

# Local Government Service Delivery Expectations and Prospects at the Collins Chabane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province

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**Abstract:** The Collins Chabane Local Municipality (CCLM) was established in 2016. This was after massive disruptive protests by community members predominantly from Malamulele area demanding re-demarcation and to be moved from the Thulamela Local Municipality into the new municipality (previously known as LIM345). Central to the demand of the 'new' municipality was the fact that the Thulamela Local Municipality was according to the residents failing to extend the delivery of services to the populace of the Malamulele constituents. This paper seeks to probe the expectations and prospects in relation to service delivery by the 'new' municipality. This is done through a quantitative survey questionnaire. The paper argues that inasmuch as the contention for the creation of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality was the failure of the Thulamela Local Municipality to deliver services, there is a huge expectation on the CCLM to deliver services to its constituent while also seeking to redress the 'service delivery imbalances' as claimed by the residents. The paper concludes by proposing measures on how the municipality must meet the expectations of their communities within its jurisdiction.

**Keywords:** Demarcation, Local government, Municipality, Service delivery

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## 1. Introduction

The Collins Chabane Local Municipality (CCLM) was established in 2016 as a result of the incorporation of the portions of the Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) and the Makhado Local Municipality (MLM). The CCLM is a category B municipality situated within the Vhembe District Municipality (VDM) in Limpopo Province. The Municipality is one of the four local municipalities in the district and make up 20% of its geographical area. Disruptive protests by 'angry' residents mainly from the Malamulele area launched a campaign demanding a 'new' municipality. This subsequently resulted in the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) deciding to establish the CCLM. The resident's matter of contention was that the TLM, which they initially fell under, deprived them of goods and services and therefore demanded their own municipality. However, antagonists argued that the demand for the 'new' municipality was solely based on tribalism rather than service delivery. They argued that the demand of the 'new' municipality was fuelled by the fact that the majority of the populace in the TLM are Venda speaking while residents of Malamulele are Tsonga speaking. Since the establishment of the CCLM, residents of the Malamulele area have huge expectations from their municipality in relation to

service delivery which will be contrary from the 'imbalances and injustices' imposed by the TLM as claimed. This article is empirical in execution and relied on a survey questionnaire to collect primary data pertaining to service delivery expectations and prospects by the CCLM residents. The article therefore provides a background on the formation of local government in South Africa, the legislative and policy framework governing local government and further interrogates the phenomenon of municipal demarcation. The article also outlines the research design and further presents analysis of data collected from the residents of the Malamulele area.

## 2. Background of the Formation of Local Government in South Africa

According to Du Toit and van Der Walddt (1999:246), 'local government is a product and process of urbanisation'. Sequentially, informal settlements develop into townships, towns and cities which ultimately become urban areas (Thornhill & Cloete, 2014:2). These urban areas transform into what in South Africa is commonly referred to as metropolitan areas. Examples of such metropolitans are amongst others; City of Cape Town, City of Joburg, City of Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, Nelson Mandela Bay and Mangaung. Metropolitans in South Africa are

one category of municipalities. As such municipalities are categorised into A, B and C. A municipality refers to a political portion established in terms of sections 151 and 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), and has control of local matters under its jurisdiction. According to Thornhill and Cloete (2014:3), the word municipality emanates from Latin *municipalis* which means a city with some self-governing authority.

According to Craythorne (2006), between 1984 and 1993, intensive negotiations by the Local Government Negotiation Forum (LGNF) and the Kempton Park Negotiations (KPN) took place between the National Party (NP), African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). These negotiations culminated to the enactment of the Local Government Transition Act (209 of 1993). The Act provided for amongst others; the establishment of local and metropolitan negotiating forums, powers of Members of Executive Committees (MECs) responsible for local government, local government elections and the establishment of transitional council.

Once the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) came into effect in 1997, section 151 of such Constitution recognised the status of municipalities, section 155 provided for the establishment of municipalities, section 156 gave powers and clarified functions of municipalities while section 157 provided for the composition and election of municipal councils. Some of the matters that local government (i.e. municipalities) exercises power on include matters relating to air pollution, child care facilities, electricity and gas reticulation, local tourism in terms of Part B Schedule 4 of the Constitution and cemeteries, funeral parlours, billboards, beaches, markets, traffic and parking etc. in terms of Part B of Schedule 5 of the Constitution. Subsequently, important pieces of legislation such as the Organised Local Government Act (52 of 1997), Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act (27 of 1998), Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998), Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) and the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act (56 of 2003) were enacted for ensuring proper functioning, sound management and good governance in local government. To date, municipalities across South Africa have been established, some merged and others abolished. The sphere of local government remains crucial as municipalities are institutions

closer to the constituents for the purposes of ensuring service delivery.

