route between Johannesburg and Cape Town. The N12 is one of the main designated development corridors in South Africa. Tlokwe Local Municipality was established in terms of Section 12 of the Structures Act, as a category B – Local Municipality in 2000 in the Provincial Gazette, designated NW402 (Tlokwe City Council 2009-2010:67). According to Van der Waldt (2004:2), a category B municipality shares both executive and legislative authority in its area with a Category C municipality within the area in which it falls.

In terms of an international perspective, Potchefstroom is well known for its university (North-West University) consisting of the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses, and as one of the two premium high altitude sports training centres in South Africa. Potchefstroom and its neighbour, the city of Klerksdorp, are situated in the heart of the country's gold mining

industry, with the world's deepest gold mine situated some 40 km north-east of Potchefstroom adjacent to the N12 to Johannesburg. The area is also characterised by diamond mining (Rysmierbult) and agricultural production such as maize, sunflower and sorghum.

3.8.1 Political Dynamics

The following represents dominant political parties/organisations in Tlokwe Local Municipality:

- African National Congress
- Democratic Alliance
- Freedom Front
- Independent Democrats
- United Christian Democratic Party
- Congress of the People.

3.8.2 Vision of the Tlokwe Local Municipality

A strong vision and strong local leadership are essential to mobilise and unite communities, residents and municipal officials. A vision is a statement of the desired long-term development of the municipality based on the identified priority issues and related to the specific conditions in the municipal area (DPLG 2001:43).

The Vision of Tlokwe Local Municipality is to achieve a transformed Potchefstroom municipality striving for economic, social and human development through good governance. In this regard, the establishment and promotion of an economic development vision as part of the broader vision of the municipality in terms of its integrated development, is a task primarily for local politicians, working in partnership with their communities. (Tlokwe City Council IDP, 2010a).

It is argued that involving local residents in establishing a local vision through the IDP will help ensure that everyone brings energy, commitment and resources to development programmes.

3.8.3 Tlokwe Local Municipality Challenges of Participation

The Constitution and other legislation discussed in this study, grants all South Africans an equal and inalienable right and access to participate in municipal affairs. However, most municipalities have inherited stark backlogs and inequalities which make participation of communities difficult in the affairs of the municipality. The Tlokwe Local Municipality faces great challenges in addressing the needs of the community, past backlogs and partial distortions, as well as planning for a sustainable future (Tlokwe City Council IDP, 2010a). Tlokwe Local Municipality believes it can only meet the latter challenges by working together with the people of Potchefstroom and partners in a spirit of co-operative governance, and by adopting a developmental mindset.

In his Budget and State of the City address 2010/2011, the executive mayor of Tlokwe Local Municipality, Maphetle Maphetle, acknowledged the need for the active support and involvement of the people in council matters. Other challenges include a shortage of key personnel in the executive mayor's administration, evident in Tlokwe Annual Report 2007/8.

Tlokwe Local Municipality also faces a challenge to build capacity in the management of financial systems. Lack of dedicated management capacity to sequence and plan and to set consistent policy on critical issues across the spectrum of participation in municipal budgeting, can put the well conceptualised policy frameworks at risk. According to Molekane (2008:9-10) it is important to note that a clear and objective picture of key challenges that must be resolved if capacity building is to be a success, should be provided.

This study argues that local government issues are highly complex and cover wide areas. The complexity of local government leads this study to pose the question as to which extent an ordinary member of the public could be

expected to participate in tackling complex and diverse issues which the local government has to deal with, such as planning and budgeting.

Furthermore, in view of the fact that ward committee members are not elected on the basis of specialist skills possessed, but rather on the basis of availability and popularity in sometimes poorly attended election meetings, they might not be best equipped to deal with complex issues (Napier, 2008:1976).

Consideration, however, must be given to the realities of capacity building within the Tlokwe Local Municipality. Mafunisa and Xaba (2008:456) aver that any political endeavour to improve participation is hampered by a lack of capacity on the part of those whose participation is most necessary. He also states in this regard, that constitutional and legislative imperatives which demand open and accessible processes are necessary for effective public participation; they are, however, not sufficient, in this case, in the Tlokwe Local Municipality socio-economic context. The right of legal access and participation has to be backed up by strategies and programmes that involve the broadest possible strata of society, particularly women, youth and poor communities.

Ensuring the effectiveness of community participation is an ongoing challenge that needs to be addressed through the involvement of officials, municipal councillors and local communities.

The following section will focus on participation strategies through which various constituencies could be engaged in municipal activities.

3.8.4 Participation Strategies

Municipalities should consider improving accountability of municipal functionaries. Skosana (2007:83) maintains that having a vision, mission and values will not bring any benefits from public institutions, including municipalities, to the people. The municipality must translate its mission and

values into action, flowing from plans aimed at achieving short, medium and long term goals. To this end, Tlokwe Local Municipality's public participation events are in the form of public mass meetings and public hearings at ward levels.

The Office of the Speaker, which deals with public participation, has acknowledged that the municipality is in the process of developing an effective mechanism for the public to be engaged in municipal affairs. There is evidently a lack of specific implementation of public participation strategies in budgeting. The mechanisms, processes and procedures for public participation of TLM are outlined in a 2007 by-law which is still in use. The following section outlines methods for participation of the community as provided for in Tlokwe's public participation policy.

3.8.5 Methods for Public Participation

The Tlokwe Local Municipality utilises the following methods for people or residents to participate in the municipal affairs.

According to the Tlokwe Local Municipality Public Participation Policy 2007, electronic mail is utilised whereby members of the local community may submit written comment directly to the municipality. The method is deemed useful, but cannot cover the largest section of the community, especially those where public participation is most needed.

It can be argued that the majority people of Tlokwe, especially those in informal settlements and the townships, are not computer literate. The lack of Internet access also denies the public the opportunity to participate meaningfully, especially in the initial draft of the IDP before it can be made known to the public.

The municipality furthermore utilises petitions and complaints, invitations for public comment and open sessions to which members of the public and interested organisations must lodge complaints and must be invited to submit

their views and comments on strategies, programmes and services to address priority needs through the integrated development plan. (Tlokwe Local Municipality Public Participation By-law, 2007).

Interested parties are invited to submit their views and comments on the following:

- The involvement of the community in the development, implementation and review of the council's performance management system, including the setting of appropriate key performance indicators and performance targets for the municipality for the purpose of helping the council.
- The views and comments of the public and interested organisations on a proposed tariff policy as contemplated in Section 74 of the Systems Act as well as its debt collection policy.
- Decisions on mechanisms for the provision of services through service delivery agreements.

Newspapers and pamphlets are also utilised by the Tlokwe Local Municipality for public participation. The local *Herald* and *Tlokwe News* are popularly utilised by the Tlokwe Local Municipality as a means of communication with the local community. The problem with these media is that they might turn out to be difficult to read as they are written in mostly one language and in a technical format.

Furthermore, the municipality must, when implementing methods for public participation, provide:

- A qualified person to help members of the community who cannot read or write;

- Appropriate access to public meetings and hearings for differently abled people; and
- A translator/interpreter, after having assessed the language preferences and usage and where appropriate.

By analysing the Tlokwe Local Municipality Participation Policy By-Law of 2007, this study argues that an effective public participation methodology was not used and instead a general approach at public participation events has now been adopted in an attempt to involve local people. Therefore a lack of public participation, more specifically at the local sphere, continues to pose serious challenges to the municipality. There is no effective linkage of IDP and the budget, which can be attributed to poor skills, and a lack of comprehensive strategies aimed at including the broadest possible spectrum of society – particularly women, the youth and poor communities. Such strategies would include contact-specific strategies, which would require basic institutional capacity as to prepare an effective IDP and budget linkage.

3.8.6 Municipal Communication Strategy

It is suggested that meaningful participation occurs in systems where there are open channels of communication. This argument is supported by Bekink (2006:476-477) who highlights the following channels of communication to enhance participation between citizens and municipalities.

As voters: One of the commonly known and important ways through which citizens can voice their opinions in terms of governmental decision making is through the process of voting. Every adult South African citizen has the right to vote and to take part in elections for any legislative body established in terms of the Constitution. This constitutionally protected right is important not only to ensure a democratic society, but also to allow the voters to have a direct say in the choice of their political leaders and their policies. As with all government structures, municipalities have an obligation to make voters aware of their right to vote and to motivate them to exercise such right.

As consumers of services: Most people have direct contact with their municipalities through the use of and payment for municipal services. Through this channel of regular contact, many aspects of municipal decision making can be communicated.

As an organised interest group: People often organise themselves in different interest groups. Such groups include political parties, NGOs and a range of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) such as ratepayers associations, church groups, etc. Business people also organise themselves into groups that look after their interests and the interest of the region. A local chamber of commerce is a good example of a business organisation that could have an important influence with the local authority and which could serve as an acknowledgement and influential communication instrument.

Through specialised structures: Communication can also be significantly enhanced through specialised local structures. A ward committee is such a structure and could be a very important intermediary between residents and their local municipality. Ward committees are best suited to detecting local problems and to communicating such problems quickly and effectively. Apart from ward committees, which interact with the specific ward representative, residents can also communicate and participate with their local municipality through their traditional leaders or other community organisations. A further example of a specialised structure is the existence of organised labour. Organised labour should be consulted by municipalities when issues are considered that could have an impact on them.

It is imperative to state that the objective of involving members of the community in municipal affairs without effectively communicating directly with them cannot be realised. A fundamental reason for communicating is to show respect for all stakeholders of change, and a likely outcome is that people will be more responsive to change (Barker, 2007:65).

On the other hand, Campbell and Marshall (2000:327) emphasise that communicative rationality rather than focusing on self interest, promotes open dialogue and encourages the emergence of shared solutions through the uncovering of new forms of knowledge and understanding. As a result, better decisions are likely to emerge from inclusive debate and discussion and trust enhanced in public institutions with a more active citizenry created. There are mechanisms that exist to promote public participation in the affairs of the local government. One of these is the communication strategy.

Tlokwe Local Municipality has been experiencing problems with regard to effective communication with the local community. According to a communication by Mr DW Maphosa who is the Communication Manager of Tlokwe Local Municipality (2009), problems include, amongst others, the following:

- Municipal strategies, policies and procedures are not easily digestible by members of the local community;
- The majority of community members are concerned with immediate needs without adhering to proper procedures; and
- Most people with whom the municipality deals are semi-skilled in evaluating complex issues such as budgeting.

The Tlokwe Local Municipal Communications Guidelines (2009) further highlight that municipal communication; like all government communications is a strategic function aimed at ensuring effective and on-going dialogue between the municipality and the communities. At the time of conducting this study at Tlokwe Local Municipality, there was an indication that the municipality was embarking on the implementation of the review of the Local Municipal Communication Strategic Framework for 2010. This means, that there is evidently a lack of an effective communication strategy.

In fact, the Constitution and all legislation flowing from it, particularly the Systems Act, place high premiums on local government's continuous

communication with communities through the public participation processes. However, municipalities are obliged to provide the public open access to information about policies, programmes and services initiatives. Such information has to be disseminated and be readily available for public use at all times practically possible.

Broadening and strengthening administrative capacity and ensuring healthy communication with the local community is a critical success factor. It is only when communication functions are accounted for, monitored and evaluated that municipal communicators can be able to effectively support the implementation of municipal programmes. This study concurs with Mafunisa and Xaba (2008:458) that Tlokwe's municipal council (personal interview with municipal officials, 2009) have not, as yet, been able to programmatically engage the municipal stakeholders as intended.

3.9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE IDP AND BUDGETING PROCESS

The purpose of integrated development planning is to better the quality of life of the people living within the area of jurisdiction of the municipality and to participate in decision making. A critical question now asked is: would these municipalities have the capacity to implement strategies for their IDPs? Or as Mosana (2005:43) puts it, would IDPs become dust-covered documents that grace the bookshelves of municipalities? As stated by De Visser (2005:20), proper strategic planning and budgeting in the public sector cannot take place when either the strategic plan or the budget is developed in isolation without taking the imperative nature of each other into account. The Tlokwe Local Municipality has a strong belief in meeting the challenges of creating a municipality (city) with an enabling environment for all citizens to utilise their full potential and access opportunities which will enable them to contribute towards a vibrant and sustainable economy (TLM, 2010c: 4). Participation in the IDP is an important activity, likewise to the budget.

