

**THE NEW ROLE OF MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE  
TOWARDS IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY: THE CASE OF WELKOM  
IN THE MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

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Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree Master in Development and Management in the Department of  
Public Management and Administration at the North West University

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November 2006

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the people who contributed positively towards the successful completion of this study. Without their support, this study would not have been successfully completed.

- Prof. EP Ababio, my study supervisor, for his informed guidance and assistance. His constructive criticism and motivation always made me work harder and with more tenacity. I sincerely hope that we will have the opportunity to work together again sometime in the future.
- My colleagues, especially Messrs LL Ledibane and TM Morake for their informal and mostly unconscious moral support.
- The Executive Mayor of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality for granting me the permission to undertake such a study using the municipality as a base for my research.
- The Matjhabeng Local Municipality officials, whose doors were always open to my endless questions and request for information.
- All respondents who honestly and reliably answered the questionnaires and the interviews.
- My typist, Ms MP Lekota for her untiring efforts, often under pressure and with personal sacrifice.
- On a personal note, I would like to thank my wife, Moleboheng and sons, Thabo and Kamohelo as well as my mother, Maleshoane for their understanding, patience and unconditional support during my absence from home while working on this study.
- Above all, thanks to our heavenly father for giving me the strength and wisdom to complete this study. Without his will and grace, all my efforts would have been in vain.

## **ABSTRACT**

An objective of local government is to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner. Thus, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality has the obligation to ensure that public services are rendered effectively, efficiently and sustainably. The obligation consequently is on the municipal officials, as agents of change towards improved service delivery, especially the Municipal Manager, as an accounting officer, to ensure improved service delivery and to continuously evaluate the quality, usefulness and acceptance of services delivered.

Officials at the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, especially those at the Welkom office, have a range of delivery options to ensure quality service provision by strategically assessing and planning the most appropriate forms of service delivery for their customers. Officials need to be geared to the implementation of the chosen delivery options in the most effective and economical manner and to ensure maximum benefits to the customers. As agents of change, officials at the Matjhabeng Local Municipality need to be effective in operating the municipal machine effectively, efficiently and in providing rational advice to the elected office-bearers and for improved services to the Welkom community.

For the purpose of this study, the hypothesis was formulated that legislation since 1994 entrusted officials as agents of change in service delivery, yet officials of the Welkom branch of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality lack capacity to effect change, and would require strategic training programmes to enhance their skills and effectiveness.

In support of the empirical research, use and analysis of a theoretical study of local government as agent for change were undertaken. The analysis showed that the theoretical distinction in the roles of political office-bearers and appointed officials in the service delivery process was incorrect. Rather, the empirical study supported a close and meaningful collaboration between the appointed officials and political office-bearers for sound financial and resources management. Further, it was found that with administrative and financial resources available, the municipality can make a significant impact in the Welkom community.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

**TITLE: The new role of municipal officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery: the case of Welkom in the Matjhabeng local municipality.**

**KEYWORDS:** Developmental local government; change; accounting officer; management; control; standards of performance; planning; decision-making; organizing; leadership; administration; Batho Pele principles.

### **1.1 ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The problem posed, as in 2005, is that observation at the Matjhabeng local municipality, which includes the following towns and their surrounding farms: Allanridge, Hennenman, Odendaalsrus, Ventersburg, Virginia and Welkom, reveals that customer care poses a problem to the administrative staff at this municipality. It was further shown what roles the municipal officials can play as agents of change towards improved service delivery at this municipality.

In terms of section 152 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, and the *Citation of Constitutional Laws Act*, 2005, one of the objectives of local government is “to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.” Thus, the Matjhabeng local municipality has the obligation to ensure that public services are rendered effectively, efficiently and in a sustainable manner. Hanekom, et al (1994:212) maintain that efficiency denotes the “how” of government action: in other words how “successful” it is. The above arguments signify that officials at the Matjhabeng local municipality must ensure that any service provided meets the expectations and needs of the

community. A service must be useful because each client/customer attaches a specific use to it. The municipal clients will probably pay little attention to services as long as the quality of service supply remains in acceptable range. An obligation consequently rests on the municipal officials, especially the municipal manager, as an accounting officer, to continuously evaluate the quality, usefulness and acceptance of services rendered. An accounting officer, according to Cloete (1995:4) is “the top official in a state department, or other public institution such as a municipality, appointed as the accounting officer for that specific department or other public institution.” Officials at the Matjhabeng local municipality, especially those in the Welkom office, have a range of delivery options to ensure quality sustainable service provision. They need to strategically assess and plan the most appropriate forms of service delivery for their customers. These officials need to be geared to the implementation of the chosen delivery options in the most effective and economical manner and to ensure maximum benefits to the customers.

Fox, et al (1991:22) view consumers of services provided by public organizations in a democracy as being “often in a situation where they have certain rights which enable them to act as regulators or to elect or appoint regulators to act on their behalf.” They are often also suppliers of economic or political resources as taxpayers or the electorate. The Matjhabeng local municipality derives its reason for existence from the needs of their clients. Thus a proper analysis of their characteristics and preferences are of significant importance to the municipal officials.

Gulick et al (1937:5) agree that “Administration has to do with getting things done with the accomplishment of defined objectives.” It is clear that if the Matjhabeng local municipality is to function effectively, attention must be given to the roles of officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery. *The Local Government Municipal*

*Systems Act 32 of 2000* provides under Section 55(1) (a) for the appointment of the municipal manager as head of the administration of a municipality to be responsible and accountable for the formation and development of an economical, effective, efficient and accountable administration. Managers directly accountable to the municipal manager, with their skills and expertise, should manage their staff in such a way that they are motivated, guided and supported if the municipality is to provide quality services in a sustainable manner. It would thus appear that the officials at the Matjhabeng local municipality need greater development in human resources management, where management styles and approaches of line managers are given serious and constructive attention. Officials also need to be developed in the field of public relations with reference to principles of *Batho Pele*, in terms of which the people must come first in service delivery. As public communication practitioners, the municipal officials have to carry out the central task of public relations, which is the exchange of messages between the organization and its many publics. This they will achieve “by identifying the organisation’s publics and evaluating their attitudes and behaviour(s) in order to execute a programme of action to create understanding and/or acceptance of a message” (Lubbe & Puth 1994:58).

This study is important because according to Craythorne (1997:425), the internal or staff services are vital for the efficient, effective and economical operation of the municipal machine and for ensuring that the officials act and behave correctly and honestly.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions flow from the problem statement above:

- What is the changed role of municipalities and officials in South Africa since 1994?
- What is the nature and sustainability of services provided by the Matjhabeng local municipality to the Welkom community?
- Do the managers of Matjhabeng local municipality in Welkom possess sufficient capacity for service delivery?
- In what ways can service provision be improved at this municipality?
- What training programmes are necessary to reskill and capacitate the officials in the Welkom branch to operate the municipal machine effectively, efficiently, economically and in a sustainable manner?

### 1.3 **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this research are:

- To provide a theoretical exposition of local government as a developmental institution.
- To analyse the types of services provided by the Matjhabeng local municipality in its developmental role to improving living standards of the Welkom community.
- To establish the level of capacity possessed by the managers at the Welkom branch of this municipality for improved service delivery.
- To research and establish what mechanisms can be put in place to improve the quality of services provided so that officials can satisfy the needs of the community.
- To recommend relevant training programmes to reskill and capacitate officials to become better equipped to operate the municipal machinery in order to realize the goals of providing quality services in a sustainable manner.

## 1.4 **HYPOTHESIS**

The following statement has been drawn as a central theoretical statement:

- Legislation since 1994 entrusts municipal managers and officials as agents of change in service delivery, yet officials of the Welkom branch of the Matjhabeng local municipality lack capacity to effect change, and would require strategic training programmes to enhance their skills and effectiveness.

## 1.5 **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The research methodology for this study included literature study and empirical investigation.

### 1.5.1 **Literature study**

Literature study involved an analysis of primary data such as legislation, namely; the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* of 1996, the *White Paper on Local Government*, 1998, the *Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117* of 1998, *Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32* of 2000; the *Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act 56* of 2003, as well as the Integrated Development Plan (2005) of the Matjhabeng municipality.

Journals, dissertations and theses on municipal administration, books as well as Government publications and Internet were used as sources of this study. The theoretical framework thus created was then used as a background for the empirical side of this research.

### 1.5.2 **Data bases**

The following data bases were consulted to ascertain the availability of study material for the purpose of this research:

- Catalogue of books: North West University library.
- Catalogue of theses and dissertations: North-West University library.
- Public Administration journals
- Electronic media such as the internet on legislation and book/journal sources.

### 1.5.3 **Empirical research and design**

Local government has changed dramatically since 1994 with the introduction of various policies governing it. As stated earlier the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* of 1996 mandates local government to be developmental and provides a policy framework for democratic, developmental, effective, efficient and sustainable local government. The policy framework requires dynamic transformation of local government and should address the serious challenges faced by municipalities and which should be accepted and dealt with by officials of the municipalities. Despite the Matjhabeng local municipality being affected by these changes and divided into six towns as already stated, the scope of this study was limited to Welkom alone as the municipality's head office. Empirical investigations were conducted only in Welkom due to the limited scope of a mini-dissertation. Such a case study approach can contribute to knowledge by providing useful information and data from which further research can be generated for the other five towns.

The following research methods were applied:

### 1.5.3.1 **Interviews**

Unstructured interviews were conducted with the municipal manager, managers accountable to the municipal manager, executive mayor and members of the mayoral committee as well as twenty members of the community, randomly selected. An attempt was made to assess the perceived roles of officials and their contribution to municipal effectiveness.

### 1.5.3.2 **Questionnaires**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:46) the questionnaire is one of the instruments in which the subjects respond to written questions or statements to elicit reactions, beliefs and attitude. The researcher therefore formulated a set of questions or statements appropriate to the research problem with the co-operation of supervisor and strategic managers of the Welkom office, and attempted to find justification for the existence of such a problem and its possible extent. The questionnaire consisted of questions or statements based on the roles of officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery. Such questionnaires were distributed among the chief officials of the municipality, the executive mayor as well as to twenty randomly selected members of the community.

### 1.5.3.3 **Participant observation**

The researcher frequently travels to Welkom and often visits some of the chief officials at this municipality and in the process, has become a participant observer by noting data relevant to the research topic.

Participant observation is preferred since it is the most unobstructive data collection technique.

## **1.6 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

The structure of the dissertation undertaken is as follows:

- Chapter one: Introduction, problem statement and method of study.
- Chapter two: Theoretical exposition of local government as agent for change.
- Chapter three: The changed role of municipal officials in service delivery.
- Chapter four: Public perception on municipal officials as agents of change.
- Chapter five: Summary, findings, recommendations and conclusion.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL EXPOSITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AGENT FOR CHANGE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Prior to 1994, the grand policy of separate development meant that local government was constructed separately for Africans, Coloureds and Indians from the system for Whites. However, these attempts were unsuccessful because the local authorities which were established were not accepted by the Coloureds, the Africans and to some extent the Indians. In the end the inhabitants of the African urban areas established civic associations which demanded unified non-racial local authorities for the adjoining urban areas, populated by the different population groups. The pressure for unified urban areas and local authorities became significant, particularly after the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) was established in 1991. Further developments on the political scene culminated in the achievement of popular democracy and in particular the transformation of local government in South Africa.

This chapter examines the building of local democracy and local development capacity as critical challenges for the transformation of local government as agent for change. It defines local government as a sphere of government with its objectives and its constitutional mandate to be developmental. The establishment of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, its vision and mission as well as the challenges it faces with regard to service delivery are discussed. Throughout the remaining sections the Municipality's Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and budgeting as well as how the community is involved in these processes receive

attention. The entire chapter focuses on the Municipality's developmental role, its level of service delivery and the role of officials in the process.

## **2.2 Defining local government**

In terms of chapter 7 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* of 1996 local government is described as a distinct sphere of government in its own right and no longer a function of National or Provincial government. It is a sphere of government closest to the community, and this strategic position makes it the ideal tool for developmental government. No sphere of government can exert more meaningful development than what local government can deliver.

Local government is responsible for the services and infrastructure so essential to the well being of the people. It must work close with citizens, groups and communities to create sustainable settlements which provide for a decent quality of life and meet the social, economic and material needs of the community in a holistic way.

According to chapter 2 of the *Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000 local government consists of municipalities which are instituted for each demarcated area, or municipal area, for the whole territory of South Africa. A municipality is an organ of state within the local sphere of government exercising legislative and executive authority within a specific demarcated area of jurisdiction which consists of the political structures and administration of the municipality and the community (Craythorne, 1997:119). It functions in its area in accordance with the political, statutory and other relationships between its political structures, political office bearers and its administration, and it has a

separate legal personality which excludes liability on the part of its community for actions of the municipality (Thornhill, 1995:23).

As a sphere of government, local government is faced with various challenges relating to transformation and service delivery. Dhlamini (in City Press, 19 February 2006:08) reported that many municipalities are perceived as extravagant and failing to respond to the real needs of their communities. These challenges include improving service delivery, addressing the issue of non-payment of services, and more importantly improving the effective management of resources. Sound financial management in local government requires a close and meaningful collaboration between political office-bearers and appointed officials. Objectives of local government are discussed below.

### **2.3 Objectives of local government**

In terms of section 152(1) of the *Constitution* local government should have the following objectives which each municipality must strive to achieve within its financial and administrative capacity:

- To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- To ensure that services are provided to communities in a sustainable manner;
- To promote social and economic development;
- To promote a safe and healthy environment;
- To encourage community participation in local affairs.

These objectives mean that municipalities must level the playing field for the communities to take part in their affairs and that elected and appointed officials must act responsibly and account to the communities.

Services rendered by municipalities must be sustainable and benefit the communities so that there is value for their money as they are expected to pay for those services. For social and economic development to be achieved, it is important for local authorities, as the first line of service delivery, to be aware of the socio-economic factors prevailing in the communities they serve so that when councillors make policies they can take these factors into consideration. Failure to do so could result in developmental policies and projects that fail to benefit the wider community. In the next paragraph, developmental local government is discussed.

#### **2.4 Developmental local government**

Within the framework of the *Constitution*, the *White Paper for Local Government*, 1998 established a basis for a new developmental local government system which is committed to working with civil society and communities to create sustainable human settlements which provide for a decent quality of life and which will meet the social and material needs of the community in a holistic way. The process of drafting the *White Paper* was thoroughly participating and involved key stakeholders and the general populace in exploring how best to empower local government (Draft Discussion Document, 1997:8).

Local authorities have an important role to play in development. According to Fox and Meyer (1995:36) development is a process of improving the quality of human lives. This involves creating conditions conducive to growth through the establishment of economic, political and social institutions that promote human dignity and respect. Wissink (1999:23) argues that development in local government is aimed at eliminating poverty caused by lack of the means to provide food, clothing, housing and other material needs. This involves equipping the

municipal inhabitants materially and spiritually so that each person is able to pursue a specific standard of living, enjoy meaningful opportunity and live according to personal values.

Local authorities fulfil an important role in development. Being the first line of service delivery makes them aware of the socio-economic factors prevailing in the communities they serve. Therefore, it is important that when councillors make policies they take these factors into consideration. Failure to do so could result in developmental policies and projects from which the wider populace fails to benefit, thus being unable to realize developmental goals.

## **2.5 Realising developmental goals**

Development is a process by which the efforts of the community, the private sector and government combine resources and expertise to improve the social, physical and economic dimension of the community. (Fitzgerald, 1997:82). The Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA) Internet booklet (2001:03) outlines ways in which the development vision can be realized. These ways are practices and mechanisms that all municipalities will have to follow according to National and Provincial Legislation. These practices are:

- Integrated Development Planning and Budgeting, and
- Land Development Objectives.

## **2.6 Developmental duties of local government**

In terms of section 153 of the *Constitution*, a municipality must-

- structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning process to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community; and
- participate in National and Provincial programmes.

According to section 22 of the *Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, development means sustainable development, and includes integrated social, economic, environmental, special, infrastructural, institutional, organizational and human resources upliftment of a community aimed at the poor and previously disadvantaged community. Section 23 of the *Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000* provides that a municipality must undertake developmentally oriented planning so as to ensure that it strives to meet its objectives and give effect to its developmental duties. Throughout the remaining part of this chapter, the situation at the Matjhabeng Local Municipality will be explained.

## **2.7 The establishment of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality**

The 2000 local government elections resulted in the reduction of municipalities from 843 to 289, through the process of amalgamating municipalities. The final outcome was the establishment of 6 metropolitan municipalities, 231 local councils and 47 district municipalities. Matjhabeng Local Municipality was established on 05 December 2000 in terms of Section 12 of the *Municipal Structures Act*, 117 of 1998. The *Provincial Establishment Notice* (Provincial Notice no. 183 of 2000) was published in the *Provincial Gazette* no. 111 dated 28 September 2000. As stated on page 1 of chapter 1, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality is the amalgamation of six towns and their surrounding farms, namely; Allanridge, Henneman, Odendaalsrus, Ventersburg, Virginia, and Welkom. The vision and mission of the Local Municipality are discussed in the sections that follow.