### **3. Legislative and Policy Framework Governing Local Government Service Delivery**

There are several legislative and policy frameworks guiding local government service delivery in South African municipalities (Pretorius & Schurink, 2007; Phago, 2009; Madzivhandila & Asha, 2012). Amongst such frameworks are the Constitution of South Africa, 1996, the White Paper on Local Government of 1998, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, the Division of Revenue Act 2 of 2013, the Development Facilitation Act 67 of 1995, and the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 23 of 2009.

#### **3.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996**

The South African Constitution (1996) is the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled. Section 152 of the Constitution, 1996 outlines the objectives that municipalities were established to fulfil. Among those objectives; the municipality must promote social and economic development. This can be achieved by ensuring that municipalities meet the socio-economic need of municipal communities by providing them with goods and services. Section 153 encompasses the developmental duties of a municipality whereby municipalities must structure and manage its administration, budgeting, and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote social and economic development of the community. Local government must promote a safe and healthy environment and encourage community participation on matters of local government. It should ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner and promote a safe and healthy environment.

#### **3.2 White Paper on Local Government of 1998**

The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 views the delivery of services to municipal communities as a way of achieving developmental local government. Local government is the sphere of

government that interacts closest with communities. Therefore, municipalities are responsible for the services and infrastructure that are so essential to our people's well-being, and it is tasked with ensuring growth and development of communities in a manner that enhances community participation and accountability (Beall, 2004; Barichiev *et al.*, 2005; Steytler, 2005). This White Paper is unique, as it does not deal with a sectoral policy, but with an entire sphere of local government. It can almost be regarded as a "mini-Constitution" for local government, as it one way or the other affects all South Africans. The second section of the White Paper, deals with issues of Developmental Local Government, puts forward a vision of a developmental local government, which centres on working with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. It articulates the aspirations of the 1996 Constitution in that it advocates for the provision of basic needs of communities, promote the socio-economic development of the community, and partake in national and provincial developmental programmes (Phago & Malan, 2004). The developmental role of a municipality is an unavoidable function in which every existing municipality must engage itself, to adhere to its ultimate service delivery responsibility to communities.

### **3.3 Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998**

The Local government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 as amended by Municipal Structures Amendment Act 33 of 2000; Municipal Structures Amendment Act 20 of 2002 and Local Government: Municipal Structures Amendment Act 1 of 2003 was promulgated to among other purposes; provide for the establishment of municipalities in accordance with the requirements relating to categories and types of municipality and provide for an appropriate division of functions and powers between categories of municipalities. The Act also aims to regulate the internal systems, structures and office-bearers of municipalities. Section 30 (5) of the Act requires the executive committee of a municipality to submit a report and make recommendations on the approval of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the municipality, and any amendment to that plan. Section 44 (2) of the Act states that the executive committee must make recommendations on the municipal council's strategies, programmes and services to address priority needs of communities.

### **3.4 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000**

The Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 was promulgated to, among other purposes provide to core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities, and ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable to all. The Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 is the principal piece of legislation that regulates the service delivery. It requires the municipality to assume developmentally oriented planning in ensuring that it endeavours to achieve the objects of local government enshrined in sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution of 1996. Section 25(1) requires the Municipal Council, within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term, to adopt a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality.

### **3.5 Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003**

The Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 was promulgated to secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of municipalities and other institutions in the local sphere of government and to establish treasury norms and standards for the local sphere of government. The Act provides a mandatory provision that relate to financial and performance management. The Act is the principal legislation that guides financial affairs at a local level of government. Section 2 of the Act stipulates that the object is to secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of the local government institutions. If municipalities are successful in ensuring effective implementation of the provisions of this Act, services as contained in the IDP are implemented for the benefit of the municipal citizenry. Section 17(3)(b) of the Act states that when an annual budget is tabled, it must be accompanied by measurable performance objectives for revenue from each source and for each vote in the budget taking into account the municipality's deliverable objectives.

