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EXPLORING THE ETHEKWINI MUNICIPAL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS A LEARNING PROCESS: A SYSTEMS THINKING PERSPECTIVE

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DECLARATION

I, Siphiwe Ngubane, declare that

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    ii.   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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ABSTRACT

A municipality, in the new democratic South Africa, is mandated by legislation to facilitate the development of a Municipal Integrated Development Plan (MIDP). The MIDP is a principal strategic planning and development framework that is to guide planning, management and development at a municipal or local government level. In recent years, there has been evidence of discontent with the developmental priorities, strategies, and programmes of some municipalities. In fact, municipalities are seen to be stumbling in their objectives of ensuring the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner, promoting social and economic development, and encouraging the involvement of communities and organisations in the matters of Local Government as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

This study examines the MIDP process as a core organisational learning and planning process, which is the foundation of the developmental local government system in South Africa. The MIDP process is also examined because it is understood to be a map, which sets out the service delivery and development plan of a municipality. Moreover, the MIDP details how a municipality will spend its limited resources on priorities/priority areas to achieve its vision.

The object of this study is to gain an understanding of the key stakeholders of the MIDP process. It ascertains how key stakeholders are engaged, and thus learn in a strategic planning dialogue, which canvass their opinions and input towards the formulation of the Strategic Development Plan for a municipality or local government entity. Such an undertaking is important, as there should be meaningful participation by stakeholders in determining priorities in the development planning process, because the MIDP is seen as an expression of governmental investments and activities in a given locality. .

A theoretical-qualitative research paradigm has been followed in this study because the research questions are theoretical in nature. The questions required a theoretical exploration and for qualitative data to be collected, which makes it possible, to gain an understanding of what is the current MIDP process and how it works.

The case study approach has been chosen as the method to better understand and contextualise the MIDP process. Furthermore, the approach has assisted in understanding the 'what, how and why' questions in relation to the MIDP process.

Different data collection techniques were followed to ensure that there are multiple sources of evidence to confirm the validity of the research. Academic literature on the subject matter and other related topics pertinent to the study were reviewed. National, Provincial and Local Government legislative and policy frameworks and other available literature on or related to, the MIDP process was also reviewed. What was evident in the reviews of literature and documents is that the development of a strategic plan, in this instance the MIDP, is a process through which stakeholders' participation or engagement should take centre stage. Moreover, the process should provide management and political leadership with an opportunity to learn about the demands that are made on local government.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select key stakeholders for interviews. The use of this technique was appropriate, as the research was an exploratory study and was to gain insight into the perspectives and constructs of key stakeholders in relation to the process expressed in their own words.

Interviews with three members of the eThekwini Municipality's Executive Committee, five members of eThekwini House of Traditional Leaders, and five Senior Management Officials who are key stakeholders in the IDP process were also conducted. The interviews were to ascertain the stakeholders' understandings of, and perspectives on, the IDP process. The focus of the interviews was on current conditions and activities in the IDP process and on the platforms for learning.

The inductive data analysis approach was followed. The analysis or interpretation of data shows that the MIDP process has become one that is aimed at fulfilling the legislative requirements. The process allows for reflective thinking, while it is seen as being somewhat inflexible. It is both a means to an end and an end in itself. The MIDP allows for some generative learning while being participative, interactive but not that inclusive. Stakeholders are not only engaged through the formulation of the MIDP, situational analysis is conducted and some data is collected through surveys and other mechanisms. In the end, the MIDP remains a strategic planning tool that connects context, a process and designed outcomes. Besides all of the above, the MIDP is a social construct or emergence and is seen by some as political and compliance-driven.

What was evidence is that the development of the MIDP is prescribed in the national policy frameworks, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No.108 of 1996, White Paper on Local Government of 1998, Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

(MSA). Even though there is participation of stakeholders outside and during the formal MIDP process, the formal process does not allow for generative learning. There are no feedback mechanisms in place to create double loop learning which might lead to change in the service delivery system.

If the MIDP process is to change to a learning process, planning should be seen as an important strategic learning process. There should be commitment, openness, willingness, trust, preparedness, reflection, and inclusivity in the process.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

What has become evident with the new democratic system of governance in South Africa is that there is a shift in local government's developmental planning approach. The South African Government has adopted a participatory strategic planning approach that promotes the interaction of local government with its citizens and other stakeholders during the process of developing a MIDP. The new developmental planning approach defines the process and the content for all municipalities in the country. The details of the approach are contained in the White Paper on Local Government (1998) and in the MSA (2000).

The focus of the approach is on demand-responsive learning that is adaptive and integrated. It is a shift from a local government's development planning that authors such as Binns and Nel (2002: 922-923) said was 'racial, top down, non-democratic, non-consultative and emphasizing sectoral planning, project based' and Pycroft (1998:154) said created 'development backlogs because of its years of localised racial division'. Instead, it promotes a collective and interactive system that focuses on how to provide municipal services or to improve the same, having understood the demands made on local government by stakeholders. It defies the mindset that strategy formulation is the forte of top management or that planning should be left to officials or experts, and this rarely involves all stakeholders. The shift is important if South Africa is to develop a uniform system of local government. The question remains though, whether or not all sectors of the society can participate or be involved to the same extent and in a similar way for planning to be a learning process.

To introduce the notion that this study is on how the new approach is a learning process, this chapter establishes the study context and rationale by giving a background. Briefly, it presents the location of the study within the field of strategy management research and its meaning derives from the context of the local government system. Then, it outlines the problem statement, and explains the purpose of the study, which is to understand how the development of the MIDP is a learning process, from the systems thinking perspective. Finally, it presents the research questions, and briefly presents the methodological approach followed in the study and outlines the remaining chapters to guide the reader through the dissertation.

1.2   Background to the study

1.2.1   The research on strategy

Research on strategy, as a management field, focuses on different dimensions. Vänttinen and Pyhalto (2009:779-780) point to these dimensions, which are variables of the studies. They said that the dimensions are strategy content, strategy process, strategy context, and learning or the concept of learning. Studies on strategy content focus on the strategic position of an organization. The studies are concerned with *what* is, and should be, the strategy for the organisation. The research on strategy process focuses on the administrative systems and decision-making processes within the organization. The studies are concerned with the *how* strategy is, or should, be made, analyzed, formulated, implemented, changed, *who* is involved and *when* the necessary activities take place.

Furthermore, Vänttinen and Pyhalto (2009:780) cite Mintzberg et al. (2003) and De Vit and Meyer (2004), who identify a third area of focus, research on strategy context, which covers circumstances that define the strategy process and strategy content. The concern here is with the *where* of the strategy in terms of where the strategy process and strategy content take root.

In addition, Vänttinen and Pyhalto (2009:780) state that strategy has also been researched as a learning process or within the concept of learning. The research on strategy as a learning process focuses on the organisational transformation process.

The research on strategy as a learning process is an area of interest and focus in this study. The study aims to gather some evidence on how the MIDP process, as the strategic planning process for eThekwini Municipality, creates platforms for learning or involvement of key stakeholders in the learning process. This is of importance as developing strategy is not an end in itself but rather a means for a municipality to deliver improved services. This is also vital as municipalities are encouraged to acquire and manage knowledge and information in a way that promotes continuous learning. This becomes important if municipalities are to be developmental or meet their developmental outcomes. Thus, focusing on how stakeholders are involved in learning during the planning process becomes important.

However, Schaffer and Willauer (2003:86) note that there is little empirical evidence collected on the actual impact of learning in strategic and effective planning. In fact, Schaffer and Willauer (2003:92) cite Mintzberg, Brunet and Waters argument that "formal [strategic] planning ...may discourage the very attitude required to conceive strategic

learning". This might be so because, in a formalized process, there might be no room for creativity and freedom for learning. Thus, the less formalized process can permit openness.

Schaffer and Willauer (2003: 103) state that "...learning in the process of strategic planning leads to increased effectiveness of anticipation and implementation". This is an indication that the planning process is adaptive as it is influenced by learning. This can have a positive impact in the performance of the organisation, as the developed strategy will point the organisation in the right direction. If this is the case, learning influenced the effectiveness of implementation as the objectives, as anticipated during planning, are actually achieved.

This dissertation is to ascertain how the strategic planning process is a learning potential while acknowledging that more evidence that is empirical is necessary.

1.2.2   Learning in the strategic planning process

Learning, states Senge (1992:44), is not about "...just taking in new information and forming new ideas". Indeed, for local government, it means that the MIDP process, as a strategic planning process, should lead to a better understanding of what is important to different key stakeholders in terms of service delivery. Thus, the formulation of the MIDP should be such that learning occurs during the development of this comprehensive and shared plan to address service delivery at local government level. The White Paper on Local Government (1998: 30) notes the importance of interaction through which learning can occur when it refers to the MIDP "as a basis for engagement between local government and the citizenry at the local level, and with various stakeholders and interest groups".

Therefore, learning becomes an important factor in the process of developing a comprehensive and shared plan; the MIDP, for local government. As such, interaction and learning among stakeholders becomes the basis of the MIDP process. This may result in shared understanding amongst stakeholders of service delivery challenges, the ever-changing environment that the Municipality operates under and what need to be done to develop an informed vision in terms of service delivery. Through 'learning-in-process', the issue of integration among stakeholders can be addressed while moving towards shared and comprehensive development goals. The strategic planning process becomes a journey for municipalities or what Kenny (2006:364) refers to as "the means by which organisations come to terms with the circumstances in which they operate, set directions and mobilize their resources to meet their needs in the medium and long term".

The process mainly involves strategy analysis to understand the environment, strategy formulation to determine which strategic options are available having evaluated each and chosen one and strategy implementation wherein the chosen strategic option is translated into concrete activities that would form part on the implementation plan. A focus on a comprehensive, interactive, participatory, and integrated strategic planning process allows the local government to work on the system and not just focus on setting out arbitrary targets and standards that have to be met as it is sometimes the case.

1.2.3   The meaning of strategic learning at local government level

Authors such as De Geus (1988:70) argue that for a company, which in this instance is a Municipality, to be successful, it has to learn and to adapt. For the Municipality to be on top of its service delivery, it also needs to learn and change. It has to learn what matters to stakeholders by listening, thinking, engaging, rethinking, and reaching some consensus on how to use its limited resources to deliver on the needs and demands of those stakeholders. This is vital because the key mandate of local government is to address issues of service delivery as stated in the legislative framework. Moreover, the MIDP is the primary tool for improving service delivery at the local level and thus changes the status quo.

Flores et al. (2008:570) argue that organisations have to engage in both planning and learning if they are to succeed. Thus, the development of a Municipal statement of intent or future plans should be formulated through integrated development planning and collective learning processes because the MIDP process is a core democratic planning process at local government level. Furthermore, South Africa is a country that comes from an apartheid system where the engagement of key stakeholders was limited to a certain race group only. As a result, different quarters of South African society advocate to government to achieve tangible outcomes in terms of improved services.

 There is a constant struggle in the process of strategy development in organisations. Key stakeholders will tend to remain polarized in their outlook and understanding of the strategic planning process. Some stakeholders tend to focus their attention on certain aspects while emphasizing the involvement of some stakeholders when embarking on the strategic planning process (a silo mentality view). Others advocate a holistic approach wherein all aspects, within and outside the organisation, are taken into consideration and there is involvement of all key stakeholders (a worldview). The latter is in line with the systems approach as it identifies the whole system and explains the behaviour or properties of the whole. Thus, different stakeholders participate in the analysis and synthesis wherein they try

to understand the local government system, its processes, and the environment in relation to service delivery (Reed 2006:11). This is evident in the responses from the key stakeholders interviewed, which will be presented later in this dissertation.

Creating or using appropriate platforms to facilitate learning can help in improving the planning processes. It can also help in gaining understanding of stakeholders' demands by ensuring that all key stakeholders are involved in planning and management of the strategy. This is possible because strategic planning "sets the stage for [an organisation] to capture and apply lessons from its past to future situations" (Flores et al., 2008:569). This can bring about an improvement in costs, quality and stakeholder satisfaction.

The MIDP becomes a framework of a municipality that defines how it will focus on meeting and on satisfying the needs of stakeholders. Section 35 (1) of the MSA (RSA, 2000: 44) states that:

> *An integrated development plan adopted by the Council of a Municipality*
> *(a) is the principal strategic planning instrument, which guides and*
> *informs all planning and development, and all decisions with regard to*
> *planning, management, and development, in the Municipality.*

Hence, based on this piece of legislation, there seems to be a relationship between a strategic planning process and learning.

Understanding the purpose of the strategic process becomes crucial as it moulds the **what** (requirements), **how** (process) and **why** (purpose) within the formulation of the MIDP as a learning process. Most importantly, it is through the strategic process such as the MIDP process that the shared vision is defined to ensures there is a common understanding amongst stakeholders and that there is an alignment of available resources. This forces stakeholders to focus on 'outside-in'; that is, the understanding of stakeholders' demands in designing a system to meet those demands. Such a focus facilitates and supports learning, as there is a need to improve the service delivery system. This calls for alignment of interests of all stakeholders and their commitment to the purpose. Thus, effective learning mechanisms become necessary to bring about improved service delivery, and to identify and respond to unforeseen issues with clarity of purpose.

What is stated above is of importance because there are challenges facing the local government system. The challenges relate to how to provide basic services, improve the

level of service delivery, enhance local economic and social development, and create jobs, amongst other needs. These challenges raise questions regarding what has to happen for a paradigm shift to occur among individual stakeholders to develop a shared vision, priorities, strategic development plans, and developmental service delivery modes. The understanding of the process and the environment set the stage for sharing, open-mindedness and the creation of effective platforms for learning.

Exploring the perspectives of key stakeholders lead to a better understanding of what they view as the purpose of the strategic planning process. Adopting the systems thinking perspective is useful in observing if there are any patterns in the different understandings of the process or within their varying mental models (Reed 2006:13). Furthermore, the exploration gives a process context and investigates possible content as shared by those that are part of its formulation or development. This then brings to the fore different stakeholders' assumptions of both the context and the content, and uncovers any contradictions in their perspectives. This is significant as the key stakeholders who participated in the research hold positions of influence and status in the local government decision-making process. Thus, the focus of the research is on what is happening, not on what should be happening.