## **2.8 The vision of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality**

Every organization, whether private or public, exists for a specific reason, and as such it should have a vision and a mission that guide its existence. According to Smit and de Cronjé (1999:145) a vision provides a strategic plan that helps in keeping decision-making within context. Mr S. Motseki (Acting Municipal Manager of Matjhabeng Local Municipality) believes that the vision of the municipality is to be a united, non-racial, transparent, responsive, developmental and efficient municipality that renders sustainable services, so as to improve the quality of life of the Matjhabeng community. The vision of the Municipality is to:

- foster a transparent local authority that strives to provide affordable services to all its residents through effective management;
- provide strategic and integrated administration;
- build a non-racial, non sexist and united municipality;
- build a developmental municipality with a view to accelerating change;
- ensure community orientated service delivery;
- create an environment that is conducive to development and growth, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all its residents; and
- stimulate and diversify local economy through timely and continuous development over the long-term (Matjhabeng Local Municipality IDP, 2005:09)

## **2.9 The mission of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality**

The mission and objective of the municipality is to develop an economically vibrant and growing city that provides affordable services

primarily to its own residents through strategic management. This involves taking into cognizance provincial and national legislation while pursuing the economic, political and social development vision of the municipality. The following are the main focus areas of the municipality: (Matjhabeng Local Municipality IDP, 2005:11)

- provision of municipal services in an economic, efficient and effective way;
- promotion of a self-reliant community through the promotion of a culture of entrepreneurship;
- creation of a conducive environment for growth and development;
- promotion of co-operative governance;
- promotion of a dynamic community participation and value adding partnership;
- continuously ensuring that progress is monitored and reported to the community.

The vision and mission of the Municipality outline its position in sustainable service delivery. However, there are challenges that impact on the municipality's ability to render services that are affordable. The key challenges that impact on service delivery at the municipality are briefly outlined in the section that follows.

## **2.10 Challenges in service delivery**

The acting Municipal Manager, Mr S. Motseki acknowledges that the decline in the mining industry, which culminated in the closure of a number of mines in the municipal jurisdiction, has had a negative impact on the municipality. (Personal interview, 17 February 2006) Retrenchments have caused mine workers to leave Welkom and surrounding units, which has affected municipal revenue negatively. Others, especially from rural areas elsewhere in the province or country,

remain in the hope of being rehired. Once retrenched, they need to find their own housing, resulting in informal settlements mushrooming almost overnight. Most become indigent over time. This situation worsens as family members from their home town join them in the hope of finding employment to sustain the struggling family. These factors challenge service delivery in terms of budget provision for free services, keeping an updated indigent register as well as providing other municipal services. The current situation as in 2006, is that in the estimated population of 750 000 with 108 000 number of households, there are only 38 000 registered number of indigent households. Motseki argues that this number, 38 000, may be less than expected.

Despite these challenges, it is this municipality's responsibility to render services that exert maximum impact in the lives of the community it serves; hence it is important that the municipality fulfils its developmental role by allowing for community participation as well as allocating its resources and setting its budget accordingly. The following sections will focus on the Matjhabeng Local Municipality Integrated Development Planning and budgeting processes as well as community participation.

### **2.11 Integrated Development Planning and budgeting.**

In terms of *the Development Facilitation Act, 67 of 1995* every municipality has to compile an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Land Development Objectives (LDOs). The process of compiling these documents is known as the Integrated Development Planning process. The process requires a municipality to be a strategic planner by establishing a developmental plan for the short, medium and long term. Only after undertaking an assessment of the current social, economic

and environmental reality in its area of jurisdiction can a municipality compile an IDP. The IDP and management means that a municipality must have clear plans and strategies for all its areas of operation and these must link together so that they are mutually reinforcing. This means that a municipality must allocate its resources and set its budget accordingly.

According to Visser & Erasmus (2004:256), the IDP requires municipalities to prioritise their limited available resources, making the necessary choices and meeting set objectives. The IDP will enable municipalities to direct their financial and institutional resources towards agreed policy objectives and programmes. It will ensure that municipalities weigh up their constitutional obligations and systematically prioritise programmed resource allocations around meeting urgent needs. Community participation and support are essential so as to develop a common developmental vision. Regulations require a prioritization of these needs in order of urgency and long-term importance and use of monitoring tools to measure impact and performance (Section C of White Paper on Local Government, 1998:47)

According to Bauer (2000:98) the function of IDPs is to serve the framework for mobilizing and prioritising the use of development resources, and aligning internal capacity systems with strategic development objectives. They also enable meaningful engagement with stakeholder groups around concrete development priorities. It is designed to enable local authorities to plan effectively for development in their area while empowering local authorities to become strategic thinkers and effective planners for development.

## 2.12 Land Development Objectives

Visser (2005:20) argues that integrated development planning should be linked to financial planning; it involves producing a medium-term (five-year) projection of capital and recurrent expenditure. This involves incorporating municipal Land Development Objectives (LDOs) and other strategies into the normal medium-term planning for capital and recurrent expenditure. A municipality should show a development plan for raising the revenue to support its strategies and ensure that their plans are affordable over the long term. *The Development Facilitation Act 67 of 1995*, divides the subject matter of LDOs into four main areas, namely:

(i) *Objectives subject to services*

A local authority must stipulate in its LDO what sort of services it will provide, the standard of such services, and the level at which they will be provided.

(ii) *Objectives relating to urban and rural growth and form*

In this regard a local authority should outline the planning process within its area of jurisdiction. This includes, amongst other things, the control of land usage, the planning of transportation and the manner in which the growth plan of a local authority will impact on the environment while making use of its natural resources.

(iii) *Objectives relating to development strategies*

After setting the first two above objectives a local authority must show how it will achieve them. This will require a local authority to outline how it will involve all sections of its community in land development as

well as how the community will have access to money for land development.

*(iv) Objectives relating to targets*

A local authority should measure its performance against set targets. It must show the number of housing units, sites or other facilities that it plans to deliver (Bauer, 2000:100).

The following section focuses on performance management.

### **2.13 Performance management**

Performance management refers to the ways that a municipality can measure its own performance in service delivery and the way that national and provincial government can evaluate the sphere of local government in general. According to Armstrong and Murlis (1988:157) performance management is about getting better results through people. It consists of a range of activities, the primary aim of which is to help managers obtain improved performance from their staff who will be rewarded accordingly. It also looks to the future. It is concerned with development of potential so that people are capable of taking on greater responsibility and thus earn even higher rewards.

Van der Waldt & Du Toit (1997:119-121) argue that to be able to monitor and evaluate policy processes, performance and outcomes, it is generally recognized that a set of key performance measures and indicators will need to be put in place. These will need to be capable of measuring what they set out to do in a reliable and meaningful way, and thereby providing managers at different levels with accurate and relevant information that can be used to inform the on-going process of policy formulation, implementation and review.

Clarity is also needed on the nature and functions of different indicators, particularly in relation to answering the following questions:

- *Efficiency*: were human, financial, institutional and technical resources used in the most efficient and cost-effective ways?
- *Effectiveness*: were the policy output and outcomes achieved?
- *Equity*: to what extent have policies and strategies served to eliminate existing disparities, to promote greater representivity, and to ensure greater equity in employment and service delivery?
- *Responsiveness*: how responsive has policy implementation been to the actual needs of customers and clients?
- *Appropriateness*: have policies and strategies been appropriate to meeting the requirements of the overall policy context set by the reconstruction and development programme (RDP), and growth, employment and redistribution (GEAR)?

In 1997, the South African Government initiated a number of projects aimed at improving the present system of performance management. The main focus is on improving government institutions' capacity and competence in formulating targets, and to improve the measuring of the results achieved. Other projects concern more extensive use of national and international benchmarking, and recurrent evaluations.

Performance measures come in many forms, including economic value measures, financial measures, and a combination of methods for linking non-financial and financial measures. Performance measurement systems also create an essential feedback and learning mechanism in support of key management decisions. By understanding how the three areas of strategic planning, performance measurement, and knowledge management interconnect, public institutions can find compelling new ways to improve the strategic decision process.

Learning processes, if dynamic, can influence both performance measures and organizational strategies. The key needs in creating dynamic organizational learning processes are as follows:

- practices aimed at improving the quality of information/technology flows that support strategic decisions.
- capacity building-developing new individual and collective capabilities that support and are addressed by the strategic planning process,
- development of organizational learning infrastructures,
- development of systems for analyzing and cataloguing tacit and explicit forms of knowledge, and
- productivity measures and analytic tools aimed at increasing the utility of knowledge and information as a dynamic element of strategic decision (Van der Waldt, 2004:36-37).

A municipality has to understand the current status of its community and measure if their programmes and projects are yielding the desired goals. This means that a municipality will have to develop key performance indicators against which it can measure its performance. Performance indicators should be used to measure whether the various projects and strategies contained in the IDP are working as expected. Over time, performance indicators will allow municipalities to adjust and adapt their IDPs to take account of past experiences. A national performance management system will be developed to monitor the effectiveness and delivery of local government in general. It is meant to provide a way for provincial and national government to monitor municipalities and identify problems before full-scale intervention in a municipality's affairs is necessary (IDASA Internet booklet, 2000:04)

## 2.14 **Environmental planning**

Sustainable development depends on the delivery of basic services and economic growth to all, without threatening the viability of the ecological and community systems upon which these services depend (Fitzgerald, et al, 1997:25). It is important that short-term and long-term developmental plans are supported by an in-depth environmental study to determine the extent to which these plans will affect the environment, the economy and more importantly the community in the long process. Environmental effects such as water, air and noise pollution should be determined. Human development depends on a healthy environment and a healthy social structure. The environmental report should be used to integrate environmental concerns into a policy and planning process.

## 2.15 **Working together with the community**

No local government can manage on its own to improve the living standards of its community without the support of its residents, community organizations and the private sector. Consultation with the community is imperative in ensuring that the policies of local authorities are readily accepted and easily supported by the majority of its residents. Community participation is important because it is the democratic right of every community member to take part in the activities of their municipality. However, for community participation to be possible municipalities must develop and provide strategies that will continually engage the community, business and private sector. According to Reddy (1996:04) the dignity of man is best manifested when he determines and controls his affairs. Responsibility for governing of one's own conduct develops integrity. According to Freysen (1998:249) community participation is the involvement of the community in a wide range of administrative policy-making activities, including the determination of

levels of service, budget priorities and other issues that affect the welfare of the community. Community participation legitimates a local authority by making it acceptable to the municipal community. Bauer (2000:91) is of the opinion that, it is mutually beneficial for both the community and local government to work hand in hand to build up a shared vision and to set goals for development. The community needs to constantly interact with its local authority to ensure that every thing done by the local authority is beneficial to them. Houston *et al* (2000:81) believe that community participation in local government matters contributes to the creation of community solidarity, because the community feels involved in matters affecting and relevant to their welfare, thereby creating civic pride. This view is supported by Ababio (2004:272) who states that it is the members of the community who are at the forefront of receiving municipal services and this makes them more aware of the impact of these services.

Section B of the White Paper on Local Government (1998:33) states that, municipalities require the active participation by communities at four levels: Firstly, as voters to ensure that maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote. Secondly, as the community who can express views through different stakeholder associations, before and after the policies have been implemented to ensure that such policies benefit the community. Thirdly, as consumers and end-users, who expect value for money, affordable services and, courteous and responsive service. Fourthly, as partners involved in the mobilization of resource for development. It can be deduced from this argument that the concept of community participation needs to be clarified; surely municipal councilors are not expected to submit all their decisions to the community for approval. Craythorne (1997:98) is of the opinion that community participation means allowing the community if it wishes to state in a general way what it thinks about some or important issues or policies. Participatory governance should not permit interference with a municipal council's right to govern and exercise its executive and

legislative authority. Participatory governance should complement the political leadership of a municipality and not impede its ability to govern effectively.

Brynard (*in* Bekker, 1996;41) explains community participation as the mere receiving of information by the community from authorities about proposed actions and the sharing of power to shape the final decisions. Thus, community participation essentially means allowing as many people as possible to be involved in the decision-making process since the community as customers of local government, are naturally more responsive to the public needs than are government officials (du Toit *et al*, 1998:124). A shortcoming of community participation is that it can take the form of self-serving actions leading to clashes in the diversity of interest within the community. It is important that the participatory process must not become an obstacle to development process where narrow interest groups could impede the process. This means that the unheard concerns, not raised by the previously marginalized groups, ignorant municipal inhabitants will not be considered. It should not always be the informed groups and ratepayers whose needs and aspirations are addressed. This view is supported by Gildenhuis (*in* Bekker, 1996:12) who states that local government and its policies are not representative of the majority of the local electorate. According to Gildenhuis the so-called responsiveness of local government generally means responsiveness to the voice of the local elite.

Local government, with all its intricacies, devolves democracy to the grassroots in that sphere of government. It ensures that there is a large degree of local autonomy for people to decide for themselves about issues such as taxation service delivery and voting (Kendall, *in* Hilliard 1996:7). Such devolution of powers means that local government functions appropriately with citizen participation which, as outlined by Clapper

(1996:75-76), provides the ordinary citizen with advantages. These include: a reduction of psychological suffering and apathy, positive application of citizen power, restraining the abuse of authority and in any case, as an inalienable constitutional right of citizens.

Citizen participation, that is, the recognition of the need to involve stakeholders in development interventions (Ambert, in Theron 2005:111), thrives on a two-way communication approach that serves the purpose to develop a dialogue between a municipal government and its residents regarding improvement in accelerated service delivery. The quality and mechanisms for communication between residents and their municipality, argue Vyas-Doorgapersad and Ababio (2006:378), play an important role in promoting trust and understanding. It enhances good governance which is a sine qua non for approved service delivery. It is the responsibility of government to educate and inform citizens regarding the policies and programmes related to service delivery. It is possible through communication and dissemination of information. It is also the responsibility of citizens to participate in the process of governance and raise their voices to improve the standard of service delivery.

According to Vyas-Doorgapersad and Ababio (2006:379) effective communication for efficient service delivery could in many ways be promoted if a municipality's management would consider and recognize residents as partners in service delivery. To realize such partnership, Theron (2005:112) advocates the following core values:

- the public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives;
- public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision;

- the public participation process communicates the interest of and meets the process needs of all participants;
- the public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate;
- the public participation process communicates to participants how their input affect the decision; and
- the public participation process provides participants with information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

To achieve the goals of participatory governance in post-apartheid era in South Africa, the government took various initiatives to enhance communication between the government and the governed. The Constitution, 1996, recognizes the importance of effective communication and dissemination of information for service delivery and various pieces of legislations came into force. The dissemination of information is requisite of enhanced public participation in the decision-making process. Yet, as lamented by Pahad (2006) key coordination moments in the communication cycles of national and provincial government are not adequately presented to local government and the flow of information to municipalities from other parts of the communication system is largely at random or even by chance. Further, as pointed out by Mahlatsi (2006:4), the economic strategies of national and provincial spheres of government are not entirely linked to the municipal economic development strategies.

The importance of the involvement of citizens in the process of local governance has been identified under section 152 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996. Further, Section 195 states that services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.

People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making.

Vyas-Doorgapersad and Ababio (2006:382) argue that the reason to stress at the municipal government sphere regarding communication and citizen participation is that in spite of the fact that information and communication technology (ICT) can help overcome many of the barriers imposed by distance, people are socially active within borders of their municipalities. In addition, some public policies are likely to be locally generated and relevant only to a specific area. People act more responsibly when they have better control of their own environment than when they are under the control of others. It stands to reason that when communities are empowered to solve their own problems, they function better than communities that depend on services provided by others. Thus the formulation of such policies can be seen as a matter for the local community. Furthermore local level is the ideal environment for the individuals and their associations to mobilize and to improve government services.

In principle, the small size of a local community is defined by a local identity, defined territory, inhabitants and common local interest can yield greater co-operation among social and political actors. Finally, local self-government can be more responsive to the needs, requests and demands of individuals or groups (Sakowicz 2002). The South African local government is decentralized, democratic and developmental. This nature of municipalities expects them to be more responsive, responsible, accountable and effective in delivering services to their inhabitants. To fulfil these responsibilities, municipalities use the following campaigns as communication for community mobilization and participation:

- Letsema – it is known as communal volunteerism.
- Vuk'uzenzele - it means rise and act

Both these campaigns assist municipalities to encourage citizen participation and communication:

- Municipal outreach programmes – they enhance participatory democracy and interactive governance.
- Imbizo – to promote direct communication between the government and the citizens. It provides information regarding government Programme of Action in languages used by inhabitants of municipalities(Sakowicz, 2002).