Tlokwe Local Municipality holds a strong view that the budget process should be an effective process that every local government must undertake to ensure

good governance and accountability. The budget process outlines the current and future direction that the Tlokwe Local Municipality intends to follow in order to meet legislative stipulations. The budget process of Tlokwe Local Municipality exhorts the municipality to involve residents and other stakeholders in the budgeting process. In terms of citizens' participation, this type of participation can probably be considered to be at the level of "Consultation" where the community requests and inputs are recorded in documentation. This cannot be considered the most effective methodology that the TLM can utilise in promoting participation in the budget. There is no feedback mechanism in place pertaining to accepting or rejecting the community inputs and informing their ward committees of their acceptance or rejection. This study argues that the community is consulted but cannot control the decisions made. Real participation strengthens the legitimacy of municipal decision making. People must have access to decision making structures to make their voices heard (also compare the discussion on theoretical aspects of participation in Chapter 2). As stated in Chapter 2 of this study, the municipality should ensure accessibility and participation by all stakeholders.

The Tlokwe Municipality Budget/Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Review process for the 2010/2011 financial year started with the approval in September 2009 of the "Process Plan for the Budget Formulation and IDP Review". The outcome of the process plan was an understanding and commitment by all stakeholders to the process to be followed in reviewing the IDP as well as formulating the budget (TLM, 2010c: 3).

Furthermore, it is highlighted that the TLM held a series of budget bilateral meetings with the managers and heads of the various departments. At these meetings, budget, strategy, budget policies and the alignment of the operating budget with the IDP were discussed. Departments hereafter submitted inputs, and the first draft was compiled.

Based on the above, it is suggested that the level of public participation is never spelt out. The objectives of involving members of the community are

similarly not clear. One must ask the question: what is really achievable in terms of public involvement in decision making? It is evident that there is a need of an organised and effective public participation strategy in Tlokwe Local Municipality budgeting.

3.9.1 Political Overseeing of the Budget Process

According to Tlokwe Local Municipality the key to strengthening the link between priorities and spending is in enhancing political supervision of the budget process. Section 53(1)(a) of the Municipal Finance Management Act states that the mayor of a municipality must provide political guidance over the budget process and the priorities that must guide the preparation of the budget.

The Tlokwe Local Municipality Budget Steering Committee has a significant role to play in the financial planning process. Strengthening the link between Government's priorities and spending plans is not an end in itself, but the goal should be to promote effective public participation in budgeting and to enhance service delivery aimed at improving the quality of life for all people within the Tlokwe Local Municipality. Since 1994 the South African government has taken a number of legislative and policy initiatives to change the focus and quality of financial management in local government in order to strengthen the linkage between planning and financial management (DPLG 2001:35).

3.9.2 Schedule for Key Deadlines Relating to Budget Process

In Tlokwe Local Municipality the budgeting time schedule for the compilation of the 2010/2011 medium term budget was approved on 15 September 2009, two weeks behind the stipulated time schedule for the compilation of the budget as contained in the Municipal Finance Management Act. The objective of the budget timetable is to ensure integration between the development of the IDP and the budget and also to ensure that a balanced budget is tabled for consideration and approval.

The above interpretation is based on the following table:

Details	Date
Tabling of Annual Budget: Council	31 March 2010
Public Hearings and Consultations on the Budget	April 2010
Workshop on Budget	End of April 2010
Approval of Final Budget	31 May 2010
Submission of Draft SDBIP to the Mayor	31 May 2010
Submission of Approved Budget to National Treasury/COGTA	13 June 2010

TABLE 3.2: *Budgeting time schedule*

3.10 TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IDP PROCESS PLAN

In order to fulfil its obligations in terms of the requirements of the Systems Act the Tlokwe Local Municipality adopted the following processes for the planning, drafting, adoption and review of the IDP:

- Organisational structure in order to effectively manage the drafting of outputs and to provide affected parties access to contribute to the decision making process;
- Distribution of roles and responsibilities of all role players in the process;
- Mechanisms and procedures for public participation;
- Action programme with time frames and resources;
- Mechanisms and procedures for alignment;
- Legally binding planning requirements and other policies; and
- Budget for the planning process (TLM IDP, 2010-2011:9).

Based on the above it is important to note that the IDP process involves public participation, which also involves the IDP Representative Forum and public meetings, and also identification of the needs of the community.

Integrated Development Planning is one of the key tools for local government to cope with its new developmental role. In contrast to the role planning has played in the past, Integrated Development Planning is now seen as a function of municipal management, as part of an integrated system of planning and delivery.

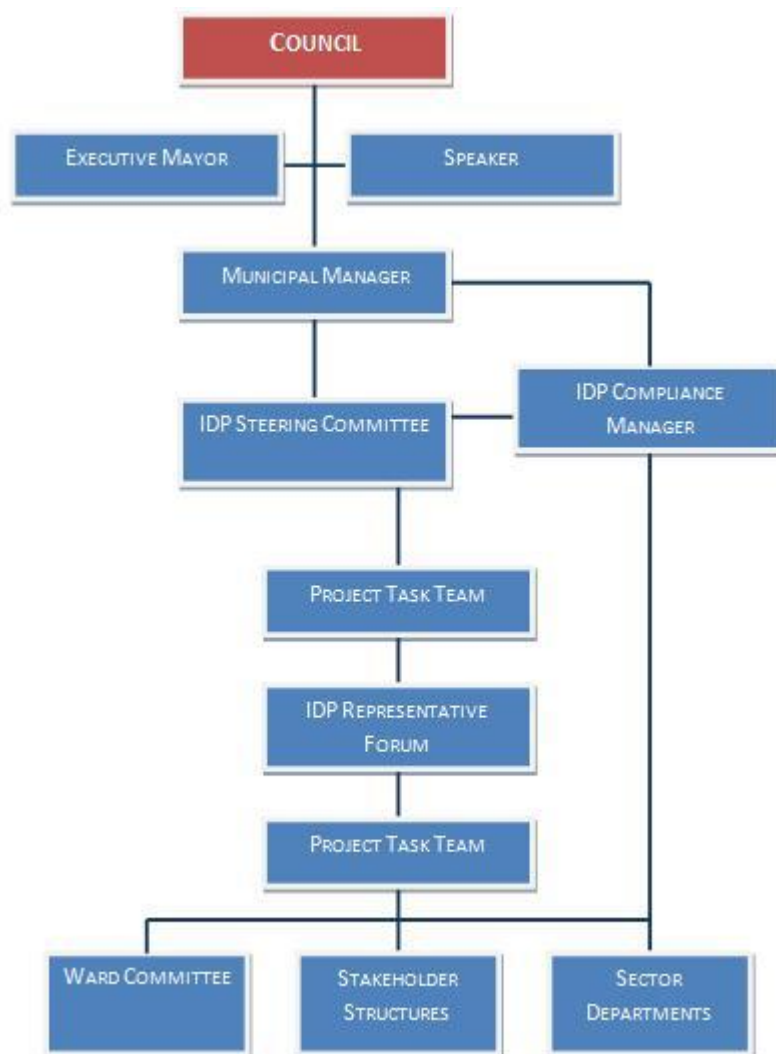
In Tlokwe Local Municipality the IDP process is meant to arrive at decisions such as municipal budgets, land management, promotion of local economic development and institutional transformation in a consultative, systematic and strategic manner. At the same time, integrated development planning will bring together the work of government planning in all spheres and across all departments in order to ensure coordination and effective use of resources (TLM IDP Process Plan 2007b:2).

The local government sphere has to elaborate a five year IDP as part of an integrated system of planning and delivery, which serves as a frame for all development activities within the municipal area and which accordingly informs:

- a) The annual budget of the municipality;
- b) The budgets and investment programmes of sector departments (national and provincial) which implement projects or provide services within the municipality;
- c) The business plans of the municipality;
- d) Land use management decisions;
- e) Economic promotion measures;
- f) The local authority's organisational set-up and management system; and
- g) The monitoring and performance management system (TLM IDP Process Plan 2010/11:3).

With regard to the IDP process Plan, the TLM organisational structure for the IDP Process can be represented as follows:

Figure 3.1
Organisational Structure for IDP Process



Source: TLM IDP Process Plan August 2009

3.10.1 IDP/Budget Steering Committee

The steering committee should be a technical working team of dedicated heads of departments and senior officials who support the IDP Manager to

ensure a smooth planning process. It should obtain inputs from sub-committees, study teams and consultants.

Composition of IDP Steering Committee:

- Chairperson – Municipal Manager (or IDP Manager). The chairperson should ensure that conditions for participation being met.
- Secretariat – Official of Municipality whose responsibility is administering and regulating internal affairs of the municipality.
- Members – Strategic Executives of the respective Departments/Sectors, who should develop and adopt policies, plans strategies and programmes.
- Senior Officials of municipality and/or Provincial Departments should decide on the framework plan and the process plan.

The IDP steering committee should provide terms and references for various planning activities.

3.10.2 IDP Representative Forum

The IDP representative forum is the structure which institutionalises and guarantees representative participation in the IDP process. Tlokwe Local Municipality has established an IDP Representative Forum for formal engagement with the various municipal stakeholders for discussion, negotiation and decision-making. The IDP Representative Forum also ensures that annual business plans and budget are linked to and based on the IDP process. The IDP Representative Forum in Tlokwe Local Municipality is constituted by, inter alia,;

- Members of the executive committee;
- Councillors, including district councillors;
- Traditional Leaders;
- Ward committee chairperson/representative;

- Heads of Departments/Senior officials;
- Stakeholder representatives of organised groups;
- Advocates for unorganised groups, e.g. a gender activist;
- Resource persons; and
- Community representative (e.g. RDP forum).

It can furthermore be highlighted that the IDP Representative Forum strives to ensure proper communication between all stakeholders and the municipalities and to monitor the planning and implementation processes.

3.10.3 Ward Committees

Ward committees represent interests and contribute knowledge and ideas in the planning process. Amongst others, they do the following:

- Inform interest groups, communities and organisations on relevant planning activities and their outcomes.
- Analyse issues, determine priorities, negotiate and reach consensus.
- Participate in the designing of project proposals/assess them.
- Discuss and comment on the draft IDP.
- Similar to IDP Representative Forum, the ward committees also ensure that annual business plans and budgets are based on and linked to the IDP.
- Conduct meetings or workshops with groups, communities or organisations to prepare for and follow up on relevant planning activities.

Many ward committee members in Tlokwe Local Municipality make inputs to the IDP and budgetary process. But as stated earlier in this study, the type of participation can probably be seen at the level of “consultation”. Councillors have to wait for their inputs to appear (or more likely not appear) in documents in ensuing years. This is possibly an indication of how relatively weak levels of public participation are in both the IDP and Budget processes.

This indicates, as Mafunisa and Xaba (2008:457) note, that in most municipalities community participation is incorporated mainly for the sake of compliance with procedural guidelines, without a deep and intense involvement on the part of the community, or any attempts to enrich the IDP process through community involvement.

This study also concurs with Napier's (2008:174) argument that ward committees operate at the lowest level of government and merely play a consultative and advisory role. As a result, it can be concluded that there is no substantial community involvement in both the drafting of the IDP and budgeting.

3.10.4 Public Participation Process

The empirical evidence of this study contends that municipal councils need to develop mechanisms to interact with community groups and to identify service needs and priorities. Without the capacity to strategise, integrate and interface with non-municipal groups, many local governments are unlikely to be sustainable in the future.

However, it can be highlighted that one of the main benefits of public participation in local government is that it enhances the potential for local authorities to meet the expectations of the inhabitants of a municipal area. Houston (2001:217) further argues that public participation promotes legitimacy and public support for the policies and programmes of local authorities, and thereby ensures democratic stability. Public participation in the IDP process would ensure the fullest support of residents and stakeholders, mobilise community and private sector resources to make the most of growth and development strategies, and provide a foundation for future development initiatives (Department of Constitutional Development, 1997:208-212).

Tlokwe Local Municipality has embarked on a rigorous process of ensuring that institutional arrangements of the IDP are put in place and are functional.

