

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Makwarela is one of the three small towns that were established in the early seventies in the former Venda homeland under *The Black (Urban Area) Consolidation Act, 1945 (Act 25 of 1945)* at Chief Tshivhase's area. At that time, all the towns were being serviced from the offices of the town managers. The Makwarela Town Manager serviced an area of about 11,5km² that had a population of 10 640 comprising of approximately 2000 households.

This study focused on Makwarela town that originally comprised four-roomed houses for which the residents had to pay monthly rental fees to the government. Despite the subsidy that was provided by government, most of them were middle class citizens who could afford to pay rent and rates.

The former Venda homeland government did its best to provide essential services to this area. For instance, each household was provided with a bin for refuse removal while there was an arrangement that garbage be collected at least twice a week and be deposited at a disposal site.

Though it took a long time for the town to get tarred streets, the former Venda homeland government managed to provide tarred streets, a drainage system and traffic lights as well.

The authorities then also managed to provide house-to-house water connections while the inhabitants rarely had problems paying for these services. Payments were determined by meter readings and the government provided subsidies to reduce the cost of water consumption for the residents.

With the inception of the new political dispensation in 1994, people had high expectations that the government would provide quality services comparable to those provided by the former homeland government. However, this was not the case since the level of service delivery has gradually deteriorated.

The local government concerned seemed unable to maintain the quality services that had been provided by the former government. For example, the tarred streets have deteriorated while a large number of the street lights do not work. The levels of payment for services have also declined.

The provision of electricity remained the responsibility of the then Venda Electricity Corporation (VEC) which had been established by the homeland government to manage the provision of electricity on its behalf.

Although the levels of electricity payments were initially high they suddenly dropped in the early 90s perhaps because the political changes at that time had created irrationally high expectations and perceptions of free service delivery.

This was exacerbated by the false promises made by political parties during their rallies and campaigns for elections by implicitly telling voters that they would get services for free.

The Makwarela residents thus established a civic organization, in line with the current laws of the land that operates like a local government.

With little capacity and resources at its disposal, the civic organization has managed to contact service providers, such as Eskom, various government departments and the local government, to improve service standards in the area.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES/PROBLEMS

This research study had the following three objectives:

- 1.2.1 To determine whether service standards in Makwarela have changed since 1994.
- 1.2.2 To determine whether existing conditions were conducive for Makwarela residents to pay for essential services and whether they could really afford to pay for such services.
- 1.2.3 To determine the responsible person/institution to provide those essential services.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

The statement to be tested during this study is the following: "*Local government service delivery standards in Makwarela have deteriorated since 1994*".

In addition, a number of factors that are central in effective service provision were identified and will be discussed. These are as follows:

People do not pay for services because:

- There are not enough and easily accessible pay points.
- The rates are too high, compared to the standard of services provided by the local government.
- They can not afford to pay as most of them are unemployed.
- They do not regularly receive monthly bills.
- They are immersed in the culture of non-payment of services.
- There was an overwhelming perception that government would provide free delivery of services.

Since the local government also has other areas to cater for, it can not afford to use all the resources at its disposal for the provision of essential services to Makwarela alone.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Research design

The research was conducted primarily through the use of the qualitative research method. The following techniques were applied to collect data: literature review, interviews (with the communities and the municipal employees and councillors), questionnaires, and direct observation.

1.4.2 Population

The population of this research study comprised of residents both individuals and groups such as civic organization, business organizations, churches, and schools as well as the municipality (inclusive of administrative staff and politicians).

1.4.3 Sampling

A manageable sample was drawn from the total population of the study. In view of the fact that the research population was relatively homogeneous, a random sampling method seemed to be appropriate. The sample comprised 5% of the population. A total of 110 households of Makwarela were thus involved in the study. This meant that every twentieth house in the town was interviewed.

1.4.4 Data collection

A number of instruments were used to obtain the necessary information while observations were made about the manner in which services were provided. In addition, interviews were conducted with the community, municipal employees and councillors and government documents were also studied.

Existing community structures and officials from provincial and national departments were important sources of information too.

1.4.5 Validity and reliability

It was envisaged that the research would achieve its intended objectives by finally indicating the ways in which essential services should be provided, maintained and sustained, and the role-players involved.

However, findings of this study may be applied in other similar environments due to the representativity of the sample selected for this research study.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

Chapter One: This Chapter comprises the introduction and background, research objectives/problems, hypothesis, research methodology, structure of the mini-dissertation, and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature related to the topic is analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Chapter Three focuses on the current standards of service provision in Makwarela.

Chapter Four: The findings of the research are presented here.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and recommendations are made in this chapter.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The South African local government system has been in a transition phase for some time. A number of Transitional Local Councils (TLCs), however, did not clearly understand their roles in facilitating and sustaining development in their localities.

On the other hand, communities have a critical role to play in essential service provision as well.

As such, the study intends providing clarity on the roles each of the above should play in service provision. This may to a certain degree indicate the direction to follow for the fully-fledged municipalities that came into power as a result of the December 2000 local government elections.

CHAPTER TWO

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

What is Local Government? This is the basic question that should be addressed before getting into any detailed discussions of this topic.

De Beer (1995:3) recognizes the existence of various definitions of local government advocated by different scholars. Despite that, he defines local government as: "an autonomous and people-oriented tier of government. It is the tier of government that is closest to the public, which can best address the needs of the people." The White Paper on Local Government, defines local government as that level of government that is closest to the people.

Globally, a number of names are used interchangeably to refer to local government. Some of these are "local authority", "local council", "municipality", "municipal council", "metropolitan" and "town or city council" (Gildenhuis, 1997:1).

The essential service delivery process by the government to communities or the electorate is a worldwide phenomenon. The vast amount of research that has been conducted on various related aspects provides a solid base for this study. This chapter will, therefore, reflect a number of ideas on the work that has already been done in this regard.

2.2 WHY SHOULD LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXIST?

In the South African context, local government is the third sphere of government after the national and provincial governments. However, being the third level of government should not be construed to mean that it is less important in ranking and functions than the preceding two. Chapter three of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)* advocates for co-operative governance between all spheres of government.

The minister of the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), F.S Mufamadi, mentioned in his address to a joint sitting of Portfolio and Selected Committees on Provincial and Local Government: "Local Government is a sphere of government with its own functions and integrity.