According to Vyas-Doorgapersad and Ababio (2006:383) a multi-purpose community centre is a structure which enables communities to manage their own development, by providing access to appropriate information, facilities, resources, training and services. In all cases the sharing of facilities and the synergy of the providers should result in more cost-effective and efficient provision of services. These services can include: community information centre, government information one-step shop, integrated delivery of a range of government services (Benjamin 1997).

Municipalities need to develop their own communication structures, systems and strategies. The language component should be considered for inhabitants to understand and utilize these communicative mechanisms. To further strengthen the involvement of citizens, communication programmes should be coordinated with ward committees.

The news media is considered as a catalyst between government and citizens. It carries the voices of citizens to government through

interactive programmes. It allows the government to disseminate information regarding policies and programmes affecting citizens. Due to media, the relationship between government and citizens has become more open, transparent and informal. Section 21 of the *Local Government Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000 provides ways of communications to municipal community and enhances the role of media in the process. Local media comprise those channels that communities use to share information. These channels may include community radio stations, community newspapers, meetings such as an Indaba or Makgotla, and electronic media. It is important to build partnerships with the community media and African language radio stations. This partnership will ensure that local government messages are communicated and conceived in a way best understood by the target audience.

In a democratic country like South Africa, it is important for the citizen to communicate and participate. But, as pointed out by Alfaro (in Silva, 2006) this process of democratizing the country requires, as an absolute condition, that access to communication be treated as an essential right of citizenship. That right will become a basic right for the future where the focus will be public and participatory. Lahera (in Silva, 2006) further added that participation is an essential aspect of making a political system representative. Where there is no participation, interests can be manipulated and some will be overrepresented while others are underrepresented. The section that follows examines the developmental role of Matjhabeng Local Municipality.

## **2.16 Developmental role of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality**

According to Van Wyk (2004:08) development involves the progression through a number of stages towards expansion, improvement or

completeness. It is a multidimensional concept involving changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty.

#### 2.16.1 **Promoting a democratic and accountable government**

The Matjhabeng Local Municipality as the sphere closest to the community makes the most impact in the lives of the local community and it has a broader role to play in development. According to Steytler and Mettler (2001:24) the elements of democracy are representative government, accountability and community participation in the activities of their municipality. This means that the role of local government should simply go beyond representing its constituents, but should also facilitate and encourage the fullest possible participation of the community. This view is supported by Section B of the *White Paper on Local Government* (1998:33) which states that, municipalities need to ensure that voters are constantly made aware of the need to vote and that they are able to vote easily and safely. When voter participation declines, democratic accountability is diluted.

According to Motseki (Personal interview, 17 February 2006), democracy requires that free and fair elections are held regularly to enable the community to elect its own leaders. Therefore, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality has to ensure that voters are constantly aware of the need to vote for leaders of their choice. Wissink (1999:54) is of the opinion that developmental local government requires political leadership that accounts to the community over and above regular elections. Increased accountability ensures that the actions of the local council reflect the community aspirations, increases the legitimacy of the council and deepens local democracy.

### **2.16.2 Provision of sustainable services to the local community**

The provision of basic services is not only a constitutional right, but it is also a moral right. The municipality has to ensure it provides basic services in an uninterrupted manner thereby promoting the general welfare of the community. A service is sustainable only if it is accessible and affordable. In other words, it must be within the financial capability of the majority of residents and addresses a real need. (Fitzgerald et al, 1997:165) Services such as sanitation, electricity, and water provision and primary health care are placed at the top of the priority list of Council. The Matjhabeng Local Municipality budget (2005/2006:21) makes provision for 6000 litres of water that will be provided free of charge to the community. This means that, every resident will have access to some free water. However, this facility could be difficult to provide in informal settlements, like it is in Matjhabeng Local Municipality.

### **2.16.3 Provision of social and economic development**

Democracy has made South Africa a global-player and no municipality can ignore the social and economic changes taking place within the international community, its surrounding regions and the local economy. Therefore, the drop in 2001 in the gold price and the declining mining production has made the municipality of Matjhabeng restructure its economic development plan with international trends. The main aim of the economic development plan is to diversify the economy from mining to manufacturing. The plan is structured in line with the Goldfields Structure Plan that takes cognizance of the growth needs regarding land uses for all development sectors, the main transport network and the provision of bulk services. Constant attention is being given to new methods for stimulating the growth of the local industrial sector such as offering potential investors attractive incentive schemes for industrialists,

the availability of land for development and low land and property prices and rates (Matjhabeng Municipality IDP 2005:40).

A number of promising development projects such as the annual hosting of the Motorbike Grand Prix (alias Phakisa) and the construction of new businesses have breathed new life into the ailing local economy. A developmental strategy for the informal sector market was completed in 2002. This strategy focuses on the management and development of informal trading in both the central business area and the suburban areas.

#### 2.16.4 **Encouraging community involvement and community organisations**

Bauer (2000:91) believes that it is mutually beneficial for both the community and local government to work hand in hand to build up a shared vision and to set goals for development. The community needs to constantly interact with its local authority to ensure that every thing done by the local authority is beneficial to them. According to Johnson (1984:177), the rationale for direct public participation usually advocates the public share in making development plans at the formative stage, rather than after officials have become committed to particular choices. Persons (1990:119) argues that effective citizen participation is determined to exist when a decision-making effort aimed at planning, funding, advocacy, or delivery of services directly involves those whom the decisions affect, so the results reflect their concerns.

Brynard (in Bekker, 1996:44) outlined specific objectives for citizen participation to at least activate some of the participants to:

- provide information to citizens;

- get information from and about citizens;
- improve public decisions, programmes, projects and services;
- enhance acceptance of public decisions, programmes, projects and services,
- supplement public agency work;
- alter political power patterns and resources allocation;
- protect individual and majority groups rights and interest, and
- delay or avoid complicating difficult public decisions.

The success of realizing the above objectives depends on a complex relationship between local government authorities and the participants, hence the significance of community involvement in local government.

Clapper (in Bekker, 1996:56) argues that for democratic government to exist, the public (or the people) must govern or at the very least be actively involved in government. Without citizen participation democratic government will cease to function as a democracy. Therefore, vibrant democracy insists that citizen participation be positively encouraged by those in power. This would require that the right of every citizen to participate in those government decisions, policies and actions that directly affect him or her be legally protected.

Good relations exist between the Municipality and the community in general. By holding monthly ward meetings, the municipality is able to consult with the community regarding issues that affect them before making resolutions. Regular informal meetings are also held to inform the community on the activities and progress reports. Furthermore members of the community are free to attend council meetings, except when the budget is debated or by-laws are passed. Mr L. Rubulana, the Speaker of the municipality (Personal interview, 10 February 2006) believes that community organizations are the most effective way of

community representation, because group representation makes the councillors take notice of the concerns raised by such groups.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, every municipality should have an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the Matjhabeng municipality is no exception. The Matjhabeng IDP is discussed in the section that follows.

## **2.17 The Matjhabeng Municipality Integrated Development Plan**

One requirement for drafting an IDP is community participation. It is important for the community to participate since important developmental issues are discussed by different work sessions. The IDP is the defining development programme for the municipality and it is legally binding to the municipality in the exercise of its executive authority. Furthermore the municipality must review its IDP annually.

According to the Matjhabeng municipality IDP (2005:01) the process of creating the IDP was guided by the guideline documents released by the department of Constitutional Development and Local Government. This involved amongst other factors, assessing the current realities, new priorities and financial planning.

### **2.17.1 Economic development and job creation**

According to the Matjhabeng Local Municipality IDP (2005:22) the economy of the area relies primarily on the mining sector and the agricultural sector. However, both these sectors are continually shedding jobs. Therefore, the main priority for the municipality is to move away through pro-active planning and dynamic promotion of development and growth through diversification and revitalization of the

local economy. The decline in economic output by the mining industry has major economic implications for the whole Matjhabeng area. The possibility of big industry coming to the area is slim and the high rates will also make it difficult for new industry.

According to Mr Motseki (Personal interview, 02 February 2006) through its dynamic economic diversification, vision and policy, the municipality will add further dimension to the growth potential of the area. Mr Motseki is of the opinion that the opportunities created in the industrial sector, eco-tourism and the jewellery industry will make the Goldfields and Matjhabeng in particular a paradise for prospective investors.

#### **2.17.2 Land reform, infrastructure development and housing**

The municipality faces enormous challenges in dealing with housing shortages. In terms of Section 84 of *the Municipal Structures Act 117 of, 1998* municipalities are not tasked with the delivery of housing. However, as the closest sphere of government to the community, municipalities are expected to play a leading role to prioritise, plan and co-ordinate the delivery of serviced stands so as to play its role to systematically eradicate the acute housing shortages. The municipality intends preventing further squatting and to develop the already existing squatter areas into planned settlements.

The municipality already advertised in 2001 the *Provincial Gazette* its intention to set aside land for development. The process regarding the preparation of the land development objections has already been undertaken and necessary steps have been set in motion. The municipality has already set sites available for sale in the Welkom, Thabong and Bronville suburbs. Land for development of houses is available for housing and bulk infrastructures. Fully serviced land is

available, and Council has undertaken the development of 10 000 subsidised houses which stretch from Dagbreek in Welkom to Odendaalsrus aimed at integrating the residents of the two towns. This is catered for under the Alma Project.

The housing subsidies that are received from the provincial government are used to help the people who qualify to finance their houses. According to Mr T. Khalipha, member of the Mayoral Committee responsible for housing, (Personal interview, 15 February 2006), the delivery of those envisaged 10 000 alone is necessary to address the housing backlog of approximately 26 000 houses.

### 2.17.3 **Effective governance and community participation**

The Matjhabeng Local Municipality realizes that it needs to provide more effective services that address the real and justified needs of the local community. One of the primary roles for the municipality is to encourage the community to be meaningful participants in the activities of the municipality. The municipality has to ensure that the previously disadvantaged communities have access to services at minimum RDP standards. Furthermore, the municipality intends to promote public-private partnership at all times.

According to Mr L. Rubulana (Personal interview: 10 February 2006) the monthly meetings of the municipality are simultaneously interpreted in four major regional languages namely, Sesotho, isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English; and these have been accepted as the four official languages of the municipality. This means that all by-laws and regulations will be available in all four languages. This policy also applies to all operations of the municipality and will be applied to all contracts, conditions of employment and all other official correspondence. Consequently, all

public announcements, public hearings and official notices will be conducted in all four languages. Although this is going to be costly to the municipality, it is necessary to encourage every member of the community to partake in the activities of their municipality. Therefore, the problem of language will not be a factor that will hamper community participation.

#### 2.17.4 **Disaster and environmental management**

The Matjhabeng economic activity centres around the mining industry. The long-term effects of this mining activity could be detrimental to the health of the local community. Although the mine groups have extensive rehabilitation programmes, which include the planting of vegetation on inactive mines, the long-term success cannot be guaranteed. Will (19 July 2005:01) reported that the residents of Thabong and Bronville have been complaining about the dust from the inactive mines within the vicinity of these residential areas. The AngloGold Trust in Welkom is undertaking the largest gold mining rehabilitation project in the Free State. The project, started in 1995, involves rehabilitation of 21 000 hectares of land, 11 shafts, four gold plants, 15 slimes dams and 11 hostels which are no longer in use for mining activities. Amongst other activities, the project involves the planting of significant vegetation. The main objective is to obtain closure certification, which means that the land can be used for something other than mining.

The Interim municipality IDP (2005:41) states that lack of clean safe water is a problem. Most local towns experience problems with the management of their waste disposal sites and to meet the requirements of the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs. The municipality IDP states that a plan to establish a regional framework for effective

waste disposal is required, including the possibility of regional dumping sites and how to deal with toxic waste.

#### **2.17.5 Redressing service delivery levels**

The municipality realizes that there is an acute difference in service levels throughout its locality. However, to address these differences, funding is critical and given the financial position of the municipality it is going to be difficult to do so. The main priorities of the municipality are to ensure that all people have access to services at a minimum RDP standard. This will involve redressing the imbalances of the past system. One of the challenges will be to ensure that national government policy of a certain level of free services is implemented. Furthermore, the municipality has to ensure accessibility of facilities by the disabled.

#### **2.18 Summary and conclusion**

The crucial test of any local authority is the degree to which it secures legitimacy in the eyes of its voters. The success or failure of a municipality can primarily be measured through its developmental projects. The most important challenges facing local government is promoting economic and social development while fostering democracy, accountability and transparency by involving the community in their activities. The Matjhabeng municipality in particular faces many challenges, including creating a financially viable municipal structure. The financial problems of the municipality will certainly affect its development role and the manner in which these problems are handled by the new leadership will mean the difference between a financially viable and a non-viable municipality.

It is important that a municipality involves all sectors of its community in its activities, because no local authority can claim to truly represent the community if the majority of its residents are ignorant about its right of existence. It will be mutually beneficial for both the municipality and the local community to work hand in hand in building a common vision and mission while setting goals for development. This will ensure that the community does not raise unrealistic demands that do not match the administrative and financial capability of the municipality. For the municipality to fulfil its mandate, officials will need to discharge the municipal resolutions, policies and procedures. Managers and staff must be proactive and reactive to issues affecting the municipality and they must manage effectively. Thus the ineffectiveness of the municipal officials must not be used as an excuse for non-delivery of essential services. The following chapter will focus on the changed role of municipal officials in service delivery.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE CHANGED ROLE OF MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS IN SERVICE DELIVERY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The goal of any local authority is to improve the general welfare of the community it serves. Therefore, all financial, administrative and material activities undertaken by a local authority should be aimed towards the development of the environment. However, many local authorities in the country have been criticized for poor financial administration and management, and almost on a regular basis municipal councilors and officials are accused of irresponsible financial decisions that result in unnecessary expenditure, with many municipalities perceived as extravagant and failing to respond to the real needs of their communities. The challenges that continue to face municipalities in the country include, improving service delivery, addressing the issue of non-payment of services, and more importantly improving the effective management of resources. Sound financial management in local government requires a close and meaningful collaboration between political office-bearers and appointed officials.

This chapter defines and determines the changed role of municipal appointed officials in service delivery. The appointed officials constitute the management level at local government and this level comprises the Municipal Manager, the treasurer and departmental heads. The role of these individuals is of utmost importance in creating visionary leadership, financial viability and effective management. Meaningful collaboration between the appointed officials and political office-bearers is important for sound financial and resources management and for that

reason; this chapter will also define and determine the extent of this collaboration. The specific role of the elected officials will as a result receive attention. Elected officials comprise the Executive Mayor, the Mayoral committee and the Municipal Councilors. The focus for discussion is the Matjhabeng Local Municipality.

For the appointed officials' role in service delivery to be understood, it is important to initially understand what effective service delivery is. The following section explains what effective service delivery means.

### **3.2 Meaning of effective service delivery**

It should be expected that the needs and demands of communities are continually changing and no public institution can meet all these needs and demands if it does not have a flexible administrative system. A service can be considered effective if its unmet needs or desires are kept at a satisfactory level. Effective service delivery encompasses the involvement of municipal inhabitants in a wide range of administrative policy making activities, including the determination of levels of service and budget priorities (Freysen, 1998:249). Local authorities should provide choice wherever possible and practical. Regular consultation with all the stakeholders must be undertaken to determine and improve productivity. Sekoto and Van Straaten (1999:104) believe that, the main objective of customer – focus approach is to improve service delivery and it is characterized by consulting users of services, setting service standards, increasing access, ensuring courtesy, providing more useful information, increasing openness and accountability and building partnership with all the relevant stakeholders in the community. Section B of the *White Paper* on Local Government (1998:29) states that, municipalities should go beyond their traditional role of making their presence felt in communities by controlling or regulating the actions of

the community. They should provide visionary leadership, encourage community involvement, offer practical support and direct community's energies into projects and programmes that benefit the area as a whole. The involvement of the youth as the future municipal ratepayers and consumers should not be undermined.

The Public Service Review Report (2006:33-35) states that effective service delivery should meet the service levels as determined in the policy objectives set; it must lead to effective and efficient services that are affordable, that services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias, and it must also confirm the value systems of society as set out in the policies and regulations. Based on the above, it can be deduced that effective service is one that provides for the municipal inhabitants' real and justified needs, it meets the acceptable minimum set standards and establishes mutual understanding and a spirit of goodwill within the community.

The ever increasing challenges facing municipalities to improve service delivery requires innovative methods and systems that will address the needs of the community. The process of improving and encouraging sustainable municipality services is not only confined to politicians. Municipalities on their own will struggle to provide effective services. Therefore, options involving all stakeholders should be found that could improve the delivery of services. The following section explores various alternatives available to municipalities in improving service delivery.

### **3.2.1 Privatisation and contracting out**

Much of the rationale for re-evaluating the boundaries between the public and private sectors has come from the economics of exchange (or transactions). However, more complex factors, including capability,

innovation and a re-focus on core functions, have affected decisions on whether or not to privatize state-owned enterprises and to contract out the provision of goods and services.