1.3   Problem statement

There has been a growing consciousness amongst stakeholders that there is a problem of service delivery in South Africa, which has resulted in a number of service delivery protests witnessed in some parts of the country. The protests are sparked by dissatisfaction with service delivery after over decade of democratic local government. Municipalities are stumbling in their ability to deliver services, and to engage positively the public in addressing issues of service delivery. This is in contrast to what should be a responsive, accountable, effective, and efficient local government system.

Jelani Karamoko argued, in the 2011 report on *Community Protests in South Africa: Trends, Analysis and Explanations*, that the "protesters often cite the lack of accountability of government officials, along with the absence of public participation, as factors that further aggravate their service delivery complaints "(Karamoko 2011:2). The issue of service delivery is echoed in the *Quality of Life Survey* conducted by eThekwini Municipality for the 2010/11 financial year. The survey conducted among residents of eThekwini Municipality shows that "there are more people who are dissatisfied (34%) than there are people who are

satisfied (25%)with services provided" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:17). Some of the reasons cited by the participants in the survey include "housing issues, lack of improvement in people's lives, the provision of electricity and water…" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:17)". This is despite the realization of, and work of, the new democratic South African Government.

1.4   Purpose of the study

"An unexamined life is not worth living" – Socrates (n.d.)

This study explores how the MIDP process, the foundation of the developmental local government system in South Africa, is a learning process wherein key stakeholders are given platforms (mechanisms and measures) to articulate their demands of Local Government. It examines the MIDP as a map, which sets out the service delivery and development plan of a municipality and details how a municipality will spend its limited resources on priorities/priority areas to achieve its vision. The research focus is based on an understanding that it is through such a strategic planning process that stakeholders in local government can change or unlearn their 'mental models' in addressing service delivery. Stacey (2011:203), cites Ackoff (1981, 1994) who is of the view that   mental models are obstructive to change as change is in the mind of the members of an organisation. Thus, the focus of the research is on the areas explained below:

Firstly, the research gauges what stakeholders understand as the 'common purpose' of the process, which is mainly to develop a strategic intent or to define the strategic direction for the Municipality. This is important when considering that the MIDP is an expression of governmental investments and activities in a given locality. Furthermore, the gathering of key stakeholders' understanding of this vital legislative process is critical as it allows for analysis of how the process is understood as a learning process based on interrelationships aimed at bringing about change.

Secondly, it considers platforms created or used as spaces for engagement during the MIDP process. In this instance, the study investigates whether or how these spaces or platforms allow stakeholders, that is, the municipal administrative officials, political leaders and traditional leaders, to share, interact, engage, learn, and relearn from each other about service delivery challenges and possible solutions for eThekwini Municipality while in a strategic planning dialogue. The platforms are mechanisms and measures to promote a system of participatory governance, as they are to encourage and create conducive environments for local stakeholders to participate in the affairs of the municipality.

Thirdly, the study ascertains the perceptions of different stakeholders on how the process is designed, and how the design creates an environment conducive for sharing and engaging. Here, the study ascertains how different stakeholders see the platforms created or used whether they are appropriate or adequate for them to inform or influence the vision and framework plans as contained in the MIDP. This is important when considering that the dialogue is to canvass stakeholders' opinions and input into the formulation of this strategic development plan for a municipality or local government

Lastly, this research explores the ethos that underlies the design of the MIDP processes and whether the designed processes encourage holistic thinking throughout the process. The ethos underlying the design has a bearing on the process design that is meant to encourage stakeholders to participate meaningfully in the MIDP process.

1.5   Research questions

Based on the problem statement and the focus of this research on learning within strategic planning, this research focused on the following four research questions:

- How is the formulation of the MIDP a process for learning?
- What platforms of dialogue exist for stakeholders to convey their needs to the Municipality within the IDP process?
- How and why have the IDP planning processes and/or measures been designed?
- What ethos underpins the IDP planning processes and/or measures?

The research questions above ascertain how the MIDP process is viewed or understood, how the process is a learning process instead of being just a process to conform to the legislative framework. Furthermore, the questions ascertain how the platforms created and used allow for stakeholders in the formulation process to share, learn and relearn, and thereby to contribute towards a developmental orientated system of local government.

1.6   Motivation for the study

The MSA of 2000 (RSA 2000:36) requires a municipality to develop a framework plan of how development should take place in its locality. This is to achieve and to give effect to the provisions in Section 152 (objects of local government) and 153 (developmental duties of municipalities) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The legislation

also set a framework on how the process should unfold and how it should be a participatory, inclusive, and democratic process (RSA 2000:36).

Furthermore, a Municipality, as the local sphere of government, is "to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; promote social and economic development; promote a safe and healthy environment; and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government" (RSA 1996b:84). This is a challenge, as "the municipality will not have sufficient resources to address all issues identified by different segments of the community" (DPLG 2001a:15).

Nevertheless, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998 (RSA 1998: 26) requires that "a municipal council...develop mechanisms to consult the community and community organisations in performing its functions and exercising its powers". Through such mechanisms, stakeholders can have platforms to articulate their needs and thus their demands of local government. This helps a municipality in obtaining information about the local conditions, needs, and desires of local stakeholders and thus, its understanding of what matters to stakeholders. This is important, as it is a duty of a Municipal Council "to strive to ensure that municipal services are provided to the local community in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner" (RSA 2000: 20).

Embarking on an holistic and interactive engagement with different stakeholders in development planning can be a learning process as stated by Galer and van Heijden (1992:7) that "planning has a potential to make a powerful contribution to organizational learning". Stakeholders can be involved and educated concerning their roles and responsibilities within the local sphere of government. There can be sharing of information and knowledge about what the needs and demands of all key stakeholders are. Furthermore, strategic issues and options can be identified and a strategic plan can be developed with methods or techniques. The methods or techniques can assist in strategic thinking and in enhancing the capabilities of local government to address service delivery.

Understanding the development plan process as a learning process is meant to guide the transformation and democratisation of the planning process in particular and the public management process in general. This is so because through a learning process, key stakeholders can have an opportunity to express their views and review or further comment on their opinions and suggestions. Creating appropriate and adequate platforms for

stakeholders' engagement is vital if there is going to be any opportunity for stakeholders to learn and reassess their worldview or mental models. This can allow the Municipality to follow a different trajectory wherein the MIDP process is entrenched as a learning process.

All parties should be aware of what learning entails if they are to understand the current process as part of a system. For this research though, the focus is on highlighting how conducive environment for learning exists for stakeholders in actively and freely engaging in the IDP process. The research also identifies and considers the current platforms created or used and how these platforms allow the flow of stakeholders' demands for consideration in the Municipal strategic plan. It investigates the platforms in relation to how they allow stakeholders to articulate and engage in dialogue – an art of thinking together – over service delivery demands, needs or issues, and how different stakeholders see that these platforms are appropriate, relevant and adequate. Furthermore, the research also sought to ascertain how the process allows for opinions or suggestions by stakeholders to be referred back to them for further comments and input after the initial engagements. This is critical as Galer and van der Heidjen (1992:11) state, "without feedback, the learning loop will not be closed, and [therefore] learning will not take place".

Reviewing documents related to the process allows for further understanding of the established system in terms of current conditions relating to platforms. It is these conditions, which may have prevented stakeholders from articulating their demands for consideration in the process of formulating the MIDP. Considerations of the value attached to the design and platforms are also essential and link to the established process ethos. In its extremes, this ethos can range from participation to control, and it is focused on fulfilling legislation obligations or ensuring genuine learning-in-process.

In addition, this research also highlights any process shortcomings as they relate to the municipalities achieving their mandates of service delivery. The focus on 'system as learning' is to ascertain how open the system to change and innovation. It is this openness, which is paramount in increasing relevance of service delivery to the articulated demands by stakeholders, as it ensures that the formulated strategic plan becomes responsive to the stakeholders' demands within available resources. Innovation also plays a primary role in ensuring that an organisation achieves its goals. The MIDP process becomes a creator of innovation in local government strategy process and it acts as a catalyst for change while facilitating the paradigm shift. Wang and Ahmed (2003:14) state that "organisational learning should facilitate the creative quality process to deliver value innovation ..." It

follows then that if the IDP does follow this kind of learning it could harness the creative potential of stakeholders and the cumulative power of a myriad of ideas.

1.7   Methodological approach

This research focuses on the perspectives of key stakeholders in relation to the MIDP process. The key stakeholders are participants in the process of developing the MIDP. The focus on these stakeholders in the study is because of the understanding that "strategy as a learning process always takes place within a particular context"(Vanttinen and Pyhalto 2009 :782). This, in essence, says that it would be influenced by the practises within a contextual environment.

A theoretical-qualitative research paradigm has been followed in this study because of the theoretical nature of the research questions, which required theoretical exploration and qualitative data to be collected. The exploratory nature of the study makes it possible to gain an understanding of the current MIDP process. By following this paradigm, the researcher adopted an holistic approach and used different tools to achieve this end. The adoption of the holistic view and use of different tools is important because the system has to be understood as a whole if the shortcomings of the system are to be addressed. The focus is on the developmental local government system, its planning process and how the process is a learning process.

The case study approach has been chosen as the method to better understand and contextualise the MIDP process. Furthermore, the approach has assisted in understanding the *what, how* and *why* questions in relation to the MIDP. This is important considering Harre's observation in 1992, as cited by Remenyi et al. (2010:169) that "we cannot describe the world in the absence of prior understanding of it..." emphasizes the importance of using a case of eThekwini Municipality as context in understanding the MIDP process as a learning process.

Different data collection techniques were followed in the study. This was to ensure that there are multiple sources of evidence. The study commenced by reviewing academic literature on the subject matter and other related topics pertinent to the study. This was done to "...provide a foundation, background, and context for the new research... [that] establishes a bridge between the research project and extant knowledge base" (Bowen, 2005:210).

Reviewing the literature also allows for the identification of any disparities between the recorded texts, the interviews of the key stakeholders and the literature on the subject.

There was also a review of National, Provincial and Local Government legislative and policy frameworks and other available literature on or related to the IDP process. These documents provide information on what the IDP process is, what it aims to achieve, how different frameworks influence it, and why government embarks on such a process. Further, they are able to indicate if there is any learning during the IDP process. The documents that were reviewed include legislative frameworks/policies and the formulated IDP from eThekwini Municipality for 2012 to 2016

Interviews with key stakeholders in the IDP process were also conducted. The interviews were to ascertain the stakeholders' understandings of, and perspectives on, the IDP process. The focus of the interviews was on current conditions and activities in the IDP process and the platforms for learning. Different data collection techniques were used to ensure the validity of the research. The purposive sampling technique was used to select key stakeholders for interviews. The use of this technique was appropriate, as the research was an exploratory study and was to gain insight into the perspectives and constructs of these key stakeholders in relation to the process expressed in their own words.

1.8   Outline of the remaining chapters

- **Chapter two: Literature review**

    The chapter outlines the literature reviewed to highlight a number of issues/factors that are pertinent to the research topic and research questions.

- **Chapter three: Research design**

    The chapter presents research design, a case study method, and details the data collection process and procedure. It elaborates the application of the case study method and details the tools used in the research which are literature and document reviews, and interviews. In addition, the chapter presents a data analysis approach.

- **Chapter four: The case study**

    This chapter presents the overview of Local Governments in South Africa post-1994; Government legislative and policy frameworks; a Profile of eThekwini Municipality; and the organisational literature which include the eThekwini Long Term Development Framework plan, eThekwini IDP and other eThekwini Municipality's policy frameworks as contextual background information.

- **Chapter five: Results and discussion**

    The chapter presents the results from the empirical data, analysis and interpretations of these results for the research.

- **Chapter six: Conclusion and recommendations**

    The chapter contains the conclusion to the study, the limitations of the study and some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

There have been a number of research studies on strategic planning or on the strategy process, mostly in the private sector, but there has been limited research on strategic planning in the public sector. The number of research studies is even more limited when it comes to investigating strategic planning as a learning process. Researchers such as Bryson and Roering (1988), Berry (1994), and Berry and Weschler (1995) have conducted research on the subject, but with the focus on strategic planning at State government level. In this chapter, the review of their works and those of others focuses on or relates to strategic planning. Such a focus is necessary because this research aims to ascertain how the formulation of a MIDP is a learning process. This is important for this research because a MIDP is a principal strategic planning and development tool at municipal/local government level and is mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, while prescribed in MSA 32 of 2000. This research will therefore provide an exploration for an understanding of what is said against what ought to be. The understanding of different authors or researchers of concepts related to this topic should benefit the research in explaining factors relating to the research topic.

This chapter is then intended to demonstrate how a strategic planning process, especially at municipal or local government level, can emerge from the literature. It puts this study on strategic planning at a municipal or local government level. Thus, the literature review defines the context, meaning, role and benefits of strategic planning for or in municipal or local government. This relates to the '*what, how* and *why'* aspects of a strategy process or strategic planning. As such, this provides a better understanding of the MIDP as a principal strategic planning and development tool that is meant to bring about a developmental local government system. Furthermore, the review offers an understanding of what a learning organisation is and what learning means at an organisational level. Lastly, the chapter presents the systems thinking' perspective as a methodological basis for understanding how the process of formulating a MIDP is a learning process.

2.2   Context of strategic planning

Poister and Streib (2005:45) state that strategic planning in government has been introduced or has been in use for over two decades. They refer to the passing of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 by the One Hundred Third (sic) Congress

of the United States of America, which is a legislation that provided for "the establishment of strategic planning and performance measurement in the Federal Government, and for other purposes" (USA 1993:1). The Act also required "federal agencies to develop strategic plans and tie them to budgets and performance measures" (Poister and Streib 2005:45). Through this Act, strategic planning was formally introduced at the Federal Government level and thus it focuses on agencies at a national level.