The following is the Tlokwe Local Municipality IDP Review Work Plan for the period 2009/2010:

Figure 3.2

IDP REVIEW WORK PLAN 2009/2011

IDP Steering Committee December 2009 – March 2010	First Draft March 2010	Public Comments (1) February – March 2010
Ward Councillor/Committee Notices/Public Notices October 2009	Council Workshop 03 February 2010	Council IDP Adoption May 2010
Ward Committee & Stakeholders Priority Submission October 2009	IDP Rep Forum March 2010	Submission to MEC June 2010

The following participation process formed part of the IDP review:

- Ward Councillors together with their committees conducted intensive ward meetings in order to review community priorities.
- An analysis of changing circumstances as reflected in the Situation Analysis by each department.
- A review of organizational performance.
- The adjustment of the Council's Strategic Plan to revise strategies and targets.
- A Mayoral Izimbizo to report back on municipal programmes and projects and to obtain public input.
- Structured consultation with sector departments to integrate socio and economic plans of sectors with the IDP needs.

Public notices and invitations were issued in the local press to the public, inviting stakeholders to participate in the IDP Review Process. As set out in the Systems Act, in the review of the IDP on an annual basis, a stakeholder

consultation process is necessary. Of critical importance is for the Tlokwe Municipality (TLM) to ensure that there is thorough consultation with the community and strategic stakeholders. As part of the Annual Review of the Municipality's IDP as prescribed by the Systems Act, the Tlokwe Local Municipality embarked on an extensive process to engage with stakeholders and elicit comments which were fed into the 2010/2011 reviewed IDP.

As is the case in the Tlokwe Local Municipality every year, once the draft IDP was completed, they used the following mechanisms to ensure effective participation and consultation of the plan:

- The draft IDP was placed on the municipal website for perusal and comment.
- Every municipal official and office received copies for comment.
- The summarised Draft Budget was published in the Tlokwe Newspaper, which is the local municipal paper.
- Local media (including community newspapers) were informed by TLM of the IDP review and published the need for civil society organisations to comment on the document.

3.10.5 Alignment of Budget with Integrated Development Plan

The Tlokwe Local Municipality believes that in an effort to achieve its vision, the following complex development priorities facing the municipality need to be addressed in both the shorter and the longer term:

- Low economic growth and unemployment.
- Poor access to basic household service.
- High levels of poverty.
- Low levels of literacy and skills development.
- Exposure to high level of crime and risk.
- Unsustainable development practices.

- Ineffective, inefficient, inward looking local government (TLM, 2010c:14).

The Tlokwe Local Municipality needs to achieve a balance between meeting basic needs, strengthening the economy and developing people skills and a technology base for the future.

In an effort to achieve their vision, the above Strategic Focus Areas of intervention for the next five years need to be balanced and integrated. However, it is important that Tlokwe Local Municipality's budget must be a pro-growth budget that meets basic needs and builds on existing skills and technology.

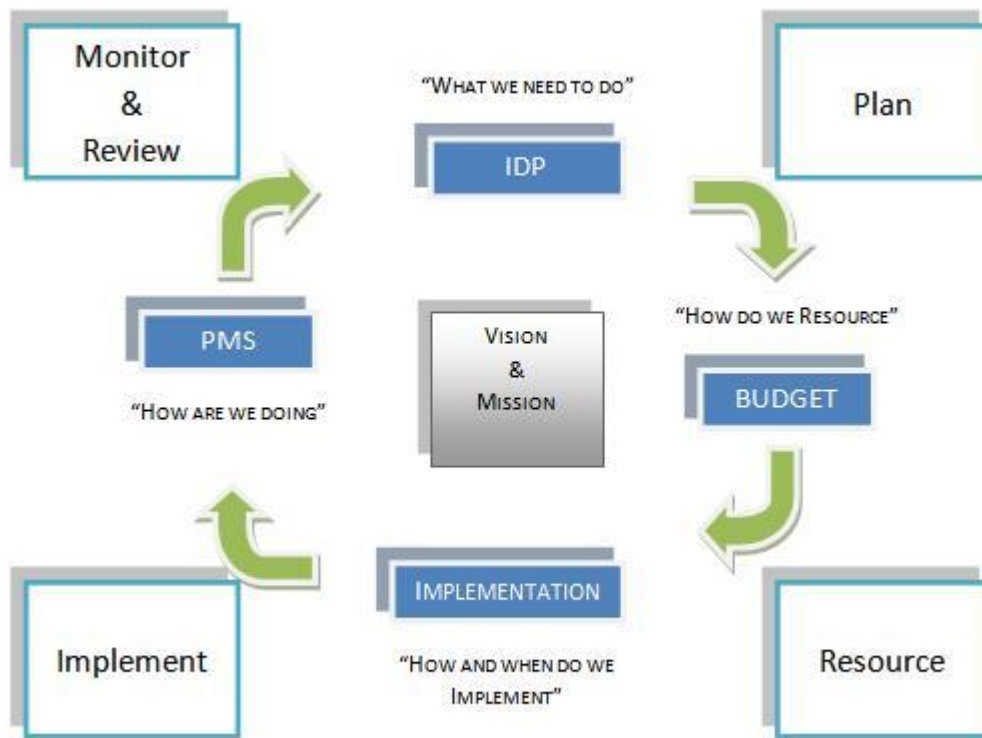
Tlokwe Local Municipality's IDP outlines EIGHT PLANS, which respond to their vision and values, thereby directing strategic focus areas, key programmes and strategic projects that are linked to the Tlokwe Municipal capital and operating budget. In this way, TLM strongly believe that they have perfect alignment and that the budgetary allocations for both the capital and operating expenditure are undertaken in a manner that will not only ensure that TLM IDP outcomes are achieved but also that their vision is realised. The current capital budget of the TLM is allocated according to the IDP and the available finances.

More importantly, the Performance Management System (PMS) allows the municipality an opportunity to monitor and evaluate individual and organisational performance in meeting their IDP outcomes and vision. Tlokwe Local Municipality contends that as with previous years, their IDP remains the strategic driver of both their budget and their performance management system.

The following figure indicates the linkages of the core components of the development and integration of the IDP, Budget and Performance.

FIGURE 3.3: IDP/Budget/PMS Integration

LINKAGES OF CORE COMPONENTS



Source: TLM IDP Draft March 2007

The eight plans outlined in the Tlokwe Local Municipality Draft Budget (2010c:14-15) are:

- Sustaining the built and natural environment;
- Economic development and job creation;
- Quality living environment;
- Empowered citizens;
- Sport, culture and heritage;
- Good governance;
- Financial viability; and
- Sustainability.

Referring to the above eight plans one may argue that they are silent on the objectives of involving members of the community. Lack of planning activities and project management capacity at all levels of the municipality, continues to pose serious challenges to an effective public participation strategy in the IDP and budget. This can be attributed to amongst other things poor governance and lack of financial viability and sustainability.

3.10.6 Link between the IDP, Budget and PMS Processes

One of the objectives of the IDP is to align resources and expenditure with community needs. The municipality could be compared to a conductor, which orchestrates public and private investment and programmes towards building a successful municipality and creating a better life for all its citizens. To fulfil this role, the municipality needs to align itself with national and provincial directives and draw these down into the spectrum of service delivery.

According to a communication by Mr D Loka (2010), the Tlokwe Local Municipality Budget is informed and aligned to the IDP objectives. In other words, the IDP determines the budget and prioritises the needs of the Tlokwe Municipal community. Furthermore, it is also highlighted that the management process for participation has been an on-going exercise over the past five years. Although these processes have their own legal requirements, they cannot readily be separated in practice and need to be seamlessly integrated. The IDP is the “plan” part of the PMS; the budget forms part of the implementation of the IDP and the SDBIP, which monitors annual operational performance and provides information for the strategic organizational performance monitoring of the PMS.

The Tlokwe Local Municipality IDP has been reviewed annually since 2002 and amendments thereof approved together with the budget on a consistent basis by the end of May each year. The first SDBIP was approved for the 2006/2007 financial year. A need was also identified during the mentioned

year to improve public participation in the IDP process, as this study is advocating.

3.11 CONCLUSION

In terms of this study there is a general statutory framework governing public participation in South Africa. In terms of the co-operative governance framework in South Africa, public participation has increasingly become a requirement in the local government sphere. Local government should adapt to new approaches in terms of improving municipal services and on how to achieve developmental objectives on the basis of sustainability.

An argument has been advanced that people at grassroots level need not to be marginalised and that they should be meaningfully accorded and provided the opportunity to participate in the municipal decision making processes. Legislation indicates that capacity needs to be developed for local communities and thus mandates municipalities to develop and empower the community to enable effective and efficient service delivery.

Municipalities are faced by challenges to ensure the effectiveness of public participation that needs to be addressed through the creative energies of municipal stakeholders and local communities.

Legislation also requires that municipalities should have an effective participation strategy. It can be concluded however, that there are a number of factors that have an impact on the quality of participation of most municipalities, including Tlokwe Local Municipality. These factors include shortage of skills (especially scarce skills such as financial skills), lack of resources and political divisions characterised by conflict.

Democratic, transparent and accountable practices in municipalities are indispensable traits. In the next chapter, focus is placed on the analysis of public participation in relation to budgeting and the IDP in Tlokwe Local Municipality in terms of an empirical study in this regard.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RELATION TO BUDGETING AND THE IDP AT TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, public participation challenges and community involvement in the IDP and budgeting processes of the Tlokwe Local Municipality were discussed, especially from a theoretical and regulatory perspective. Public participation as a strategy in dealing with various municipal issues was also highlighted. This chapter presents the empirical situation at grassroots level to indicate the challenges of public participation experienced, and explores the concerns of the public at large.

Furthermore, the manner of data collection and the processing thereof within the framework of the research process are highlighted. This chapter also affords consideration to the research ethics and relevance in selecting a particular sample for research.

The focus of this study is based on the main problem to be addressed which is primarily based on the following questions stated in Chapter 1 and restated here:

- Is the application of public participation mechanisms in the Integrated Development Planning and Budgeting processes in the Tlokwe Local Municipality well coordinated and resourced; and
- Does the public participation strategy in Tlokwe Local Municipality's IDP and Budget ensure active and meaningful participation of the Potchefstroom communities in the way in which it is required to ensure optimal delivery of services?

The objectives of this study as indicated in Chapter 1 are to:

- Provide a theoretical exposition of public participation concepts and related principles for budgeting;
- Describe the current statutory and regulatory framework requirements required of developmental local government in order to facilitate public participation in the budget process and the IDP;
- Establish the nature and extent of a public participation strategy for budgeting and IDP manifested in the Tlokwe Local Municipality; and
- Suggest recommendations that may propose solutions to Tlokwe Municipal Management for improving a strategy for the public to participate in the IDP and the budget process.

The objectives of this study were used to compile questions from the theoretical analysis. In Chapter 2 a theoretical exposition of IDP and budget concepts were provided. Based on the above problem statement and objectives, the researcher's focus was to conduct research in order to test the validity of the hypothesis that an ineffective public participation strategy for budgeting in local government results from lack of transparency, poor decision making and accountability, amongst others.

Tlokwe Local Municipality was chosen as case study for the empirical research of this study. The following section will focus on the theoretical exposition of what is meant by data collection; research methodology and techniques that are involved for various methods used. Empirical research will also be analysed in respect of the effectiveness of the process and structure at Tlokwe Local Municipality.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION

According to Bless *et al* (2009:111) facts are empirically verifiable observations. Data consist of measurements collected as a result of scientific observations. In other words, data are facts expressed in the language of

measurement. Here the word measurement is used in its general sense and needs not necessarily be expressed numerically. For example, a person's views on an educational reform could be positive, neutral or negative. The fact that this person takes a definite position towards an issue becomes data once it is expressed as a measurement. This study also identifies and differentiates between two types of data. Ghauri *et al.* (1995:54-57) refer to primary data and secondary data.

Primary data refer to the original data collected by the researcher, and data collected by other researchers concerning other research problems, are referred to as secondary data. This research study is exploratory, employing a qualitative research method technique for data collection.

Data collection for the purpose of this study was also done through existing guides, publications identified for study and reports that are relevant with the research subject obtained from the budget office of Tlokwe Local Municipality and IDP department of the municipality.

For document analysis, Tlokwe Local Municipality's records of the IDP, Draft Budget, Participation Policy (By-Law) minutes of meetings with the community members and attendance registers were used to assess the extent to which the community had participated in both the IDP and the budget process.

In the research process, a request was made to interview municipal officials, the political representative of the majority party, which in this regard was the chairperson of the ANC in the region, and members of the office of the Speaker which deals largely with public participation issues.