Privatisation is a once-off operation; contracting out can always be reversed (De Bettignies et al 2004:138 and Diale 2005:55). However, as government become more comfortable with involving the private sector in public services, they are beginning to explore long-term solutions, where applicable. Increasing the use of the term Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) reflects this underlying desire to develop and sustain close working relationships with the external market and that public authorities and private companies should enter into a partnership for the management of safe, regular and reliable public services for citizens/customers (Domberger & Fernandez 1999:1 & Levy 1998:24). Where substantial financial investment is needed to create additional infrastructure, these partnerships have been referred to as Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT). In the context of PFI/BOT the word “partnership” refers mainly to the long-term commitment that exists between the government and the private sector contractor over the latter’s right to operate and manage an infrastructure asset for the purpose of revenue generation (Prager 1997:622; Murphy 1998:45; Ruane 2001:2 & De Bettignies et al 2004:136).

The common feature of all PFIs/BOTs is the recognition of the need for commercial expertise to help manage the enormous and complex investment process. By introducing private sector investors who put up their own capital, skills and experience, the public sector receives the benefit of commercial discipline, innovations and efficiencies. The result is not only better services, but also better value for money. The yardstick for success is therefore whether publicly funded services

deliver their core purpose. In this regard, the following key indicators can be identified (Smith 2000:128):

- output-based specifications, where services are specified as outputs and payment is linked to the quality and timing of their delivery;
- the long term nature of contracts, which provides scope to recover the initial capital investment, to develop alternative approaches to service delivery and to focus on whole-life costing;
- performance measurement and incentives which provide the means of securing the value for money promised by the original deal;
- competition which makes it easier to demonstrate that value for money has been achieved; and
- private sector management skills delivering efficiencies and innovation with the financing, construction and operation of the total project.

The concept of partnership can be extended to contractual agreements between public and private sectors for the delivery of services where ownership of the asset remains in the public sector. Such services range from the basic – refuse collection for example - to more complex - such as information technology. As opposed to PFI/BOT, which require long contract terms to ensure adequate return of capital, finance is less of an issue in contracts for service delivery. Partnership between the public and private sector can have shorter contract terms when they relate purely to the delivery of services and do not involve significant investment in physical assets (Domberger & Fernandez 1992:2).

Service delivery PPPs often involve a complex bundle of component services, each of which may have to be managed differently. Throughout the duration of the contract there are close interactions and dialogues among the contracting parties to manage the changeable nature of most of these services. Furthermore, irrespective of who receives the service –

the community or the public sector organisation – all financial payments are made by the public sector organisation to the private sector contractor. Barney (1999:138) describes this as follows: “Governance of the contractual relationships for service delivery would be intermediate between the arms – length arrangements of market - based transactions and the hierarchical governance that exists within an organisation”. The questions of how citizens can be served better in municipalities, how the production of public services should be organized, and how and by whom service delivery systems should be managed and conducted, are being posed as responses to the challenges of governance in contemporary public administration and management. Different ways to define governance can be found (Kooiman 1999:68-69; Boviard et al 2000:3). However, most governance concepts highlight the arrangements and collaborations in which public as well as private and voluntary sectors aim at both solving societal problems and creating societal opportunities (Kooiman 2000:139).

### **3.2.2 Partnership in local government**

According to Kroukamp (2005:76) the global trend of reduced spending by governments means that private institutions are increasingly involved in playing active roles in the improvement of public service delivery to inhabitants. Public – Private Partnerships (PPP), also referred to as Municipal Service Partnership (MSPs) to include possibilities for public – public partnerships (Hlahla 1999:2), comprise not only business (in its various forms, for example multi – national companies and small, medium and micro enterprises – SMMEs) but also non – governmental organizations, community based organizations and citizens (Van Niekerk et al 2001:256).

Cranko and Khan (1999:3) indicate that the primary motivation of municipalities for the establishment of partnerships is to supplement capacity or enhance the cost – effectiveness of services. However, municipalities experience a number of constraints regarding the establishment of effective partnerships, namely (Cranko & Khan 1999:3):

- the political divisions and conflicts within communities;
- a lack of capacity to manage the processes of planning, implementation and monitoring of development outputs;
- local government capacity to engage in true partnerships is ascribed to limited skills expertise and commitment among its officials;
- local government experiences a general lack of adequate administrative and financial resources to support municipal partnerships; and
- differences between the organizational and operational ethos of partners are sometimes difficult to reconcile. This state of affairs causes many misunderstandings, divisions and mistrust in interactions and exchanges between municipalities and their stakeholders.

Despite the above - mentioned constraints, partnerships offer the following benefits as it (Tisch 2004:4):

- eliminate or reduce obstacles by converting potential adversaries into allies;
- expand the reach into markets and suppliers through new contacts, connections and channels of communications;
- give access to resources, strengths controlled by other institutions thereby multiplying the capabilities and compensating for limitations;
- align the interests of the institution with the community;

- reduce the amount of time, energy and finances that must be devoted to conflict resolution, freeing up resources for more productive pursuits;
- produce a positive spiraling effect as one partnership tends to beget further partnership.

These benefits can only come to fruition if a serious commitment is made by addressing inter alia the following challenges, namely

- treat the concerns of the partner equally, thus partnerships should not be faked;
- creativity;
- compromise;
- commitment and consistency;
- flexibility;
- openness; and
- fairness (Tisch 2004:5 and Mulgan 2005:63).

According to Van Niekerk et al (2001:256) PPPs/MSPs can assist in empowering local communities and encourage local economic development. Furthermore, a partnership can be viewed as a continuous relationship and a definite process. Such partnerships involve active interactivity and are based on the following principles: particular skills, cost effectiveness and service efficiency, effective public participation, continued government responsibility, a proper contractual relationship, monitoring process and regulatory frame-work and a good working relationship between the government authority and the government agent (Van Niekerk et al 2001:257). Mulgan (2005:55) argues that the movement predicted between government and PPPs/MSPs will blur and perhaps eventually eliminate the clear – cut distinction between public

administration and private administration, or what can more accurately be called non governmental administration.

Kroukamp (2005:79) argues that partnerships should not be seen as “quick-fix” management solutions. The partnership form of organizing is a unique combination of strategy, structure and management. The move from a functional organisation to an integrated one is a major undertaking that may take years to implement effectively. Partnerships are also becoming increasingly necessary to support innovative activities. In these perspectives, partnership are increasingly required to pool resources, skills and risk capital to maintain competitiveness in the global environment and to improve the quality of life of inhabitants through improved service delivery.

### **3.2.3 Partnership with the community and community based organizations**

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are usually at the forefront of community needs and expectations that are not met by government. Both CBOs and NGOs embrace a variety of organizational forms and activities ranging from small, informal local initiatives to more formalized structures. The main functions of these organizations are responding to the basic needs of the community that are not met by either local government or the market. They also play an important role in a sense that they represent ordinary service delivery. According to Wissink (1999:106) there are strong grounds for support and increased collaboration between NGOs, CBOs and local government. Therefore, municipalities can benefit from the use of community organizations due to their people centred development

approach and their capacity to work with the community at grassroots level.

In the new management movement public – private partnerships and networks are seen as mechanisms to strengthen government’s policy capacity and administrative systems that support service delivery outcomes. Through public-partnerships and networks, the responsibility for implementing public programmes is more broadly shared in intricate contract – management and coordination strategies that are tied up in partnership agreement between the public, private and NGO sectors. However in this environment, authority became less effective as a mechanism in problem-solving, decision-making and accountability (Peters and Savoie, 2000; Goodnow and with a new introduction by Rohr, 2003; Kettl, 2003).

The main reason being that the challenges faced by management in positions of authority became more complex as health and HIV/AIDS policies became broader-based and more horizontal. “Fuzzy or blurred boundaries” confused managers as they are required to manage less through vertical authority and more through horizontal authority and the wide variety of other strategies. While public servants find themselves delegating authority in traditional ways they are discovering that the old mechanisms for ensuring accountability are ineffective and fail to address the real issues and needs (Kettl, 2003). Being that government relies more on partnerships with the private and NGO sectors, the problems faced by building value-for-money strategies are multiplied as public servants need to devise new techniques and strategies for securing democratic accountability (Kettl, 2003). This is further complicated by a shift in service delivery planning that requires public servants to “listen” and “serve” rather than “tell” and “steer” the governance process (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2003).

### **3.3 Role of appointed officials in the management of local government resources**

The role of appointed officials in improving the financial position of their local authority should not be undermined. Appointed officials, unlike municipal councilors, are involved with the day-to-day administration of a local authority and this function makes them more familiar with the socio-economic issues and the financial capabilities of their locality. According to Craythorne (1997:438) the management level in the service of a municipal council comprise the Municipal Manager, City Treasurer and Heads of departments. The Municipal Manager together with other chief officials such as departmental heads should actively partake in the policy making process by advising councillors about proposed legislative measures and their likely impact. Furthermore, these chief officials have to ensure that they make councillors aware of policy alternatives.

According to Ferreira (2000:172) municipal chief officials are a distinct group of officials holding specific posts allowing and requiring active co-operation with elected councillors. Their role include, amongst others, controlling and providing factual information to councillors for effective financial policy-making and responsibility for the execution of by-laws and other regulations. Zybrands (in Venter 1998:208) is of the opinion that, sound financial management requires a high degree of financial expertise and without such expertise financial mismanagement becomes inevitable, thereby exacerbating an already complicated matter. This view is also shared by Gildenhuis (1997:62) who states that, the various facets of financial management and the administrative processes at local government level have become so complicated and comprehensive that the help of specialists such as accountants, cost accountants,

economists, and programmers is needed to ensure effective municipal administration and management.

### **3.3.1 Role of the Municipal Manager**

The Municipal Manager plays a dynamic role within local government finances. According to Reddy (1997:190) the importance of the position of the Municipal Manager is highlighted by the fact that it is often entrenched by statutory provisions. Section 82 of the *Municipal Structures Act*, 1998, stipulates that, a municipal council must appoint a Municipal Manager, who is the head of administration and the accounting officer of the municipality. Also Section 10B of the *Local Government Transition Act*, 1996 (Act 97 of 1996) clearly states that, the Municipal Manager (referred to as the Chief Executive Officer) is responsible for the overall performance of a municipality and shall be charged with the responsibility of accounting for all monies received and for payments made by the municipality.

In terms of Section 55 of the *Municipal Systems Act*, 2000, the Municipal Manager is responsible for the efficient and economical municipal administration. This means that the Municipal Manager facilitates interaction and communication between the political and administrative units of the municipality. In doing so the Municipal Manager must be responsive to the needs of the local community while operating in accordance with the municipality performance management system. To ensure that Municipal Managers deliver and meet the targets set in the IDP, all Municipal Managers are employed on fixed contracts, which will include performance indicators, targets and standards.

According to Ababio and Makgoba (2002:18), the Municipal Manager is primarily responsible for the execution of all decisions taken by the municipal council, including the Executive Mayor.

Therefore he is expected to attend as many as possible (if not all), municipal council meetings so as to guide councillors, especially the Executive Mayor of the policy proposals and the likely impact of such policies. Furthermore, the Municipal Manager must inform council about the impact of their decisions and the progress thereof (Ferreira, 2000:148). According to Mr S. Motseki, the Acting Municipal Manager of Matjhabeng (Personal interview, 27 February 2006), in the performance of his duties, the Municipal Manager has to provide guidance and advise his subordinate officials, including the treasurer and other senior officials while pointing out steps to follow to effect financial decisions and directives. The Municipal Manager renders account to both the Executive Mayor and the municipal council about implemented decisions and, at the same time recommends corrective and remedial measures, where necessary. According to Visser (2005:02) this requires the municipal council to have the tools to hold the Municipal Manager accountable and review his performance. Conversely, the Municipal Manager must have the tools to answer to that accountability, that is the administration must be managed in such a way that it enables the Municipal Manager to account for the performance of the entire administration of the municipality. Furthermore, the Municipal Manager reports back to the Executive Mayor and the council about the strength and weakness of the financial policies of the council. It should be noted that the Auditor-General directs his enquiries towards the Municipal Manager. Therefore, failure to comply with proper accounting procedures by any official will have to be explained by the Municipal Manager.

The Municipal Manager needs to know how the organization is functioning, by keeping in contact with the other chief officials, while he must resist the temptation to meddle in the direct management of their departments. Ferreira (2000:149) believes that the Municipal Manager

must view each department as forming part of the whole, with the departmental heads forming a directing team under his leadership. This view is shared by Mr Motseki (Personal interview, 27 February 2006) who states that, departmental heads or chief officials are specialists who know more about the complexities faced by their departments than any other official. Therefore, regular meetings (either weekly or monthly or when necessary) and reports between the Municipal Manager and the Chief Officials are of utmost importance to ensure that the council's goals are achieved. Although the Municipal Manager is primarily responsible for these tasks, the City treasurer supports him by performing some of the allocated responsibilities.

### **3.3.2 Role of the treasurer**

The treasurer works hand in hand with the Municipal Manager and has overall responsibility for the final compilation of the budget as a working document. According to Ferreira (2000:177) in managing the finances of a municipality the treasurer has to assist the Municipal Manager in evaluating activities of all kinds. This involves the overriding responsibility of ensuring that all financial aspects are given due consideration. Mr N. Pitso, the Matjhabeng municipality treasurer (Personal interview, 27 February 2006), outlines lack of service payment as one of the key challenges facing the municipality. This, he argues, impacts negatively on the budget and affects service delivery. However, attention was being given to the phenomenon. The municipality encourages all its employees and the larger community to implement stop order and debit order facilities as one of the methods of encouraging service payment. Those who are able to pay, but fail to do so, have their services suspended in an attempt to encourage them to pay. This method, Pitso maintains, has yielded positive results as the level of payment improves every month.

Ismail, Bayat and Meyer (1997:87) state that, the treasurer must provide heads of departments with timeous and accurate records of expenditure incurred and income accrued so as to be clearly aware of the financial implication of the likely projects. This means that he takes into account all funding requests made by different departments within the municipality and determines the overall implications of these requests. The treasurer must also develop an integrated financial system, which must be approved by the Municipal Manager. The system must enable all the departments to execute, without constraints, the policies and work programmes of the local government (Gildenhuis, 1997:62). The viability of an efficient and effective department is of utmost importance in creating and maintaining a sound accounting system that minimizes the chances of financial mismanagement and corruption.

### **3.3.3 Role of the Internal Auditor**

According to Fox and Meyer (1995:23), internal control refers to the degree of influence that management has for directing the behaviour of organization members and their related activities and it involves amongst other things, periodic inspections, supervision and internal auditing by the internal auditor. A sound system of internal control should be established to safeguard assets, ensure reliability of records, provide operational records, encourage adherence to policies and more importantly minimize the risk of fraud. Internal auditing is pivotal for the daily checking of all financial transactions. Section G of the White Paper on Local Government (1998:126) states that, the lack of internal reporting standards in the past limited the effectiveness of senior management and councillors, thereby compromising the financial viability of many municipalities. Gildenhuis (1997:67) is of the opinion that, the nature and scope of internal auditing may differ from one local

authority to another. In some local authorities internal auditors are used for checking the receipt and spending of money for the sole purpose of uncovering or preventing theft and corruption and, in other local authorities, internal auditors are mainly responsible for evaluation either of financial policy matters or with investigations where quality considerations are involved. According to Mr Segalo MD, internal auditor at Matjhabeng local municipality, (Personal interview, 27 February 2006) the Matjhabeng municipality internal audit section fulfils both functions.

The internal auditor of the municipality has to assess whether payment was actually made, that it was made to the proper person and more importantly whether it (payment) has been acknowledged. However, the role and function of the internal auditor does not stop here, he has to also determine that payment had been incurred under proper authority and was duly budgeted. It is the function of an internal auditor to examine that the municipality's statements, books, and accounts are kept in connection with the receipt, custody, security or other property of the municipality. In doing so the internal auditor has to determine that proper provision has been made for the redemption of any money and loans borrowed by the municipality (Craythorne, 1997:374).

According to Mr M.D. Segalo, internal auditor of the Matjhabeng municipality (Personal interview, 27 February 2006), the impartiality of the internal auditor is of paramount importance in ensuring that all irregularities are not only detected, but also reported to the municipal council. Gildenhuis (1997:67) believes that the office of the internal auditor should be made independent to enable the internal auditor to be free to audit all activities of all departments and to report directly to the municipal council. Furthermore, the internal auditor should not concern himself with the evaluation of policy matters, but rather he should check the regularity and legitimacy of financial transactions. An internal

auditor works hand in hand with the municipal manager and the municipal manager as the accounting officer should have profound and intricate knowledge of existing audit systems. According to Craythorne(1997:379) the existence of a system of daily internal audit inspection tends to have a good moral effect in preventing irregularities and in keeping the work of employees engaged in financial work up to a high standard of efficiency and effectiveness.