We must resist any view that local government is simply an administrative arm of government" (Mufamadi, 2001:05).

Since being equally important as the other two levels of government, the South African local government system too has a legal mandate. It has been established by law and, therefore, has a legal basis from which to execute its obligations. Chapter 7 of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)* provides for the establishment of a third sphere of government with autonomous powers to run its affairs without interference from the other arms of government.

Gildenhuys (1997:2) implicitly states that local government should not exist just for the sake of its councillors and officials, but should have a purpose, goal and mission to attain.

The two main reasons for the existence of local government are:

- to render essential services to the community, and
- to facilitate and co-ordinate socio-economic development within its jurisdictional area (Motshekga, Harris and Dawson, 1996:19).

The general purpose for the existence of local government would not only be to create a satisfactory quality of life for its citizens, but also to create favourable circumstances for socio-economic development to unfold within its jurisdictional area (Gildenhuis, 1997:2).

Experience has, however, shown that the people have always been dissatisfied when only national government departments have provided the essential services in that these departments are far from where the services are needed (Cloete, 1986:14).

Section 155 of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)* thus mandates the national and provincial levels of government to establish local governments for the whole territory of the Republic of South Africa to render services to the communities on their behalf.

In addition to the above, the establishment of municipalities should not distinguish between rural and urban areas, as all citizens of the Republic are equal and should receive equal treatment in all spheres of life (Motshekga et al., (1996:11).

It then becomes imperative for the national and provincial governments to support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, in other words, to exercise their powers and perform their functions (Motshekga et al., 1996:11).

The municipal capacity building is a thorny issue not only in this country, but also in the Southern Africa Development Countries (SADC) region as a whole. According to the Local Government Survey in SADC region of January 2001, the main challenge facing local governments and their associations in Africa is to develop their own internal capacity to be strong enough to mobilize their resources. The fact that local governments do not have the required skills, knowledge and experience should not justify the fiscal centralization at higher levels of governments (Foundation for Contemporary Research [FCR], January 2001:17).

Capacity building does not only refer to the level of human resource quality and capability, but also to the provision of appropriate investment policies and infrastructural investments that are needed for African cities to be able

to play their roles as nodes of growth and development (FCR, January 2001:19).

It should, however, be emphasized that governments at all levels have full responsibility of providing essential services to their communities. The fact that municipalities have the mandate to manage their own affairs should not be interpreted as a shift of responsibility from the higher levels of government, but merely that local government is strategically placed to provide affordable services to needy communities (Cloete, 1986:14).

Section 156 (2) of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)* mandates local governments to execute their legal obligations, namely to legislate by-laws through its elected councillors who are in the local council. It states that municipal by-laws should guide and regulate municipal functioning only within the boundaries of that specific local government.

Though independent, a local government cannot legislate against any national or provincial government legislation. In such cases, section 156 (3) of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)*, in line

with sections 149 and 151 (4) of the same legislation, provides that provincial and national legislation should prevail over municipal by-laws.

This in a way means that local government does not have absolute powers to run their affairs since it is still subordinate to the higher levels of government. However, in line with section 151 (4) of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)*, the national and provincial governments should refrain from interfering directly with the affairs of municipalities.

2.3 DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The *White Paper on Local Government* provides for the developmental role of local government. To achieve this, local government should create an enabling environment for development to take place in its area of jurisdiction (RSA, March 1998:17).

Motshekga et al (1996:19) mentioned, "local government is nothing if it is not about community development, that is, making a better life happen where we live".

This may be achieved in a number of ways, for example, providing direct service by the municipality, co-ordinating and facilitating other governmental development programmes within its area of operation, and getting sponsors or funding for proposed projects (RSA, October 2001:47).

2.3.1 Service Provision

Citizens use municipal services on a daily basis. There indeed exists a need to establish local governments to provide affordable basic services that people cannot provide by themselves. Services such as streets or municipal roads, street lighting, refuse removal, sewerage collection and disposal, water and electricity are necessities of existence that a municipality should provide to the people. Once established, local governments should thus accept the obligation of rendering essential services to the community (Cloete 1986:14).

It is therefore clear that the provision of basic services becomes one of the main reasons for the existence of local government. Schedule 4 of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)* points out a number

of functions that are attached to local governments. These are:

- air pollution control
- child care facilities
- electricity and gas reticulation
- fire fighting services
- municipal tourism, municipal planning
- municipal public transport
- water and sanitation services
- water supply systems, as well as
- domestic waste and sewerage disposal.

In addition, local authorities should also promote social and economic development in their jurisdictional areas (Reddy, 1996:51).

Boot (1990:68-70) categorises local government functions into seven categories:

(i) Community Services

Community Services are those services that are provided with no direct service charges levied on the customers, for example, the provision and maintenance

of community halls, roads, streets, and storm-water drainage.

(ii) Security Services

These include civil protection, traffic control and law enforcement.

(iii) Subsidised Services

These are services that local government provides on behalf of other spheres of government as agents of services like ambulances, libraries and museums.

(iv) Commercial Services

Such services refer to those that local government can sell directly to the customers and are, as such the best sources of income to municipalities. They include electricity, gas supply, abattoirs, produce markets, urban transport, and water.

(v) Environmental Services

Environmental services are essentially concerned with the environmental conservation such as pollution control, conservation and nature reserves, and refuse collection. It is impossible to measure consumption levels of these services.

(vi) Services of Convenience

These are services that are open to all members of the public, for example recreation facilities, ablution facilities, and swimming pools.

(vii) Economic Services

Economic Services are provided on a cost recovery basis without making profit or deficit. These are housing, sewerage and cleaning.

Service provision is not a once-off event. Services need to be sustained through maintenance. To achieve this, municipalities should ensure that they effectively and efficiently make use of the available limited resources (Cloete, 1986:23).

According to Jackie Manche, the Chief Director of Local Government Finance at DPLG, municipalities will be more effective if all the causes of municipal malfunctioning have been addressed. She identified these causes to include overstaffing, poor accounting systems, poor asset management, defective administration of cash flows, deficiencies in credit control, and inefficient collection of payments of services (FCR, January 2001:53).