Thomas Plant (2006:5) states that the introduction of the strategic planning concepts to municipal governments as organisations was in the early 1990s. Denhardt (1985:175) states that strategic planning is " to give clarity and direction to the organization, to choose from among competing goals and activities, to cope with shifts in the environment and to bring together the thoughts and ideas of all participants in the work of the organization". At a municipal or local government level, the local development planning and management tool is the strategic plan, which assists in defining an organisation in terms of what it is and what it is doing. This relates to its roles and responsibilities of providing municipal services and goods, and thus improving the lives of people living within its locality.

In South Africa, this form of planning was first introduced by the democratic Government of the Republic of South Africa in 1996 with the Second Amendment to the Local Government Transition Act 209 of 1993 (RSA 1996a:6). The Amendment states that a district council (District or Metropolitan Municipality today) shall "formulate and implement an integrated development plan for its area of jurisdiction." (RSA 1996a:6). To stress the issue of budgeting, the Act also states that "every municipality shall prepare a financial plan in accordance with the integrated development plan..." (RSA 1996a:8). This form of planning is entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996b:85) where it states that municipalities in South Africa are to utilise the Integrated Development Plan as the strategic development tool to guide and inform all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making in their municipal area. The MSA of 2000 (RSA 2000:44) regards the MIDP as a legislative requirement and a plan that supersedes all other plans and guides planning, management and development at a municipal or local government level. Furthermore, the MIDP is the principal strategic planning instrument that binds the municipality and all other persons.

With the introduction of this kind of planning in South Africa, there was a 'strategic re-conceptualisation' of local government, as it changed the system of local governance and repositioned the local government within a new developmental mode (Pycroff 1998:155).

This sphere of government adopted a developmental local government system, which "improved communication, consensus building, and stakeholder participation, better utilisation of resources, better definition of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and definition of vision, among other elements". The developmental local government approach has transformed local governance by focusing on strategies for socio-economic development. It addresses the 'inequities of apartheid local government', which created 'development backlogs' because of its years of 'localized racial division' (Pycroft 1998:154).

Furthermore, the new approach to local government also saw the decentralisation and delegation of local socio-economic planning and development to the local sphere of government to promote local democracy and good governance (Van der Waldt 2007:4). It ensures that South Africa has an integrated strategic planning and strategy formulation at a local government level. Binns and Nel (2002:922 states that 'this is a shift from the process during the apartheid era where local governments had a narrow function, and a top-down, non-democratic, non-consultative, racially-based approach which emphasised sectoral planning' The new system of an integrated strategic planning process changes the system of local governance, planning and development in South Africa. This was imperative, as the integrated planning and development were to change and improve the lives of those that were disadvantaged or neglected during the Apartheid era. This is in accordance with Chapter 3 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, Act 117 of 1998 (RSA 1998:26), which states that Municipal councils are to "strive within [their] capacity to achieve the objectives set out in Section 152 of the Constitution". To achieve these objectives, strategic planning at a local government level was to ensure stakeholder participation as also stated in the MSA of 2000. Pieterse et al. (2008:11) state that "municipalities are compelled to establish systems and mechanisms for focused citizen participation..." These systems and mechanisms are to ensure that citizens, community groups and other stakeholders participate in the planning, design and implementation of programmes and projects that are of priority. The systems and mechanisms act as channels for participation of citizens, communities, and representatives of community structures and organisations in local government. They help local government to understand the views of stakeholders during strategic planning and to focus on strategic decisions in relation to "a locality future and then implementing those decisions" (Pindur 1992:102). They also allowed other stakeholders to be heard during the process of formulating the MIDP. Through such platforms, strategic planning allowed divergent interests and values to be accommodated (Bryson 2004:6).

The importance of these systems and mechanisms is highlighted by Vanttinen and Pyhalto (2009:788) when they warn that "if the strategy process does not promote the participation and activeness of all the actors [stakeholders within a municipality], there is a risk that the strategy will not be implemented in everyday work". Denhardt (1985:175) supports this view when he states that effective changes in organisational practices can be achieved when all affected by it are involved. Maier (2000:250) sees the involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning promotes the identification of needs and prioritisation of development initiatives within their locality. Furthermore, in relation to this research, stakeholders' involvement is important as it facilitates the capturing of their knowledge and experience when it comes to service delivery. This ensures that stakeholders, including local government, can chart a way forward into the future, which can bring about improved services and performance of an organisation.

Section 28 of the MSA 32 of 2000 (RSA 2000:40) dictates that a municipal council must adopt a process. The adopted process is important as strategic planning implies that "a series of action steps will develop as part of the planning process and that will guide activities of the organisation in the immediate future" (Denhardt 1985:175). The process sets out in writing how the planning, drafting, adoption, and reviewing of the IDP will take place. It also ensures that municipalities have adopted processes to engage stakeholders while learning and planning for responses to present service delivery that challenges realities faced by municipalities. Thus, the development of the MIDP becomes a vehicle and method to promote integrated planning and development. It is to improve service delivery within the limits of the financial and material resources. Such expected results would not be fulfilled if "the preconditions for meaningful learning are not considered when [planning and] conducting the process" (Vanttinen and Pyhalto (2009:781).

Bryson (2004:6) suggests, "Strategic planning requires [a] broad-scale yet effective information gathering". This is so because information collected during the strategy process helps define the strategic goals, objectives and actions, and it is also used to formulate a long- term direction for the organisation. The strategic goals and objectives explain "what an organisation is (its identity), what it does (its strategies and actions) and why it does [it] (mandates, missions, goals), and what the creation of public value does" (Berry 2007:332; Bryson 2010:256-257). Figure 2-1, the ABCs of strategic planning by Bryson and Alston (2005) (Bryson (2004:7).below shows elements of how strategic planning, as defined by Karpisek and Hradcova (2002: 14) in their discussion paper is being about an "organisation's

mandates, mission, product or service level and mix, cost, financing, management or organisational design".

Eadie (1983:447) advises that the successful application of strategic planning as a technique to plan better, which at the local government level is the MIDP process, rely on how the process is designed for "the unique circumstances of a particular public organisation". This is so because planning should be flexible and responsive to the environment as organisational environment changes. If there is lack of fit between an organisation and its environment, this can spell disaster. Thus, Eadie (1983:448) states that planning should focus on "understanding and interpreting an organisation's environment" and it should create a fit between an organisation, its environment, and the understanding of the demands of stakeholders of the organisation. The organisation should be a common denominator as it is the organisation that has to take charge of implementing strategies that are developed during the strategic planning process.

Platforms created and used during strategic planning play a pivotal role as they further the purpose of stakeholders' participation and help in taking into account the environment. This is important when considering what is stated by Berry (2007:339) regarding strategies having to "link the organisation effectively to its environment and move it towards accomplishing its mission". Furthermore, using the platforms created, stakeholders are offered an opportunity to reflect on the information and knowledge collected around shared issues during the strategy process. Such reflections at a municipal or local government level ensure that the best solutions are found to achieve sustainable development within the Municipality (RSA 1996b:84). In addition, they also ensure that priorities for the Municipality are identified and that difficult funding decisions are made.

 The context presented above on strategic planning is useful as a frame of reference when the meaning, role, and benefits of strategic planning are explored. It provides a context for a process that has to facilitate decision-making about the direction of the organisation. The meaning of strategic planning is presented in the next section to give the perspectives of different authors on the concept of strategic planning.
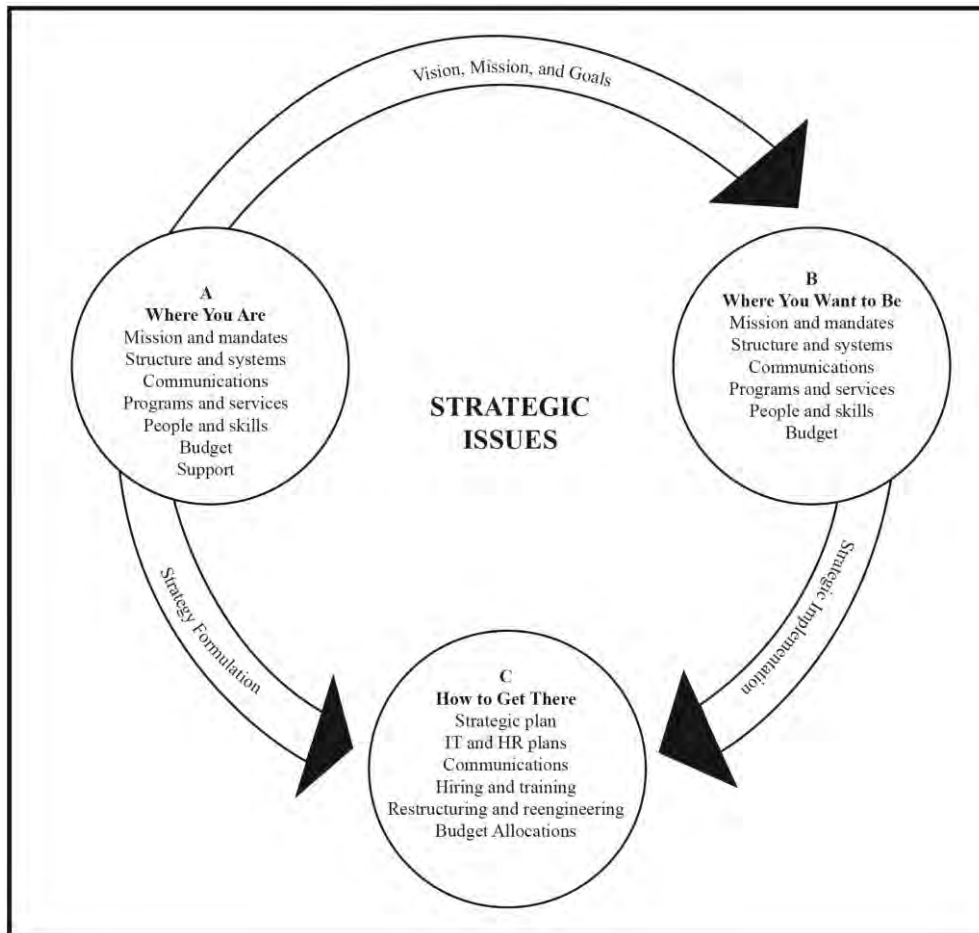
Figure 2-1: The ABCs of Strategic Planning
Source: Bryson, 2004, p 7

2.3   Meaning of strategic planning

Authors on strategy present different perspectives on strategic planning. One perspective stated by is that strategic planning is a way to make decisions about the long-term direction of an organisation and to ensure that action is taken. Such decisions are made on issues currently confronting an organisation and how the organisation's capabilities can be employed to address what matters to the stakeholders. (Mintzberg 1994:271; Pindur 1992:102; Poister and Streib 2005:46; Berry 2007:332)

Bryson (2004:6) defines" strategic planning as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation is ..., what it does, and why it does it". Figure 2-2 below by Bryson (2004:28) depicts the purpose and functions of strategic planning, which are to develop "a strategy ...a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, actions, decisions, or resource allocations that defines what an organisation is, what it does and why it does it" (Bryson 2004:46). This definition and what is depicted in

Figure 2-2 are of importance to this study because the study ascertains how the formulation of the MIDP is a learning process, having reconciled the perceptions of stakeholders, what is written about the process and what actually happened during this process. Mintzberg (1967:71) defines strategy-making as "the process of making important organizational decisions" and, further, that "the sum total of all these decisions... may result from the process of integrated decisions plans" Mintzberg 1967:71). Mintzberg (1994a:107) also refers to strategic planning as the strategy process, which involves capturing and synthesizing learning into a vision of the direction that an organisation should pursue. Bryson (2004) and Mintzberg (1967 &1994) are in agreement with what is stated by Langley (1988) that strategic planning is "a means to make strategic decisions".

The focus on strategic decisions in strategic planning, states Eadie (1983:448), shows that the priority of strategic planning lies beyond the operational level improvement of outputs. Furthermore, Eadie (1983:448) states that strategic planning is beyond "the refinement of existing programs". This is in contrast to the conventional or traditional planning, which is concerned primarily with establishing goals or objectives for performance over a period of time. Bryson (2004:11) states that strategic planning is about improved decision-making. It is about how to improve our present decisions in order to influence the future. Bryson (2004:11) again states that many failures in strategic decisions are "a result of poor decision-making processes". This is true, as strategic planning is about informing and fostering decisions and actions relating to the direction of the organisation, organisational priorities and strategies, among other things.