## **4. Conceptualising Service Delivery Expectations**

Although this paper is premised on the field of public policy and public administration practice,

the concept of service delivery expectations is private sector oriented. Bebko (2000) acknowledges the difficulty associated with defining customer satisfaction concisely and meaningfully. However, he defines service delivery expectations as beliefs about services delivered that serves as standards of judgment against actual performance or delivery. The reason could be that societies are diverse and complex, therefore meaning expectations and service delivery prospects differs. According to Ho and Zengh (2003), customers are not only satisfied by quality but also the shorter delivery times which services are expected. With this being said, the delivery of quality services to communities necessitates that public institutions beware of the expectations from customers they service. Central to this, Ipsos (2014) alludes that the following questions can serve as a guideline:

- What type of expectation standards do communities have on services?
- What factors informs the formation of these expectations?
- What role do these factors play in the change of expectations?
- How can institutions exceed service expectations?

Public institutions can use these questions as guidelines as a framework to attempt and meet the service delivery needs of communities. Although, this is not a model that can be used as a catalyst, it can go a long way in addressing service delivery challenges particularly in South African municipalities. This paper attempts to use the questions in the data analysis and interpretation and see how the Collins Chabane Local Municipality can address the expectations and prospects in the delivery of services to its municipal community.

## 5. Politics of Municipal Demarcation

The creation of LIM 345 (Collins Chabane Local Municipality) was as a result of massive disruptive protests by Malamulele residents demanding to be removed from the TLM. Consequently, new boundary determinations were published in 2016 creating the CCLM which comprised of certain wards from Thulamela and Makhado (LIM 344 and 343) respectively. The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) delimits wards particularly for the purposes

of elections and capacity assessment. Capacity assessment can be viewed as a process preceding the creation of a new municipality through analysing the municipality's ability to collect own revenue and sustainable service delivery (Municipal Demarcation Board, online). This is so because according to Chauke, Sebola and Mathebula (2017), capacity challenges in South African municipalities are related to their ability or inability to efficiently collect own revenue rather than solely relying on equitable shares from national government. Capacity assessment is a means of testing adequacy, rules, knowledge for the supply of infrastructural services for the municipal community.

The MDB draws its mandate to demarcate and re-demarcate municipal boundaries from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (1998) and the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act (1998) being the principal piece of legislation governing issues related to municipal demarcation. The Act was promulgated with its main objectives being to establish a criterion to be used in the determination of municipal boundaries. This objective is consistent with the provisions enshrined in section 155(3)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). One of the key requirements of the Act is that when the Board is engaging in determination or re-determination of municipal boundaries such decisions be published in the Government Gazette. This is so because in most disputed MDB's decisions are that members of the public affected by decisions of the Board are not consulted. Furthermore, Government Gazettes have not been made available for comment hence giving rise to issues of transparency in the process. The Act requires the Board to take into consideration its objectives and factors to be taken into account in the determination and re-determination of boundaries which are; public and stakeholder participation and conducting formal investigations in relation to determination. It was argued that the residents of Vuwani were ignored in the re-determination that led to the creation of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

### 5.1 Case Study of Vuwani and Malamulele

It was in the wake of August 2016 when the Municipal Demarcation Board announced the establishment of a 'new municipality' (LIM 345) that would include Malamulele, Masia, Mashau, Masakona, Tshino, Davhana, Khakhanwa, Mulenzhe, Tshikonelo,



Ramukhuba, Piet boy, Tshimbupfe and Vyeboom. However, this proposal was received by one of the most violent demarcation demonstrations of the democratic South Africa. There are many and sometimes confusing reasons that sparked the violence which ultimately led to the establishment of the Pro-Makhado Task Team by community structures in Vuwani. The task team clearly stated that they did not want to form part of the new municipality instead they must be retained to the initial Makhado Local Municipality. The formation of the task team was therefore preceded by the burning of schools and other public assets. It is speculated that the people in Vuwani who are predominantly Venda speaking do not want to be led by Tsonga speaking people and that there would be minimum job opportunities for them (Case Study on Vuwani Demarcation Protest, 30 June 2016). To the core of the contentions in Vuwani is the fact that the Municipal Demarcation Board failed to put in place consultation platforms and therefore ignoring the provisions of the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act (28 of 1998).