The sustainability of services provided is, nevertheless, determined by the attitudes of the people to whom these services are rendered. Service provision does not mean giving free services to passive and irresponsible communities. Although local authorities should provide services to the people, this should be in accordance with the consumers' willingness and ability to pay (Reddy 1996:294). Hence, services provided should be in accordance with the priorities of the municipality, which should be informed by the needs of the community (Cloete, 1986:23).

According to Ishmail *et al* (1997:69), local governments should provide services on a cost recovery basis. This arises from the realisation that local governments do not

have unlimited resources to provide services to the people. In simple terms, communities should respond to service provision through payments to enable the municipalities to sustain the process.

It is for this reason that Section 229 of *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)* mandates local municipalities to impose rates and fees for services provided by or on behalf of the municipality. However, it further prohibits municipalities from imposing income tax, value-added tax, general sales tax or customs duty.

According to Section 74 (2) c of *The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 2000)*, in rendering services to the communities, municipalities are not expected to generate profit from the services they sell to the community. They are only entitled to recover costs incurred during service provision, for example, for a bulk purchase of electricity, constructions and the maintenance of streets.

People should own the services and projects that the local government provides. This is necessary to avoid vandalism

of these projects and services that are being rendered to them. A case study of the Phumla Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)'s housing project undertaken by the Germiston City Council can set a good example in this regard (SABC 3 Current News programme: 2002).

A developer was hired to construct houses to be given free of charge to the community. Surprisingly, the same people for whom the houses were being constructed were found to be stealing material purchased by the developer. Other infrastructure already in place was vandalised. The developer's cars were also reported to have been hijacked on the project site (SABC 3 Current News programme: 2002).

Cloete (1986: 71) further emphasized the responsibility of the communities to pay for services they receive from the municipality. The municipality should not make more profit in doing so, but to be able to maintain and sustain or to continuously render more affordable services to the people.

The local government transition phase has been completed since we now have fully-fledged democratic local governments in place and people expect them to be more functional in terms of service provision. According to the

Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) policy document, local governments are responsible for the service delivery and should be extended into the rural areas to provide, restore, maintain and upgrade services. However, the total body of consumers should be responsible for the cost of such services (ANC, 1994:130).

Section 74 (2) c of *The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 2000)* provides that the local government should collect payments in terms of its tariff policy that in turn should only recommend tariffs for operational and maintenance cost.

2.3.2 Co-ordination of other Government Development Programmes

Section 153 (b) of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)* mandates municipalities to participate in other provincial and national programmes implemented within their area of jurisdiction. Some of these are; Local Economic Development (LED), Social Plan Fund (SPF), and the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP) all under DPLG,

Community Based Public Works Programmes (CBPWP) through the Department of Public Works (DPLG, October 2001:50).

Other foreign donors also provide assistance to municipalities with projects funding.

Some of these are; the European Union (EU), USAID - from the United States of America, United Nations Children `s Fund (UNICEF), DANIDA - from Danish government, Department for International Development (DFID) and others (DPLG, October 2001:51).

Whether local governments have necessary capacity or not, it is important that they should participate in these programmes as it helps them to know the level of development, investment and the nature of services available within their jurisdictional areas. Most of these programmes have provisions for capacity building for the projects beneficiaries who should be identified in conjunction with the municipalities. Municipal officials and councillors involved are also afforded an opportunity for skills development in these programmes. In addition, the Department of Labour (DOL) has a programme called Employment and Skills development services that focuses on

skills development through training by the accredited service providers on different fields of development (DPLG, October 2001:50).

2.3.3 Local Economic Development (LED)

The municipalities have a constitutional mandate to promote the stability of local economy. This is an important role that they play in the reconstruction and redistribution of resources (DPLG, October 2001: 1-3).

Communities, mostly those in rural areas, do not have access to employment opportunities and as a result depend largely on self-employment projects. These are small projects such as gardening, brick making, arts and crafts as well as tourism. However, rural municipalities are advantageous in terms of their location and natural resources that this programme intends to harness for the good of their communities. The only challenge facing these municipalities is the capacity to identify those advantages and the skills to use them effectively (DPLG, January 2000:09).

Municipalities therefore have a meaningful role to play in building the local economy. This should not be construed to mean that municipalities should provide jobs to the communities, but that they should create enabling environment for job creation (FCR, January 2001:6).

These include, inter alia, to review their infrastructure and service delivery processes, improve their efficiency and effectiveness, review policy and legislation, and develop innovative ways of stimulating, supporting and attracting investments. All these should be reflected in the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) processes of the municipalities. (DPLG, October 2001:26).

The DPLG has established an LED Fund programme in 1999 to support locally identified *job creation* and *poverty alleviation* projects. These projects are helpful to municipalities in that beneficiaries are able to pay for services rendered to them (DPLG, October 2001: 1-3).

This fund is administered through the provinces and municipalities that are regarded as the Project Implementing Agents (PIAs) while communities may access these funds only through the municipalities. This is one of

the ways that the DPLG has initiated to promote governance and community involvement in municipal affairs. The LED programme also requires an integrated development approach so that government departments and other stakeholders get an opportunity to interact and work together in service provision. (DPLG, October 2001: 1-3).

In addition, there is another unfolding programme in the Limpopo Province that aims at stimulating economic growth at local level, which is mainly a six-year European Union (EU) funded programme. The programme focuses on community economic development, business promotion and municipal capacity building. The Premier of Limpopo Province Adv. N. Ramathlodi and the EU Commissioner Nielson launched the Programme in August 2002 (Mahosi, September 2003).

2.3.4 Marketing the Locality

Marketing the locality is one way through which the local government can attract investors to boost the local economy. It is, therefore, necessary that the local government should provide incentives to potential investors, for example by cutting certain taxes and releasing land at a reasonable price (Reddy, 1996:51).

There are a number on international governments that are interested in capacity building of local municipalities and the disadvantaged communities as well. It is the role of the local government to identify these programmes and develop proposals to that effect (Cloete, 1995:32).

Though independent, municipalities still do not have direct linkages with international donors. Agreements are still entered into from the national government on behalf of municipalities. The reason behind this is said to be lack of capacity at local level to enter into such deals with foreign donors/countries (FCR, January 2001:17).

2.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN MUNICIPAL SERVICE PROVISION

In line with Batho Pele/People First principles, the municipalities will benefit from involving the communities in municipal service provision in that it forms part of the consultation process. However, communities know best which services should be provided as well as the priorities of such services (RSA, 1997: 23).