Berry and Wechsler (1995:159) define strategic planning as "a systematic process for managing the organization and its future direction in relation to its environment and the demands of its external stakeholders". Poister and Streib (2005:46) stress the systematic nature of strategic planning in relation to gathering information of the organisation and its wider context/environment. Flores et al. (2008:571) concur with what is said about the systematic nature in the approach to strategic planning when they state that "strategic planning allows [an organisation] to acquire information or knowledge systematically..." The continuously gathered information helps in setting the organisational long-term direction, which is converted into specific goals, objectives, and actions. Berry (2007:332) states that the systematic nature of the process is in "managing the organisation and its future direction [according] to its environment and the demands of its external stakeholders".
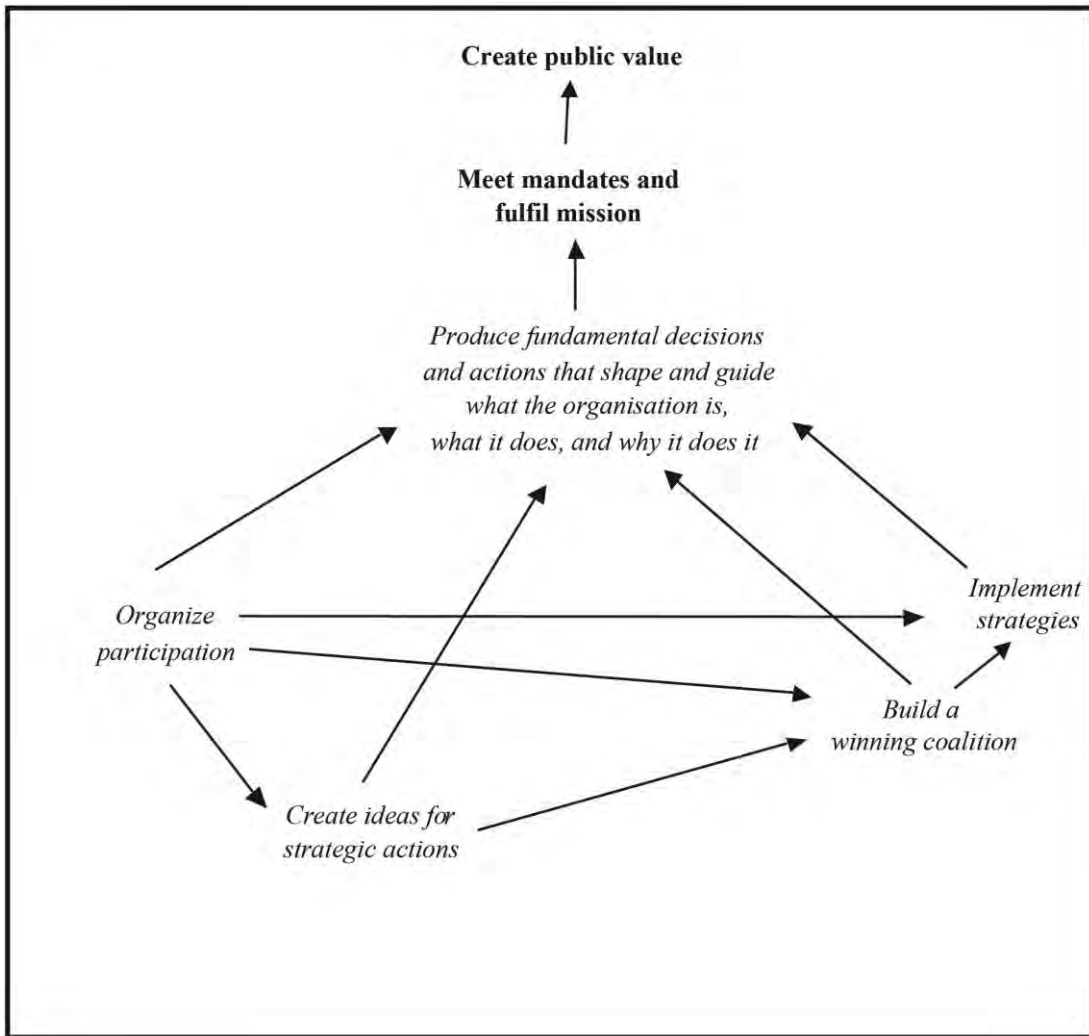
Figure 2-2: Purposes and Functions of Strategic Planning
Source: Adapted from Bryson, 2004, p.25

The development of a strategic plan, in this instance a MIDP, is a critical process. Armstrong (1982:198) states that formal strategic planning demands that there should be "an explicit process for determining the [organisation's] long-range objectives, procedures for generating and evaluating alternative strategies, and a system for monitoring the results of the plan when implemented". He also states, "a systematic procedure [should] be used to gain commitment of those who will be affected by the plan" (Armstrong 1982:198). This is important, as Armstrong (1982:199) states, as it will improve performance and lead to "greater satisfaction among participants in organizations". This highlights that a relationship exists between planning and performance. Mintzberg (1990:184) raises an issue, though, about a formal plan and the articulation of strategy. He argues that articulating strategy in a formal plan creates an impression that environmental conditions are stable or predictable,

which is not always the case, as he points out, as organisations mostly operate in a forever-changing environment.

Nonetheless, Armstrong (1982: 201) states that with formal strategic planning, there is "participation in the generation and evaluation of alternative strategies [which] is helpful in gaining commitment for a plan". Armstrong (1982:201) notes though, that management may "sometimes use planning to gain control of others", which would be detrimental as other stakeholders in the process of planning "might feel less responsible for the success [or, for that matter, failure] of strategic decisions". The control will be that management will do the thinking and planning, and the other stakeholders will have to act. This refers to the formulation-implementation dichotomy.

William F. Glueck (1980:9) points out in his book *Strategic Management and Business Policy* that a strategic plan is "a plan that is unified...comprehensive...and integrated..." (Denhardt (1985:175). This is true of the MIDP, a strategic plan at a local government level in South Africa, which is seen as "a principal strategic planning instrument" (RSA 2000:44). The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 defines the MIDP as a "simple and enabling framework for core processes of planning, performance management, resource mobilisation, and organisational change" (RSA 2000:2). The plan provides an overall framework for local development and co-ordinates work between local government and other spheres of government within a coherent plan to improve the quality of life of all those living in a particular locality. Furthermore, the MIDP links, integrates and co-ordinates all plans to improve service delivery within the limits of financial and material resources. The plan also presents priorities and develops a framework which focuses on how and what needs to be done for a municipality to facilitate and promote sustainable growth and development. This ties together planning activities, performance measurement and resource allocation, which Mintzberg (1994) criticises as lacking in strategic planning.

Mintzberg (1994b:270) asserts that strategies are a result of engagement with different stakeholders and the gathering of "detailed and intimate knowledge of the situation". Strategic planning creates a guide in an organisation that defines how these stakeholders should relate in their environment and guides their learning activities. Similarly, Robert Denhardt (1985:175) cites Robert Shirley (1982:262) who writes, "strategy defines the relationship of the total organisation to its environment and gives guidance to administrative and operational activities on an on-going basis". Importantly, every effort must be made for

citizens and other stakeholders to be actively participating and involved in the process, beyond the involvement of elected leadership and municipal staff.

Strategic planning is likened to a quilt or stitching of a quilt (Streib 1992:342). The quilt is a metaphor for strategy - an interesting cohesive pattern stitched during a design and implemented using a co-ordinated, integrated, and holistic approach to development. This ensures that there is coherence to organisational action. Planning is a formal, systematic, and integrated method, which is a conduit for all the pieces needed within the process. The South African Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, Act 117 of 1998 defines these pieces when it refers to elements or issues that a municipal council should focus on when developing a MIDP. These include:

- *the needs of the community;*

- *its priorities to meet those needs;*

- *its processes for involving the community;*

- *its organisational and delivery mechanisms for meeting the needs of the community; and...*

- *the development of mechanisms to consult the community and community organisations in performing its functions and exercising its powers. (RSA1998:26)*

Swilling (2008:394) cites Muller (2006) who shows that "IDPs are mostly technical, managerial documents instead of [a] collaborative communicative process ...with a definite end-product in mind (the IDP document)". This means in many, if not all, cases that municipalities are more concerned with ensuring the development of plans. However, reading what is stated by Poister (2010), strategic planning is seen as both an end and a means. The 'end' relates to aspirations - mission, purpose, goal and strategic intent - as stated in the strategic planning, which is what the process aims to achieve. The means relate to action orientation – strategies, programmes or action plans and resource allocation –, which is how the strategic planning intends to achieve the end. This confirms what is stated by Denhardt (1985:179) that "strategic planning [provides] both a plan and a process" for stakeholders to influence the priorities and programs of the IDP. The IDP, the product of the strategic planning process, Pieterse et al. (2008:2) states, is "to ensure the realisation of social and economic development". This means, institutionally, that municipalities need to

develop means/platforms to involve stakeholders or to bring in citizens, community organisations and other stakeholders while in the process of developing a strategic plan –the MIDP - for improved decision-making.

There is an emphasis on municipalities working together with their stakeholders within a particular locality. Therefore, the means/platforms created and used in strategic planning should allow stakeholders to be heard, understood, and for their demands to be made known. This ensures that there is a process of integration and that municipalities act as custodians of public intervention, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996b:84). Moreover, stakeholder participation and involvement maximises stakeholder support for municipal programmes and projects during implementation. Any deviations from fulfilling this role may raise questions as to whose development the municipalities are pursuing. Furthermore, the absence of meaningful participation of citizens and other stakeholders undermines the legitimacy of the IDP, and the strategic plan may not reflect the needs and priorities of citizens and other stakeholders.

However, some authors state that the strategy process is not about planning but is rather about programming. Mintzberg (1994a:112) states, "planning cannot generate strategies but [it]...can program them". Besides, strategy development is not intended and deliberate. Mintzberg (1994a:107). Mintzberg, and Waters (1985:259) state that planning is programming within which an organisation sets how it intends to implement the actions that it has been considering for years and has now decided upon. Furthermore, Mintzberg and Waters (1985:270,261) are of the view that "defining strategy as intended and conceiving it as deliberate... effectively precludes the notion of strategic learning", as learning involves adaptation and adaptation is foregone once the intentions have been set. Mintzberg (1994b:271) also contends that "strategy planning cannot provide the strategic vision on its own". Instead, he states that a vision is a result of strategic learning during strategic planning which brings about a sense of discovery. In addition, Mintzberg and Waters (1985:259) argue that "strategies appear not to be conceived in planning processes so much as elaborated from existing visions..."

What Mintzberg (1994) states above about strategic learning could be true because there is learning, unlearning and relearning in the strategy process as different channels of information collection and sharing are used. Therefore, this creates an opportunity for strategic learning for citizens and other stakeholders, including officials, civil society, the business sector, Non-Governmental Organisations and Community-Based Organisations and

structures, among other stakeholders at local government level, as they participate in the strategy formulation. Furthermore, during strategy planning an opportunity is created to understand the views of stakeholders, and to understand and interpret an organisation's environment through the eyes of its stakeholders (Berry 2007:331; Eadie 1983:448). The organisation's environment is taken into account because the environment is a learning area and influences the process.

The emphasis in the above paragraphs is on the 'perspective-in-meaning' held by different authors, which is important in coming to an understanding of the meaning implicit in the various processes of strategic planning. The meaning defines the '*what*' of the literature under review and thus sets the parameters that ensure that the process for this study/research is understood. The focus of the coming section is on the '*how*' and it looks at the role of strategic planning in local government.

2.4   The role of strategic planning in government

Bryson (2010:259) states that strategic planning "involves ideas, behaviours, and collective actions that are determined by both individual human agency and structural and institutional forces". The ideas, behaviours and actions are analysed and synthesised during strategic planning to allow an organisation to formulate an integrated strategic plan. Consequently, as Gordon (2005:28) states, "the strategic plan is [a] roadmap to the future... envisioned" by stakeholders. In the municipal/local government setting the plan responds to the typology of stakeholders' demands in terms of service delivery. Such a response is possible because "strategic choices are made by individual[s] and groups..."(Bryson 2010:259). This highlights the importance of participation and the interaction of internal and external stakeholders in the strategy process, as the thoughts and ideas of the stakeholders are pivotal.

Kabir (2007:6) states that strategic planning is an essential tool for municipal governments in order to improve service delivery. The strategic planning process provides platforms for stakeholders to participate and be involved in a 'strategic dialogue' and, thus, in developing the MIDP. This is paramount in South Africa considering the White Paper on Local Government of 1998 characterises developmental local government as "local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs, and improve their quality of lives" (DPLG 1998:23; Schmidt 2008:121). This is a departure from the apartheid system, which did not allow engagement or dialogue amongst stakeholders.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the formulation of the Integrated Development Plan defines the new function of local government, which emphasises democracy, accountability, and the involvement of stakeholders in matters of local government (RSA 1998:58). A municipality, as a local sphere of government, has now to conduct its affairs in a manner, which is consistent with its integrated development plan (RSA 2000:44). Any inconsistency can result in the community questioning the budget and other plans.

Thus, as Mintzberg (1994a:104) states, the strategic planning process gives an opportunity to stakeholders to articulate and elaborate on strategies or visions during strategic planning. This presents strategic planning as a complex, collective, participatory, and flexible process during which stakeholders develop negotiated and tailored strategies, and detailed plans to achieve the vision of an organisation (Eadie 1983:447, Mintzberg 1994a:104 and Kabir 2007:6). Thus, the strategic planning process becomes an opportunity to bring about positive change.

Denhardt (1985:176) states that participation in strategic planning opens the possibility of building new understanding among stakeholders in the organization. It can also bring about change in attitude instead of just resulting in a written strategy document. Denhardt (1985:176) states that embarking on strategic planning can bring about both direction and commitment. Based on such understanding, the MIDP, as a strategic plan, presents the strategic direction of a municipality. It is seen as a plan that ensures that the designed outcomes are reached.

The plan strives to achieve the objects of local government as set out in Section 152 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996b: 84). It also creates the constitutional obligations that are to be achieved in accordance with Section 152 (2). The constitutional and statutory obligations and order placed upon or prescribed to municipalities are to prioritise the basic needs of the community and "to promote social and economic development" (RSA 1996b:84). Furthermore, municipalities are to assume a primary role and should be responsible for providing basic municipal services and public goods to people living within its locality. The provision of the services and goods are matters of interest to citizens, community organisations and other stakeholders, and are a matter of public duty for a municipality.

The involvement of stakeholders was a subject of enquiry in the study by Poister and Streib (2005:48) on the use of strategic planning. The study found that there has been involvement of citizens and other external stakeholders during the strategic planning processes in US

local governments. In South Africa, absence of stakeholder participation might undermine the legitimacy of a MIDP as this might not allow for the emergence of new facts and opinions.

Effective organisational communication in the process improves stakeholder participation and involvement. Maier (2000:251) stresses the importance of stakeholders "listening to [one another], addressing conflicts and creating commonly accepted priorities "and developing shared strategy as a key result or strategic planning outcomes. Berry (2007:342) refers to Osborn and Plastrik's (1997) four strategies to improve the quality of organisations, which include listening, clarity of purpose and organisational culture as among the four strategies that are "compatible with an effective strategic planning process". Maier (2000:251) states that "a complex and structured process of communication [among] stakeholders" results in "sound and effective strategic planning". Furthermore, Maier (2000:251) points to a need for a feedback mechanism that has to be established for learning purposes, which may reinforce a positive or negative loop wherein there can be stability or instability in a local governance system.

The MIDP, as a developmental planning tool, integrates decision-making processes within municipal government. This is borne out of a realisation that public sector organisations, such as local government, have to forge directions that must be pursued for the benefit of stakeholders. Berry (2007:331) and Denhardt (1985:175) state that this is not made easy by the fact that they are also operating in a changing environment. Halachmi (1993:126) states that some local governments are "geared to restore the fit with governmental environment rather than to determine the destiny of the community".