Data collection involves different research methods and each method makes use of specific research techniques. The section below is based on the discussion of methods and techniques.

4.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Welman and Kruger (1999:2) define research as the process which involves the application of various methods and techniques in order to create scientifically obtained knowledge by using objective methods and procedures.

Research is about answering unanswered questions or creating that which does not currently exist. It is not just information gathering. The discovery and the creation of knowledge lie at the heart of research. In this regard Leedy and Ormrod (2001:4-8) define research as a systematic quest for undiscovered knowledge. Good research is systematic in that it is planned, organised and has a specific goal.

Research methodology firstly deals with “what scientific knowledge is” and secondly “which methods to apply or to follow” to obtain scientific knowledge. In fact, the word “methodology” refers to how to get from A to B, i.e. how to get from the starting position to the point where scientific knowledge is achieved (Coetzee, 2001:xii).

The study of methodology means nothing more than to understand that methods are used to achieve the goal of scientific knowledge about something.

Because of the fact that this research study is concerned with a public participation strategy in budgeting, the qualitative rather than the quantitative research method was chosen due to its relevance and suitability for this study as outlined in Chapter 1.

Although types of research and research methods are often associated with the academic discipline in which the research is conducted, these two methodologies mentioned above are of importance in all scientific investigation.

In the following section a distinction will be made between these two methodologies.

4.3.1 Qualitative Methodology

According to Zaaiman (2009:37), qualitative studies attempt to study human activities from the perspective of the human actors. In this regard, qualitative research is done in the natural environment of the social actors. The natural course of events is therefore investigated within context.

This view that qualitative methodology focuses on two aspects is supported by Leedy and Ormrod (2001:147-148). Firstly, it focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings – that is, in the “real world”. Secondly, it focuses on studying those phenomena in all their complexity. Qualitative researchers rarely try to simplify what they observe. Instead, they recognise that the issue they are studying has many dimensions and layers, and so they try to portray the issue in its multi-faceted format (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 147-148). According to Charles (cited by Mokhoabane 2006:79) the following important concepts should be applied by the qualitative researcher:

- Qualitative research is designed to discover what can be learned about a phenomenon of interest.
- Qualitative research has various interpretations and reveals logistics and relevance, which have an influence on the reader.
- Impressive conceptions related to the origin of truth of the word are revealed.
- The focus is based on the respondent's response and experience.
- Simple events in their original situations display real life in the research process.
- It helps in the justification of correct life skills and the future success of the individual.
- It stresses identification, induction and formulated theory, and

- It involves the respondent's observation in detailed interview and conversational analysis.

4.3.2 Quantitative Methodology

This is a methodology that yields information that can be summarised through statistical analysis. This is a form of conclusive research involving large representative samples and fairly structured data collection procedures. It requires that the data collected can be expressed in numbers – i.e. they can be quantified. The most common methods used to conduct quantitative research are the exploratory, descriptive, experimental and quasi-experimental methods (Struwig & Stead, 2001:7).

4.4 APPLICATION OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research, in contrast to qualitative research, is characterised by more respondent samples. As a result of this, quantitative research techniques (usually in the form of large-scale questionnaire surveys or structured observations) can be used in conclusive research projects (where information obtained from samples is representative of the population).

An important characteristic of qualitative research is the need for developing an initial understanding of something. A primary role of qualitative research is to generate hunches of hypotheses that may be tested through more formal research. In contrast, each situation under quantitative research calls for specific data capable of suggesting a final course of action. A primary role of quantitative research is to test hypotheses. Although the concepts “qualitative” and quantitative” distinguish between two different forms of research, the dichotomy (two contrasted groups) is not clear-cut as some would think. All data are “soft” and any mode of gathering data is a series of compromises. Also, the interpretation of quantitative data is often of a qualitative nature. What is important in research is transforming data into information insights and knowledge (Struwig & Stead, 2001:19).

4.5 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Research techniques involve step-by-step procedures when gathering data and analysing them. Although a variety of methods are presented, the emphasis of this study is placed on interviews, observations and questionnaires. These techniques are briefly discussed as follows:

4.5.1 Interviews

The interview is the most frequently used technique to collect information and to give more clarity on some of the questions asked in the questionnaire. Through the interview the respondents are asked questions to find out what they do or think or what their feelings are about a particular phenomenon of interest. According to Ghauri *et al* (in Sebiloane 2009:74), there are two types of interviews, namely:

- Structured interviews: where a standard format of interview is used with an emphasis on fixed response categories and systematic sampling.
- Semi-structured or unstructured interviews: where the respondent is given almost full liberty to discuss reactions, opinions and behaviour on a particular issue. The interviewer is there just to give lead questions and to record the response in order to understand how and why. Questions are not systematically coded beforehand. Furthermore, the researcher acknowledges the importance of a selection strategy which should be employed when using probability sampling to select participants for interviews. In this study, respondents were selected on the basis of their involvement, experience and knowledge to the research topic. This study chose a specific population which comprises the Executive Mayor, Municipal

Officials of Tlokwe Local Municipality and residents of the municipal area. The interviews were conducted by visiting offices of the municipality and ward committee members who represent the community of Tlokwe Local Municipality.

This research study employed a semi-structured interview, where face to face interviews were conducted with selected respondents and the interviewer listened attentively and made notes from the interviewees' responses. Semi-structured interviews are a versatile method of data collection and limit vague responses (Van der Walt, 2004:62). According to Welman and Kruger (1999:166) the biggest advantage of such interviews is the fact that the interviewer is in control of the interview situation. In Chapter 3 of this study, municipal officials were selected on the basis of their knowledge to the research topic. Those were the head of communications department, IDP assistant manager and the manager from the Office of the Speaker. The researcher conducted the interviews by visiting the offices of the Tlokwe Municipality and contacting officials of the municipality telephonically.

4.5.2 Observation

This is also a research technique used to determine how respondents react under specific circumstances.

According to Bless *et al* (2009:114-115) simple observation, also called non-participant observation, is the recording of events as observed by an outsider. For example, a researcher can observe the social behaviour of people interacting in bars, shops, pleasure resorts or at political rallies.

Since the researcher is part of the community being researched, personal observations of the researcher were also used in collecting data that are relevant and suitable to the research of this study. The researcher attended some of the public participation meetings held by Tlokwe Local Municipality in order to obtain first-hand information, to ask questions for clarity, and to interpret and understand the observed behaviour and attitude more

accurately. A non-participatory observation was preferred as the researcher's objective was to observe and record what people do in terms of their actions and behaviour without being involved himself.

Ghuri *et al* (1995:57) echo the importance of observation as a data collection tool, stating that it entails listening and watching other people's behaviour in a way that allows some type of analytical interpretation. With this technique, the researcher can collect first-hand information in a natural setting, interpret and understand the observed behaviour, attitude and situation more accurately and capture the dynamics of social behaviour in a way that is not possible through questionnaires and interviews. Sebiloane (2009:76) outlines two important ways in which observation can be conducted:

4.5.2.1 Participatory Observation

Participatory observation which is sometimes called field observation, where the observer is a natural part of the situation or event. The observer becomes part of a company or organisation and decides to study the same organisation in one way or another. In this way the observation is not hidden or disguised as argued by Ghuri *et al* (1995:58). According to Hussey and Hussey (in Sebiloane 2009:76) participatory observation aims to provide the means of obtaining a detailed understanding of values, motives and practices of those being observed. Factors which should be taken into account when choosing the role of the participant observer include the following:

- The purpose of the research
- The cost of the research
- The extent to which access can be gained
- The extent to which the researcher would be comfortable
- The amount of time the researcher has available.

4.5.2.2 Non-participatory observation

In non-participatory observation the observer observes and records what people do in terms of their actions and their behaviour without being involved himself. The observer is separate from the activities taking place and the subjects of the research may or may not be aware that they are being observed; therefore, the observation technique emphasises the fact that the researcher's eyes are still a very good research instrument.

4.5.3 Questionnaires

According to Hussey and Hussey (in Sebiloane 2009:74-75), a questionnaire is defined as a list of carefully structured questions, chosen after considerable testing, with a view to eliciting reliable responses from a chosen sample. The aim is to find out what a selected group of participants do, think and feel.

Questionnaires can be used without direct personal contact with respondents. This statement reflects Brynard and Hanekom's (2006:46) views that questionnaires are a popular method for collecting data, since they give respondents enough time to think about the answers to the questions, and a large number of respondents, distributed over a large geographical area can be reached. In this study self-constructed questionnaires were formulated to gather information from the Office of the Speaker, which deals with issues related to IDP, public participation and budgeting. Municipal officials, ward councillors and members of the community also participated in the study by completing questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed and collected once the respondents had completed them. Both open-ended and closed questions were asked to enable respondents to give their opinions in their own words. (See Annexure B, C and D).

4.5.4 Research Ethics

It is important to indicate that research ethics require the researcher to work according to certain ethical standards – preferably articulated – through an

ethical policy. Ethical policies will, amongst others, protect individuals or group rights. In other words, the research should not be at the expense of the people involved in the research project.

The study of research ethics as postulated by Bless *et al.* (2009:140) also emphasises that research ethics help to prevent research abuses and assist investigators in understanding their responsibilities as ethical scholars.

Research ethics emphasise the humane and sensitive treatment of research participants who may be placed at varying degrees of risk by research procedures. It is however the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that his or her research is conducted ethically.

Confidentiality of the research results must be guaranteed and the respondents must be assured that their responses will be treated confidentially with the utmost sensitivity.

In conducting the study the researcher duly considered the research ethics. Therefore, a letter was written to the Municipal Manager of Tlokwe Local Municipality to request permission to conduct this study (See Annexure A). The letter outlined the research purpose and assured all participants that the information they would provide was purely for academic purposes.

The following section will now focus on analysis of the questionnaire and interviews.

4.6 ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires for this study were self-administered and therefore regarded as a data collection tool whereby written questions are presented to be answered by the respondent in written form. The questionnaires in this study also contain questions that are asked within the context of Chapter 2. The questions that the community answered were general in nature. This

was to find out to what extent the community is involved in the municipal affairs.

On the other hand, specific questions were answered by the Executive Mayor and municipal officials on the basis of their knowledge pertaining to the research topic.

4.6.1 Questionnaires

As instrument of the stated qualitative research in this study, a questionnaire was used to establish the opinions of the Executive Mayor, municipal officials and members of the community. (See Annexures B1, B2, & B3).

The researcher personally handed out questionnaires to the respondents and their responses were collected at a given time. About forty questionnaires were completed by white people from town, forty by Indians at Mohadin, forty at Promosa and about fifty to sixty at Ikageng township, considering the larger population of Ikageng as compared to other sections of Potchefstroom. These questionnaires were completed by the respondents and returned.

The selection of respondents for administering questionnaires was done on the basis of their involvement and knowledge to the research topic. This included senior members of the Tlokwe Local Municipality, ward committee members who largely represent the community of Tlokwe Local Municipality, and the coordinators in budget and IDP.

To further facilitate the analysis, the respondents and their responses were divided into those from the Executive Mayor, municipal officials and members of the community.

4.6.2 Questionnaire Analysis

A. Questionnaire for the Executive Mayor

The questionnaire is divided into sections A and B. Section A consists of question 1.1-1.4, outlines the demographic information of the Executive Mayor and was completed by the Executive Mayor. Section B consists of questions 1-8 and was utilized to establish the opinion of the Executive Mayor with regard to issues related to public participation strategy in budgeting.

B. Questionnaire for the Municipal Officials

This is the second questionnaire which is also divided into Sections A and B. It was completed by municipal officials who are in senior positions, ward councillors and IDP and budget representatives. Section A of this questionnaire consists of questions 1.1-1.5 to establish the profile of the municipal officials. Section B, which is the second part of the questionnaire, seeks to establish the municipal official's participation in issues related to budgeting and to find out if these officials are conversant with the municipal public participation strategy in budgeting, according to this research project.

C. Questionnaire for members of the community

The questionnaire (Annexure D) also has the same structure as that of the Executive Mayor and the Municipal Officials. The difference is that the community's questions are more general in nature. The reason why these questions are general is an attempt to obtain their opinion on community involvement in the municipal affairs, such as decision making, IDP and involvement in budgeting.

4.6.2.1 Overview of Executive Mayor's Questions

Tlokwe Local Municipality is faced with enormous challenges in facilitating public participation in the budgeting and IDP process.