#### **3.3.4 Role of Departmental heads**

According to Gildenhuis (1997:68) the arrival of the new corporate management system in local government, which requires the Municipal Manager to be the chief accounting officer has forced the heads of departments to be more active participants in financial management. It is expected of departmental heads to be responsible and accountable for the financial administration of their departments. In other words they are departmental accounting officers and they accept sole responsibility and accountability for the financial administration of these departments. Craythorne (1997:439) believes that the heads of departments and the municipal manager should have a specialized relationship. To keep in constant touch with how the organization is functioning, the municipal manager needs to keep in constant touch with the chief officials, including departmental heads.

According to Mr Motseki, the Municipal Manager and departmental heads have to meet regularly and function as a team. This will help the municipal manager to monitor the services provided by the municipal organization and be in a position to take corrective action. Ferreira (2000:140) states that the departmental heads in collaboration with the treasurer and the municipal manager are responsible for preparing reports and carrying out transactions with financial implications.

Furthermore the departmental heads should inform the treasurer about matters likely to have financial consequences on the municipal council. The head of department must ensure that the results of the activities of the department comply with predetermined cost standards and must arrange for the keeping of proper financial cost records (Gildenhuis, 1997:69). Mr Motseki believes that, the increased pressure based on municipalities by the national government and the communities requires that, in addition to their different specialist role departmental heads should apply best practices as value for money in performing their different departmental activities.

Sound financial management at local government level requires meaningful collaboration between appointed and elected officials. Elected officials comprise the Executive Mayor, the Mayoral Committee and municipal councillors. The role of these elected officials is discussed in the sections that follow.

#### **3.4 The role of elected officials in the management of local government resources**

Municipal councillors as elected representatives are tasked primarily with the responsibility of making decisions about how the limited resources will be allocated and which services will be provided. The 1995 municipal elections (1996 in Kwazulu Natal) were the first non-racial local government elections in the country and symbolised the birth of a democratic local government. Although the elections symbolized a new era in local government, one characterised by a non-racial and democratic local government, the transition was incomplete. According to Section A of the White Paper on Local Government (1998:08) the new democratic political leadership found that the systems of municipal governance they inherited was bureaucratic and slow to respond to the

needs of the communities they served. The municipalities inherited were characterized by poor co-ordination between line departments and authoritarian management practices. Thus, many of the transitional structures did not have the capacity to implement service delivery and infrastructure development. This inability to achieve development outcomes risked undermining the democratic process. Accordingly it was necessary to improve the system in order for local government units to provide better life for all.

Section F of the White Paper on Local Government (1998:102) states that to effectively play a developmental role and improve performance with respect to service delivery, municipalities will need to develop at least three sets of new capacities, namely:

- Strategic capacity to assess, plan and develop innovative programmes to meet local needs. Unlike the previous undemocratic local government, the new order will have to be innovative and flexible in dealing with problems faced by their communities.
- Integrating capacity to co-ordinate and integrate inputs from inside and outside the administration to ensure development outcomes. This is especially important in rural municipalities to build their administrative capacity.
- A community orientation to inform a user-friendly, relevant and quality service to local communities. The principles of “Batho-Pele” are important in this regard. These principles are aimed at motivating the right attitude and good governance in the process of delivering public services. They provide a new and holistic framework to make the philosophy more realizable, practical and beneficial to the internal and external customers of the public service. The “Batho-Pele” principles have become a brand name in signifying the intention to improve service delivery. The final

- transformation in local government and the resultant new political leadership structure is discussed in the following sections.

#### **3.4.1 The final transformation in local government**

The December 2000 municipal elections symbolized the final transformation in local government. According to the Types of Municipalities Guideline (2001:01) from the National Department of Provincial and Local Government the new phase of local government symbolizes an era characterized by strong leadership and the ability to implement decisions effectively while providing democratic and accountable government to the local community. The new political system will improve efficiency, especially where municipalities have to respond to vast service backlogs with minimal resources. It will force municipalities to think strategically and prioritise wisely by doing more with less. In other words the new structures will promote economies of scale in local government management. This means that municipal budgets will be redirected to development priorities and not overheads. The National Department of Provincial and Local Government believes that, the increased pressure for delivery will force municipalities to train staff to be more efficient and professional by developing a culture of service delivery. In an address to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP, 12 October 2000) the President, Mr T. Mbeki, stated that, social transformation requires among other things, a truly representative local government system that is efficient and cost effective and the new system provides the possibility to achieve both objectives. Furthermore, the new system will create fewer, larger and more rational municipal entities rather than continue with the local government units that are small, fragmented and weak. However, President Mbeki also stated that, the mere creation of larger local government units by itself would not solve the problems that continue to confront municipalities.

Section 1 of the *Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998 provides for five different systems of municipal governance, that is, the three executive systems, namely, the Mayoral Executive System the Collective Executive System and Plenary Executive System and two participatory systems, namely, the Ward-participatory system and the Sub-council participatory system. All municipalities must have one of the three executive systems of municipal government. The two participatory systems cannot be applied on their own. They must be combined with one of the three executive systems.

The executive systems describe the structures, through which the municipal council exercises its executive powers and performs its executive duties, while the participating systems describe structures to which the municipal council may delegate powers, to be exercised in part of the municipal area. The Matjhabeng local municipality uses the Mayoral Executive System and the Ward participatory system. These systems are discussed below.

#### **3.4.2 The Mayoral Executive System**

The Mayoral Executive System allows for the exercise of executive authority through an Executive Mayor. With this system the municipal council elects one member as the Executive Mayor. In the case of Matjhabeng Municipality Mr S Leeuw was elected as the Executive Mayor in the year 2000. In 2006 Ms M. Mokapo was elected Executive Mayor. As a result, the executive leadership of the municipality is vested in this functionary. In terms of Section E of the White Paper on Local Government (1998:83) the new political system makes it easier for ordinary people to relate to the leadership of their local area, thereby giving a human face to local government. Furthermore, the Mayoral

Executive System will work well in rural and other municipalities that have a limited range of powers and duties covering large geographical areas. For instance, in areas where councillors have to travel long distances to attend committee meetings, the election of an Executive Mayor could minimize the need for committees to meet, thereby enabling faster and more effective decision making.

A municipal council may appoint a Deputy Executive Mayor only with the approval of the Provincial Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for Local Government. In terms of Section 55 of the *Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, the Deputy Mayor exercises the powers and performs the duties of the Executive Mayor if the Executive Mayor is not available. The Executive Mayor is elected for a period of five years or until the next municipal elections. Both the Executive Mayor and the Deputy Mayor cannot serve for more than two consecutive terms. Once elected, the Executive Mayor can only be removed from office, if he ceases to be a councillor, resigns from office or if the municipal council, after giving notice of its intention to do so, resolves to remove the Executive Mayor.

The former Matjhabeng municipality Executive Mayor, Mr S Leeuw (Personal interview, 15 February 2006) believes that boosting staff morale, debt collection, performance management implementation, maximum community participation and the prioritizing of community needs are important. For that matter, the municipality has to ensure that it practises the eight principles of Batho Pele (people first). Amongst others, these principles involve, consulting the municipal inhabitants before making decisions, setting service standards, providing access to information and treating members of the public with courtesy and respect (Sekoto & van Straaten, 1999:105). In exercising his executive powers, the Executive Mayor is assisted by the Mayoral Committee. In terms of Section 60 of the *Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, the

Mayoral Committee, also referred to as the Cabinet, can only be elected if a municipal council has more than nine members. Only councillors appointed by the Executive Mayor can serve on this committee. The Executive Mayor may delegate powers and duties to the Committee or to individual councillors. However, the Executive Mayor remains accountable to the municipal council for all the powers and duties allocated to him.

According to Mr S. Leeuw, the municipality will avoid unnecessary and unwarranted misunderstanding between the different role players and other stakeholders. Through periodic review performances and annual reports, the municipality and the community will monitor the municipality for good service delivery and development governance in general. Consequently, this process will help in ensuring that efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are realised in the administration and management of resources.

### **3.4.3 The Mayoral Committee**

As explained above, if a municipality has more than nine members, the Executive Mayor must appoint a Mayoral Committee to assist with the exercise and the performance of mayoral powers. The Executive Mayor is also entitled to dismiss members of the committee should they fail in the performance of their allocated tasks. The Matjhabeng municipality has 72 councillors and as such is entitled to a Mayoral Committee. Section 60(2) of the *Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, states that, the number of councillors on the Mayoral Committee must be the number required for effective and efficient municipal government or no more than 20 percent of the councillors on the municipal council or 10 councillors whichever is the least.

The Executive Mayor of Matjhabeng municipality appointed 8 members of the ruling party, African National Congress (ANC) to his Mayoral Committee and all serve on delegated specific responsibilities by the Executive Mayor. They each head the following portfolios:

- Finances by the Chief Financial Officer
- Community Services & Social Development
- Engineering Services
- Corporate Services
- Economic Development and Spatial Planning
- Housing Development and Environmental affairs
- Human Resources
- Public Safety and Transport

In essence, the committee will function like a Cabinet at national level. If the Executive Mayor vacates office, the Mayoral Committee appointed by him dissolves. Mr S. Leeuw believed that his five year tenure had impacted positively in resolving the financial problems which surrounded the municipality as a result of the legacies of the past system of local government. However, he was quick to point out that challenges still exist that need to be grappled with. These include the improvement of service delivery and striving for customer satisfaction. (Leeuw, Budget speech, 31 May 2005).

#### **3.4.4. Role of the Mayoral Committee in the management of the municipality**

Until the 2000 municipal elections in South Africa, all municipal mayors had had no executive authority. The reason for this is that the mayor was first among equals, being elected by fellow councillors and not by the

public at large. This meant that the mayor only performed ceremonial duties and hosted dignitaries (Zybrands, in Venter, 1998:201). However, the role of the mayor in the country changed after the December 2000 municipal elections. According to Mrs P. de Blom, communications officer in the Executive Mayor's office, (Personal interview, 27 February 2006) not only is the Executive Mayor the ceremonial dignitary but he is also the chief executive of the council. Also the Executive Mayor is the mirror of the municipality and a great deal is expected from the individual entrusted to the office of Executive Mayor. Honesty, respect and loyalty, and caring are important components in the role of the Executive Mayor. The extent of the powers and functions of the Mayoral Committee are determined by the Executive Mayor. Therefore, the Executive Mayor must establish a Mayoral Committee with due regard to the need to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the performance of the Mayoral Committee. This includes taking into account the available financial and administrative resources to support the work of the committee including the preparation of agendas and minutes of the committee (Types of municipalities' guideline from the national Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2001:04).

The Executive Mayor plays a crucial role in local government financial management. The election of the Executive Mayor means that, municipal council delegates executive powers to the Executive Mayor. This makes the Executive Mayor responsible for ensuring that the resources at the disposal of the municipality are used in a way that best meets the needs of a variety of local citizens. In doing so the Executive Mayor together with his Mayoral Committee must identify the variety of needs that exist in a municipality and review and evaluate those needs in order of priority. In terms of Section 56 of *the Municipal Structures Act, 1998*, the Executive Mayor together with his Mayoral Committee must develop strategies and service programmes to address priority needs.

After deciding on the priorities the Executive Mayor must recommend the best methods, including partnership(s) with the private sector or the community and other approaches to deliver on those strategies. In doing so they must ensure that, provincial and national programmes are taken into cognizance. Any powers and duties delegated to the Executive Mayor by the municipal council must be exercised and performed by the Executive Mayor together with the other members of the Mayoral Committee. This will ensure some sort of check and balance on the performance of the Executive Mayor.

The Executive Mayor must also monitor whether the strategies described above are working successfully, and if resources are being used effectively and efficiently. Consequently, the Executive Mayor must prepare and submit an operating budget and a capital programme annually to the municipal council. Section B of *the White Paper on Local Government* (1998:31) states that performance management is critical in ensuring that plans being implemented have the desired development impact and resources are used efficiently. Municipalities must set their own measures of performance, or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs vary from municipality to municipality and cover both efficiency and human resource development. Furthermore, they can provide valuable information for two purposes. Firstly, they can be used as developmental indices for helping municipalities know their areas better and plan more efficiently. Secondly, indicators that measure value-for-money in service provision can provide guidance for municipal organisational promotion. In the monitoring phase the Executive Mayor must review the performance of the municipality in order to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the municipality. This is to ensure that the provision of services is undertaken in a sustainable manner.

According to Mr Leeuw the municipality introduced more effective policies regarding credit control and the implementation of the financial system that have ensured a uniform tariff structure for all the six units that make up Matjhabeng municipality. This has improved and ensured effective financial administration and reflected the correct financial capability of the municipality. Mr N. Masoka (Personal interview, 27 February 2006) a member of the Mayoral Committee responsible for finance shares this view. He states that central to the financial problems of the municipality was the issue of non payment of services and the regulation of unnecessary expenditure. Mr Masoka believes that the community and the business sector must pay for services rendered and, if all accounts in arrears were to be paid up, this would improve the financial position of the municipality and help in clearing the municipality debt. However, he also realises that for service payment to improve the community must be billed with the correct accounts.

#### **3.4.5 The ward participatory system**

The municipality makes use of ward committees. The Ward participatory system allows for the establishment of ward committees to facilitate community participation in matters of local government. According to Section 72(3) of the *Local Government Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998, the object of ward committees is to enhance participatory democracy in local government. The ward system allows for matters of local concern to be addressed by committees established for wards. This gives residents a more direct voice in the governance of their neighbourhood. It enhances participatory democracy in local government by providing a vehicle for local communities to make their views and needs known to the municipal council. If a municipality decides to have ward committees, it must establish a ward committee for each ward in the municipality. This must consists of the councillor who represents

that ward and a maximum of 10 persons from each ward area. The ward councillor acts as the chairperson of the ward.

According to Mr S. Leeuw, the ward committees are part of the municipal system where provision is made to allow the community in all different wards to participate directly in the affairs of their municipality. It is imperative that wards represent the diverse interests and needs of the community. To ensure gender sensitivity, women should also be part of the ward committee. The Speaker of the municipality, Mr L. Rabulana, oversees the work of ward committees.

Section 74 of *the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, provides that, the ward committee mainly acts as an advisory committee and can make recommendations on any matter affecting their ward. Furthermore, through their councillor a ward committee can make recommendations to the municipal council, the Executive Committee and the Executive Mayor. A municipal council may delegate additional powers and duties that can be handled effectively by a ward.

### **3.5 Establishment of municipal committees in local government**

Municipal councils must delegate powers in a manner that facilitates timeous and efficient decision-making and allows for the sound management and oversight of the municipal administration. Meiring (2000:113) believes that the execution of legislation and government on a democratic basis always starts with an elected council. Such a council usually has too large a membership to ensure the performance of government on a continuous basis. The traditional second step is to appoint a committee, or committees from amongst the members of the council to perform the governing function. Committees assist the

municipal council in fulfilling its development functions and can have delegated powers or advisory powers, or a combination of both.

Section 32 of *the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, provides that, a municipality must develop a system of delegation that will maximise administrative and operational efficiency. That means the delegation of powers to committees. According to Ismael, Bayat and Meyer (1997:102), a committee may be defined as a group of councillors appointed by the municipal council to discuss matters with some field of reference with a view to making group decisions or recommendations to the municipal council. Councillors are firstly elected to the municipal council by the municipal voters and secondly by elected fellow councillors to serve on the municipal committees. Section E of the White Paper on Local Government (1998:86) states that committees can play a number of crucial roles in the management and supervision of municipal activities and functions. As a result, a municipality must establish an Audit committee to ensure effective management of local government resources and to enhance municipal accountability. The role and functions of this committee is discussed below.

### **3.6 Establishment of the Audit committee**

Committees are used extensively at the local government level, with the primary reason being to facilitate the work of a council. Depending on the committee system in use, councillors will be responsible for the legislative and governing function (Zybrands, in Venter, 1998:202). In terms of *Section 125 of the Free State Provincial Gazette 140A* (dated 1 December, 2000) a municipal council must appoint three councillors to the audit committee and at least one must have knowledge and experience of accounting and auditing. Should a municipal council not have such a councillor, the Provincial Gazette states that, the municipal

council must employ a person who is neither a councillor nor an employee of the municipality with the necessary knowledge and experience. Furthermore, the Audit committee must enhance the accuracy, reliability and credibility of financial reporting by and to the municipal council. The Audit Committee has to also ensure that proper accounting and internal control measures are made, implemented and maintained for the safe custody and protection of the municipality's resources. Furthermore, the Audit Committee facilitates communication between itself, the Municipal Manager, the internal auditors and the Auditor-General.