Flores et al. (2008:570), citing Bennet and O'Brien (1994) maintain, "strategic planning is a necessary condition for enhancing learning". Brews and Hunt (1999:903) who state, "planning may be a necessary precursor to successful [learning]", concur with this view. They state that organisations plan to learn as they learn to plan in early years. They also note a "strong planning/performance relationship". This, they say, support other studies by Eisenhardt (1989), Goll and Rasheed (1997) and others, which report "a positive relationship between formal planning processes and performance" (Brews and Hunt 1999:903).

De Geus (1988:70) thinks of "planning as learning and of corporate planning as institutional learning". This is contrary to what is stated by Ansoff (1991) who regards planning and learning as being poles apart. De Geus (1988:70) asserts that systems are continuously engaged in learning, as every decision-making process in organisations is a learning process.

Further, he notes the role played by the culture and structure of the organisation in learning. He states that "the best learning takes place in teams[/groups] that accept that the whole is larger than the sum of the parts' and there is a need to alter "existing mental models" (De Geus 1988:74).

Berry (2007:331-332) states that strategic planning helps an organisation to develop a clear sense of mission. This shows how critical the strategic planning process is as it highlights how the process of developing a strategic plan helps local government to develop a clear vision, which, with its mission, determines the desired outcomes. The focus on the vision, mission, and desired outcomes in strategic planning defines *what, why, when* and *how* an organisation plans for its future. This emphasises what Peter Drucker (1964:6) states on the issue of effectiveness versus efficiency, when he says that "the pertinent question is not how to do things right but how to find the right things to do, and to concentrate resources and efforts on them". This means the focus of strategic planning should be to find the right things to do, and to focus resources and energies on these things. Gordon (2005:28) advises that a vision and long- term goals should be part of an accepted strategic plan as this can "facilitate the budget process and make the difficult funding decisions clearer and more defensible".

What is stated above highlights that the MIDP identifies strategic goals, service delivery inputs, outputs and developmental outcomes, and provides details on how the budget will be used. As such, the role of strategic planning is rather more than just "a rigid recipe for producing ...strategic plans"(Bryson 2010:259). Instead, the strategic planning process includes goal/objective setting, situation analysis, consideration of alternatives and selection of strategic options, implementation and, lastly, monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, Bryson (2010:259) advocates that strategic planning should be understood as a "managerial practice or [a] set of practices..." The benefits will be presented in the next section.

2.5   Benefits of strategic planning

There are said to be a number of reasons that organisations engage in strategic planning and, similarly, there are number of benefits that are likely to result from the same process. Poister (2010:247), in reference to case studies in the US military and in local government, indicates, "effective strategic planning on the part of public agencies can be instrumental in bringing about meaningful change". Furthermore, Poister (2010:247) states that it has been found that "strategic planning efforts are credited with bringing about improvements in both organisational capacity and performance". These can be attributed to what Van der Heijden (1996) states as potential benefits of strategic planning, which are the "promotion of strategic

planning, acting, and learning especially through dialogue and strategic conversation among key actors" (Bryson 2004:11).

Strategic planning allows municipalities to ascertain "the current reality, determination of community needs through close consultation, developing a vision for development of an area ... [and]...integrated frameworks and goals to meet these needs" (DPLG 1998:29). Furthermore, they can also focus on understanding and interpreting an organisation's environment. Such understanding and interpretation are important considerations. Pieterse, et al. (2008:3) state that "municipalities remain the primary sphere responsible for many of the basic services..." They should address "social, economic and material needs of communities in a holistic way"(DPLG 1998:8). Furthermore, they should promote an integrated planning process based upon involvement of all stakeholders in pursuit of development, which is the cornerstone of the system of developmental local government.

The strategy process guides a municipality on how to manoeuvre within its existing complex environment to realise the organisational goals of addressing community needs. This dispels the assumption that organisations neither exist nor operate in a vacuum (Denhardt 1985:175). Instead, organisational objectives, and any undertaking to achieve these objectives, should be viewed in the context of the environment. The process also ensures that the limited municipal resources are optimally allocated and used within a locality. Harrison (2008:323) states that the IDP is an instrument to assist "municipalities in performing their functions in a coordinated, strategic, developmental, and fiscally responsible way".

The new approach to planning in South Africa involves aligning sectoral developmental strategies and integrating plans aimed at addressing issues relating to local development. With strategic planning, major organisational issues are clarified and taken into account while dealing effectively with changing environment. Sectoral issues are also taken into consideration when deciding on overall strategic decisions on how to contribute to better functioning of local government systems by entering into partnership with stakeholders. Bryson (2004:11) states that strategic planning results in "enhanced organisational effectiveness". What is said by Bryson may be challenged by Huber (1991:89), who states that "learning does not always increase the learner's effectiveness ... [and this] does not always lead to veridical knowledge".

The introduction of IDP changed the system of local governance in South Africa. It gave effect to municipalities' developmental duties as required by Section 153 of the Constitution. It developed a new organisational strategic planning process for the local sphere of

government, as a municipality, together with other organs of the State, had to contribute to the realisation of the fundamental rights contained in sections 24, 25, 26, 27 and 29 of the Constitution. This shifted the functions of local government.

What is stated above about the MIDP as a strategic plan is admirable. However, Schmidt (2008:123) states, "the IDP processes often reinforce bureaucratic rather than developmental thinking". Furthermore, the formulation of the IDP relates more to compliance and thus, this seems to be "more important than the content of the plan"(Schmidt 2008:123). He argues that, in actuality, formulation of the MIDP, in this instance, is a bureaucratic process focused on compliance with National Legislative Frameworks. If this is the case the enactment of the MSA of 2000 in South Africa was about the National Government using its power to set standards with which municipalities are to comply in their new developmental role. Thus, this presents the IDP as a prescriptive tool of the national government in dealing with local government. This might have shifted the focus of IDP processes towards compliance with the law instead of creating a developmental plan that emphasises the developmental local government system (Schmidt 2008:123).

Having said what is stated what is raised by Schmidt above, the MIDP process is seen as the local government's strategic planning process that gives clarity and direction, among other things. Denhardt (1985:175) states that strategic planning helps an organisation to decide on "competing goals and activities ...and to bring together the thoughts and ideas" of different stakeholders within the organisation which is important because local government exists to implement programmes and projects that are to provide goods and services as required by the people to better their lives. Strategic planning gives a collective direction on how to move forward to the future. It builds trust, and establishes commitment to its stakeholders, especially in an environment that is complex. Thus, states Denhardt (1985:175) on planning in the public sector, it "provide[s] an opportunity for widespread substantive involvement of leaders and citizens in defining the direction of the community..., thus building trust and commitment". This calls for an holistic approach and change in thinking as the decisions are manifestations of the thinking.

Strategic thinking in strategic planning helps ensure that the social, economic, institutional, and environmental issues are presented in an innovative or creative way in a strategic plan. Poister (2010:248) notes, though, that formal planning may have served to support the initial creative sparks that did not originate from the formal strategic planning process. This is in support of what Mintzberg (1994a:109) states as "the synthesis of the insight evoked" from a

variety of actions and decisions made by different people with no thought of their strategic significance in mind. Thus, synthesis requires viewing of all these variety of actions and decisions made.

Eadie (1983:448) highlights "the need for innovation and creativity" in strategic planning. This should be in the nature of the culture of the organisation to be flexible in approach. The culture of the organisation has a bearing on its responsiveness and in encouraging learning and innovation. This can enable the organisation to achieve its desired future or its key strategic objectives as the stakeholders begin to think outside-in, which focuses on mandates and external environment to achieve the best fit between an organisation and its environment.

With reference to what is said above, strategic planning is seen to create conditions for stakeholders to learn and relearn. Stakeholders are provided with a platform on which to interact during the process. Constructive dialogue and learning during strategic planning are vital as it is through such engagements that a shared strategic plan is produced which is responsive to the prevailing conditions within a locality. The thoughts and ideas of stakeholders are bought together with the aim of deciding on issues confronting the organisation (Kabir 2007:6). This opens the way to new learning, which affects the framework for action. Engaging in constructive dialogue is imperative as strategic issues may conflict with one another when it comes to '*what*' (output/outcome), '*how*' (means), '*why*' (philosophy), '*where*' (location), '*when*' (timing) and '*who*' (the actor or entity) (Bryson 2004:43). Such dialogues create feed-forward and feedback loops which allow for continuous organizational learning. Participating stakeholders in these dialogues can buy into the strategy process and become "not just contributors but also partners in the process" (Plant 2009:26).

Supported by what has been said above, the success of strategic planning is said to rest on how the process is planned and organised, and on whether or not the environment is conducive to the process. Mintzberg (1994a:109) contends, "strategic planning has not only never amounted to strategic thinking but has, in fact, often impeded it". Bryson (2004:15) reminds us that, "strategic planning is simply a set of concepts, procedures, and tools". The involvement, participation, and support of key stakeholders are as important as the environment that enhances learning and promotes dynamism.

Authors such as Geus (1988) see planning and learning as important for a success of an organisation (Flores et al. 2008:570). Huber (1991:89) defines organisational learning as

taking place when an organisation "acquires knowledge that it recognizes as potentially useful to the organization" (Flores et al. 2008:570). Since gathering knowledge and information about an organisation is a critical component of the strategic planning process, organisational learning is valuable for the organization. Therefore, it is imperative for this research that there is an understanding of the concepts of a learning organisation and of learning in organisations.

2.6   Concepts of a learning organisation and learning in organisations

One of the four characteristics of the developmental local government system is leading and learning (Schmidt 2008:121). Leading refers to giving direction and being open to new thinking. This ensures that there is maximization and increased sustainability of social development and economic growth. Learning focuses on sharing knowledge and information and is critical for an organisation in order for it to discover or rethink ways of doing things and to revisit strategies in order to respond effectively and appropriately to both current and future demands and to the changing environment. Huber (1991: 89) points out that "an entity learns if, through its processing of information, the range of its potential behaviours is changed". Bodhanya (2008:4) states "organizational learning... exists to the extent that individuals make their knowledge available to others through a process of sharing..." This calls for a well-designed strategic planning system to help increase learning capacity and to be more open to the needs of the citizenry and other stakeholders. In this way, a developmental local government system links very closely with the concepts of a 'learning organisation' as well as to learning within organisations. Platforms for dialogue should be created or used as vehicles that can allow municipalities to seek what matters to stakeholders for integration, coordination, and democratization of development within a locality.

Bryson (2010:262) states that, in strategic planning,

> "*learning occurs ... about what the mandates are and mission should be; the outside environment and concomitant opportunities and threats; the way things are currently done inside the organisation and their attendant strengths and weaknesses; the major strategic issues; alternative strategies for addressing the issues, and quite significantly, the politics surrounding any change effort*".

Vanttinen and Pyhalto (2009:781) consider learning as also providing "a means to steer change and take responsibility for it. Bodhanya (2008:4) states, "all new learning by

individuals occurs within a social context..." The emphasis on learning, states Bryson (2010:262) "underscores the importance of who is involved in the planning process, and how the design and evolution of planning processes can promote iterations of dialogue, deliberation, and change" For this learning to occur, it needs to happen within a learning organisation.

2.6.1   A learning organisation

Senge (1990:3) views a learning organisation as one:

> *"Where people continuously expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together."*

Wang and Ahmed (2003: 12) cite Pedler et al. (1991) who also give a similar definition of a learning organisation to Senge that "a learning organisation should consciously and intentionally devote itself to the facilitation of individual learning in order to continuously transform the entire organisation and its contexts". Pedler, Senge and others are of the view that "a learning organisation evolves as a result of learning and behaviour of its people" (Wang and Ahmed 2003:9) This refers to generative learning or double-loop learning which is where an organisation goes beyond developing, adapting and improving what already exists. Instead, the organisation takes a leap of faith and crafts new strategies in anticipation of a possible future. Since the strategic planning process is iterative and flexible, stakeholders have an opportunity to rethink the nature of their business in relation to what is currently happening and what is envisaged or desired in the future.

Wang and Ahmed (2003:9) state how important it is for an organisation to be a learning organisation as "a learning organisation evolves as a result of learning". Bennet and O'Brien (1994:42) state that the effect of organizational learning is continuous change and improvement in organization, higher customer satisfaction, and effective management practices. Mintzberg (1994) states that focus should be on "the process and the involvement of stakeholders..." (Wang and Ahmed 2003:11). Bennet and O'Brien (1994:42) further highlight the organisational values, policies, and supportive management practices and systems as accelerators of learning.

What is stated above confirms that learning should be at the heart of strategic planning because, as Bryson (2004:15) states, strategic planning is about "clarifying mission, mandates, vision, goals..." As municipalities, like other organisations, are constantly faced with challenges where stakeholders place demands on them, they have to develop a strategic plan with the elements mentioned above. In this instance, understanding the concept of a learning organisation becomes important when considering that organisations like municipalities may not just need to improve continuously their process design to respond to the demands of stakeholders. They may also need to develop whole new approaches that will ensure that there is clarified mission, mandates, vision, and goals of addressing these demands, and more.

De Geus (1988:71) states that the purpose of effective planning as learning is to change the outlook of stakeholders regarding their concepts of reality as their understanding of the world improves. The new approaches referred to above must be employed in such a manner that they effectively and efficiently respond to stakeholders' demands otherwise the stakeholders might exercise their power to act. Failure to do so may result in some stakeholders taking to the streets in protest of service delivery or going to court to use their collective power to challenge the operations of local government. To avoid such situations, there is a need to develop new approaches to planning, design, and implementation, which should have vigour and creativity to take the organisation to a new level of responsiveness. Sharing, collective learning and relearning within municipalities are likely to be a positive, adequate, and appropriate response to the demands, ideas, and ideals of stakeholders.