The executive mayor is mandated with the new role of placing greater responsibility on political involvement of the politicians in the administration of the various directorates. Public participation necessitates municipal management to approach matters in a more holistic and transparent way.

The following questions were designed for the executive mayor (Annexure B). These questions were asked to establish the existence of workable and trusting relationships between the executive mayor, councillors and the community.

QUESTIONS

1. Which are the most significant challenges faced by Tlokwe Local Municipality in facilitating public participation in budgeting and IDP processes?
2. Motivate if *Batho Pele* Principles at this municipality are employed and foster public participation to improve services offered.
3. There is a need for public participation strategy in budgeting. Does the community know the public participation strategy?
4. In your opinion, is there a need for retraining and re-skilling municipal personnel to improve community involvement and service delivery at your municipality?
5. Do the Tlokwe Local Municipality residents trust the municipal leadership, and are they satisfied with the level of services provided?
6. Do you agree that the municipal budget must be open for inspection by the public to promote transparency?
7. Should the budget management decisions be linked to and based on the IDP?

QUESTION 1

WHICH ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES FACED BY TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN FACILITATING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BUDGETING AND IDP PROCESSES?

RESPONSE

The Executive Mayor agrees and indicates that the community members do not attend meetings for budgeting and IDP as expected. As a municipality, they have noticed that the IDP priorities are based on emotions of the people and that government is unable to meet the people's expectations. The Executive Mayor is optimistic that the municipality will address this challenge by inter alia:

- Transforming the municipality in order to meet the statutory requirements;
- Setting up effective mechanisms for public participation; and
- Implementing strategies and programmes to achieve the objectives of local government in general.

QUESTION 2

*MOTIVATE IF **BATHO PELE** PRINCIPLES AT THIS MUNICIPALITY ARE EMPLOYED AND FOSTERS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TO IMPROVE SERVICES OFFERED.*

RESPONSE

The Executive Mayor acknowledges his role as a politician, especially in the social and economical upliftment of the community. The Executive Mayor also agrees that he has an administrative and managerial function to fulfil in the municipality to try to adhere to the *Batho Pele* Principles. According to

him, the *Batho Pele* Principles and community participation are not fully employed by the municipality.

QUESTION 3

THERE IS A NEED FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY IN BUDGETING. DOES THE COMMUNITY KNOW THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY?

RESPONSE

The Executive Mayor admits that the municipality does not have an effective public participation strategy in budgeting and IDP. He indicates that the municipality uses guidelines from national government. As a result, when they conclude the IDP process, their undertakings are not monitored by the community.

QUESTION 4

IN YOUR OPINION, IS THERE A NEED FOR RETRAINING AND RESKILLING MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY AT YOUR MUNICIPALITY?

RESPONSE

The Executive Mayor strongly agrees that municipal personnel must be equipped to face the challenges and problems that face a municipality. Municipal personnel must also adapt to the changing circumstances by being sufficiently skilled and trained. The Executive Mayor acknowledges skills shortages, service delivery backlogs and an insufficient revenue base because of large numbers of poor and indigent people prevalent in his municipality.

QUESTION 5

THE TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY RESIDENTS TRUST THE MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP AND ARE SATISFIED WITH THE LEVEL OF SERVICES PROVIDED

RESPONSE

The Executive Mayor feels that the people trust them though there are challenges on social and political interference in the administration. The Executive mayor is hopeful that political problems related to the abuse of power will be addressed.

QUESTION 6

THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET MUST BE OPEN FOR INSPECTION BY THE PUBLIC TO PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY

RESPONSE

The motivation given by the Executive Mayor is that their municipality adheres to the open door policy. The budget and IDP are accessible and made available in the libraries, internet and documents are available on request. He also indicates that awareness campaigns are seldom undertaken to make the public aware. The Executive Mayor admits to poor participation of the community in the municipal affairs.

QUESTION 7

THE BUDGET MANAGEMENT DECISIONS SHOULD BE LINKED TO AND BASED ON THE IDP

RESPONSE

The Executive Mayor maintains that the IDP is a “bible” of what the people must expect, to follow with clear budget allocations for the year. He believes strongly that the IDP informs the budget. The Executive Mayor further confirms that the community is not engaged on the draft budget and IDP as community members only expect their inputs to be submitted by the specific ward councillor. The Executive Mayor, however, expresses the view that perceived representational participation through the ward councillor is identical to participation by the community. In this regard, he feels that there are certain decisions within the powers of the municipality officials who have the right to take such decisions.

4.6.2.2 Interpretation of the Executive Mayor’s response

The Executive Mayor acknowledges that great challenges face his municipal management. Through data collected, it can be indicated that the Executive Mayor confirms that it is required for municipalities, including Tlokwe Local Municipality, to be developmental in order to meet perceived challenges. He further alludes to the fact that management and staff have assessed their strengths and short comings in order to adapt and gear up for service delivery challenges. The Executive Mayor does not see effective public participation in his municipality in relationships with the community and acknowledges that a concerted effort and commitment by all stakeholders could improve participation. He also points out the major challenges of poverty and unemployment which derail community participation as critical.

Based on the leading theoretical argument of this study, a public participation strategy in the changing social and political environment is indispensable within the management practices of Tlokwe Local Municipality.

Regarding a participation strategy in budgeting, the Executive Mayor agrees that his municipality is faced by a harsh reality reflecting the deficiency in forging strategic links and engaging the community on a wide range of

municipal programmes and projects. Empirical research thus shows that an effective participation strategy in the Tlokwe Local Municipality is lacking, and, from the evidence available, one cannot speak of significant public participation at all. The municipality only uses guidelines from national government.

As regards a need for retraining and re-skilling municipal personnel, the Executive Mayor agrees that the municipal personnel possess inadequate skills and technical competencies to meet people's socio-economic challenges and expectations. He feels that personnel should be trained and their skills be developed to ensure sound support in carrying out management functions. The Executive Mayor also feels that for democracy to survive and flourish, a substantial portion of its citizens must possess skills. He regards this as important because they use consultants regarding financial matters of the municipality. He also feels that lack of skills not only derails but also affects the progress of the municipality and its intended objectives. So, training and re-skilling of officials should be continuous in order to adapt to the ever changing municipal environment.

With reference to the residents' trust of the municipal leadership, the Executive Mayor feels that the community does trust them. He acknowledges political tensions and political challenges in the administration of the municipality as a serious concern. He admits that political interference in the administration will weaken public participation and trust, thereby contributing to the lack of strategic direction of the municipality. A relationship of trust and respect between the community and the municipality must be developed. This study outlined in Chapter 2 that participation through inclusiveness and empowerment of citizens should be an underlying principle in decision making and implementation.

As regards the municipal budget to be open for inspection by the public, the Executive Mayor admits to poor participation of the community in budgeting. According to him, Tlokwe Local Municipality endeavours to communicate all important matters to its residents in the most transparent and efficient way

possible. The Executive Mayor concurs that open and transparent budget for inspection by the public promotes democracy. The enabling legislation such as the Municipal Systems Act makes provision for the extension of citizen participation in the governing of a municipality. The public participation process must be transparent to ensure that people are afforded the opportunity in the development and control of the municipal budget. So, the Executive Mayor feels that residents of Tlokwe Local Municipality must be encouraged to participate in the affairs of the municipality to ensure the establishment of working partnerships with the local community. In this regard, effective mechanisms, procedures and structures must be put in place to facilitate consultation, involvement and mobilisation of the community in the formal processes of policy making and implementation.

As stated in Chapter 2, it is necessary to fulfil the needs of the communities to eradicate disadvantages of the past despite the limited resources available to the municipality. Effective mechanisms for consultation and participation should be in place.

Furthermore, policies and the implementation of strategies and programmes should be determined to achieve the objectives of local government in general. Service delivery standards should be set up to ensure that all people have access to those services. However, it can be indicated that the Executive Mayor concedes that the community should be allowed to make certain inputs with regard to development issues in a municipality. The emphasis should be placed on specialist group participation in all council decision-making processes. As argued in this study, effective participation involves true devolution of power to the citizens at grassroots level.

4.6.2.3 Overview of Municipal Officials' questions

The following questions were used to engage municipal officials in an attempt to obtain their opinion regarding a public participation strategy in budgeting (Annexure C).

QUESTIONS

1. Are there challenges that you experience in the new dispensation for the local municipalities?
2. As an employee of Tlokwe Local Municipality, are you suitably qualified and effective to the success of the municipality in improving service delivery?
3. In your view, who should participate in the budget process of municipality and why do you think so?
4. Do you think the municipal budget must be open for inspection by the public?
5. Can public participation strategy help in involving community participation in the budgeting process?
6. Overall, how do you rate community involvement at your municipality for effective and efficient service delivery?
7. To what extent, with regard to Tlokwe Local Municipality, would you agree with the statements below:
 - a. Supervisors promote meaningful participation and provides members of the community with valuable information on budgeting, and;
 - b. Does political factionalism exist in your municipality?

The municipal officials perceived themselves differently from the Executive Mayor. Of those who responded to the questionnaire, the collective response was as follows:

QUESTION 1

ARE THERE CHALLENGES THAT YOU EXPERIENCE IN THE NEW DISPENSATION FOR THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES?

RESPONSE

The majority of the municipal officials agree that there are challenges facing municipal management in the new dispensation. The most important challenges to address are, amongst others, the following:

- To meet the needs of the community with the limited resources available;
- Empowerment of ward committee members to participate fully in both the IDP and budget process;
- The content of workshops that the municipal officials attended are deemed to be limited, thus only equipping them to monitor municipal services at community level; and
- To put in place effective mechanisms for consultation and participation.

QUESTION 2

AS AN EMPLOYEE OF TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY ARE YOU SUITABLY QUALIFIED AND EFFECTIVE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE MUNICIPALITY IN IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY?

RESPONSE

All municipal officials agree that they see themselves sufficiently skilled, competent and effective to the success of this municipality. They also agree and acknowledge the fact that due to the challenges that arise from time to time, there is room for improvement. Some municipal officials do not concur with the statement above. They express the view that not all personnel are skilled, and alluded to the fact that those who are skilled are either not fully functional or are misplaced, and those not skilled are placed in wrong positions and this hampers service delivery.

QUESTION 3

IN YOUR VIEW, WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE BUDGET PROCESSES OF THE MUNICIPALITY, AND WHY DO YOU THINK SO?

RESPONSE

All officials agree that the community, municipal officials and stakeholders should meaningfully participate in the budget process of the municipality. They believe that an inclusive approach is needed to ensure that different groups have the opportunity to participate and are not disadvantaged in the process. However, a strong view exists that behind the government's policies is a concern for developing the capacity of individuals to engage and take decisions on local issues. This is clearly the case in both the IDP and budget process.

QUESTION 4

DO YOU THINK THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET MUST BE OPEN FOR INSPECTION BY THE PUBLIC?

RESPONSE

Municipal officials hold a strong view that members of the public should not merely be recipients of information, but rather be given an opportunity to make an input in the budget. The budget must be open for meaningful input from the community – tailored to their interests and needs. The majority of senior managers at Tlokwe Local Municipality believe that senior managers understand the importance of a transparent budget, but that this understanding does not cascade down to lower levels of management.

QUESTION 5

CAN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY HELP IN INVOLVING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN BUDGETING PROCESSES?

RESPONSE

There was a common feeling among municipal officials that legislation such as the Municipal Systems Act indicates and dictates councillors to involve communities in the preparation, implementation, and reviews of the IDP and the preparation of its budget. But municipal officials at Tlokwe Local Municipality indicate that they do not know of any public participation strategy employed by their municipality.

QUESTION 6

OVERALL, HOW DO YOU RATE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AT YOUR MUNICIPALITY FOR EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY?

RESPONSE

The municipal officials all rated the community involvement at their municipality as moderate. They also agree that despite the challenges that their municipality faces, they would like to contribute to the improvement of services offered by the municipality and the quality of life of residents. They believe that policies regarding the use of local labour on infrastructure and projects need to be clarified and communicated to the residents. Respondents also wanted the politicians' involvement in the IDP and budget to be minimal so as to be accorded the opportunity to have input in such processes.