### **3.6.1 Functions of the Audit committee in local government financial management**

Section 129(1) of the *Provincial Gazette 140A* (dated 1 December 2000:66) stipulates that, the Audit committee together with the Municipal Manager, the external auditors and other employees of the municipal council should assess the planning and scope of significant transactions that do not fall within the normal activities of the municipality. In doing so the committee must ensure reasonable reporting, presentation and publication of information in the annual financial statements. The committee must also ensure that, the accounting policies followed by the municipality are relevant to the prescribed format in the compilation of annual financial statements. Furthermore, the municipality should comply with the Generally Accepted Municipal Accounting Principles (GAMAP) and the law, that is other pieces of legislation that are applicable to municipal financial activities such as the *Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998* and the *Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, and the *Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003*.

Local authorities usually work through a committee system in which a committee of the council supervises the council and controls the implementation of the executive policy made by the municipal council. Each committee is appointed by the council, derives its powers from the municipal council, is responsible to the council and can only act within the limits of delegated authority, which is within the prescribed policy, directives and wishes of the council. Regarding internal control the audit committee must review the effectiveness of the accounting policies and control systems to determine whether deficiencies exist and if identified, proper and effective measures should be implemented to rectify those deficiencies. The Audit committee must also provide a forum for direct reporting of the findings of the internal auditor. Whenever a performance audit is conducted, the committee must evaluate the findings, to assess whether there has been efficient and effective usage of the municipal resources. The findings should be referred to the municipal council (*The Free State Provincial Gazette 140A* dated 1 December, 2000:65).

### **3.6.2 Powers of the Audit committee**

The main role of the Audit committee is to ensure the effective use of the municipality's resources. Section 30 of *the Free State Provincial Gazette 140A*, 1 December 2000:67) provides that the Audit committee may access and inspect any records, documents and information held by the municipality or an employee of the municipality. The committee can also inspect any premises on which the activities of the municipal council are performed. Furthermore, the committee can conduct interviews with the municipal council or any committee thereof and summon any employee of the municipal council to appear before it. In doing so the committee must inform the Municipal Manager.

The committee can also ensure that effective accounting policies, systems and reporting are implemented and applied to facilitate the improvement of the standard of financial reporting. The committee must have at least four ordinary meetings during a financial year. A majority of members of the committee must be present before a decision on any matter may be taken. It is expected that the Municipal Manager or any other employee of the municipal council must assist the Audit committee in the performance of its functions. For municipalities using the Plenary Executive system, after electing the Speaker, they must elect the members of the Finance committee.

### **3.7 Role of the Finance committee in municipal financing**

The primary function of the Finance Committee is to identify the needs of the community, review and evaluate those needs in order of priority. This involves recommending to the municipal council the strategies, programmes and services to address the priority needs through the IDP. Furthermore, the committee must recommend or determine the best methods, including partnerships and other approaches to deliver maximum benefits to the community.

The membership of this committee should be no more than 20 percent of the councillors or 10 councillors whichever is the least. However, a Finance committee must have no less than three members. The committee should be composed in such a way that all political parties and interests represented in council are represented in the committee in substantially the same proportion they are represented in the municipal council (*Free State Provincial Government Gazette 140A* dated 1 December 2000:68).

### **3.8 Summary and conclusion**

The viability of local government depends to a large extent on the resources available at its disposal. To provide services in a sustainable manner a municipality should have adequate financial and human resources. However, it is possible that a municipality can have both administrative and financial resources and fail to make a significant impact in the community that it serves. The management of resources is inextricably linked to the quality of services.

The role of both the municipal councillors and the appointed officials is of utmost importance in financial administration and management. This chapter analysed and described the role of the Executive Mayor, the Mayoral Committee, Municipal Manager, the City treasurer and chief officials. Special attention was given to the role of the Municipal Manager because of his important role in local government. The Municipal Manager as the appointee in the Council has to filter through council mandate to subordinates, including the municipal treasurer and departmental heads. Financial administration and management is perhaps the single most important factor determining the success or failure of developmental local government and major financial reforms are necessary to enable municipalities to strengthen their administrative and financial capabilities. If municipalities are serious about making a significant impact on the lives of the communities they serve then the days of reserving jobs for “buddies” or friends are over. Municipalities must employ officials who are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver.

The administrative changes which the municipality has undergone as a result of the amalgamation process require significant changes in terms of how business will be done by the Municipality. Failure to deliver

services will impact on the lives of more residents and it is imperative that both the Executive Mayor and the Municipal Manager are equipped with the right training to impact positively on the challenges that lie ahead. The next chapter examines public perception on municipal officials as agents of change.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter the changed role of municipal officials in service delivery was defined and determined. Reference was made to the role of appointed officials, namely, the Municipal Manager, the treasurer and departmental heads. It was further shown how significant meaningful collaboration between the appointed officials and political office-bearers is for sound financial and resources management. To this end the role of elected officials, namely, the Executive Mayor, the Mayoral Committee and Municipal Councilors was defined and determined. It was further explained what effective service delivery means.

This chapter will deal with public perception on municipal officials as agents of change. An empirical research will be done in respect of the Municipal Manager and on other managers who report to the Municipal Manager to establish their effectiveness as agents of change towards improved service delivery. It will further be highlighted what the perception of the community and the Executive Mayor is on municipal officials as agents of change.

After the 01 March 2006 municipal elections, Ms M. Mokabo was elected and replaced Mr S. Leeuw as the Matjhabeng Municipality Executive Mayor. The management of the Matjhabeng municipality was elected as a case study for the empirical research of this study. The reason is that Welkom is one of many significant economic centres in the Free State Province and the Municipality is only one of the 42 in South Africa which

has implemented an executive mayoral system, which it will be shown, has a direct bearing on the changed role of the appointed officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery. Much progress has been made by the municipality in the process of transformation. Structures have been established and systems implemented to meet the constitutional mandate and objectives of developmental local government. A municipal manager and strategic managers who report to the municipal manager have been appointed. The following section defines the research method.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH METHOD DEFINED**

This research project examines the changed role of appointed officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery. The qualitative research method was chosen as most relevant and suitable for this study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998:72), one of the features of qualitative research is that it is interpretative in character in that the inquiries try to account for what researchers have given an account of (by asking themselves questions, for example, what is the effectiveness of municipal officials as agents of change) and thereafter collect the responses from municipal stakeholders.

This interpretative character of qualitative research described above, is in the survey method considered by the researcher for this study. Surveys are used to learn amongst other things, about people's attitudes, beliefs, opinions and values (Charles 1995:20). This corresponds with qualitative research in that qualitative research also researches about attitudes, that is, why people behave in the manner they do when in their natural settings (Denzin and Lincoln 1998:47).

Qualitative research concentrates on verbal responses and approaches are not limited to formality, the scope is less defined, less structured and data appears as words (Creswell 1996:42). Strauss and Corbin (1998:91) argue that qualitative research is a foundation aimed at covering various methods and approaches to the inquiry of human behavior. It includes exploring the life world of people interviewed, studying their background and examining the information gathered in this regard, with the purpose of establishing the meaning of facts being provided. What people perceive, tends to expose how they think things should be, whereas what is initially identified is more likely to reveal how things are, especially when field observation extends throughout an adequate time period (Denzin and Lincoln 1998:56). In the context of this research, the views were established of the Executive Mayor, appointed officials and the community about their perceptions of municipal officials as agents of change.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:390) contend that, by trying to understand and observe a problem, qualitative research may enhance the following elements of endeavor related to educational intervention in the identified patterns of human behavior, which are:

- establishing which causal factors can be influenced and which cannot; and
- predicting transformation that might be introduced in the domains concerned.

In the light of the previous paragraphs, the qualitative research method may be explained as guidelines which produce descriptive information as engaged in people's own written or verbal words and identified behaviour rather than figures. This implies that correct meaning to perceptions

held by the Executive Mayor, officials and the community should be deduced (Denzin and Lincoln 1998:35).

MacMillan and Schumacher (1997:233) further assert that qualitative research interprets reality as interactive and as a distributed experience viewed by individuals. In this study, different perceptions by participants on municipal officials' effectiveness are examined and a relevant conclusion is reached.

Research could simultaneously be qualitative as well as quantitative (Neuman 1997:198). Qualitative methods enable the researcher to study selected matters in depth and in detail, while quantitative methods compel standardized measures to be used in order that the perspective and experiences of people could be placed into categories which are predetermined and to which numbers are allocated (McMillan and Schumacher 1997:20). The following section examines the rationale for choosing the qualitative and quantitative methods.

#### **4.3 RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS**

These research methods are considered with the purpose of revealing what benefits can be achieved if municipal inhabitants are exposed to officials' effectiveness. Due to the evidence that various people view the world differently, responses of municipal inhabitants are sought in order for relevant conclusions to be drawn. The qualitative method of research is viewed as appropriate for this study because it becomes possible to measure the reactions of many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating direct comparisons between people (Radebe 1995:50).

#### 4.3.1 **Qualitative method**

Radebe (1995:51) and Strauss and Corbin (1998:30) indicate that 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. It reveals logistics and the relevance, which has an influence on the readers;
- impressive conceptions, related to the origin of truth of the world, are revealed;
- the focus is based on the respondent's ideas and experiences;
- 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 (Charles 1995:21).

Qualitative methods enable the researcher to study selected matters in depth and detail, while quantitative methods compel standardized measures to be used in order that the perspective and experiences of people could be placed into categories which are predetermined and to which numbers are allocated (Cresswell 1994:146).

#### 4.3.2 **Quantitative method**

Charles (1995:97) explains that quantitative data deals principally with numbers while qualitative data deals with meanings. These meanings are expressed through language and action (Thomas 1998:130). Like

meanings, numbers are important at all levels of measurements in research. Numbers must be based on meaningful conceptualizations. Quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other for meaningful research (Creswell 1994:147).

One of the most important requisites in contemporary social science is that scientific information should be quantitative, because it represents an endeavor to detect laws, relationships and explanations of various occurrences. Results obtained in such a way are always transcribed in statistical manner. The extent into which observations are translated into numbers, serves as an indication of the maturity of science (Charles 1995:99).

Quantitative research measures the reaction of many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data, which gives a broad, generalisable set of findings (Thomas 1998:133).

In order to reach the correct conclusion for this study, it is important to focus on the character of a research instrument. This receives attention in the following section.

#### **4.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF A RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

An important attribute of a research instrument is the existence of reliability and validity, the latter being the most essential characteristic (Thomas 1998:133). Mouton (1996:78) postulates that research is a scientific method of enquiry, thus information should be carefully assessed by means of reliability and validity focusing on the trustworthiness (Charles 1995:101), which invite explanation of phenomena, reliability and validity. Validity involves what is intended to

be evaluated and for whom it is relevant, whereas reliability includes the consistency with the instrument appraising whatever should be measured (Thomas 1998:138).

#### 4.4.1 **Validity**

Strauss and Corbin (1998:76) state that validity is employed to guarantee that information includes everything it should and that it does not include anything that should not be included. Validity is the way of discovering a truth and precise picture of what is claimed to be described and is dependent on the purpose in which measurement takes place (Rubin and Rubin 1995:85). The results of a questionnaire and interview can therefore be valid in one situation and invalid in another.

Validity is the degree to which a survey instrument evaluates what it purports to measure (Creswell 1994:121). For instances, the study of municipal officials' effectiveness is valid if the researcher formulates and asks questions that are relevant to officials' effectiveness as agents of change.

To obtain validity, Fink (1995:50) claims that the researcher has to employ standards which may have a meaningful link with research questions and with data analysis, to make use of in order to direct him/her in creating valid arguments, findings and reports. This emphasis is considered with the idea that validity is a single, unitary concept that requires evidence for the specific use that is cited.

#### 4.4.2 **Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement to the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument

or occasions of data collecting. In other words, that the same results are obtained each time the researcher uses various techniques for assessing the collected data (Charles 1995:103).

There might be errors in a set of collected data; therefore reliability is utilized with the aim of achieving a more precise reflection of the truth. Clear and relevant questions were formulated for the interview with the purpose of attaining reliable data that is free from measurement mistakes (Mouton 1996:97), which leads to the process of sampling and selection of respondents.

#### **4.5 SAMPLING AND SELECTION**

Cormack (2000:51) postulates that sampling is a small group of participants from a defined population. He further defines sampling as the scientific research in which a number of individuals are stakeholders to establish a concise conclusion about a large number of people.

Qualitative research is mainly focused on the description of the site and sample (Frey and Oishi 1995:14-15). In this instance, questions regarding where, how and with whom a particular phenomenon prevails, may be asked. Frey and Oishi (1995:16) further emphasize the importance of a selection strategy which should be employed in order to achieve the sub-set of the population from whom data is collected by means of interviewing, observation and documentation. It is therefore, important to conceptualize sampling as an aspect of research. This research study has chosen a specific population which comprises the Executive Mayor, chief officials of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality as well as residents of the municipal area.

The researcher used purposeful sampling because he aimed to receive information from participants who were richly informed and experienced in municipal machinery. Therefore the site where the research was conducted was selected and Welkom, as the municipality head office, was chosen. The following section explains the data collection instruments.

#### **4.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection forms an important part of any research because it does not only give a description of what data could be collected and how it should be collected, but also constitutes the basic information from which conclusions are drawn. It creates an essential component of any research because it does not only supply an explanation of what data is collected and how it is received, it further impacts the important data from which conclusions are drawn (Silverman 1993:170).

The instruments that were used to collect data in this project were the questionnaire and the interview. The questionnaire was the instrument that was used to solicit primary information. Interviews were conducted to validate data collected through the questionnaire.

The researcher made use of the questionnaire and interviews to formulate an opinion about officials' effectiveness as agents of change. In order to follow this course, the researcher had to obtain permission to conduct the research in the Matjhabeng Local Municipality. (Appendix 4.1)

#### **4.6.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was used to conduct a survey study such as this project, in order for the investigator to select a sample of subjects and administer a questionnaire to collect data (Schumacher and McMillan 1993:36). The items in the questionnaire were developed by the researcher according to the method suggested by Mouton (1996:36).

Silverman (1993:175) states that the questionnaire is the most widely used technique for obtaining information from subjects. A questionnaire is relatively economical, has the same questions for all subjects, can ensure anonymity, and contains questions written for specific purposes.

##### **4.6.1.1 Questions explained**

Silverman (1993:175) indicated that once the researcher has defined objectives and has ascertained that no existing methods can be used, he or she may begin the task of writing the questions. It is best to write the items objectively and to consider the way the results are analyzed once the data has been collected. In this research all questions which were deemed irrelevant were eliminated. It is essential to provide clarity to what the researcher wants to achieve by posing the type of questions listed below. Questions listed below solicited the opinion of participants on issues related to officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery at the Matjhabeng Local Municipality.

##### **A. Questionnaire for the Executive Mayor ( Appendix 4.2)**

The first questionnaire is divided into sections A and B, and was completed by the Executive Mayor.

## **Section A**

Questions 1 – 3 establish the demographical information of the Executive Mayor.

## **Section B**

Questions 1 – 6 are included to establish the effectiveness of officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery and also seek to establish client perception about the municipality's level of service delivery.

### **B. Questionnaire for chief officials (Appendix 4.3)**

The second questionnaire, also divided into sections A and B, was completed by the municipal chief officials.

## **Section A**

Questions 1 – 4 establish the demographical information of the chief officials.

## **Section B**

Questions 1 – 9 are included to establish the effectiveness of officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery and their individual contributions towards making the municipality successful.

### **C. Questionnaire for the municipal residents (Appendix 4.4)**

The third questionnaire, also divided into sections A and B, was completed by the municipal residents.

#### **Section A**

Questions 1 – 2 establish the demographical information of the municipal residents.

#### **Section B**

Questions 1 – 6 are included to establish the effectiveness of officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery and their perceptions about the municipality's level of service delivery.

#### **4.6.2 Interviews**

The interview is selected as another instrument used for collecting information as well as to give clarity on certain questions posed in the questionnaire. Through the interview the interviewees have the chance to discuss, answer and pose questions related to the phenomenon (Rubin and Rubin 1995:36). This method is regarded as characterised by open-response questions which enable the researcher to determine how respondents interpret events in their lives. This type of interview provides researchers with a uniform method of recording information, and therefore enhances the validity of the interview as a measuring instrument (McMillan and Schumacher 1993:426).

The following are advantages of interviews:

- by making personal contact, interviewees get the impression that they are being valued and they therefore provide sincere responses;
- the interview setting enables the interviewer to clarify questions that respondents may find confusing;
- respondents may broaden their answers or be limited from the central topic in ways that prove useful to the investigator; and
- provide an in-depth understanding of respondent's motives, their pattern of reasoning and emotional reactions not possible with questionnaires (Thomas 1998:135).

The main disadvantage of interviews is that they are more expensive and time-consuming than questionnaires (Frey and Oishi 1995:3).