For any of the above to happen, there should be a paradigm shift on the part of stakeholders as well as regarding how stakeholders are considered in the process. This means that if the strategy process (MIDP process) is to be considered a learning process, all actors (stakeholders) participating in the process should be considered as learning subjects (Vanttinen and Pyhalto 2009:789). Furthermore, these stakeholders would need to change their outlook and their behaviour. This is necessary because their involvement is of significance; learning starts from individuals, and it is these "individuals as agents for organisations to learn", who should interact (Argyris and Schön 1978:16; Wang and Ahmed 2003:9). In addition, this also ensures the successful implementation of the strategy. The perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the formulation process of a MIDP, and their understanding of how the process is one characterised by learning, is crucial in this research. De Geus (1988:71) is of the view that learning should be for "those people who have the power to act". For this research, key stakeholders have been identified that participate in the

MIDP process as directed by legislative frameworks. Furthermore, these key stakeholders occupy leadership positions in their respective constituencies. Hence, they can champion and influence the design of the process, as well as what ethos should underlie the design, making them powerful actors.

While the concept of learning is seen as a noble idea for some, others are sceptical about the concept because participants in the learning process conduct the studies on this subject matter. Thus, it could be argued that the studies are self-fulfilling prophecies. Furthermore, a question has been raised regarding who it is that learns.

2.6.2   Learning in organisations or organisational learning

Organisations, like municipalities, operate in environments, which are constantly evolving. This calls for an organisation with an ability to adapt and to be creative. Consequently, organisations have to explore different avenues to improve their operations and management. Learning in organisations allows an organisation to follow different trajectories. This is because learning can change stakeholders' attitudes to planning and thus, allow them to rethink their worldviews. For this to happen, platforms need to be created for stakeholders to share, learn and relearn to allow for creativity and innovativeness. In this view, organisational learning is a means to an end.

Bierly et al. (2000:597) state that "learning is the process of linking, expanding, and improving data, information, knowledge, and wisdom", which emphasises that learning is an interactive process. Fiol and Lyles (1985:811) see it as being about linking the past and future activities. How these authors define learning has a similar subtext to strategic planning, which is defined by Flores et al. (2008:569) as a process which "sets the stage for [an organisation] to capture and apply lessons from its past to future situations". Thus, there are processes or platforms through which individuals in organisations can participate in strategizing about how to attain goals that an organisation might wish to achieve.

According to Wang and Ahmed (2003:14), for the process of learning "to deliver value and innovation" and "to achieve quantum leaps", there should be facilitation. Wang and Ahmed (2003:14) state that the facilitation ensures that "a higher degree of creativity" is incorporated, new collective knowledge is created, and that the process is one of quality. This may assist organisations such as municipalities to navigate the complex environments within which they operate and to discover new creative ways to arrive at different and better organisational outcomes.

Platforms created and used in the process of learning should be flexible and are to be changed in structure and process to allow an organisation, a Municipality in this instance, to acquire "diverse information ...[and] to share common understanding..." (Fiol 1994:404). Through learning, the organisations should be able to create a process for the development of insight, knowledge, and association of experiences and future activities (Fiol and Lyles, 1985:811).

Needless to say, there should be preparations before an organisation embarks on such a learning process, as this can help in securing commitment among stakeholders. Preparations can also allow for better managing of what Bennet and O'Brien (1994:41) refer to as "the creative tension between the current reality [what the organisation is or is not doing that works and what works or does not work] and the designed future [what the organization should be doing]". This can ensure that the learning process creates insight, knowledge, and associations embedded in a strategic planning process, which will ensure that the latter is not just to make plans but to change the mental models held within the system and practice of the local government system. It is for this that the key questions of this research concern how the MIDP process is a learning process which ensures that there is improvement in service delivery and a transformation of the municipal/local government system into a developmental one.

Crucially, however, Field (1997) warns "...learning is not necessarily positive or contributive to the organisation", as stakeholders can be in it for themselves and not for the organisation (Wang and Ahmed 2003:9). This can hold true for stakeholders in the MIDP process who might be in it for themselves or for political reasons. For some of these stakeholders, their electoral cycle acts to constrain their time horizon or make them more concerned about their own priorities since they might have a limited period of time in their positions and might not collaborate fully in the process. This can be a concern, especially because it is an individual's actions and capabilities, which contribute towards the accumulation and sharing of knowledge in an organisation; in this instance the formulation of an inclusive and integrated planning and development plan. Wang and Ahmed (2003:9), citing Hyland and Matlay (1997), state that learning has to be considered as "the sum total of accumulated individual and collective learning". What is pointed out above is that what an individual learns contributes to organisational learning, which in turn can result in changes in action beyond just the accumulation of new knowledge.

To understand the dynamics in the process of developing the MIDP as a strategic plan such as the one stated above, there is a need to adopt an holistic outlook. Systems thinking, as a theoretical framework, is an approach that will assist in understanding the process in perspective, especially because organisations operate in a complex and dynamic environment. Paragraphs and sections below explain the systems thinking and how it relates to this research.

2.7   Systems thinking as a theoretical framework

Blockley (2010:189) simply defines systems thinking as being about "getting information (what) to the right people (who) at the right time (when) for the right purpose (why) in the right format (where) and in the right way (why)". Consequently, systems thinking is about integration and it considers all aspects from a holistic and integrated point of view. This makes it an holistic way of thinking, which involves the consideration of interrelated variables (interrelations) and perception of the world as a whole (holism principle) (Batra et al. 2010:6). The approach is based on the understanding that the whole is greater than its parts. Therefore, the focus should be on understanding the whole and how there are linkages and interrelationships among elements of the whole system instead of just separate parts. This outlook differs from analytical thinking, which seeks to simplify complex phenomena.

Understanding the world or phenomena in an holistic way is important. Haines (1998) is of the view that how one thinks, is how one acts, and is how one is (Skarzauskience 2008:105). Haines (1998) advocates that "one way to improve the quality of results of an activity is to enhance the quality of thinking". This in essence means that how the organisation will perform or achieve its objective must involve reflective thinking within the organisation. Therefore, the systems thinking perspective reflects on how the organisation will collect and process information, formulate concepts, and develop ways of addressing issues before making decisions in relation to its future.

Systems thinking is conceptual. Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell (2008:301) state that it is "the conceptual patterns of how we think systematically". This asserts that for an organisation, in this instance a municipality as a system, to change in its thinking and thus in its planning and management of development, it has to change the way it conceptualises its strategic plan. Systems thinking, as a theoretical framework would seek to balance the focus between understanding the whole process of developing the MIDP and what are the elements in the process.

In relation to the above, the MIDP would need to be defined to distinguish it from other forms of planning:

- It would need to be examined as a learning process in terms of how it affects, or effects, learning by understanding the relationship that exists between the process and the output;

- Key elements or components in a system, for example, stakeholder participation needs to be identified;

- Platforms created for or used in the process need to be examined in terms of their appropriateness and adequacy in promoting learning; and;

- It needs to be established how these elements contribute or relate to other elements or components and to the process as a whole.

Perspectives of key stakeholders in relation to how the process is a learning process and how the platforms created or used allow this process to unfold are sought. The latter becomes a frame of reference for the research.

What is outlined above shows how critical it is to understand how the formulation of the MIDP is a learning process. This is in view of the understanding that organisations, in this instance municipalities, are seen as social systems; and, as systems, they are complex systems. Not all systems are necessarily complex. Systems theory considers them to have boundaries within which they operate, influence, and interact directly with their dynamic environment. This is supported by Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell (2008:301) who state that "systems thinking is also based on the contextual patterns of the organisation rather than on specific content". As such, when the municipality embarks on any strategic decisions and options formulation it must take into account the interdependence and interaction amongst stakeholders and between a municipality and the environment. Thus, Bryson (2010:260) asserts that it is a "serious error to view strategic planning as any kind of technocratic, mechanistic, strictly linear process."

Vanttinen and Pyhalto (2009:788) state, "a mechanistic planning process is not able to create chances, learning, and innovations in an organisation". This is so because strategic planning is a generative system, which connects elements of context, a process, and desired outcomes. Accordingly, the study of strategic planning requires a theoretical framework that is dynamic and holistic in focus because "the strategy process is a complex system in which many factors interact simultaneously" (Vanttinen and Pyhalto 2009:780). This is the case because

the process is about individual and collective thinking, acting, learning, and meaning-making.

2.7.1 Wholeness and dynamism

Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell (2008:301) define a system as 'a complex whole of related parts' or 'any other assemblage of components compiling a whole'. It follows then that if there is no understanding of the whole, there is a possibility of blind spots. Blind spots, the unknown factors, may influence/impact on the process under study if they are not understood. Since a municipality is an organisation and thus a system, Stacey (2011:59) says that this should be "understood not as parts adding to a whole, but as a system in which the interaction between its parts are of primary importance in producing a whole that is more than the sum of its parts". It is of importance for this study that the perspectives of different stakeholders within the organisation are seen in light of the organisation/collective instead of from just the individual stakeholder's perspective. This emphasises the focus on understanding the role of key stakeholders within the process of formulating the MIDP as a local government system process. This also highlights how the process is a vehicle to bring about systemic change – a change to a developmental local government system.

The holistic nature of this approach is also against the "breaking down of problems into its components parts for detailed examination" (Batra et al. 2010:6). This says that we cannot also reduce phenomena to their constituent parts and then study them in relation to cause and effect. Instead, the phenomena should be studied within the whole with emphasis on how the interrelated parts dynamically interact. Bodhanya (2008:11) presents the argument that "systems thinking argues that we lose something when we decompose a system into its constituent parts". Instead, studying the systems as a whole results in a non-linear feedback process wherein there is dynamism and manifestation of the inter-relationship of the parts within the whole. The resultant feedback can have a negative or positive effect, which can lead to stability or instability within a system. This means it can either reinforce what is or it can prompt the system to seek new ways of responding to current situations.

Considering the above, the understanding is that systems thinking takes a different view of what has been referred to as the positivist outlook. Senge (1990:3), in the introduction of his book *The Fifth Discipline,* states that the illusion should be destroyed that "the world is created of separate, unrelated forces". He maintains that systems are interconnected and interrelated. Therefore, the positivist view is a reductionist approach to understanding phenomena and the focus on linear thinking is the opposite of the relatedness and

connectivity advocated in systems thinking. This is so because linear thinking involves breaking down or reducing a system to its constituent parts and studying these parts. Systems thinking, on the other hand, examines the patterns of relationships within the entire system.

For this research, focusing on what is known about the IDP process, without getting the perceptions of key stakeholders involved in the process, would be limiting and superficial. This is so because the dynamism of the system would remain unknown, as the focus would be on what is known and sometimes on the mental models held about the process of formulating the MIDP. Furthermore, the focus is on both the analysis and synthesis, which will allow a better understanding of the local government system, its processes and the environment.

The focus on targets in the public sector is about the parts rather than about the whole (Seddon 2008:97). This is so because targets are the outputs of an organisation, not the overall outcome. If the emphasis is on targets, the focus is on the parts, which makes the public sector preoccupied with managing performance against targets instead of focusing on the whole or overall outcome, which is how to improve delivery of the system and service itself (Seddon 2008:101).

This goes against the grain of holism in systems thinking, which is based on the premise that the whole is not comprised of the lesser (parts), but the lesser parts contribute to the whole, which is greater than its constituent parts. Thus, the systems thinking approach is seen as a promising alternative as it promotes examining a system as a whole. MIDP. The focus is on looking at all the elements of the process including the stakeholders, the platforms created or used and the environment within which the process of formulating the MIDP is taking place.

For Stacey (2011: 200), the systemic way of thinking also shifts the focus from "an ideology of control and efficiency to one of participation and inclusion". This also advances what Stacey (2011:200) refers to as the "post model idea of multiple discourses or realities". For this research, the IDP process is seen as a system, and the platforms created or used for the interactions in this strategic planning process are examined for better understanding of this system. The system has emergence properties, which arise out of the interactions between parts. This is based on the understanding that the behaviour of a system is generated from within the system, not from the environment within which the system operates. It is based on the understanding as stated by Bodhanya (2009:2) that "it is not possible to stand outside the system and analyze the organization and the environment and the design strategy".

2.7.2 Emergence and interrelatedness

Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell (2008:300) state that 'systems thinking' is a construct as it is a results from interactions between parts that make the whole. As such, the relationship between parts determines the emergent properties of the system. It is for this reason that, in this research, the focus is on how the IDP provides platforms (output) and how these platforms allow for 'strategic planning dialogue' that brings about change in the local governance system (outcome). Both output and outcome of the system are areas of focus of the research as they are interrelated and interdependent. Thus, the pattern of relationships becomes crucial in the understanding of a system as changes in one part flow to other parts of the system and can have a ripple effect (Read 2006:11).

Systems have boundaries between them and their surrounding the environment that influences them, and boundaries between whole systems and others. The system boundary "differentiates between who/what is in and who/what is outside the set boundary" (Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell 2008:304). This means, for example, that there is a superficial boundary between a local government system or municipality and other spheres of government. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa takes this into cognisance in Section 152, where it states that the municipality, in its endeavour to develop an integrated plan, should also "participate in national and provincial development programmes" (RSA 1996b:85). Consultation with other spheres of government ensures that the municipality take into account its broader environment within its strategic planning process, even though the plan is about a locality. This is important as any change in the boundaries causes the system to follow suit as the boundaries, as stated before, set the parameters for a system at any given time.

What is also imperative for systems thinking is to understand what it is in a system and what could be in a system. This provides the basis for reframing the understanding of a system or its phenomena. This is in line with what Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell (2008:299) state about systems thinking as offering "a model for thinking differently" and systematically. This understanding is supported by Stacey (2011:201), who views systems thinking as the departure from "mechanistic and reductionist approaches in that they stressed the dynamic interaction between parts of a system, between systems and between a system and its environment".

Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell (2008:307) states that "systems thinking is not content specific ... [but] ... a pattern of thinking that formally alters context... [thus]...transforms the meaning

of any kind of content (i.e. subject matter)". Furthermore, Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell (2008:307) state that "systems thinking is not something one does, but something one gets as a result of applying simple rules based on patterns". This is further confirmed by Reed (2006:12), who refers to Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline*, and states that "systems thinking provides just the type of discipline and toolset needed to encourage the seeing of 'interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots'".

The points stated above explain why systems thinking as a framework is a framework of choice, and is looked at here as a construct where the relationship between parts lead to emergence and show interrelatedness of a system's parts to the whole.