QUESTION 7

TO WHAT EXTENT, WITH REGARD TO TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY WOULD YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT BELOW:

- a) SUPERVISORS PROMOTE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION AND PROVIDE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WITH VALUABLE INFORMATION ON BUDGETING, AND*
- b) DOES POLITICAL FACTIONALISM EXIST IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY?*

RESPONSE

The response of the municipal officials to question 7 indicates that supervisors at Tlokwe Local Municipality do not promote meaningful participation according to their understanding. The decision-making in the budget is performed solely by the municipal senior management.

Concerning political factionalism prevalent in the municipality, the municipal officials agree that political interference in the administration is rife, but express hope that these political problems that are related to the abuse of power will be addressed.

4.6.2.4 Interpretation of Municipal Officials' responses

The majority of municipal officials' responses indicate that they are faced with challenges in the new dispensation. Some of the challenges are:

- Lack of training in all planning systems;
- Limited resources;
- Administrative interference by politicians, and
- Poor leadership skills.

Municipal officials also agree that managers of the municipality must be equipped academically to be able to analyse the statutory framework of the new dispensation for local government.

Despite municipal officials' belief that they are sufficiently skilled, some respondents agree that personnel should be trained so as to develop their skills to ensure sound support when carrying out managerial duties. Respondents also state that critical thinking is very important especially in the promotion and implementation of a public participation strategy. This will ensure that creative initiatives are developed to carry out plans and strategies.

The municipal officials concur with the Executive Mayor that an inclusive approach is necessary to ensure that different groups such as members of the public and stakeholders participate in budget inspection. They further mention some obstacles for participation in the budget process by highlighting, inter alia;

- Conditions in the political environment that may limit the commitment of municipal officials to seeking input;
- Professional administrators who have concerns about sharing decision making on complex issues with the public; and
- Administrators and elected officials feel that the public already have sufficient access.

The Tlokwe Local Municipality's officials hold the view that a transparent budget must cascade down to lower levels of municipal management. They also believe that the municipality is not doing as much as it should to ensure that the public is aware of the IDP and budgeting participation strategy. The municipal officials further acknowledge that embracing the principles of public participation within local authorities relates to governance cultures, within the overall framework of democracy. Perhaps the community served by Tlokwe Local Municipality needs to be involved in a public participation process on determining its role and function. Structures and mechanisms referred to in

Chapter 2 of this study should be enhanced in facilitating effective community participation. Accountability and strengthening of public participation in municipal processes and decisions must be provided for within a framework of certain minimum standards.

4.6.2.5 Overview of Community of Tlokwe Municipality's questions

The following overview of questions for the community was compiled to gain an insight into whether effective public participation at this municipality takes place to meet the statutory requirements. See Annexure.

1. What is the IDP?
2. Are you satisfied with the services rendered by your municipality?
3. Have you seen any improvement in the services rendered by your municipality in the past?
4. Do municipal officials possess sufficient capacity for service delivery?
5. Are training programmes or workshops essential to equip municipal personnel?
6. Does Tlokwe Local Municipality:
 - 6.1 Listen to the people's needs?
 - 6.2 Involve the public in IDP and budget processes?
7. Can you explain what do you think will improve services at this municipality?
8. Does the community know the municipal strategy for community participation?
9. Do you see public participation at this municipality as lacking, improving, good, or not good at all? Explain.
10. Are officials at this municipality honest, trustworthy and do they understand their role?

QUESTION 1

AS THE RESIDENT OF TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY I KNOW WHAT IDP (INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING) IS. (INDICATE YOUR CHOICE WITH A TICK (✓) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK).

RESPONSE

From 90% of the respondents' answers, it is clear that the residents do not know what the IDP is, or they do not understand it. Only 10% of respondents seem to know the IDP as a municipal strategic plan.

QUESTION 2

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE SERVICES RENDERED BY YOUR MUNICIPALITY? ARE YOU VERY SATISFIED, SATISFIED, NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED, VERY DISSATISFIED?

SERVICE	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEITHER/NOR	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
1. Transparency of Council decisions					
2. Community participation in budgeting processes					
3. Participation in Council decisions					

RESPONSE

The responses to this question indicate that 95% of the residents are very dissatisfied with regard to transparency of council decisions, community participation in budgeting processes and participation in the IDP. The other 5% of respondents are those who are not aware that they must make inputs to municipal IDP and budgeting processes as required by legislation. The community members also express concern that the municipality must listen and address people's needs.

QUESTION 3

YES/NO = HAVE YOU SEEN ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THE SERVICES RENDERED BY YOUR MUNICIPALITY THE PAST YEAR?

RESPONSE

Although there were a lot of different opinions in response to this question, the majority of responses reflected that they do not see improvements in the services rendered by the municipality. They are rendered lip-service which does not better their lives. They further attribute this to a lack of leadership by the municipality.

QUESTION 4

YES/NO = MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS POSSESSES SUFFICIENT CAPACITY FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

RESPONSE

With reference to municipal's capacity, 95% of the respondents agree that officials do not possess sufficient capacity for service delivery.

QUESTION 5

ARE TRAINING PROGRAMMES (WORKSHOPS) ESSENTIAL TO EQUIP MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL?

RESPONSE

The response to this question reflected that 90% of the respondents agree that training programmes are essential to re-skill municipal officials.

QUESTION 6

HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OVER THE PAST YEAR IN:

STATEMENTS	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEITHER/NOR	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
6.1 Listening to the people's needs					
6.2 Involving the public in both the IDP and budgeting processes					

RESPONSE

The respondents indicate that they are very dissatisfied with regard to the transparency of decisions taken by council. They indicate that the municipality should not instruct or impose on them what they must do. They want to be part and parcel of the IDP and budget process from the initial stage to the implementation phase.

QUESTION 7

WHAT, IN YOUR OPINION, WILL BE NEEDED FOR SERVICES RENDERED TO BE IMPROVED AT THIS MUNICIPALITY? EXPLAIN.

RESPONSE

The response to this question basically addresses the community needs, which are, amongst others, the following:

- The community to be included in council decisions (transparency);
- Effective and efficient leadership is needed;
- Effective communication channels between the municipality and stakeholders;
- Community invitations to all affairs of the municipality to make inputs in IDP and budget processes as required by legislation;
- Relevant skills, knowledge and capacity amongst some key role players including councillors, administration and community based organisations;
- Buy slot from the local media, Aganang Radio Station, to keep the community informed of developments with municipal programmes and plans;
- Change the top-down approach and adopt participatory management systems;
- The community representative to receive training on the IDP and budgeting process; and
- Effective public consultation within which the draft IDP and budget are presented and discussed.

QUESTION 8

DOES THE COMMUNITY KNOW THE MUNICIPAL STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION?

RESPONSE

100% of respondents indicate that they do not know any municipal strategy for public participation. They point out that they are called to attend meetings at a short notice. Respondents also complain that the municipality's meetings are called at awkward times, sometimes without an agenda, and as a result they believe that their participation is not valued.

QUESTION 9

DO YOU SEE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT THIS MUNICIPALITY AS LACKING, IMPROVING, GOOD, OR NOT GOOD AT ALL?

RESPONSE

Almost all respondents see public participation at this municipality as lacking and not good at all. The municipality is not using any effective participation strategy.

QUESTION 10

ARE OFFICIALS AT THIS MUNICIPALITY HONEST, TRUSTWORTHY AND UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLE?

RESPONSE

With reference to official's honesty and trustworthiness at Tlokwe Local Municipality, 100% of the respondents agree that officials are not honest and trustworthy. Respondents indicate that the decline in trust of the public is due to the fact that the municipality has become less effective (indeed at times part of the problem rather than the solution), and to lack political leadership on the strategic and planning processes. This leads to the IDP and budgeting being driven administratively and becoming a technical process.

4.6.2.6 Interpretation of Community's Responses

Based on the community's responses or knowledge about the IDP, the 10% of community members who know what the IDP is, are those who reside in town, and the 90% who do not are those in the surrounding township who are confronted by a number of serious issues, including housing, water and electricity. The problem of lack of knowledge can be attributed to the fact that residents in the townships, as stated by some municipal officials, do not

attend the IDP meetings when called or are simply not interested. They are only concerned with immediate needs as indicated above.

With regard to transparency of municipal decisions, the Tlokwe Local Municipality community members are very dissatisfied that the council is not really involving them in decision making. Those who happen to attend council meetings feel that they are given little time to express their views and thus discourage their participation. Respondents view decision making in the IDP and budgeting processes as being performed unilaterally by the council, and thus outside the community's participation and input. The respondents were also dissatisfied with the fact that the municipality takes ultimate decisions on the drafted IDP, and they doubt whether their positive input is taken on board.

The residents further express concern with regard to poor services rendered. They feel that the tenders that the municipality provides are not given to people with relevant skills, and question the fairness thereof. Respondents also indicate that most people in the municipality possess insufficient capacity and are in key positions in the municipal area. They hold a strong view that capacity building and skills transfer will improve skills development within the municipality.

With regard to community needs, the respondents allude amongst others to municipal change in attitude that the top-down approach be changed to an adoption of participatory management systems. The community will be committed to participate in the IDP and budget processes if they perceive that their contributions yield results. The council decision-making process should allow the community an opportunity to directly inform both the IDP and budget process.

This study also reveals that respondents agree that they do not know the municipal strategy document that should outline all facets of public participation, communication and resources with those people mainly responsible. They believe that a strategy would help the municipality to interact with the public regarding all IDP and budget processes. In the

absence of a public participation strategy, respondents see public participation at this municipality as lacking and not good at all.

According to respondents, officials at Tlokwe Local Municipality are not honest and trustworthy. This decline in trust of the public is owing to the fact that the municipality has become less effective, indeed at times becomes part of the problem rather than the solution. Respondents also highlighted lack of political leadership on the strategic and planning processes, leading to the IDP and budget being driven administratively and becoming a technical process. The residents' responses to the questionnaire are unanimous about their obvious lack of participation in budgeting.

From the above analysis of collected data, in terms of this study, it is concluded that public participation strategy is fluid at Tlokwe Local Municipality.

Some community members' responses indicate that internal communication between administration and political leadership of Tlokwe Local Municipality, needs to be managed in a way that will build trust, honesty and understanding of main processes such as the IDP and annual budget cycles. The municipality has to have integrity in all that it does, from the way it treats and works with the public to the way it allocates its resources. If there is a lack of trust within the municipality, especially when it is in a stable state, it is unlikely that people will trust the officials so as to enable them to make meaningful contributions. A high level of trust based on openness is an essential prerequisite for participation of the community and stakeholders. This will, however, encourage and bring about joint decision making between the municipality and the community. The community would like to have the kind of leadership that will recognise its input in decision making.

4.7 CONCLUSION

It is evident from the above interpretation of collected data, that the application of public participation mechanisms in the integrated development

planning and budgeting processes in the Tlokwe Local Municipality is not well coordinated and resourced. There is no public participation strategy document that contains and highlights Tlokwe Local Municipality's comprehensive IDP and budget facets that should ensure active and meaningful participation of the Potchefstroom community in the way in which it is required to ensure optimal delivery of services. Residents feel that municipal officials should not be trusted as they do not carry their mandate as promised. On the other hand, the council and the municipal administrators do not have the interest of each other at heart. Administrators complain that they are not consulted and involved in matters that affect them and cannot make any contribution. There is no clear definition between political and administrative roles. There is also a lack of compliance as to what is already available in terms of the regulatory framework.

It must further be indicated that a clear participation strategy will ensure that the integrated development planning process does involve communities and stakeholders. This will, however depend on the provision of the necessary resources in the form of officials of the municipality with the necessary skills and capacity to drive this critical strategic tool.

Thus, following interpretation of collected data by this study, it can be concluded that poor public participation has resulted in poor communication between municipal officials, councillors and the community.

The following chapter will deal with the summary, research findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to address the issue of a public participation strategy in South African local government towards improved service delivery, with special reference to the Tlokwe Local Municipality. The empirical research was conducted in the previous chapter to determine whether public participation and associated strategies in budget decision making at Tlokwe Local Municipality is effective or minimalist in order to meet the challenges that face the municipality.

This final chapter will provide a review of the four previous chapters. These will be based on the summary, research findings, recommendations and conclusion.

5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 stated that local government is a key role player in the development process of South Africa. The transformation process to establish non-racial and viable municipalities is a crucial strategic move to enable local government to fulfil its developmental role. In this regard, there is a need for the establishment of an effective, efficient, vibrant and innovative local government system. Municipal officials will play a key role in ensuring that people receive quality leadership, and they need to develop capacities to be more strategic in their orientation, to maximise integrated capacity and to be much more community orientated to face the challenges.