Rubin and Rubin (1995:56) claim that an interview permits the interviewer to maintain an understanding of what the interviewee means by responses he/she gives to questions asked. Interviews have been employed extensively across all the disciplines of the social sciences and in scientific research as a key technique of data collection.

The following features (Thomas 1998:134) are deduced from interviews, which are:

- interviewers can probe for more specific answers and can repeat a question when the response indicates that the interviewee has misunderstood the question;
- an interview does not have a time limit. Even people who cannot read could still answer questions in an interview;

- the interviewer is present to observe non-verbal behavior as well as to assess the validity of the interviewee's answers;
- the interviewer may standardize the interview environment, for example by making sure that there is privacy and no noise;
- the interviewer has full control over the order of questions to be answered;
- the interviewee cannot retract an answer once it has been given and thus the interviewer can record answers from the interviewee as they arise;
- the interviewer can ensure that all questions have been answered;
- provide an in-depth understanding of respondent's motives, pattern of reasoning and emotional reactions not possible with questionnaires; and
- the interviewer can record the exact time, date and place of the interview (Thomas 1998:135).

In this research, the municipal chief officials and the executive mayor were requested to be interviewed and informed how important this research could be in adding value to existing information on their effectiveness as agents of change towards improved service delivery. They were also advised that the research may provide solutions or alternatives to problems they are faced with and thereby contribute to the improvement in service delivery.

A semi-structured interview was employed, during which the researcher listened intently, made notes and as pointed out by Creswell (1994:158) where necessary, sought clarity or more information from interviewees. The interviews were conducted in a manner that conformed to typology of Neuman(1997:258)

The procedure was as follows:

- the interviewer introduced himself and explained the need for the interview and reasons for selecting the interviewees;
- secondly, questions were asked and answers were recorded. The interviewer accurately recorded answers and he may not summarise or paraphrase, because this may cause loss of information or may distort the answers;
- thirdly, the interviewer sought clarity from the interviewee by means of asking probing questions to supply more information. A probe was a neutral request to clarify any ambiguous answers or to obtain a relevant response; and
- finally, the interviewer thanked participants and then entered details like time, place of interview and attitude of respondents. Every disturbance that might have taken place, such as a phone ringing and the respondents going to answer it were also recorded.

#### **4.6.2.1 Interview questions**

The following questions were utilized to engage the Executive Mayor and officials as an attempt to obtain their opinion on improved service delivery.

##### **Interview questions designed for the Executive Mayor (Appendix 4.5)**

- In what way does your municipality address the challenges facing it?
- How effective do you regard your officials in addressing service delivery backlogs?
- How do you foster community participation in getting feedback regarding the level of services delivered?
- In your opinion, are your officials sufficiently skilled to operate the municipal machine effectively and economically towards improved service delivery?

##### **Interview questions designed for the municipal officials (Appendix 4.6)**

- How do you regard your personal contribution to the success of the municipality in service delivery?
- As an agent of change, do you regard yourself sufficiently skilled and effective to make a difference in this municipality?

- Are you aware of the negative perceptions of members of the community regarding the level of services and what do you do about it?
- In your opinion, how is it like working at this municipality and why?

#### **4.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

In the former sections the methods of data collection were described in detail. Research instruments such as the questionnaires and interviews were explained. The reasons for including specific questions were also given attention. Interviews were conducted with the Executive Mayor and eight chief officials in order to assess the validity and reliability of responses to the questionnaires.

Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:293) postulate that analysis is a way of gathering and explaining the content of text. The content includes meanings, thoughts, words, themes and messages that can be communicated. The text is anything written, visual and spoken which is utilized as a medium for communication.

In the following sections the collected data is analysed and interpretations are made. Collected data has to be organized before interpretation can be made (Charles 1995:35). Firstly, data analysis is defined and thereafter responses from the Executive Mayor, officials, and municipal residents are analysed.

Data analysis is the way of choosing, classifying, viewing and discarding information. In this research, the mass of collected data is analysed and interpreted with the purpose of bringing order and structure to information (Fraenkel and Wallen 1993:324-325). The researcher is of

the view that officials at the Matjhabeng Local Municipality are not sufficiently effective as agents of change towards improved service delivery. Efforts, such as training, need to be made to let them realize their changed and new roles as agents of change. Only then will they become effective.

Analysis of data in qualitative research involves logic. This insinuates that reasoning is used and a conclusion is drawn based on evidence (Strauss and Corbin 1998:58). Creswell (1994:122-123) stipulates that once a conclusion is drawn by reasoning, it should clarify the logistics of the data for analysis purposes. In this process of research, the researcher investigates patterns of similarities and differences and attempts to disclose their diversity. The researcher is responsible and accountable to establish the extent to which materials are valid and reliable (Strauss and Corbin 1998:179). Charles (1995:48) further emphasized that reliability and validity of the respondents should be maintained as far as possible.

#### **4.8 DESCRIPTIVE PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS**

Qualitative and quantitative data are not presented in the same pattern. A major distinction normally is made between the qualitative and quantitative data, because qualitative research explores traits of individuals and settings that cannot easily be described numerically. The information is largely verbal and is collected through observation, description and recording (Strauss and Corbin 1998:31-34). Quantitative research on the other hand, explores traits and situations from which numerical data can be obtained. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:15-17) maintain that quantitative research primarily makes use of measurement and statistics. Often both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the same study.

After the initial organizing of data, information obtained is tabulated (McMillan and Schumacher 1997:15-17). Data have to be displayed as an element of analysis.

#### **4.8.1 Data display of questionnaire**

The qualitative questionnaire is divided into two sections, each section of which Yes or No responses are required and open-ended questions at the end to indicate the opinion of the respondents. Each section is analysed individually. An analysis is made of the questionnaire completed by the Executive Mayor, chief officials and members of the community. Interviews were conducted with chief officials and the Executive Mayor.

#### **4.8.2 Analysis of questionnaire**

Certain practical considerations require attention to ensure the functionality of questionnaires. As an instrument of qualitative research in present study, a questionnaire based on the design of Strauss and Corbin (1998:45) is utilized to establish the opinions of the Executive Mayor, chief officials and members of the community (Appendixes 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

Questionnaires were personally handed to the respondents and the responses collected at a given time. As a result, all the thirty questionnaires were completed and returned. Regarding the completion of the questionnaires, all questions were completed. Not a single questionnaire was discarded.

Three questionnaires were prepared for the sampled population. Appendixes 4.2 – 4.4 show which questionnaire was administered to which specific group.

#### **4.8.2.1 Demographic data**

The first sections of the questionnaires address demographic data of all participants. Participants are classified because the researcher did not want to publish the names of participants for personal research study purposes.

#### **4.8.2.2 Executive Mayor's responses to the questionnaire**

With regard to the role of municipalities, the Executive Mayor agrees that the role of the municipalities has changed drastically since 2000 because prior to 2000 municipalities that existed were transitional local councils aimed at managing the transitional/change that was to create the establishment of developmental municipalities. Moreover such transitional local councils did not have powers and functions that the current municipalities possess.

As regards challenges facing the municipality, the Executive Mayor agrees that the Matjhabeng local municipality is faced with enormous challenges, most of which are financial in nature. She argues that it is because the municipality does not implement the debt collection policy effectively and this has a negative impact on effective service delivery.

As regards skills and capacity possessed by municipal officials, the Executive Mayor agrees that municipal officials do not possess sufficient skills and capacity to operate the municipal machine effectively and economically towards improved service delivery. She feels this is so

because of the bad financial position the municipality is and their failure to spend on capital projects thus being forced to utilize consultants.

With reference to Batho Pele Principles, the Executive Mayor admits that the municipality does not fully employ the Batho Pele principles and foster community participation to improve service delivery. She maintains that community members still don't have full information of services provided, and because community participation is not good and Batho Pele principles are not 100% implemented payment of services is as bad as it is.

With reference to retraining and reskilling officials, the Executive Mayor argues that there is a need for retraining and reskilling of officials to improve their effectiveness as agents of change, because training should be continuous as the municipality needs are ever changing.

As regards residents, the Executive Mayor concedes that municipal residents are not satisfied with the level of services provided. This is evident given their letters in the press. She feels residents are also to blame for not paying for services.

#### **4.8.2.3 Municipal officials' responses to the questionnaire**

The municipality has eight executive managers and all of them responded to the questionnaire.

As regards their changed role, all chief officials agree that their role has changed maximally in the new dispensation for local government.

With reference to their personal contribution, all chief officials agree that their personal contribution to the success of the municipality in improving service delivery is very good.

As regards skills and effectiveness, 80% of respondents agree that as agents of change they are sufficiently skilled and effective to make a difference in this municipality.

As regards direction and guidance from their supervisor, 75% of respondents agree that their supervisor directs and guides them meaningfully.

With reference to serving the community, 90% of respondents agree that they always serve the community to the best of their abilities.

With reference to the municipality's service delivery success, 70% of respondents agree that they can think of many good reasons for continuing to work for this municipality, but there are also many good reasons to change to another employer.

As regards the effectiveness of chief officials, 75% of respondents agree that overall chief officials at this municipality are good, while 25% agree that overall chief officials are average as effective agents of change towards improved service delivery.

With reference to service delivery at Matjhabeng local municipality, 100% of respondents agree that officials play a meaningful role in service delivery and that politicians interfere in the management function of officials thus disturbing service delivery.

As regards words that describe chief officials, 66, 66% of respondents describe officials at Matjhabeng local municipality as ambitious and kind

while 33, 33% describe them as insecure, unassertive, innovative and caring.

#### **4.8.2.4 Municipal residents responses to the questionnaire**

Twenty residents were earmarked for this project and were drawn from all race groups. All twenty residents completed and returned the questionnaires.

As regards officials' understanding of their role, 80% of the respondents agree that officials at this municipality do not understand their role.

As regards the nature of services provided, 80% of the respondents agree that services provided are neither pleasing nor sustainable.

With reference to officials' capacity, 90% of the respondents agree that officials do not possess sufficient capacity for service delivery.

With reference to services provided, 80% of the respondents agree that services provided need to be improved.

As regards training programmes, 100% of the respondents agree that training programmes are necessary to reskill officials.

With reference to officials' effectiveness, 95% of the respondents agree that officials are not effective as agents of change.

#### **4.8.3 Feedback from interviews with the Executive Mayor and officials**

Two sets of questions were prepared for the Executive Mayor and officials respectively. They responded as follows:

#### **4.8.3.1 Executive Mayor's responses**

##### **QUESTION 1**

**IN WHAT WAY DOES YOUR MUNICIPALITY ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES FACING IT?**

##### **RESPONSE**

The Executive Mayor responds by indicating that the biggest challenge facing the municipality is debt collection. As a municipality they reach out to the community through ward committees and encourage payment for services. They have identified indigents so that national government could assist them with payments. The Executive Mayor is optimistic that the council will address this challenge.

##### **QUESTION 2**

**HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU REGARD YOUR OFFICIALS IN ADDRESSING SERVICE DELIVERY BACKLOGS?**

##### **RESPONSE**

The Executive Mayor feels that officials are not effective enough in addressing service delivery backlogs. This is evident due to their failure to collect revenue and also spending on capital projects. The fact that the Municipality makes use of consultants attests to the ineffectiveness of officials.

### **QUESTION 3**

**HOW DO YOU PROMOTE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN GETTING FEEDBACK REGARDING THE LEVEL OF SERVICES DELIVERED?**

#### **RESPONSE**

The Executive Mayor emphasizes the effectiveness of ward committees in promoting community participation. She also holds community meetings quarterly and gives them feedback on service delivery. The council also has a monthly bulletin called "Matjhabeng Talks" through which every department gives feedback regarding service delivery. The community is also allowed to make submissions and raise issues through this newspaper, which is delivered free of charge throughout the Matjhabeng municipality.

### **QUESTION 4**

**IN YOUR OPINION, ARE YOUR OFFICIALS SUFFICIENTLY SKILLED TO OPERATE THE MUNICIPAL MACHINE EFFECTIVELY AND ECONOMICALLY TOWARDS IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY?**

#### **RESPONSE**

The Executive Mayor maintains that officials are not sufficiently skilled to operate the municipal machine effectively and economically towards improved service delivery. The municipality is currently busy with workshops to capacitate officials. The fact that they have recently employed a full time Municipal Manager is a positive strategy as working with acting municipal managers did not assist the process. The incumbent Municipal Manager is a former MEC in the Free State

Legislature and his vast experience will assist with effective service delivery.

#### **4.8.3.2 Officials' responses**

All eight chief officials were interviewed and they responded as follows:

##### **QUESTION 1**

**HOW DO YOU REGARD YOUR PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF THE MUNICIPALITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY?**

##### **RESPONSE**

All officials maintain that their contribution to the success of the municipality in service delivery is very good.

##### **QUESTION 2**

**AS AGENT OF CHANGE, DO YOU REGARD YOURSELF SUFFICIENTLY SKILLED AND EFFECTIVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS MUNICIPALITY?**

##### **RESPONSE**

All officials agree that they regard themselves sufficiently skilled and effective to make a difference in this municipality, although there is room for improvement.

### **QUESTION 3**

**ARE YOU AWARE OF THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY REGARDING THE LEVEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT IT?**

#### **RESPONSE**

All officials are not aware of the negative perceptions of members of the community regarding the level of service delivery. However, when members of the community raise issues needing attention with them, they promptly attend to them. They do the same with issues raised through the newsletter.

### **QUESTION 4**

**IN YOUR OPINION, HOW IS IT LIKE WORKING AT THIS MUNICIPALITY AND WHY?**

#### **RESPONSE**

All officials agree that working at the Matjhabeng local municipality is both rewarding and stressful. It is rewarding because they derive pleasure in servicing the community but it can often be very stressful especially when politicians interfere with management.

In the following sections responses from the Executive Mayor, officials and municipal residents are analysed.

## 4.9 ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

In this section, collected data from questionnaires and interviews is analysed with the view to arriving at a scientific conclusion regarding the effectiveness of officials at this municipality in service delivery.

### 4.9.1 Data collected from the Executive Mayor

Through the collected data, it can be concluded that the Executive Mayor does not see her officials as effective agents of change towards improved service delivery. She doubts their skills and ability to perform their duties effectively towards improved service delivery. However, through workshops being run and the recent appointment of the full time Municipal Manager with vast experience, service delivery can improve. It can further be concluded that the Executive Mayor is optimistic that her municipality can deliver on its mandate.

### 4.9.2 Data collected from the officials

The officials, as central to this study, see themselves differently from the Executive Mayor. They feel that they are doing enough to transform this municipality into a successful institution, delivering on its developmental mandate. Although the officials feel that they are well skilled, they are quick to point out that they can only improve. Despite what they say around their role as agents of change towards improved service delivery, it can be concluded that, in the view of the Executive Mayor and the community, officials at this municipality are ineffective as agents towards effective service delivery.

#### **4.9.3 Data collected from the community**

Based on their responses to the questionnaire, residents are unanimous about the obvious ineffectiveness of officials of Matjhabeng local municipality as agents of change towards improved service delivery. Residents feel that officials do not understand their role and that they provide services of a very poor nature. They do not regard them as sufficiently skilled and propose that they be reskilled to operate the municipal machine effectively.

From the above analysis of collected data, it is concluded that officials at this municipality are ineffective as agents of change towards improved service delivery.

The following chapter will deal with summary, findings, recommendations and conclusion.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The fundamental aim of this study was to investigate and analyse the changed role of municipal officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery with special reference to Welkom in the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, and to determine the effectiveness of chief officials at this municipality in service delivery. The empirical research was conducted to determine what the new roles of officials are in service delivery and whether they are adequately equipped to fulfil their functions effectively and efficiently and to meet the challenges successfully. In this final chapter of the study, there is a review of the previous four chapters. Furthermore, the summary, findings and recommendations of the study are stated in this chapter.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter one stated that local government has been given a new constitutional mandate to create and sustain humane, equitable and viable settlements. By executing this mandate local government accepts a major challenge to eradicate the imbalances of the past by addressing the huge infrastructure disparities. Municipalities need to be transformed and the changed mandate requires new capacities, attitudes and approaches. New structures, mechanisms and processes need to be established. Officials will play an important role to fulfil these objectives and need to be adequately equipped to face the challenges. Officials need to be capacitated to play a developmental role to ensure that the committees are consulted and informed, that their needs are met. The

new role of municipal officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery focuses on and relate to the improvements of the quality of life of the community. It is emphasized that it is imperative for officials at the Welkom branch of the Matjhabeng local municipality to be effective as agents of change towards improved service delivery so that the municipality can realize and fulfil its mandate of being developmental.

Chapter two placed the theme of the study in context by focusing on the theoretical exposition of local government as agent of change. It analysed the developmental role of local government in the country. In this chapter local government was identified as a sphere of government closest to the community with the capacity to exert meaningful impact on the lives of the local community it serves. However, true to the hypothesis, the ineffectiveness of municipal officials in service delivery impedes the ability of this sphere of government to exert maximum developmental impact. For the municipality to fulfil its mandate, officials will need to discharge the municipal resolutions, policies and procedures. Officials must be proactive and reactive to issues affecting the municipality and they must manage effectively. Thus the ineffectiveness of the municipal officials must not be used as an excuse for non-delivery of essential services.