It is further argued that this is inconsistent with the provisions of Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) which demands that people must be encouraged to participate in policy and decision making processes. It is critically important that the voice of the people in a democratic dispensation is provided with space and be navigated to policy maker's table. However, this article condemns violence as it cannot be a mechanism of registering discontent with government and its institutions. The paper is however of the view that the Board has failed to take into account stakeholder's inputs in the determination of the 'new municipality'. This is in line with the submissions of the South African Police Services made at the South African Human Rights Commission where it was submitted that the Board failed to explain demarcation processes to the residents which ultimately resulted into violence (Manyathela 2016). Stakeholders in Vuwani claim to have made several submissions to the Board and were told that nothing can be done to reverse the decision of establishing the 'new municipality' (News24 Correspondent, 2016).

## 6. Methods and Materials

According to Schwardt (2007:195), a research methodology is a theory of how an inquiry should proceed. It involves an analysis of the assumptions, principles

and procedures in a particular approach to inquiry. There are mainly two types of methods particularly in social science research; qualitative and quantitative. Due to the nature and scope of the study both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were utilised to obtain deeper knowledge on the Collin Chabane Local Municipality's residents service delivery expectations and prospects. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) allude that qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, i.e. qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Quantitative research aims at testing particular theories by examining the relationship amongst variables (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative findings are numerical and can easily be quantified and presented in figures and graphs.

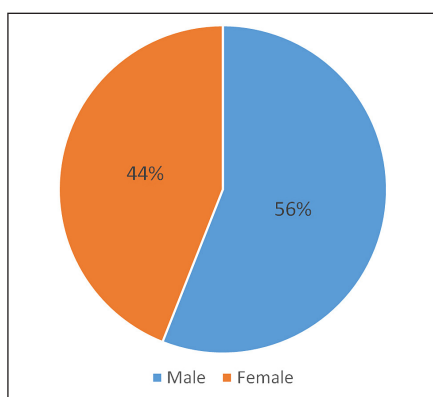
A sample is a group of elements or single element from which data are obtained. The identification of the elements or element from which data has to be sourced is known as sampling (McMillan, 1996:86). 70 respondents from the Malamulele town were randomly and conveniently sampled to participate in the study. However, only 52 questionnaires were returned for the purposes of manipulation and interpretation. In order to enhance the validity of the quantitative data as collected through questionnaires, 50 unstructured and supplementary interviews were randomly conducted to elicit further data in order to understand the service delivery expectations and some of the prospects brought about by the new Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Dobson (1963:13) defines an interview as follows:

*An interview is a spoken exchange of information, between a person or two, even a small group. An interview is different from every day "chit chat" type of conversation. This exchange of information involves speaking and listening on both sides.*

Both qualitative and quantitative data was then arranged, categorised and manipulated accordingly.

## 7. Results and Discussion

The discussion in the following section reports on the findings of the data collected through a structured questionnaire and supplementary interviews. The questionnaires were administered to the residents of the Malamulele town to unearth their service

**Figure 1: Gender Representation of Respondents**

Source: Authors

**Table 1: The State of Service Delivery at the Thulamela Local Municipality was Satisfactory**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Frequency</b>	5	5	5	15	22
<b>Percentage (%)</b>	9.6%	9.6%	9.6%	28.9%	42.3%

Source: Authors

**Table 2: The Reason for Demanding a New Municipality was Solely on the Basis of Service Delivery**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Frequency</b>	35	11	1	2	3
<b>Percentage (%)</b>	67.3%	21.2%	1.9%	3.8%	5.8%

Source: Authors

delivery expectations by the CCLM. All respondents were black Africans and Tsonga speaking. This could be ascribed to the geographical location the respondents find themselves in.

In Table 1 above, 9.6% of the respondents strongly agree that the state of service delivery of their former municipality (TLM) was satisfactory, 9.6% agree, 9.6% is undecided, 28.9% disagree, 42.3% strongly disagree. In Table 2 above, 67.3% of the respondents are of the view that the demand of a new municipality was solely based on lack of service delivery by the TLM, 21.2% agree, 1.9% is undecided, 3.8% disagree while 5.8% strongly disagree. From the findings above, it can be seen that majority of the respondents are of the view that service delivery by the TLM was not satisfactory. Furthermore, the findings reiterate that the demand for a new municipality was based on the lack of service delivery rather than any other motive as is advocated

by other 'anti-new' municipality. As pointed out in literature, the demand for a new municipality was due to the failure to meet service delivery needs of the Malamulele area. This is inconsistent with the issue of tribalism which was thought to have perpetuated the need for a new municipality by the Malamulele residents. It was contended that tribalism rather than service delivery was a driving factor behind the demand for a new municipality.