Tlokwe Local Municipality needs to develop mechanisms to interact with community groups and to identify service needs and priorities. It is further emphasised that without the capacity to strategise, integrate and interface

with stakeholders, the Tlokwe Local Municipality is unlikely to be sustainable in the future.

Chapter 2 focused on the theoretical overview of a public participation strategy in budgeting in local government. It also focused on the municipality's IDP and the role of local government in promoting the different approaches to participation as Government attempt to involve citizens in decision making through processes of consultation and engagement. However, it is required of municipalities, including Tlokwe Local Municipality, that the local people should be involved in their strategic move and to consider their financial requirements and policies within a holistic framework. Fowler (1999:2) contends that the Municipal Systems Act as stated in Chapter 2 of this study challenges municipalities in South Africa to provide the following:

- Mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities;
- Ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable and cost effective;
- Establishment of working partnerships with the communities with the municipal areas;
- Resource mobilisation and organisational change which underpin the notion of developmental local government;
- To empower and ensure that municipalities put in place the service/tariffs and credit control policies that take their needs into account;
- To establish a framework for support, monitoring and standard setting by other spheres of government in order to progressively build local government into an efficient, front-line development agency capable of integrating the activities of all spheres of government for the overall social and economic development of communities.

The Constitution and the Municipal Systems Act clearly stipulate that the municipality must mobilise the involvement and commitment of its stakeholders by establishing an effective participatory process. A participation strategy is indispensable as stated in Chapter 2 of this study.

Thus public involvement is valuable as a key element of a vibrant, open and participatory democracy.

Chapter 3 dealt with the statutory framework and regulatory requirements governing participation. In the past, that is, before the historical 1994 democratic elections, there was no culture of actively involving the public in local municipalities. Service provision was not sustainable as the majority of the African population was not part of the decision making of the local municipality.

This chapter indicated that the advent of democracy has brought a paradigm shift, and eventually, there was an emphasis on transparency in municipal activities, greater public accountability and a shift in how municipalities included all citizens to be active in decision making processes in terms of policing and legislation. The South African government has also passed legislation to make public participation a requirement for municipal decision making, planning, budgeting and finances.

However, key challenges facing municipalities, are to ensure the effectiveness of public participation that needs to be addressed through the creative energies of municipal stakeholders and local communities.

Legislation also requires that municipalities should have an effective participation strategy. The Executive Mayor, municipal manager and municipal officials of different directorates are important in the municipal area which should ensure that the needs of the community are addressed.

Democratic, transparent and accountable practices in municipalities are indispensable qualities in ensuring effective service delivery.

Chapter 4 dealt with the empirical research component of the study conducted among the Executive Mayor, municipal officials and residents of Tlokwe Local Municipality. Personal conversations were held with key administrative personnel and questionnaires were also given to the Executive Mayor, municipal officials and community members. This chapter emphasised that the real challenges of public participation are at grassroots level and explored the concerns of the public at large.

5.3 REALISATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The first objective of this study was to provide a theoretical exposition of public participation concepts and related principles for budgeting. To achieve this objective, the theoretical overview of public participation strategy in budgeting in local government was provided in Chapter 2.

The second objective was to describe the current statutory and regulatory framework requirements required of developmental local government in order to facilitate public participation in the budget process and the IDP. Chapter 3 accomplished this objective by emphasizing structures, processes and mechanisms employed within the Tlokwe Local Municipality in order to meet challenges of effective and efficient service delivery.

Thirdly, the objective was to establish the nature and extent of a public participation strategy for budgeting and IDP manifested in Tlokwe Local Municipality. Chapter 3 highlighted that in ensuring effective public participation, Tlokwe Local Municipality needs an effective public participation strategy as required by legislation.

The last objective was to suggest recommendations that may propose solutions to Tlokwe Municipal Management on improving a strategy for public participation in the IDP and budget process. In achieving this objective, Chapter 5 mainly focused on an effective public participation strategy.

5.4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

In the light of this study's exposition on public participation, the following findings were reached:

The research for this study has revealed that there is poor attendance of meetings by community members. One municipal respondent points out that the level of public participation differs within the urban area (town) and the townships. The TLM community respondents cite lack of confidence in the municipality as a reason for poor attendance at community meetings. Failure by the municipality to respond to community needs and expectations can also be seen as a contributing factor.

The *Batho Pele* Principles are not fully implemented in this municipality. Mofolo and Smith (2009:430) state that the key to address the impatience and protests that result from the failure of municipalities concerning fulfilment of the promises of social and economic development would be the broader implementation of *Batho Pele* Principles. This means, *Batho Pele* Principles should not be implemented only to individual residents across the counter, but should also serve as an approach when addressing collective needs of residents.

There are processes, systems and mechanisms in TLM to integrate all planning systems, but these processes and systems are not well coordinated due to lack of proper strategic planning. To ensure that the municipality delivers its developmental mandate for effective public participation, there is need for meaningful measures to be implemented, such as the implementation of an effective strategy. Both the municipal officials and community members do not have knowledge of any strategy used by the municipality.

This study has shown that public participation remains a great challenge within this municipality. The perception of community members is that they are not involved in the draft budget which affects their lives, and this has

brought dissatisfaction to them as members of the community. Other challenges include: service delivery backlogs, insufficient revenue base, and public awareness campaigns seldom being undertaken at Tlokwe Local Municipality.

Skills shortages exist, and comprehensive training is lacking as the community respondents claim that they have never received training on the IDP and its processes. Hence, there is no comprehensive understanding of what the IDP is and what the budget entails amongst all stakeholders at TLM. On the other hand, this study has revealed that some municipal officials did attend some training courses, but regarded these as inadequate as far as increasing their capacity, particularly in the IDP and budget processes is concerned. This study also indicates that community respondents are not satisfied with municipal officials who do not possess sufficient capacity for services rendered. Masango (2009:130) concurs that in order to develop and sustain public participation, there must be a certain level of education and sophistication amongst members of society.

The findings of this study are supported by an overview of the level of education of residents in the municipal area. The table below illustrates that less than 21% of the study area population have a grade 12 or higher education qualification, while 12,8% have no schooling. The implication of the above information is that very few people are academically educated, and this will probably influence effective participation negatively.

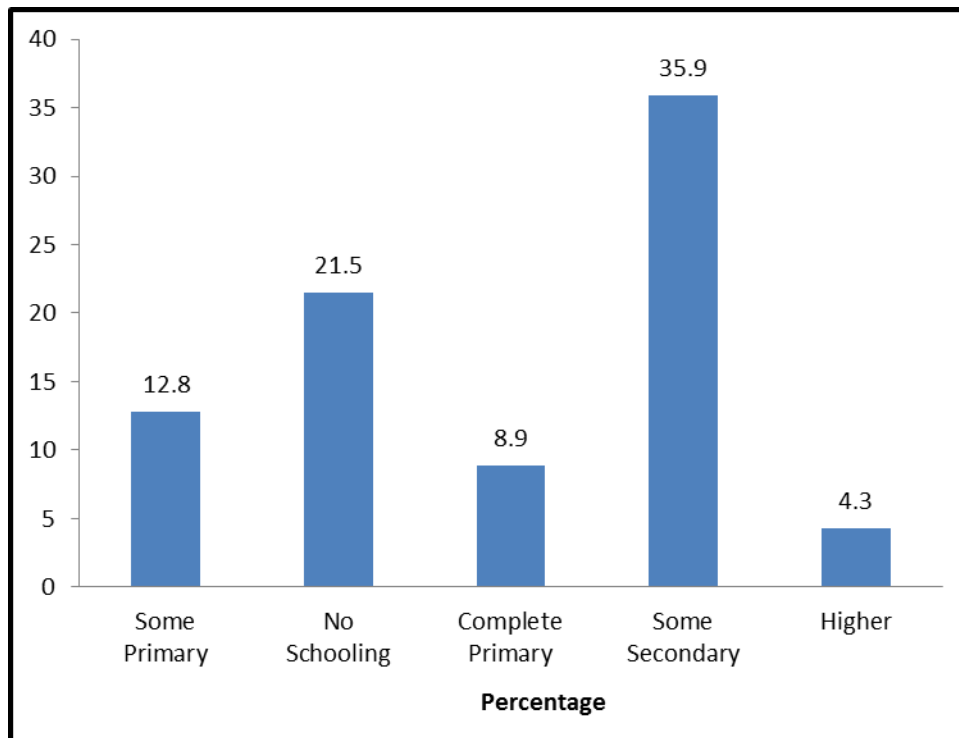


Table 5.1 Education levels

Source: Tlokwe Local Municipality (2009-2010:45)

There are communication systems and plans at Tlokwe Local Municipality which seem not to be effective due to lack of effective communication strategy by the municipality towards the community. New communication procedures are also not adequately communicated; instead community meetings are used for communication purposes.

It was also established during the collection of data that most municipal operational and functional employees are not kept informed of the legislative mandate and developments implemented in other municipalities. This may be attributed to the fact that there is a lack of active and effective participation by community members in joint municipal decision making. Phago and Malan (2004:489) sound a warning that these pitfalls and impediments to recognise the significance of legislation and other municipal experiences in the implementation process can negatively influence participation of the community and stakeholders.

The municipality needs to regularly consult with the community on matters that directly affect them, and give feedback. Feedback based on either accepting or rejecting community inputs is crucial. At Tlokwe Local Municipality there are no feedback mechanisms in place.

The research findings also indicate the need for a change in mindset on all levels of the municipality, and to embed community consultation into the practice of planning as the norm. Respondents feel that an underlying distrust of this municipality by the public remains, coupled with apathy and a perception of dishonesty. These serve as barriers to participation particularly for marginalised members of the community who are not involved in the IDP and budget process. Respondents also express concern that greater political interference in the IDP and budget process have an influence on administrators when performing their duties and that a fine balance is needed between politics and administration to enable officials who are entirely responsible for budgets to perform their duties without political interferences. The respondents furthermore indicate that their municipality is plagued by political rivalry and intolerance. These political tensions tend to weaken public participation and grievously undermine the capacity of development at their municipality.

The following section will deal with recommendations which emanate from the findings:

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The linkage between the IDP and budget processes can be identified as very important if effective participation should occur, and the following recommendations need to be considered:

- **Municipal Structured IDP Meetings**

It has been revealed in this study that poorly attended municipal meetings are due to community members' lack of confidence in this municipality, because

they feel that their needs and expectations are not met. For Tlokwe Local Municipality meetings to be successful, these meetings should not be measured according to mere attendance, but rather on the municipality's ability to transform community needs and wants into real solutions.

The IDP meetings should not be seen as the sole responsibility of only a few municipal officials, but as the joint responsibility of senior management, councillors and community. Tlokwe Local Municipality should structure IDP meetings so that they afford a hearing to community related issues that draw interest from community members. With quality statements of community involvement, realistic resourcing and a fundamental shift in mind-set, there could be a move towards more inclusive participation in IDP and budget planning.

- ***Batho Pele Principles***

It has been established that owing to the municipal failure concerning fulfilment of the promises of social and economic development, the implementation of effective Batho Pele principles has become a necessity. There is a need for minimum service standards to be met by all municipal employees to improve performance.

It is advocated that public institutions, such as Tlokwe Local Municipality, should use *Batho Pele* principles as a strategic mechanism to address the shortfalls of its management. The TLM should use *Batho Pele* as a communication tool with ward committees, NGOs, CBOs and community members. The municipality should give real meaning to *Batho Pele* principles as the strategic challenge facing the public service. However, the community of Tlokwe Local Municipality should be awarded the opportunity to express their opinion in ensuring that the principles of *Batho Pele* are adhered to.

- **Transformative Participation**

It was indicated earlier in this study that public participation remains a challenge. To address this challenge, there are several possibilities for re-engineering the present system in order to encourage full public participation. There is need for a positive attitude towards seeking forums where the community can meet their representatives in an atmosphere that is conducive to true communication. At Tlokwe Local Municipality, transformation processes should promote greater transparency and external accountability.