Chapter three examined the changed role of municipal officials in service delivery. To provide services in a sustainable manner a municipality should have adequate financial and human resources. Improving the effective management of resources and service delivery remain key challenges facing municipalities, hence the importance of close and meaningful collaboration between political office-bearers and appointed officials. The roles of the Executive Mayor, the Mayoral Committee, Municipal Manager, the chief financial officer and chief officials are

important in ensuring effective service delivery that addresses the needs of the community. The Municipal Manager's role is very essential as he has to filter through council mandate to subordinates. Failure to deliver services will impact on the lives of more residents and it is imperative that both the Executive Mayor and the Municipal Manager are equipped with the right training to impact positively on the challenges that face the municipality.

Chapter four focused on the results and findings of an empirical study conducted among the Executive Mayor, chief officials of Welkom in the Matjhabeng Local Municipality as well as among the Welkom residents. Data regarding the effectiveness of municipal officials was obtained from the Executive Mayor, the Municipal Manager and eight chief officials through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires and from twenty municipal residents through questionnaires only.

### **5.3 REALISATION OF THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The first objective of this study was to provide a theoretical exposition of the municipality as a developmental institution. To meet this objective, the theoretical exposition of the municipality as a developmental institution was provided in chapter two.

The second objective was to analyse the types of services provided by the Matjhabeng Local Municipality in its developmental role to improving living standards of the Welkom community. Chapter three stressed the changed role of municipal officials in service delivery. The purpose was to show that if municipal officials are effective as agents of change towards improved service delivery, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality will fulfil its developmental role to improving the living standards of the Welkom community.

Thirdly, the study aimed to establish the level of capacity possessed by the managers at the Welkom branch of this municipality for improved service delivery. Chapter three highlighted that the municipal officials must be equipped with the right training to impact positively on the challenges that face the municipality.

The fourth objective was to research and establish what mechanisms can be put in place to improve the quality of services provided so that they can satisfy the needs of the community. In chapter two it was shown that community participation in service delivery is important as the community should be consulted in ensuring that the policies of local government are readily accepted and easily supported by the majority of its residents

The last objective was about training programmes that are relevant to reskill and capacitate the officials so that they become better equipped to operate the municipal machinery in order to realize the goals of providing quality services in a sustainable manner. The section on recommendations highlights various strategic training programmes that are necessary for municipal officials, as agents of change towards improved service delivery.

#### **5.4 TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS**

The aim of this study was also to test the preliminary statement that was made in chapter one, namely that:

- Legislation since 1994 entrusts municipal managers and officials as agents of change in service delivery, yet officials at the Welkom branch of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality lack capacity to effect

change, and would require strategic training programmes to enhance skills and effectiveness.

Findings from the conducted literature review and empirical research support the stated preliminary statement. Municipal managers and officials need to be subjected to strategic training programmes to enhance skills and effectiveness so as to contribute towards improved service delivery.

## 5.5 FINDINGS

From the research of this study, it can be stated that lack of experience and proper training is the main cause for the ineffectiveness of the majority of officials in service delivery at Matjhabeng local municipality. The problem is also exacerbated by uniformed financial decisions on the part of both municipal councilors and officials. The local government transformation also contributed to this problem, it resulted in the loss of largely skilled white personnel who either voluntarily left the service or were sidelined in the transformation process. This meant that relatively inexperienced personnel were promoted to senior positions without the necessary expertise required in local government management.

The *White Paper on Local Government (1998)* established a basis for a new developmental local government system, committed to working with civil society and communities to create sustainable human settlements which will meet the social and material needs of the community in a holistic way. This study has shown that community participation remains a big challenge at this municipality. The community is not sufficiently consulted on matters that affect them, that is why they regard services provided as being unsatisfactory. The municipality needs to regularly consult with the community and give feedback on service

delivery and also listen to the concerns of the community. The fact that 90% of the residents maintain that officials do not possess sufficient capacity for service delivery and that services provided are not satisfactory and need to be improved is evidence that the community is not consulted on matters that directly affect them.

To ensure that the municipality delivers on its developmental mandate and that officials become effective agents of change, more meaningful measures need to be implemented that will ensure that municipalities have effective financial and resources administration with management mechanisms to ensure that they make the most out of their limited resources.

It is certain that the local sphere of government is the most important and closest to the community. To that end, after interpretation of the relevant information it becomes obvious that the role and functions of officials of a municipality have changed significantly in the new dispensation. Municipalities have a new mandate to be developmental and officials have to focus on integrated development planning, social and economic development of local communities, and to ensure effective and efficient service delivery either with their own capacity or with a service provider in terms of a municipal services partnership. Officials are also facing greater responsibility for performing their functions and duties, with full-time political office-bearers presiding over their administrations. Officials are required to understand their roles, vis-à-vis the political leadership, but must endeavor to strike a fine balance between the politics and administration in their directorates, without entering the political arena. The following section deals with recommendations

## 5.6 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations are as follows:

- Officials are definitely faced with great challenges in the new dispensation. The new dispensation is aimed at the eradication of the imbalances of the past. Huge backlogs in infrastructure exist in previously disadvantaged areas. Social and economic upliftment need to be performed. The needs of the poor and disadvantaged should be addressed within the administrative and financial capacity of the municipality.
- Officials should be trained in integrated development planning. The integrated development plan should include the prioritized needs of the community to address the backlogs in infrastructure and service delivery. Strategies and programmes which are linked to the budget should be included.
- Officials should also be trained in sustainable development and project management. Officials must understand that sustainable development of the human society has environmental, material, social, economical, ecological, legal, cultural, political and psychological dimensions which must be addressed.
- In terms of the afore-said it is required from officials to become more strategic, visionary and resourceful in their approach to developmental local government. They should develop skills to bring together coalitions and networks of local interests that co-operate to realize a shared vision to achieve the objectives of local government.

- Officials must ensure that they liaise with all role-players and develop an open partnership with business, trade unions and community-based organizations to create responsive problem-solving options/alternatives. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without thoroughly taking into account environmental issues and officials should be equipped to build an awareness of environmental issues and encourage residents to utilize scarce natural resources in a prudent and careful manner.
  
- Officials should improve their communication skills to communicate effectively, not only internally with councilors, colleagues and subordinates, but with residents and interest groups to ensure that information and knowledge are conveyed and obtained.
  
- The transformation of the municipality is important to meet not only the statutory requirements, but to create a progressive and enabling environment for officials to meet the challenges facing them in the new dispensation. Extensive workshops for officials and between officials and politicians should be held on a regular basis to ensure that approaches and attitudes are focused on meeting the challenges of the new dispensation and to adapt to the new culture and environment in which officials must perform their functions. The transformation process is, however, one of the most fundamental changes that is undertaken and managed by the politicians and the officials.
  
- The relationship between the political interface, the executive mayor and members of the mayoral committee, and the administrative interface, the municipal manager and other managers reporting directly to the municipal manager, is one of the most important challenges of the transformation design. Much progress was made

in redefining core business, the organizational culture, service orientation and organizational image, but transformation should allow for pursuance of performance without the loss of quality and control, order and stability. The main focus must still be on what priorities are of key importance and the necessary backbone by finalizing the alignment of structures, the appointment and placement of personnel and the provision of resources to achieve objectives of the municipality effectively and efficiently.

- Strategy is about the future, while change is the function of altering what one is doing. There will be resistance to change, fear and uncertainty, greater emphasis on diversity and conflicts will be high. The uncertainty level is high, anxiety and confusion, and even a degree of chaos developed, which need to be managed. New game rules must be developed and need for strong leadership has arisen.
- Officials should be trained in transformational and visionary leadership. As transformational leaders they must lead with vision and not in terms of tradition and should be changed agents who make a difference. The organizational rebirth should be re-evaluated and renewal should be promoted.
- In developing visionary leadership insight will be given to building or improving the organizational vision which should be transferred to subordinates to strengthen the vision community. Vision without action is merely a dream, while vision with action will bring about effective change in the municipality.
- The transformation process should not be allowed to stagnate. The personnel should be reassured, motivated and brought on board with a sense of urgency. Bringing about equity is an important goal

of the transformational process, but all employees should be empowered for broad based action.

- Both the municipal councilors and officials need to embark on an educational tour to explain the importance of community participation in local government structures. The low community participation means that local government has not fully explained its role in developmental government to the community. This requires local government to encourage the fullest participation of the community not only during the elections, but also in its day to day activities Political parties must also encourage the community to be active participants in the administration of their municipality.
- There is a need to set the minimum service delivery standards that should be met by all municipal employees. Employees who go beyond the set minimum standards should be awarded an employee of the month award and be used as model employees. Also, the municipality needs to set periodic targets that are attainable. These targets must be linked to the financial capability of the municipality.
- The Municipality needs to set up a direct line for complaints about poor service delivery. This line could be monitored by senior officials to ensure that all complaints raised are responded to. The line can also be used to assess the perception of the community towards the municipal administration and service delivery efforts.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

The objectives of this study were achieved in determining the new role of municipal officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery.

For the Matjhabeng Local Municipality to fulfil its developmental role, it will require the effectiveness of its officials.

Therefore all the conclusions and recommendations presented in this dissertation are made in the light of what is contained in the study. It is hoped that the arguments presented are not seen as the only solutions to problems in local government, but as the starting point for further research in addressing the shortcomings in the current structure.

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P.O. Box 513  
Wesselsbron  
9680

13-01-2006

The Municipal Manager  
Matjhabeng Local Municipality  
P.O. Box 708  
Welkom  
9460

Sir

## REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above matter refers.
2. I wish to request you to allow me to conduct my research at your municipality.
3. I am a student at the North West University, Vaal-Triangle Campus pursuing studies for the Masters degree in Development and Management and have chosen Welkom as my institution for research.
4. My dissertation theme is:  

**"The new role of municipal officials as agents of change towards improved service delivery: The case of Welkom in the Matjhabeng Local Municipality"**
5. I am contactable at the above address or telephonically at 072 141 5778 for any clarity needed.
6. I hope you will find the above in order.
7. I thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully

  
 .....  
**JELLO A. MOKHOABANE**

## MATJHABENG



Municipality  
Umasipala  
P/O Box 708  
Welkom, 9460  
South Africa

Mmasepala  
Munisipaliteit  
Tel: (057) 391-335  
Fax: (057) 357-431  
E-Mail: munman@matjhabeng.co.za

Office of the Municipal Manager

## FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO / AAN: <i>Mr S Mokhoabane</i>	FROM / VAN: <i>Mr NJ Motseki</i>
COMPANY / MAATSKAPPY:	DATE / DATUM: <i>16/1/2006</i>
FAX NR / FAXS NR: <i>057) 899-8540</i>	TOTAL PAGES / AANTAL BLADSYE: <i>2</i>
TELEPHONE NR / TELEFOONNR: <i>072 141 5778</i>	OUR REF NR / ONS VERW NR:

## MESSAGE / BOODSKAP:

*Mr Mokhoabane,*

*Mr Motseki granted permission to conduct your research. He however will not be able to see you due to Management Meeting.*

## Appendix 4.2

### Questionnaire to be completed by the Executive Mayor

#### Introduction

The author is pursuing studies for the M degree in Development and Management and would want to solicit your assistance in completing the questions below as frank as possible. The purpose is purely academic.

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### A. DEMOGRAPHICS

(For questions 1 to 3, indicate your choice with a cross in the relevant block.)

1. Gender:

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

2. Race (Group):

Indian/Asian	
Black	
Coloured	
White	

3. Home language

Afrikaans	
English	
IsiSwati	

isiXhosa	
isiZulu	
Ndebele	
Northern Sotho	
Southern Sotho	
Tshivenda	
Tswana	
Xitshonga	
Other (specify)	

**B. MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

**(For questions 1 to 6 indicate your choice with a cross in the relevant block and briefly motivate your answer)**

1. The role of municipalities has changed drastically since 1994.

TRUE		FALSE	
------	--	-------	--

**Give reasons for your answer:**

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2. Service delivery at this municipality is faced with enormous challenges.

Yes		No	
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**Motivate**

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3. Municipal officials possess sufficient skills and capacity to operate the municipal machine effectively and economically towards improved service delivery.

Yes		No	
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**Motivate**

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4. The Municipality employs *Batho Pele* principles and fosters community participation to improve service delivery.

Yes		No	
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**Motivate**

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5. There is a need for retraining and reskilling of officials to improve their effectiveness as agents of change.

Yes		No	
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**Motivate**

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The Municipal residents are satisfied with the level of services provided.

Yes		No	
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**Motivate**

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

**Appendix 4.3**

**Questionnaire to be completed by the municipal officials.**

**Introduction**

**The author is pursuing studies for the M degree in Development and Management and would want to solicit your assistance in completing the questions below as frank as possible. The purpose is purely academic.**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**A. DEMOGRAPHICS**

**(For questions 1 to 3, indicate your choice with a cross in the relevant block.)**

1. Gender:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------

2. Race (Group):

Indian/Asian	
Black	
Coloured	
White	

3. Experience in years

1-10	
11-15	
16-20	
21-25	
26 and above	

4. Qualifications

Matric and below	
Diploma	
Junior degree	
Senior degree(s)	

**B. MANAGEMENT**

**(For questions 1 – 5 indicate your choice with a cross in the relevant block).**

1. How has your role changed in the new dispensation for local government?

Maximally	
Slightly/Minimally	

Not at all	
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2. How is your personal contribution to the success of the municipality in improving service delivery?

Very good	
Good	
Average	
Not at all good	
Do not know	

3. As an agent of change I am sufficiently skilled and effective to make a difference in this municipality.

Yes	
No	
Not sure	

4. My supervisor directs and guides me meaningfully.

Yes	
No	
Not sure	

5. I serve the community to the best of my ability.

Always	
Sometimes	
When I have the time	
Not at all	

6. Which one of the three statements best describes your municipality in terms of successful service delivery?

I can think of no other municipality as successful as this one is and working here is rewarding	
I can think of many good reasons for continuing to work for this municipality, but there are also many good reasons to change to another employer	
I can think of few good reasons for continuing to work for this municipality and there are many good reasons to change to another employer	

7. Overall, how would you rate chief officials at your municipality as effective agents of change towards improved service delivery?

Very good	
Good	
Average	
Not at all good	
Do not know	

8. With regard to service delivery at Matjhabeng Local Municipality, to what extent would you agree with each of the following statements (indicate your choice with a cross in the relevant block).

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Don't know
Officials play a meaningful role in service delivery				
Officials are not aware of the negative perceptions of				

members of the community regarding the level of services				
Politicians interfere in the management function of officials thus disturbing service delivery				

9. Thinking about officials at Matjhabeng Local Municipality, can you please indicate with a cross in the relevant block those words you think describe them. You can choose more than one word but only choose words that apply to them as agents of change.

1. Ambitious	
2. Honest	
3. Innovative	
4. Caring	
5. Insecure	
6. Kind	
7. Lazy	
8. Racist	
9. Disrespectful	
10. Uncaring	
11. Unassertive	
12. Unfriendly	
13. Rude	

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

## Appendix 4.4

### QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MUNICIPAL RESIDENTS.

#### INTRODUCTION:

The author is pursuing studies for the M degree in Development and Management and would want to solicit your assistance in completing the questions below as frank as possible. The purpose is purely academic.

#### A. DEMOGRAPHICS

(For questions 1 to 2, indicate your choice with a cross in the relevant block.)

1. Gender:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------

2. Race (Group):

Indian/Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coloured	<input type="checkbox"/>
White	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### B. PERCEPTIONS

**(For questions 1 - 6, indicate your choice with a cross in the relevant block)**

	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
1. Officials at this Municipality understand their role.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Services provided are pleasing and sustainable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Officials possess sufficient capacity for service delivery.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Services provided need to be improved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Training programmes are necessary to reskill officials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Officials are effective as agents of change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

## **Appendix 4.5**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS DESIGNED FOR THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR**

1. In what way does your municipality address the challenges facing it?
2. How effective do you regard your officials in addressing service delivery backlogs?
3. How do you foster community participation in getting feedback regarding the level of services delivered?
4. In your opinion, are your officials sufficiently skilled to operate the municipal machine effectively and economically towards improved service delivery?

## **APPENDIX 4.6**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS DESIGNED FOR THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS**

1. How do you regard your personal contribution to the success of the municipality in delivery?
2. As an agent of change, do you regard yourself sufficiently skilled and effective to make a difference in this municipality?
3. Are you aware of the negative perceptions of members of the community regarding the level of services and what do you do about it?
4. In your opinion, how is it like working at this municipality, and why?