2.7.3 Reflective thinking, measures and methods

Batra (2010:6) view systems thinking as an approach of looking at something with an aim of understanding and gaining insight into the complexity of the process. This research analyses the MIDP process from this perspective. It looks at different aspects of the system in formulating the MIDP and ascertains the perspective of different stakeholders in the process. Such an undertaking of exploring the MIDP from the systems thinking perspective allows for reflective thinking and also ensures that facts or statements correspond to contexts (Blockley 2010:192). Ensuring that facts or statements correspond to contexts makes possible contextual understanding of the process and how the process influences local government responses to service delivery demands and the needs of different stakeholders.

Systems thinking values knowledge as "the intention of knowledge is to achieve understanding" and "the intention of action [as it] is to achieve outcome" (Blockley 2010:194). Furthermore, Blockley (2010:194) states, "to know you need to act and to act you need to know". Within all this, understanding the context and purpose/aim in a process is the ultimate, as Edwards Deming, cited by Seddon (2008:82), states "without an aim, there [is] no system." Having an aim or purpose means developing clear ideas that underlie any action, as facts and statements of intent should be reflective of the situation and the environment. Furthermore, the focus is outside-in; in other words, it is on the understanding of stakeholders' demands instead of focusing solely on the organisation's point of view. Here the focus is on the output, result and outcome of the process, which means the focus is beyond just the output (strategic plan), but it is also on the outcome, which is about the change in the local governance system. The result is the designing of a system that meets the demands. This can be achieved if the approach is about reflective thinking.

As a point to note, the focus on the understanding or insight of key stakeholders in the MIDP means the perspectives on the IDP process are subjective rather than objective. This point is imperative to note and understand because subjectivity emanates from the understanding that our mental models influence how we see the world. Blockley (2010:193) states that "subjectivity is a difficult concept and widely disparaged". Nonetheless, subjectivity centres on our mental models, which are our deeply rooted assumptions, generalisations, outlook, or pictures of the world – what exist in our minds. It is this outlook of the world that results in people's confining themselves to familiarity and thus not embarking on reflective thinking, and critical assessment of the measures and methods created or used. Blockley (2010:193) states that some of these "perceptions and private thoughts ...cannot be shared [as] they are truly subjective". In such instances, mental models become inhibitors to systems thinking because there can be no reflective thinking. Moreover, this means that we cannot really understand what others know or perceive; however, we can make inferences about these perceptions by drawing from past experiences and knowledge.

If what is stated above is the case, it confirms what is stated by Ackoff (1981, 1994) cited by (Stacey 2011:203) that "obstructions to change lie in the minds of the members of an organization, that is, in their mental models". Therefore, understanding the mental models held by stakeholders becomes imperative, as it is through such an understanding that one can gain a better idea of what is and possibly, what could be. Moreover, such an understanding within a process of change gives stakeholders both an opportunity to explore their own understanding of a situation as well as the needs behind any process for change. By understanding self, others, and the collective, this creates awareness of the mental models held by different stakeholders that may influence the process of learning and articulation of issues towards service delivery. Seddon (2007:18) advocates the importance of being prepared to change our thinking and to move away from interpreting from our current point of view. This may consequently address aphorism that "if we always see how we've always seen, we'll always be who we've always been!"

The systems thinking approach to learning and implementation facilitates the change for the Municipality to respond more positively, adequately and appropriately to the demands of stakeholders and their ideas and ideals. This is possible as systems thinking explores the systemic nature of processes and creates platforms or measures to allow for a deeper understanding of the *why, how* and *what* of the process.

What has been highlighted also stresses that the importance of the use of a systems thinking perspective is that it highlights the possibility of seeing the process in an holistic and integral space wherein different factors are interrelated and interdependent. Bodhanya (2009:128) states that "phenomena are not independent of the context in which they occur". In this, the perspectives of stakeholders are taken into account as they take part in the process. The perspectives of the stakeholders are vital, as events seen in systems can be manifested symptoms and not the cause of system failure or success. There may be underlying factors, which influence the events that can be observed and are contributing to the current status quo. Any actions based on the events, which do not seek the contribution from stakeholders as a collective, may result in the process being reactive instead of proactive.

The systems thinking perspective allows for a more proactive response as it prioritises the understanding of the underlying factors or root causes having considered all of them as a whole system (Batra et al. 2010:5). Such an understanding is of importance to systems thinking, as the approach values knowledge about the dynamism of the system and the mental models held by different stakeholders in the process. Furthermore, the recognition of dynamism and wholeness within various factors results in a better understanding of the system itself. This is important considering that the process of formulating the MIDP is complex and consists of a number of aspects that are interrelated.

2.8   Concluding Remarks

The literature on strategic planning, learning organisations, organisational learning, and systems thinking covers several issues. One, it relates the context of strategic planning in the public sector and it shows how the process brings about decision-making in relation, in this case, to the strategic direction of a municipal/local government organisation. While some authors refer to it as a decision-making process, some take the view that it promotes learning as it is an interactive, participatory and systematic process that is critical for any organisation that aims to re-define and fine-tune its future endeavours.

Two , what is also emphasised is how important it is for stakeholders to be involved in the process, and why systems, mechanisms, platforms, structures, communication and preparations play a pivotal role in ensuring that the process achieves its potential as a principal strategic planning instrument for local government.

Three, the literature, and legislation chosen for review promote the process of the strategic planning or process for better understanding of the phenomena as well as what critics say

about the process. Also included were some authors who referred to the process as more like programming and how its formalisation as a deliberate and structured process might limit its dynamisms and emergent nature.

Four, review of the concepts of learning and of learning within organisations was undertaken. The point of this was to determine the relationship between learning and strategic planning as well as how the process of strategic planning brings about learning. This advances a clear understanding that strategic planning is an interactive process, which is key in learning, that platforms are created to enable stakeholders to engage, and that through such engagements stakeholders learn and that the organisation is therefore a process for learning. This shows that through a strategy process participants learn, unlearn and possible relearn about the objectives, goals or purpose of the organisation, understand what direction the organisation intends to follow, and the value of undertaking such a direction in light of the current situation and possible future circumstances.

Five y, learning includes better understanding and how important to follow a holistic view, which is imperative in strategic planning of municipal/local government.

Finally, in the literature it is emphasised how important it is to involve stakeholders by creating platforms/structures to engage them and, further, how their involvement can be beneficial to the strategy process.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This research reflects on how the MIDP process allows stakeholders in the local government system to share and learn while articulating their demands of local government. It ascertains what platforms are used or created for stakeholders to share and learn about their demands while embarking on a process to create a developmental strategic plan. It also reflects on how the content of the MIDP, as a strategic development plan, is reflective of the sharing, learning and articulation of the demands of stakeholders. In order to undertake the above, a decision was made to follow a theoretical–qualitative research paradigm and a case study methodology.

The theoretical-qualitative research paradigm has been followed as a means of developing and testing accounts that present the process of developing the MIDP as one of learning. The approach allows for the construction of an empirical reality to gain insight and knowledge into how the MIDP process facilitates learning. It also allowed for the identification and analysis of the platforms created or used to facilitate learning during the IDP process, and for ascertaining and/or determining how these platforms are appropriate or adequate to achieving that facilitation.

The qualitative case study research method followed in this research helped in structuring and in ensuring that the research questions were answered. The research methodology also helped in specifying how the researcher got to know what he knows by determining how he knows it. This has a bearing on justifying the knowledge claims, which is why the choice of research design and methodology was determined from a combination of factors, which are mentioned in this chapter.

Literature and document reviews and interviews were used in the data collection process as tools or research instruments to gather knowledge and understanding of the MIDP process. The theoretical views stated in the secondary data - literature and documents reviews - were considered with the primary data: empirical evidence collected through interviews with key stakeholders. It is stated by Flick (2002:164) that "the form and design of [the data gathering tool needs] to be crosschecked with method ...and with the theoretical background of one's own study".

The inductive data analysis was decided upon since the plan was to analyse and interpret data as it was being collected. Deciding on the inductive approach was in keeping with the ultimate aim of the research, illustrated and stated by Gray (2014:17-18), as being the accumulation or gathering of facts and data on which hypothesis or theory can be built, thus establishing meanings, which allows moving from specifics to generalizations. In relation to this research, this supports a theory or inferences being developed from observed empirical reality.

The use of inductive data analysis, as an interpretative analytical approach in this research, was to gain an understanding of how key participants in the MIDP process interpret and understand the process as a learning process. The interpretations and understanding of key participants were then used to formulate and present meaning within the process. The intended meaning, justified with empirical data, is essential because interpretation is an important part of any analysis of qualitative materials.

The research design, research method and data analysis approach are presented in this chapter, starting with the research paradigm as research design.

3.2   Research design

The research paradigm sets the direction of the research and, hence, the theoretical-qualitative paradigm has been chosen for this research to contextualise the interpretation and understanding of how the MIDP process is a learning process. It gives a framework for the collection of data to show how the process of developing the MIDP works, producing knowledge in the process. This knowledge cannot be generalised though as this is not the aim of qualitative research; instead, it is to gain an understanding of the subject matter.

Nevertheless, using the qualitative research paradigm, knowledge and insight into the MIDP process were obtained from key stakeholders. This knowledge and insight determined how the process is a learning process. The perspectives or different viewpoints of the stakeholders in relation to the process were taken into account because of their different subjective perspectives and knowledge backgrounds.

Different methods of collecting qualitative data for analysis as evidence were followed to give context and, thus, an holistic understanding of the MIDP process. This was in line with what Guba and Lincoln (1994: 106) state that qualitative data provides "contextual information" and "rich insight into human behaviour" through its "reference to the meanings

and purposes attached by human actors to their activities". This is possible because narrative thinking in qualitative research involves the construction of a consistent and convincing description of the subject matter, which in this instance is the MIDP process. Furthermore, words are used to produce social reality, which here involves a description of the MIDP process. The implication, though, is that the words can also obscure the description of the process, thus altering the views and understanding of the process.

The theoretical nature of the approach allows for understanding the process through the writings of others. The interpretations and meanings of researchers and authors on the subject matter were ascertained. These interpretations and meanings were based on their understanding and knowledge of the process of developing or formulating a strategic development plan in both the private and public sectors.

To complement the literature and document reviews, this approach provided the framework for close interaction with participants as a direct source of data. Key participants in the MIDP process (individuals) were interviewed to gain their perceptions and so achieve better understanding of the process in the actual situation. Their perspectives and understanding of the process provided a frame of reference from stakeholders' points of view and a reflection on the essential internal and external factors in relation to the MIDP process. In essence, the engagement of stakeholders explored a 'meaning-in-context' of a process. Furthermore, the research method enriched the understanding of the research topic, as key participants gave their perspectives in the context of the dynamic environment in which the process was undertaken.

The research was exploratory, as perspectives and understanding of the process were sought. Babbie (2013:90) states that exploration is one of the purposes of research and it is, "to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding" Following an exploratory research design was essential as the researcher was investigating the MIDP process from a different angle, that is, as a learning process. As a result, the researcher had to take part in knowledge production instead of being personally detached and seen as 'objective'. Furthermore, as Denzil and Lincoln (1994:345), cited by Punch (2005:176), state, the researcher became an integral part of the research process as a creator of the reality of the interview situation. This favoured the inductive approach to be used in data analysis for this theoretical-qualitative research because facts on which the knowledge and understanding were built were established as the data collection was being undertaken. Thus, each participant's perspective of the process was considered as the process unfolded.

While considering the perspectives of participants in the MIDP process, multiple realities emerged which are a reflection of how the world has multiple realities. This is so, states Gray (2014:20), because "meaning is constructed not discovered, so subjects [(participants)] construct their own meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomena [(MIDP process)]". This says that the meaning of the process has a constructed meaning and that things do not just happen out there, independent of consciousness. Instead, there is a systemic activity involving a number of "variables, structures, forms and orders of interaction between the participants in the situation" (Starman 2013:31).

The case study method followed in this research presents the process as a reality in context, or the contextual outlook. The focus is on understanding the meaning as constructed by the participants involved in the events. This gives an understanding of events from the insiders' perspectives or information directly from the source. The use of the inductive approach, which is discussed later in the chapter, helps in analysing data, especially because the researcher is actively involved in data collection and, thus, in data analysis which is occurring throughout the research.

3.3   Research method

The desire to understand this process in context or in terms of perceptive meaning called for the use of the case study as a research method. Besides the factors listed below, the choice was guided by the understanding, stated by Stake (1995), cited by Creswell (2003:15) that a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, which in this instance is a process wherein "researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures..." The MIDP process of eThekwini Municipality is a 'bounded system', as the process is bounded by time and activity. This means that it is focused (time) and that what happens (activity) during the process is considered vital and useful for the research. Besides, the case study research method helped in this qualitative research as Bartunek and Seo (2002:240) state, it is suitable for discovering "local meanings of phenomena and the interactions that create these meanings".

Furthermore, in 1972 Hare, cited in Remenyi (2010:169), observed, "we cannot describe the world in the absence of prior understanding of it..." Thus, it was important that an investigation of the   MIDP process as a specific event or activity is undertaken within a real life context and that the key participants in the process are engaged. EThekwini Municipality's process was chosen as a specific process to analyse and evaluate the extent to

which it was a learning process. This was to build a better understanding of the process with the knowledge held by the participants in a particular setting.

The choice of research methodology, states Gray (2014:29), "is determined by a combination of several factors". For this research, the factors that were taken into consideration in deciding on the case study method are stated below:

- Firstly, the case study allows the researcher to conduct a detailed analytic and narrative description of the case, and to understand the case as a unique functioning system;

- Secondly, the case study answers questions relating to *what, how* and *why*;

- Thirdly, it allows reasoning within the context to lead evidence for an opinion or to give a chain of evidence [as] an explicit link between the questions asked, the data collected, and the conclusions drawn. This refers to the interrelatedness between the methodology and the findings in context; and

- Fourthly, as stated by Yin (1988:14), the case study allows for an holistic view. Such a view is possible because the approach allows for the use of multiple sources of evidence.