There is, however, a challenge that always faces the municipalities and the communities concerning prioritisation of essential services. According to Bish (1983:64), no matter how organised people are, they will always have diverse preferences with regard to public goods that must be provided collectively. For example, some would want to have public parks while others would prefer streets. The municipality should therefore, ensure that the different views of the community members are reconciled without necessarily compromising itself.

Bish (1983:64) stresses the importance of the local community's participation in municipal government affairs saying it depends largely on the ways in which local government itself stimulates the community to buy into the process. He further stated that community participation in municipal activities should not be a once-off event, but should be an ongoing process that involves debates and dialogue between a municipality and its electorate. This information sharing process enables the communities to have first-hand information and make meaningful contributions on decisions taken by the municipal authority.

There are a number of ways in which communities can participate in municipal affairs. Members of the community may attend general councils' meetings and budget meetings. Though they are not supposed to actively participate in council debates, their presence help in transparency and information dissemination. Ward councillors may also encourage this linkage through ward committees meetings and general ward meetings. Again, municipalities may invite inputs from the communities with regard to day-to-day functioning of the council and services they render to them (Cloete, 1995:33).

2.5 TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

In the past, traditional leaders exercised powers and performed functions of the local governments. Added to these was the responsibility of allocating land to their subjects. Though this role was not legally binding, it influenced land ownership and the manner in which land had to be utilised. This role was possible due to the fact that traditional leaders held strong positions in the former homeland governments that were loyal to the former apartheid regime (Kotze, 1999:43).

Traditional leadership currently still has an important role to play in the local development process, a reality that a successful and service provision-oriented municipality should take advantage of. In terms of Section 81 of *The Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act NO. 117, 1998)* a representation of at least 10% of traditional leadership must be allowed to attend and participate in council meetings. It is therefore a legal requirement that a council that has such a representation should, before making any decision that may directly affect the area of a traditional authority, solicit views and comments from the affected authority.

As enshrined in "*The White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance of July 2003*", traditional leaders, through their institutions have the following roles to play in the development of their local areas and their communities:

- Making recommendations on land allocations and settling of land disputes;
- Promote socio-economic development;
- Promote service delivery;
- Promote the social well-being and welfare of communities;

- Lobbying government and other agencies for the development of their areas;
- Ensuring that the traditional community participates in decision making on development and contributes to development costs; and
- Considering and making recommendations to authorities on trading licences in their areas in accordance with the law.

In this regard, the institutions of traditional leaders may recommend appropriate interventions to government to bring about development and service delivery. Traditional councils are encouraged to enter into partnership and service delivery agreements with government, at all levels, to promote development at local level.

2.6 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

According to the DPLG document named, '*A citizen's guide to MSPs*', it is vital that municipalities should concentrate on capacity building to deliver effective and efficient services. They should thus expand and improve the delivery of municipal services directly, that is, by improving their capacities to plan, implement, and manage service delivery.

The delivery of municipal services is, however, a complex process that requires a number of skills.

These include **good communication** with citizens and other users of the services, so that the municipality can determine their needs while establishing whether those needs are being met. They also include **financial planning** that enables the municipality to determine how best to pay for service improvement and expansion and to obtain the best value for money. **Technical skills** in turn enable the council to determine most suitable and most economic way to design and operate municipal services. Municipalities are thus legally required to compile their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). This is also due to the fact that service delivery involves spending public funds and should be coordinated for proper accountability.

In his paper named "Strategy Round table on Strengthening Local Government" 29 August 2002, minister S.F Mufamadi indicated that the South African local government system has inherited an apartheid system of government, which is characterized by institutions and forms of administration which were designed to exclude the majority from the benefits of development. He then outlined the following

phases through which the local government transformation process should take place:

- the *Establishment and Stabilization Phase* to take place from 2000 to 2002.
- the *Consolidation Phase* to run from 2002 to 2005 and
- the *Sustainability phase* from 2005 to 2010.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the municipal council to make sure that it has sufficient capacity to carry out its objectives. Although capacity itself is a very broad concept, in this case, it refers to personnel, finance, machinery, and administrative systems.

Municipalities have powers in terms of *The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 1998 (Act NO. 117, 1998)* to appoint its personnel whose benefits are determined by the category within which a particular municipality is functioning. Based on this, municipalities should appoint competent personnel who will be able to convert its objectives into visible deliverables.

The municipal financial year runs from July to June the following year. During these twelve months, the municipal

council should approve and implement a budget that reflects its income and expenditure.

2.7 INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANS (IDPs)

Integrated Development Plan refers to a five-year principal strategic planning instrument that guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management, and decision-making in a municipality. According to the provisions of *The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 2000)*, IDP is a legal requirement for each municipality and that it bears legal status and supersedes all other plans that guide development at local government level.

2.7.1 Main Components

The following are the main components of the IDP document as enshrined in the IDP Guidelines:

2.7.1.1 *The Analysis*

This is an audit of the existing level of development in the municipality. It should not only show achievements, but should also reflect areas with no access to basic services

to enable the municipality to start planning on matters that are most needed by the community it serves.

2.7.1.2 Development Strategies

Development strategies should reflect the vision of the municipality. It shows what the intentions of the municipality are in terms of service provision. Once the intentions have been formulated, it is imperative for municipalities to plan development priorities or objectives to aid the municipality to be more focused in developing strategies to achieve those objectives.

2.7.1.3. Projects

Development priorities that the municipality has identified should at this stage be converted into physical projects that should correspond with the budget. In other words, projects should be informed by the municipal budget that should be transparent to all taxpayers. This refers to both internal and external funding that is accessible to the municipality while it is of most important to attach time frames to such projects to make it clear to the members of the community when a particular type of service should be

expected. Such promises should thus be realistic to avoid making empty promises that cannot be achieved.

2.7.1.4 Integration

For proper and self-sustainable development to take place, municipal development projects should be integrated. These linkages should already be introduced at the planning stage of such projects. The idea behind this is to create efficiency in service provision, in other words, to cover as many communities as possible in terms of service provision with the available resources.

In order for a municipality to be focused, there should be a spatial development framework showing the settlement arrangements according to which communities reside within the jurisdictional area of a particular municipality. This gives the municipality an opportunity to decide on the means of providing services to those settlements.