The community should be educated in order to claim their right to participate actively in IDP and budget processes as these affect their lives directly. The Tlokwe Municipality should formulate its IDP in such a way as to make it understandable to all stakeholders. The IDP will then ensure that the Tlokwe Local Municipality remains accountable to its constituencies. Public participation leads to outcomes that better reflect the views and aspirations and meet the needs of the wider community in all its diversity. On the other hand, educating elected officials and community members about their rights and responsibilities has to be a funded mandate for all municipalities, and a proper monitoring and evaluation strategy must be put in place.

To meet the challenges of transformation, extensive workshops for municipal officials, politicians and community based organisation representatives should be regularly held to allow IDP role players a better understanding of the linkages with financial commitments.

The roles of both the politicians and senior officials of Tlokwe Local Municipality should be reviewed in the transformation process. This is to ensure that they act as transformed champions who are committed to driving the implementation of transformation forward.

- **Training and Development**

The Tlokwe Local Municipality needs to have an overall strategic approach. This will be particularly important in implementing policies aimed at altering structural aspects of the municipality. A well-planned training and development programme that is monitored, evaluated and revised as required is one of the strategies of improving performance. Training and development should be a key way to ensure that the importance of the IDP and budget implementation plan is conducted to all municipal stakeholders. Some officials at Tlokwe Municipality believe that proper training at all levels must be conducted and that there should be no political interference in the work of respective officials when dealing with the budget. There is a need for the public to learn about complex public budgeting. This can be done through training programmes and awareness campaigns.

The re-training and re-development of the municipal officials should be an essential prerequisite that will ensure effective implementation, participation and control over budgetary allocations. The municipal officials should also be trained in IDPs that include the prioritized needs of the community.

Training and development strategies should enhance knowledge, skills and attitudes. Enhancing effective participation through training and development might entail elevating other developmental aspects including the building of human capital, local economy, and social capital to achieve the goal of a better life for all.

It is against this backdrop that knowledgeable, skilful and conscientised contributions to community development are required to meet the challenge of dependence syndrome in order to transform state to citizen relations. In other words, community dependence on local government should be minimal. Participation in municipal affairs needs to have a feeling (quality) of power and effectiveness.

- **Empowerment**

Empowerment entails community participation to have an influence on the IDP process and it is therefore essential for community participants to be well informed. Based on the findings of this research study, capacity building interventions are required in Tlokwe Local Municipality. Skills transfer and capacity building are needed through all the projects implemented in the municipal area. The Tlokwe Local Municipality is required to develop its human resource capacity to a level that enables it to perform its functions and exercise its powers effectively, efficiently and economically. It is recommended that workshops be considered to address and respond to any gaps in capacity revealed by community participants.

Measures must be established to finance training programmes for municipal officials. The community should, on the other hand, have the capacity and the right to act and influence the development process. Consideration must be given to the empowerment of and equal access to and control of resources and decision making of the municipality.

Tlokwe Local Municipality managers and IDP committees need to introduce the concepts of community organisation, teamwork and empowerment to local government. In order for both municipal officials and the community to take advantage of empowerment, and in order to ensure that they play a full and positive role within the municipal management process, they need to be trained and developed.

- **Communication**

Tlokwe Local Municipality should restructure its organisation in such a way as to encourage inter-departmental communication and co-ordination. A clear and comprehensible communication strategy is needed as part of the broader strategy in Tlokwe Local Municipality. This communication strategy should be simple and in the language understood by the majority of residents of the

municipal area. Community meetings should not be used for communication purposes, as such. The municipal officials should improve their communication skills to communicate effectively with residents to ensure that information and knowledge are conveyed. In this regard, regular workshops for municipal officials are important.

Communication helps promote social cohesion by making real connections with the public and offering them a tangible stake in decision making.

Feedback mechanisms, especially from the municipal officials, must be encouraged and listened to. Improved communications must be one of the desired improvements in the municipal management project.

Those responsible for management processes at Tlokwe Local Municipality need to have – or develop through training – effective communication skills. The ability to communicate well also includes the skill to listen and empathise. Tlokwe Local Municipality's communication within the community must be clear and consistent, open and honest, with opportunities for all to contribute.

- **Innovative forms of consultation**

In order to improve the current consultation regarding budget and IDP participation in Tlokwe Local Municipality, it is proposed that the following forms of consultation techniques be developed:

- Tlokwe Local Municipality should implement consultative innovations. There are new methods which seek mainly to consult the community on particular issues rather than to engage them in sustained dialogue. Key examples are interactive websites, focus groups, citizens' panels and referendums.
- Deliberative innovations are also significant new methods that Tlokwe Local Municipality should consider. These methods

encourage the community to reflect upon issues which directly affect them and their communities through some form of deliberative process.

Furthermore, consultation will assist the municipality to make more appropriate decisions based on the real needs of the people. The more informed people are, the better they will understand what goals the municipality is endeavouring to achieve and what the budget and resource limitations are.

- **Decision Making**

Tlokwe Local Municipality needs to open up the process of decision making and create innovative platforms to include participation of all stakeholders. The current decision making process at TLM does not allow residents an opportunity to directly inform the IDP and budget processes. Instead, the municipality accepts representational participation through ward councillors as adequate. Effective implementation of the IDP depends on community participation in all its phases.

Structured consultation processes at all levels of the municipality should be introduced to ensure participation in policymaking, planning and project implementation. In this way, the municipality will draw on the creative energy of communities. The decision through which public policies promote the interests of the society must ultimately be taken by the people themselves.

- **Benchmarking**

In Tlokwe Local Municipality, it has become evident that the absence of national benchmarks also makes performance comparison very difficult. This should hopefully be an important area of development in future. It is also important that municipal employees should be kept informed of the legislative mandate and developments implemented in other municipalities.

Tlokwe Local Municipality minimally employs benchmarking to compare its level of performance and achievement with other municipalities. Benchmarking involves the discovery of the best practice. Through benchmarking, TLM will be able to set reliable uniform standards to be implemented in the long term plan. Increased efficiency is paramount to the benchmarking process as, in improved efficiency, reliability of data and the effectiveness of activities will lead to a more competitive edge.

In order to promote informed and effective involvement in the development and implementation of the budget, Tlokwe Local Municipality must have shared and reliable benchmarks against which to assess the impact of spending.

- **Political – Administrative Interface**

It is necessary for officials at Tlokwe Local Municipality to be able to distinguish between political activities and administrative activities to be performed, consciously recognising the values and needs of the community they serve. There must be compliance of the Tlokwe Local Municipality officials and political office bearers to meet the requirements of local government legislation to enhance capacity and good financial governance of the municipality. The political parties must also encourage the community to participate in the administration of their municipality. This can be achieved by constructing a form of politics that could find solutions to difficult social and economic challenges, and find ways in which people could be engaged. The political leadership at Tlokwe Local Municipality should also offer a unique contribution by providing a base for legitimate public decision making to enable the community to express its shared voice.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The objectives of this study were achieved in determining the nature of an effective public participation strategy in budgeting. In the absence of a

linkage between the IDP and budget, the Tlokwe Local Municipality would plan in an ad hoc and uncoordinated manner which would result in an ongoing challenge of public participation.

From the evidence available, one cannot speak of significant public participation at this municipality. Much emphasis is placed on the need to participate in structures such as ward committees. There is also the need to emphasise specialist group participation that will make inputs concerning important policy and legislative initiatives. On the other hand, the general public might participate in certain defined non-technical areas in the wider public participation process.

It is however clear that more still needs to be done at this municipality, especially in the area of budgeting strategy and effective implementation of the IDP which will ensure that the desired community participation is achieved.

Public participation strategy in budgeting, therefore, needs to be re-thought in terms of the broader (strategic) public decision making context in the Tlokwe Local Municipality and its municipal area.

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ANNEXURE A

6057 Ramhitsane Street
Ikageng Township
POTCHEFSTROOM
2531

19-02-2010

THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER
TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
PO BOX 113
POTCHEFSTROOM
2520

Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS FOR RESEARCH ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY FOR BUDGETING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE CASE OF TLOKWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

I wish to humbly request you to allow me to conduct my research at your Municipality.

I am currently a student at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, pursuing studies for the Masters Program in Public Management and Governance. I have chosen Tlokwe Local Municipality as my institution for research.

The research is purely academic and seeks to find a solution to the problem of public participation on strategy and budgeting to ensure active, effective and meaningful participation of the public, more specifically Potchefstroom Community.

My student number is: 21250278.

My Supervisor is Mr PW Heydenrych, contact number:

(018) 299 1623

Cell number: 082 828 1690

The interviews are voluntary and the anonymity of the interviews will be guaranteed.

I can be contacted at the address above or telephonically at:

(018) 295 5278 (W)

Cell: 073 022 4401

I am fully aware that you have a hectic schedule, but I would really appreciate it if you would assist me in this regard.

Your effort and time spend in reading this communication is appreciated.

I thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

SIGNED:

MR IJ MOTALE

ANNEXURE B

QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR

1. Tlokwe Local Municipality is faced with enormous challenges in facilitating public participation in the budgeting and IDP processes.

YES		NO	
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Motivate:

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.....

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2. At this Municipality *Batho Pele* principles are employed and fosters public participation to improve services offered.

YES		NO	
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Motivate:

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. There is a need for public participation strategy in budgeting. Does the community know the public participation strategy?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

Motivate:

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. In your opinion, is there a need for retraining and reskilling municipal personnel to improve community involvement and service delivery at your Municipality:

YES		NO	
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Motivate:

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.....

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5. The Tlokwe Local Municipality residents trust the municipal leadership and are satisfied with the level of services provided.

YES		NO	
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Motivate:

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6. The Municipal budget must be open for inspection by the public to promote transparency.

YES		NO	
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Motivate:

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7. The budget management decisions should be linked to and based on the IDP.

YES		NO	
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Motivate:

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND VALUABLE ASSISTANCE WITH THIS
RESEARCH WORK.**

ANNEXURE C

QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

- 1. Are there challenges you experience in the new dispensation for the Local Municipalities?**

Slightly	
Moderately	
Maximally	
Not at all	

- 2. As an employee of Tlokwe Local Municipality I am suitably qualified and effective to the success of the Municipality in improving service delivery.**

Yes	
No	
Not sure	

- 3. In your view, who should participate in the budget processes of the Municipality; and why do you think so?**

Explain:

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.....
.....
.....

- 4. Do you think the Municipal budget must be open for inspection by the public?**

Yes	
No	

Not sure	
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5. Can the public participation strategy help in involving community participation in budgeting processes?

Yes		No	
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Motivate:.....

6. Overall, how do you rate community involvement at your Municipality for effective and efficient service delivery? Indicate your choice with a tick (✓) in the relevant block.

Very good	
Good	
Average	
Not good at all	
Do not know	

7. To what extent, with regard to Tlokwe Local Municipality, would you agree with the statements below.

Please indicate your choice with a tick (✓) in the appropriate block.

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Don't know
Supervisors promote meaningful participation and provides members of the community with valuable information on budgeting				
Does political factionalism exist in your Municipality				

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE

ANNEXURE D

QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY

1. As the resident of Tlokwe Local Municipality, I know what IDP (Integrated Development Planning) is. (Indicate your choice with a tick (✓) in the appropriate block).

Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Don't know

2. How satisfied are you with the services rendered by your municipality? Are you very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?

SERVICE	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEITHER /NOR	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
1. Transparency of Council decisions					
2. Community participation in budgeting processes					
3. Participation in Council decisions					

3. Have you seen any improvements in the services rendered by your Municipality the past year? (Indicate your choice with a tick (✓) in the relevant block).

YES		NO	
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4. Municipal officials possess sufficient capacity for service delivery

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

5. Training programmes (workshops) are essential to equip municipal personnel (Please tick (✓) the relevant block).

YES		NO	
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6. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the performance of the Tlokwe Local Municipality over the past year in:

STATEMENTS	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEITHER/ NOR	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
6.1 Listening to the people's needs					
6.2 Involving the public in both the IDP and budgeting processes					

7. What, in your opinion, will be needed for services rendered to be improved at this municipality?

Explain:

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8. Does the Community know the Municipal Strategy for community participation?

YES		NO	
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9. Do you see public participation at this Municipality as: Lacking, improving, good, not good at all? (Indicate your choice by ticking (✓) the relevant block).

Lacking	
Improving	
Good	
Not good at all	

10. Officials at this municipality are honest, trustworthy, and understand their role.

YES		NO	
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND VALUABLE ASSISTANCE WITH THIS PROJECT.