As pointed out in literature, service clients always expect institutions servicing them to deliver as per the expectation. Quality of services and the period within which services are delivered plays a crucial role in meeting service delivery expectation. In this study as indicated in Table 3 on the following page 53.8% of the respondents strongly agree that better services from the CCLM as expected, 38.5% of the respondents agree, 7.7% are undecided, and no respondents neither disagree nor strongly

**Table 3: The Expectation is that the Collins Chabane Local Municipality Will Deliver Better Services**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Frequency	28	20	4	0	0
Percentage (%)	53.8%	38.5%	7.7%	0%	0%

Source: Authors

**Table 4: The Collins Chabane Local Municipality Will Deliver Better Services that the Thulamela Local Municipality**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Frequency	25	22	3	0	2
Percentage (%)	48.1%	42.3%	5.8%	0%	3.8%

Source: Authors

**Table 5: Residents are Expecting Improvements in Existing Infrastructure and Services**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Frequency	20	24	5	2	1
Percentage (%)	38.5%	46.2%	9.6%	3.8%	1.9%

Source: Authors

**Table 6: Residents are Expecting New Developments in Infrastructure and Services**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Frequency	21	24	5	2	0
Percentage (%)	40.4%	46.2%	9.6%	3.8%	0%

Source: Authors

disagree that the expectation for better services by the CCLM exists. Table 4 indicates that 48.1% of the respondents strongly agree and expect the CCLM will deliver better services that the TLM, 42.3% agree, 5.8% are undecided, 0% disagree, while 3.8% strongly disagree. As pointed out in literature, the municipality can use the four questions as proposed by Ipsos (2014). If the municipality fails to meet the expectations of citizens, frustration will always grow among service clients. This is so as residents expect the new municipality to deliver better services by the TLM. However, the findings of this study may not necessarily translate into what will practically transpire in terms of service delivery. CCLM is a new municipality and as pointed out in literature, capacity might not allow the municipality to collect adequate self-revenue and therefore defeating the aim of sustainable service delivery.

In Table 5 above, the study probed whether municipal residents expected the CCLM to make improvements to already existing infrastructure and services. 38.5% strongly agree, 46.2% agree, 9.6% are undecided, 3.8% disagree while 1.9% strongly disagree. In Table 6, respondents were asked whether the Municipality will develop new infrastructure and expand the delivery of services. On that note, 40.4% strongly agree, 46.2% agree, 9.6% undecided, 3.8% disagree while 0% strongly disagree. On the basis of these findings it can be drawn that the CCLM is expected to deliver new infrastructure and services while also ensuring that improvements are made to existing services and infrastructure.

There is a tendency among South African citizens to embark on violent demonstrations when public institutions do not perform as expected. Over the

**Table 7: If the Municipality Fails to Meet the Expectation, there will be Service Delivery Protests**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Frequency	12	24	9	4	3
Percentage (%)	23%	46.2%	17.3%	7.7%	5.8%

Source: Authors

past 10 years, service delivery protests across the country have become rife. This may be ascribed to huge expectations that citizens place on government institutions. In this study 23% strongly agree, 46.2% agree, 17.3%, 7.7% disagree while 5.8% strongly disagree that if the CCLM fails to meet their expectations as indicated in the data in the above table, they are likely to engage in service delivery protests. Expectations create anxiety in people and if not met there is a likelihood of disappointment and violence.

## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this article was to report on the findings acquired through literature and empirical evidence. The study was conducted in the Malamulele area in order to understand the municipal community's service delivery expectation by the new CCLM. From the findings, it can be concluded that although the CCLM relatively with low capacity to collect self-revenue due to its rural setting, residents have huge service delivery expectations. Due to the nature and extent of the expectations for service delivery, if the CCLM fails to meet the service delivery expectations, residents are likely to embark on service delivery protests. It can also be seen from the findings that the demand for a new municipality by the Malamulele community was mainly based on the lack of service delivery rather than tribalism as was advocated by other groups. In light of this, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The prioritisation of service delivery by the Municipality;
- Inviting investment for the purposes of industrialisation and job creation of jobs;
- Building of public facilities such as schools and houses and;
- Support for small businesses.

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