The integration of projects also helps in disaster management planning, financial planning and co-ordination with other governmental development programmes, such as

education, safety and security, agriculture, health, public works programmes, and environmental conservation.

2.7.1.5 Managing IDPs

In terms of *The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 2000)* the overall responsibility for the preparation and management of the Integrated Development Plan lies with the Executive Committee or the Executive Mayor. However, this role can be further delegated to the IDP Manager who should report directly to the Municipal Manager.

2.8 IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN SERVICE PROVISION

The Municipal Services Partnerships (MSP) Policy Framework defines partnership as "a contractual agreement with another body or organisation for the delivery or performance of any municipal service outlined by the policy" In other words those covered by Schedule 4 Part B and Schedule 5 Part A of *The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No.108 of 1996)*.

In his paper delivered at the South African Development Community (SADC) Local Government Conference in July 1999, Kithakye said: "local governments/authorities tend to consider service provision their sole responsibility and create large establishments which are difficult to manage and to be effective or just fails to deliver". He added that local government should establish partnerships with other service providers though the challenge will be on the way in which to ensure that the user gets value for his/her money. This helps all stakeholders to exchange experiences to improve their capabilities of service provision and the mobilization of resources (Kithakye, 1999: 35).

Minister S.F Mufamadi, in his speech to the National Conference on Municipal Partnerships on the 08th May 2002, said MSP could unlock management and financial resources from the private sector in order to assist and even to improve in the delivery of basic services. The leveraging of private resources into the local sphere would increase activity in the locality and may well lead to positive spin-offs, such as employment creation for the local economy. Many of local authorities are faced with the challenge of providing municipal services to all their community members. This is mainly because local governments

do not have adequate funds to provide such services and are unable to manage their resources properly.

In these cases, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) may offer a considerable solution. Where the local authority fails to deliver services, they may seek assistance from someone else, be it a private firm, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), a public body such as neighbouring municipalities or a water board to provide the service on its behalf. In this case, the local authority must select the service provider and ensure that it provides the services properly, and at an affordable cost (DPLG, October 2001: 47).

The World Bank suggested options of partnerships that include:

Option A: Public ownership and operation

Service provision by a local government department, public enterprise or parastatal authority is the most common form of urban infrastructure ownership and operation.

Option B: Public ownership and private operation

This option known as 'competition for the market' is typically implemented through lease contracts or concessions for full operation and maintenance of public facilities.

Option C: Private ownership and private operation

In this instance private firms are given a chance to render, that is, to own and operate municipal infrastructure facilities and to collect tariffs thereof, for example, for public bus transport and cellular telephone facilities.

Option D: Community and user provision

Community and user provision is most common for local, small-scale municipal infrastructure or urban projects such as access to roads, water supply and sanitation serving a well-defined user group or residential area, and often complements publicly provided services. An example, of this is community policing through Community Policing Forums (CPF) and neighbourhood watches (World Bank Report 1994).

In its publication titled '*A Citizen's Guide to Municipal Services Partnerships*', DPLG suggests *Corporatisation* as another option to improve the delivery of municipal services. This means creating a company, owned by the municipality, to provide a particular service. Such a company may be set up and permitted to operate more independently than a department of the council, while still acting under the council's overall supervision and control.

This added independence could allow the service delivery company to be more innovative in its approach to service delivery by using new and improved technology or management techniques to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible cost.

Whatever method a council chooses to ensure the delivery of municipal services, the overall goal should always be the improvement of the quality of services, and the extension of services to those citizens who do not have them, at an affordable cost.

2.9 THE CULTURE OF NON-PAYMENT OF SERVICES: CASE STUDIES OF MPHOPOMENI AND SESHEGO

Before 1994 the South African essential service provision process was marked by a culture of non-payment of services. This was most commonly found in black towns due to the political unrest and resistance in the country because the anti-governmental political movements were influencing the communities to engage in all kinds of activities that would render the country ungovernable (Liebenberg, Nel, Lortan and Van der Westhuizen, 1994: 241-242).

Non-payment of services was one method used during that time and was perceived to be effective as it directly affected the smooth running of local authorities in that they remain with very little capacity to maintain services. The cutting-off of services was the order of the day at the stage. When the democratic government came into power in 1994, the main challenge it faced was to change the mindset of the people, to make them start paying rates to the municipalities for the usage of services. (Liebenberg, 1994: 241-242).

According to the studies conducted by the Palmer Development Group, commissioned by DPLG in 1997, in Mphopomeni (Howick), the non-payment of services or rent boycotts had started in 1983.

To break the long-standing boycott, the municipality had to understand the reasons for it and to explain to the consumers the importance of service payments. Thus, extensive education campaigns, workshops, pamphlets, and door-to-door campaigns were conducted throughout the Mphopomeni area. An educational play was also launched to put the message across while the municipality opened its doors to communicate and to answer questions on service provision and payments.

Since August 1996, 60% of the residents were paying the flat rate and the standard of services had improved (Palmer, 1997:14). In addition, shifting from a flat rate to a usage tariff or the cost of providing that service is another challenge to be addressed by municipalities. This has not been a simple task to achieve because municipalities needed to have sufficient capacity, for example, meter readings, reliable billing systems, and accessible pay points. A number of municipalities did not have this capacity, as they were new (Palmer, 1997:14).

When Polokwane municipality came into power, it introduced the flat rate system in Seshego. It was gradually shifted to a usage tariff with a series of discounts over a period of a year. The table below illustrates the way in which the shift to usage tariff was effected:

Period	Discount
July - October 1996	50%
November - December 1996	30%
January - March 1997	20%
April - June 1997	10%
July onwards	0%

(Palmer, 1997:14).

Recent municipal statistics indicates that Seshego's overall payment rate was more than 90% in July 2003.

2.10 CONCLUSION

It came out very clearly in this literature assessment that a need arises to further research on topics around sustainable essential service provision. A number of options proposed in this chapter may improve service provision though clarity may be necessary on the roles each

stakeholder should play in the whole process. This, therefore, justifies the importance of this study, basically on municipal capacity building.

CHAPTER THREE

3. CURRENT REALITIES IN TERMS OF SERVICE PROVISION IN MAKWARELA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to highlight the existing situation in terms of service provision at Makwarela. All the essential services have been identified and discussed here underneath.

3.2 TYPES OF SERVICES BEING PROVIDED

The following are the types of services that are currently rendered to Makwarela, though the level and quality thereof still remain unsatisfactory:

- Water and Sanitation
- Refuse removal
- Streets
- Traffic lights
- Sewerage
- Electricity

- Sporting facilities, and
- A Cemetery.

3.2.1 Water and Sanitation

Makwarela already had a water reticulation system in place when the new local government came into power. This infrastructure was provided by the previous government so that the municipality was expected to maintain it to ensure a regular flow of water to the residents. The system has enabled the residents to access water with ease since all the households are connected to the system. As water meters are also in place, they merely require maintenance.

The responsibility of water provision in the whole municipality still lies with the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and the Vhembe District Municipality. The two institutions are mainly responsible for the bulk water supply. The challenge facing the local municipality is thus to keep the system working by developing a reliable billing system for issuing accurate statements.

However, the residents have been complaining about inaccurate statements that reflect wrong house numbers and names of house owners. This shows how bad the municipal billing system is. Meanwhile, the water reticulation is currently of a poor quality. There are times of the day when the whole town does not get water at all, especially in the evenings and on weekends when the majority of the people need water for domestic usage. About 90% of the households in this area do get water in the afternoons during mid-week.

However, there is an indication that the current water provision system can no longer cater for the fast growing needs of the town and the new extensions that were not part of the town before.

3.2.2 Refuse removal

The municipality is doing its best to provide this service to the residents of Makwarela. Households have refuse bins that they purchased for themselves while there is an arrangement that the municipality will collect garbage once every Friday. Each household should ensure that the bin is accessible to the municipal workers on that day.

Though this service is rendered efficiently, there are cases in which residents allege that some streets are not always attended to. Their main concern is people's hygiene as dogs and cats begin to scavenge these unattended garbage containers, leaving rubbish exposed to human contact.

3.2.3 Streets

The previous government tarred almost 95% of the streets in Makwarela. The remaining 5% were in the extensions that have been developed during the past ten years.

In the existing streets, the main task of the municipality is maintenance only e.g. taking care of damaged roads, pavements and drainage system. Since the streets were constructed some 15-20 years ago, one would expect some repair work to be done by the municipality. The streets have developed potholes that need urgent attention because if not attended to, the damage may reach a stage where it cannot be repaired at all. At some stage, the municipality tried to repair the streets but the workmanship was unsatisfactory so that potholes again developed within twelve months.

3.2.4 Electricity

The responsibility for providing electricity in the Thulamela municipality `s jurisdictional area still remains with Eskom. This has been one of the areas where the town has enjoyed value for money because of the efficiency of the service rendered since there are no unnecessary power failures in the town.

The service provider has just completed the renewal phase for the infrastructure of the town. New poles, cables, and transformers have been installed throughout the town for efficient electricity provision.

The residents have two payment options from which they can choose the most suitable one. They may either remain in a billing system in which Eskom has a reliable system for issuing monthly statements to residents who are expected to pay accordingly or may choose a prepaid system.

In a case where an individual fails to pay, his/her electricity supply is cut off until such a time that they settle the outstanding balance and pay a reconnection fee.

Those who opt for the prepaid option may apply to ESKOM for a prepaid meter to be installed in their household. They buy units according to their needs and means. Once the units have been used, they have to recharge. Many of the Makwarela`s residents are using this system. This is an indication that electricity provision can be a major source of income to the municipality provided it is managed properly as is the case in Metros and larger municipalities in Limpopo such as Polokwane and Makhado.

3.2.5 Traffic Lights

The renewal of the electricity infrastructure in the town was coupled with the installation of new traffic lights that are functioning well in all the streets.

3.2.6 Sewerage

There is a sewerage system in place that is operational in Makwarela and its maintenance satisfactory.

However, the main challenge for this service provision is the shortage of water on which the system depends. The sewerage system is only functional at times when there is

water. Regrettably, there are certain areas that do not get water for a period of a week, thus compelling the residents to use pit toilets.

3.2.7 Sporting Facilities

Sporting facilities are crucial in any town for sports development.

Makwarela has a tennis court that has not been well maintained. This is a good asset that can be useful to the youth and schools in the area.

There is also a stadium that is currently being upgraded by the municipality. It is envisaged that a number of activities such as soccer, netball, athletics, and cultural activities will take place in this stadium as it was before.

3.2.8 Cemetery

The Makwarela town per se does not have a cemetery. However, the cemetery service is available from the municipality in Thohoyandou area.

All the neighbouring villages including Makwarela access this service from the municipality at a standard fee payable to the municipality for a grave number.

To access this service, there is a precondition that the affected family should produce a proof of service payment. There are municipal employees who prepare graves for the community. Here the concern is the long distance that the residents travel to the cemetery, as the affected family should arrange transport for the mourners.

3.3 COST RECOVERY

Cost recovery is an essential tool to sustainable service provision since it enables the continuous provision of services by the municipality and its partners. The municipalities' main source of revenue, besides grants from national and provincial governments, and donor funding, is the service payments and property taxes that come from the communities they serve.

Thulamela municipality is faced with a strong challenge of getting the residents of Makwarela to pay for services as they claim that the municipality has not done much in terms

of service provision in the area hence the standard of service provision is unsatisfactory.

The South African Yearbook (1999:43) indicates the availability of essential minimum package of services to all indigent households, i.e. those who cannot afford to pay for services rendered by the government. In this regard, the local government should determine its mechanisms for identifying and passing this subsidy on to poorest of the poor within its jurisdictional area.

3.4 MUNICIPAL CAPACITATION

Municipal capacity building has become a "buzz-word" in day-to-day operations of all government, semi-government, and private institutions, foreign donors and organizations in South Africa.

The Thulamela Municipality has entered into an agreement with the United Nations (UN) on a Capacity Building for Local Governance (CBLG) programme that the UN is sponsoring. The main objectives of the programme entail capacity building on the systems of operations, integrated development planning and budgeting processes, legislative

processes, as well as council proceedings. The programme has already made a mark in meeting its objectives, for example, ward committees were established and educated of their roles and responsibilities (UN-CBLG, 2001: 7).

3.5 THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY'S IDP AGAINST THE 2003/2004 BUDGET

Like any other municipality, Thulamela had already developed its IDP that outlines the way in which development will unfold and be managed within the municipality during the next five years. Once the municipal IDP is in place, it is then a legal requirement that the municipal budget should be aligned with the goals to be achieved during that particular year as per IDP document. The following table shows the budget and essential services to be attended to during the 2003/2004 financial year:-

Table 3.1: Thulamela Municipality's 2003/2004 Budget

Development Projects	Budget Allocation
Water Facilities	R1 500 000.00
Upgrading Sanitation Schemes	R303 000.00

Development Projects	Budget Allocation
Community Libraries	R330 000.00
Transfer of Electricity Services to Municipality	R20 000.00
Provision of Streets	R14 000 000.00
Maintenance of Tarred Roads	R2 000 000.00
Upgrading of Streets in Rural Areas	R300 000.00
Local Transport	R350 000.00
Cemeteries	R22 000.00

(Thulamela Municipal IDP document 2003/2004)

Given the above budget, and the areas to be covered in terms of service provision, much still needs to be done to access more funding for development in this municipality.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The services discussed above are basic to daily human life in the whole world. It is therefore a challenge to each government to strive towards the satisfaction of these needs for the community they serve or else government should cease to exist.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The research was conducted through the use of qualitative research methods. The following techniques were used in this regard: questionnaires were developed for both the municipal employees, and councilors and the residents of Makwarela town; interviews were conducted with the communities and the Thulamela Municipal Manager and other government officials; direct observation was applied; government documents such legislation, speeches and papers were studied; while the media were used to obtain information.

4.2 NATURE OR TYPES OF SERVICES REQUIRED

Makwarela was proclaimed a town that needs provision of basic services. This is a concern that worries the residents due to the nature and standard of services that are rendered to them.

These are: water and sanitation, electricity, street and traffic lights, refuse removal, sporting facilities, and a cemetery.

Table 4.1: Required Services ranked by Priority

Priority	Response
1. Water and Sanitation	110
2. Electricity	110
3. Street and Traffic Lights	110
4. Refuse Removal	110
5. Sporting Facilities	89
6. Cemetery	57

All the respondents indicated that of all the services that the municipality should render to Makwarela, water and sanitation, refuse removal and streets should be provided first. The table further illustrates how important these services are on a daily basis for the communities in this area as they appear in order of preference.

Reference was made in the previous chapter to the status quo on these essential services in the town. The shortage of water in Makwarela is a big challenge that the residents are faced with on a daily basis. As water is an essential commodity, it should always be made available to the community.

There also exists a need that the water reticulation system in the area be reconstructed since the current system is not capable of providing water to the growing town.

The current system appears outdated and overloaded because the homeland government installed it when the town was established in the early seventies.

The lack of reliable water provision also reflects on the provision of other services such as the sewerage system. The sewerage system has been reported to be intact and the municipality is maintaining it regularly. However, the reliability thereof is yet to be tested as to whether it can maintain pressure from the entire town once water reticulation has been improved.

Electricity is one of the services that have been prioritized by the respondents to this study. Since this service is being provided and maintained by ESKOM, the residents seem to be very comfortable with the quality of this service.

The efficiency of the electricity supply has raised the question whether the same route i.e. privatization should be followed with the rest of the services rendered by the municipality. However, the respondents felt it may be very expensive to the communities to privatize all the basic services.

Ninety-three of the respondents felt that the public sector should provide services while the remaining seventeen were in favour of private sector.

However, there is a strong feeling that these services were being provided and maintained satisfactorily by the homeland government. Services such as the provision and maintenance of streets and traffic lights serve as the best examples in this regard. All the tarred streets in the area were provided during the former Venda administration. The only challenge currently facing the local municipality is the maintenance thereof, which still appears to be a burden. Though the municipality is attending to this, the quality thereof is poor, amounting to a waste of municipal resources. The following table illustrates the general standard of services as rated by the scores of the respondents:

Table 4.2: General standard of services

<i>Type of service</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
1. Water and Sanitation	85	14	11	00
2. Electricity	00	00	104	06
3. Refuse Removal	45	38	23	04
4 Streets and Traffic Lights	00	03	02	105
5 Sporting Facilities	30	50	16	14
6. Cemetery	105	05	00	00

Capacity building at municipal level is critical for the municipality to be able to provide these services efficiently and effectively. The PPP may also be considered in this regard and the main objective in such a relationship should be service provision and skills transfer.

Refuse removal is done satisfactorily though some of the respondents indicated that this should be done at least twice a week. This is because of the difficulty that the residents are faced with in storing domestic waste for the rest of the week.

As for sporting facilities, the feeling is that the existing tennis court should be upgraded and maintained as the Thulamela Municipality's IDP document provides for the upgrading of this sporting field.

An amount of R54 400.00 has been budgeted for in the financial year 2003/2004. The Makwarela stadium that has also been upgraded should be maintained for the benefit of the community, not only for the Makwarela residents, but also for the surrounding villages.

4.3 SUSTAINABILITY

Most of the respondents understand why people should pay for the services rendered to them. They agree that the municipality has other communities to look after with its resources and that it remains their responsibility to contribute towards the sustenance of these services.

On the role that residents have to play in service provision, the survey revealed that 95% of the respondents were aware of the ownership role they are expected to play of the provided facilities. However, the respondents indicated that it might not be proper to expect the residents to pay for services that do not exist.

4.4 ACCESS TO PAY POINTS

4.4.1 *Services provided by the municipality*

There is an indication that there are no pay points in Makwarela and as such residents have to travel to the municipal offices in Thohoyandou to pay for their services. This is a distance of 5(five) kilometers.

The study further indicated that residents feel discouraged because they have to pay transport to go to municipal headquarters, which are always overcrowded.

4.4.2 *Services provided by the private sector*

All the respondents indicated that there is an electricity pay point at Sibasa, a 2,5 kilometers distance from Makwarela.

Though the people are still not satisfied with the arrangement because of the distance, they appreciate ESKOM's efforts in that it reduces the long queues that they are likely to get at the ESKOM `s main offices at Thohoyandou.

4.5 DETERMINING PAYMENT METHODS AND RATES

The determination of service payments remains the responsibility of the municipality though it should be in consultation with the taxpayers. In this case, the respondents indicated that they were not consulted when these were decided upon.

4.6 PRIVATIZATION OF CERTAIN MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The respondents in the study indicated that privatization of services will not solve the problems that the residents are faced with. They believe that the municipal council is the only legal institution that they had elected to provide affordable services to them and maintained that when essential services are "sold" to private companies, the communities will suffer since the rates may be too high for the poor residents to afford.

However, the municipality is adamant about the concept of MSPs. According to the Municipal Manager, PPPs are matters of national concern that even the former President of the country, Dr. N.R. Mandela, supported (Mathivha, September 2002).

This should not only be seen as privatization since there are contributions that businesses and other foreign countries/donors are bringing into the country and to the Thulamela municipality in particular (Mathivha, September 2002).

4.7 AFFORDABILITY VERSUS PAYMENTS AND PENALTIES

Eighty percent of the respondents of the study had an average monthly income of R8000.00 per household and could contribute between R250.00 and R350.00 for services every month. The remaining 20% comprised pensioners and families without a stable monthly income. There were only a few cases of families that depended largely on social welfare grants.

It is worth noting that that there are external forces that influence late or non-payments of services that may differ between categories of the community. To cite an example, pensioners sometimes get their grants very late and by the time they receive them, their services like electricity have already been cut off. To get the service reconnection, they should pay reconnection fees that are usually double the normal connection fees.

4.8. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed the major challenges facing Makwarela residents regarding essential service provision.

Electricity and refuse collection are the best-provided services as compared to water, sanitation, streets and sporting facilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first part of this study reflected the manner in which essential services have been provided to Makwarela by the homeland government. The research revealed that the level of service provision at that time was remarkably higher than it is currently under the democratically elected local government system.

This should not in any way be construed to suggest that the previous government system was better than the current one since there are a number of factors contributing to this scenario as mentioned below.

The democratically elected local government system remains responsible to create a conducive environment for improvement of the living standards of the communities they serve by supporting economic growth and development. However, with the limited capacity at their disposal, municipalities cannot fully respond to the unrealistic expectations that were created by election promises to the communities.

The concept of democracy was not properly communicated to the people at grass-root level. Instead, wrong impressions were created by those who wanted political power at the expense of the poor communities. It should have been made clear from the on set that democracy is always accompanied by responsibility. It is ridiculous to find politicians, even those at higher positions in government, making irresponsible public statements like, *"it is acceptable for politicians to lie"*.

Municipalities should thus create public awareness on the public responsibilities regarding service provision. People should know that they have a constitutional obligation to own and to sustain such services. This is possible mainly through service payments.

Unfortunately the South African democratic local government system, though in its tenth year of existence, still does not have adequate capacity for service provision.

The Constitution of the country mandates provincial government to establish municipalities and build the necessary capacity at that level.

Municipalities have been established but depend much on other spheres of government for financial support. The small grants they receive are, however, mainly spent on personnel and consultancy fees, as they frequently lack the technical skills to implement projects.

The provision of electricity to Makwarela town has been through Eskom and has since 1994 been excellent. Perhaps municipalities should also be run like private companies, not necessarily to make profit, but for cost recovery.

This does not suggest that all municipal services should be privatized. Major or essential services such as electricity, water, and traffic control should remain the prerogative of the municipality since they are the main sources of revenue to the municipalities and if all are privatized, municipalities may not have an adequate economic base.

The local municipality should therefore improve its capacity for service provision. It may also be an added advantage to obtain an electricity license, as the municipality would then be able to consolidate all service charges in a single statement.

This system has been introduced to Metro Cities and bigger municipalities such as Polokwane and Makhado and has since been working very well.

This is also cost effective to the taxpayers in that an inclusive statement is more manageable than more segmented statements from different service providers because it cuts certain charges such as bank charges that may be levied on consumers when making payments and time in particular.

Municipalities are strategically placed to render services to the electorate and as such should create ways and means of making this happen. MSP is one other option that the municipality may adopt. This does not suggest that the municipalities should totally privatize their responsibilities to businesses, but that they should work hand in hand for a common purpose i.e. the wellbeing of the communities. Local businesses should come forth to join local municipalities in community development.

It is essential that adequate and accessible pay points be made available to the communities. Pay points should operate during public holidays and weekends.

This study has revealed that there are inadequate pay centers for residents of Makwarela to make their payments. It is unrealistic to expect people to spend hours in long queues for payments of services.

Other options available will be to make arrangements for electronic transfer payments so that the people can pay directly into the municipal's bank account. Alternatively, a cheque deposit-box can be made available for people who may opt to pay with bank guaranteed cheques at any time.

Service cut-offs may only be used as a last resort to get people to pay for services rendered. This should not be viewed negatively as a punishment, but as a positive step to make the people realize and accept the role they have to play in the service provision process. The municipalities do not have unlimited resources to continuously provide services to passive communities as it is a generally accepted principle that responsible citizens pay for what they have consumed.

This raises the question of what should come first, service or payments? It all depends on the circumstances of a particular municipality. There are cases in which a

municipality may have sufficient capacity to initiate the process and in that case, the municipality should take the lead. The communities are, however, expected to make their contributions to enable the municipality to provide essential services.

The standard of services should be determined by the level of affordability on the part of the communities. The service providers and the consumers who have to pay should agree upon service standards. However, service providers should not give poor services to the people claiming that they cannot afford better services.

The municipalities should also play their role in helping those who cannot afford to pay, for example, identifying those who may be covered by the Indigent Policy.

There are a number of options available for service delivery though their success will differ from one municipality to another. Examples, of such options are Corporatisation, Management Contracts, Lease Contracts, Concessions, Full Privatization, Public-Public Partnerships, Municipal Debt Issuance, and Service

Contracts. An appropriate method of service delivery will be determined by the circumstances of a particular municipality.

To conclude: The hypothesis that the service delivery standards in Makwarela have deteriorated since 1994 is accepted. There is thus a need for an urgent intervention by both the national and provincial governments in building capacity for service provision at the Thulamela municipality. This will enable the municipality to upgrade the living standards of the residents of Makwarela and to encourage a sense of responsibility on the part of the communities they serve, basically in terms of payments of services and participation in local government matters in general.

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