The factors stated above concur with what is stated by Fouche (2005:272): that "the exploration and description of the case study takes place through detailed, in-depth data collection methods, involving multiple sources of information that are rich in context". The sources of evidence for this research were the literature review on the subject matter; a review of organisational and other related documents, and interviews conducted with some key stakeholders in the MIDP process. Literature and document reviews included legislative and policy frameworks and organisational documents such as eThekwini Municipality's IDP. The multiple sources of data in the case study method enable the capturing of the dynamic and contextual nature of the MIDP process. This allowed "the researcher to concentrate on specific instances in an attempt to identify detailed interactive processes, which may be crucial to understand..."Remenyi et al. 2010:166). Further, this provided for an investigation into the complex and dynamic socio-political environment. In the end, there is "a holistic interpretation of evidence because the focus is on learning about organisational process" (Remenyi et al. 2010:164).

Besides the above important factors, the choice of the single case study approach in this instance is because it is manageable, and the institution used as a point of reference is

accessible. Furthermore, some key participants were willing to participate in the research, seeing its potential value or contribution to a better understanding of the IDP process.

3.4   Data collection techniques

A qualitative research assumption of the world is that it has multiple realities and, as such, data-collecting techniques should be reflective of this approach. The case study approach, as stated above, allowed the researcher to collect and use multiple sources of evidence to converge on the same sets of facts or findings. It is for this reason that data sources for this research varied. As stated above in this chapter, data for this study were collected through literature and document reviews and through interviews with key stakeholders participating in the MIDP process.

Before the researcher could confirm eThekwini Municipality as a case study and key stakeholders within the Municipality could be identified as participants in the research, the Municipality was approached and informed about the proposed research in a formal letter (Appendix 1). The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs was also approached and informed in a formal letter (Appendix 2) requesting permission to give authority for Amakhosi AseThekwini to participate in the research. The letters contained a copy of a research proposal that had to be submitted. Formal letters to gatekeepers - individuals in authority – were necessary for them to give permission and to "provide access to study participants at research sites" Creswell (2003:74). The Municipality and the Department gave the permissions by signing Letters of Informed Consent (Appendix 3 and 4) to participate in the research project. The Letters gave the researcher access to the institution and permission to engage participants. The signed informed consents are also a requirement for the Ethical clearance (Appendix 5) to be given by the University's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

As stated above, approaching eThekwini Municipality and Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs was to satisfy legal and ethical considerations. Furthermore, it was to get informed consents from the Municipality and Department to use the Municipality as a case study, to approach key stakeholders in the MIDP and for the Department to get permission to approach Amakhosi to participate in the research. This activity is normally seen as one of the challenges that the qualitative researcher would be likely to face. However, it was not a challenge because the researcher is a staff member of eThekwini Municipality; the research was not way going to bring the Municipality, the Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs, or Amakhosi AseThekwini

into disrepute. Instead, the research was intended to bring about a better understanding of the MIDP process.

After the administrative issues were settled, the researcher continued with the literature and document reviews which allowed for theoretical and contextual reflections. This was done to gain insight into the MIDP as a strategic learning process, to investigate what platforms are created or used to facilitate learning, and to determine whether such platforms are adequate and appropriate to facilitate learning. The data collection techniques are explained below.

3.4.1 Literature review

Bowen (2005: 210) states that prior studies are important as they "...provide a foundation, background, and context for new research ... [and] establishes a bridge between the research project and the extant knowledge base". Therefore, a literature review was adopted as a method to collect the secondary data to give a theoretical perspective to the research. The literature review provided different views of the meaning of strategic planning, what makes a learning organisation, what organisational learning is and how the MIDP process, as a strategic planning process, emerges from the literature. This provides the context for this research in terms of the meaning, role and benefits of strategic planning for and in municipal or local government. The claims made by different authors and researchers, and their reasons or evidence provided to substantiate these claims, were looked at. This forms a backdrop and theoretical context for the study and offers perspectives against which to reflect on the process. Sense was thus made of the phenomena under investigation.

The literature review highlighted the theoretical assumptions and /or versions or perspectives through which the process is explored. The theoretical assumptions and/or versions or perspectives also gave meaningful context to document reviews and interviews. Flick (2002:43) states that the "theoretical assumptions become relevant as preliminary versions of understanding of and the perspective on the [process] being studied". Consequently, reviewing literature was vital in order to provide relevant theoretical-qualitative constructs and knowing what other researchers have written about the research topic. Literature published in journals (especially peer-reviewed articles), books and electronic databases were consulted, explored, summarised, compared and critically analysed. The presentation of the literature review was defined and guided by the research questions

The review of literature as well as documents available on this subject matter, were also considered in order to corroborate and augment evidence gathered during the interviews and

vice versa. The reviews also provided some information that the interviews might not have provided, and they were used as a guide for appropriate interview questions. While reviewing the literature as well as documents, the researcher kept in mind that this material was incomplete, selective, and written for some specific purpose and audience other than for the purposes of this case study.

3.4.2 Document review

For the researcher to gain insight into the current and historical perspective of the MIDP, textual data (documents) were reviewed as 'artefacts' and secondary data to give information on *what*, *why* and *how* a particular phenomenon happens. In this instance, the MIDP process documents and other available related documents that contribute or impact/influence the MIDP and its formulation were used to gain an understanding of the context and the process undertaken. The documents gave details on objectives, principles and procedures underpinning the IDP process, municipal vision and context of the IDP document.

Further, by reviewing these documents the researcher was enabled to examine the reasons why the Government of the Republic of South Africa took the IDP direction. The review of these documents also highlights how the MIDP process allows for learning by providing platforms for stakeholders' engagement including through other processes of formulating documents used or referred to during the formulation of the MIDP process. The documents reviewed included international, national, provincial, and municipal policy frameworks that referred to the IDP and the Developmental Local Government System, strategic planning at municipal or local government or public sector levels, framework plans and the eThekwini Municipality's IDP.

While reviewing the documents, the researcher was reflecting and attempting to keep an open mind, as the documents might present the subjective views and influence of the authors. For instance, the researcher was conscious that reviewed documents might be influenced by a political ideology or the agenda of particular stakeholders, although written as if representing the views of most, if not all, 'stakeholders'. This is inevitable, though, as any document is written for a purpose and particular views might therefore be advanced. It was consequently important that the texts were not taken as comprehensive objective accounts instead used as particular lenses into the IDP process/context, acknowledging the inherent subjectivity of such documents, as would be the case with participants in the interviews.

Points of convergence or divergence between what key stakeholders articulated in the interviews and the body of literature (the recorded texts) were sought and highlighted. The review provided some specific details that can support the verbal accounts of the participants (interviewees) and set the context for interviews.

3.4.3 Interviews

Punch (2005:144) states that "the interview is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research". Furthermore, Punch (2005:144) explains why this is the case by stating that the interview "is a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality". This being the case, participants in the MIDP process rightfully became research instruments because their perceptions, meanings, and definitions were sought in order to understand a local government process as a social phenomenon. Interviewing became an appropriate method for this research because it is about a process undertaken within a social system: eThekwini Municipality as an organisation.

In this research, the interviews were therefore used to gather stakeholders' constructs of the MIDP process. They captured stakeholders' understanding or subjective interpretations based on their perceptions, learning, and recall of the process. Stakeholders interviewed each expressed their views, understanding and construct of the process in their own words. The data collected reflected multiple realities as the stakeholders gave a multidimensional picture of the process. Interviews provided rich sources of data on the challenges and opportunities in the process that is meant to bring about a systemic change.

Interviewing key stakeholders in the MIDP process was important considering that understanding a social reality , for example the strategy process, there should be an understanding that "the social process is constructed, created by human agents – individual or collective – through their actions" (Pettigrew 1992:8). Key stakeholders as participants in the MIDP process are key respondents or informants, as they understand the process better than any other person does. They can thus provide better sense and meanings to the process as they are part of it and can provide the insiders' view. Interviewing became a data collection tool to discover the understanding and meaning to the key stakeholders of how the MIDP process is a learning process. For the stakeholders' own perspectives to emerge, an interviewing approach was chosen to explore or acquire an insight into their experiences, views, meanings, and understandings.

- **Interviewing approach**

Interviewing followed a semi-structured conversational approach in which a number of prepared questions about *what* and *how* were asked. The focus was on understanding and interpreting the participants' viewpoints through meaningful conversation. This is in contrast to the quantitative research paradigm, which focuses on facts and objectivity (Durrheim and Painter 2006:132). The interview guide (Appendix 6) was used to set the parameters for the interviews, structure the information, and to provide a foundation for analysis. It also focused the interview on important issues or points. The advantage in following this approach is that data collection becomes somewhat systematic and comprehensive. Furthermore, the researcher had an opportunity to compare the participants' responses while simultaneously seeking to understand fully their unique understanding.

The interviews were one-on-one to obtain first-hand insights from the participants. Face-to-face interviews were conducted because participants were all within the eThekwini Municipal Area and thus were geographically accessible. Securing appointments with most of the participants was a challenge because of their busy schedules and because their availability was during the researcher's work hours. Nevertheless, the interviews were scheduled at convenient times for the participants and were at the location decided by the participant, mostly their offices. For the interview, the researcher engaged each participant in examining what is as well as what ought to be the MIDP process. Stakeholders were able to express their understanding of what is and what ought to be.

Research interviews presented the researcher with an opportunity to learn about participants' views and understanding in their own words. Each interview was intended to be approximately 60 minutes, but interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The length and level of engagement during the interview depended on whether the researcher had developed a rapport and reciprocal relations with interviewees (participants). This had an effect on levels of conversations the researcher had with the participants, and on their responses. Thus, the rapport and relations between the participants and researcher might have contributed to some participants being more detailed in their responses.

- **Interview questions**

The questions for the interviews were simple and open-ended to allow participants to be detailed in their responses. The researcher listened carefully to what was said by the participants. The open-ended and direct questions produced more talk, as the participants

were freely able to express their perspectives and views on the process. This was important, considering that qualitative research is concerned with obtaining detailed and first-hand knowledge and information from participants. Further, as Greene (1998) cited by Qu and Dumay (2011: 245) suggests, "the purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed".

Since the research design is qualitative, the research questions, as Chambliss and Schutt (2006:167) state, were more exploratory at the beginning or starting point. The questions were flexible, but focused on the meaning or interpretations that each participant gives to the process. The exploratory nature of the questions allowed for probing issues of concern and provided opportunity for detailed information or points of clarity in instances when the participant was unclear. This ensured that all the questions were answered satisfactorily or adequately, and that this was done over a short period. Furthermore, it ensured that key stakeholders, as participants, shared their understanding about or gave their insights into the IDP process and its purpose, thus providing empirical material for the research.

Before the researcher could begin with the interviews, he explained the purpose and use of the interview data and requested permission to record the interview digitally. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in order for them to be at ease in responding to the questions. The researcher then began with broad, non-direct questions to create a rapport and thereafter focused on key issues relating to the research. Beginning with the broad questions, states Creswell (2003:9), is "so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation..."

The interview questions included who was involved in the process and the nature of such involvement. The initial broad questions were used to initiate the conversation or the interviewing process. Creating a rapport is important, as interviews rely extensively on verbal accounts of how people act and what they feel. Furthermore, lack of rapport can affect the interview process owing to issues like power dynamics and culture.

The power dynamics issues related to participants being senior administrative, political and community leaders and the researcher being in a junior management position. The issue of culture, on the other hand, related to how to conduct oneself and how to ask direct questions of the Amakhosi relating to their understanding and interpretations of the process without being seen as in any way questioning their intellect. This did not prove to be an issue as the researcher had experience in dealing with traditional leaders.

- **Interview recording**

All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. The recorder was used only after the researcher had explained the consent form and each participant had signed this form, and also agreed to the use of a digital recorder. The use of the digital recorder was to ensure accuracy of information and to minimise disturbance in capturing what the participants said while in conversation. Furthermore, the recorder allowed the researcher space and time to be in conversation with the participant. This was of importance, because the researcher used a conversational approach to the interviews to gather data. Furthermore, the use of the recorder also allowed the researcher to listen carefully during these intentional conversations so that the flow of the conversation could be fluid while ensuring at the same time that all questions were answered.

- **Sampling technique**

The researcher selected the participants in the study following a purposive sampling technique. This was to ensure that the focus was on key stakeholders; the participants in the MIDP process as determined by the legislative frameworks, which includes the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the White Paper on Local Government (1998), the MSA (2000), the Traditional Leadership & Governance Framework Act (2003), and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act (2005). Choosing to use the purposive sampling is consistent with the idea that best participants that can "help researcher understand the problem and the research question" are purposefully chosen when conducting qualitative research (Creswell 2003: 213). Furthermore, following this technique was appropriate because the purpose of the research was not to validate or to generalise, but rather it was exploratory in nature and it took the form of a case study.

The purposive sampling technique is a subjective two-stage method of sampling. The first stage involved the researcher deciding on the study population, which in this research involved stakeholders in the MIDP process, as defined by policy frameworks. The second stage involved the researcher deciding who, among the stakeholders, would be interviewed. In deciding on the individual participants, the researcher had to consider who would most likely contribute appropriate and rich data, both in terms of relevance and depth. Furthermore, the researcher considered the administrative and/or political position that each stakeholder held within the Municipality and in the eThekwini Local House of Traditional Leaders.

Each of the chosen participants received a letter of Informed Consent explaining the purpose of the study, procedures, duration, that participation in the study was voluntary, and that there would be no monetary gain. The letter also explained that the participant could withdraw from the research at any time. Each participant had to sign the letter giving informed consent. The letter guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity to participants. The Letters of Informed Consent were explained in IsiZulu for participants who are not English speakers. This was out of consideration for some participants' language preference.

It is accepted that the purposive sampling technique has its shortcomings or limitations. One limiting factor is that another researcher might well choose different elements relating to the criteria for selecting participants, which might not necessarily be the same as the elements selected for this research. Furthermore, the subjectivity in the sample selection is a source of potential bias, and a significant threat to the validity of the research conclusion. Nonetheless, the exploratory nature of the research helps in developing a general understanding of the process, despite the fact one case study is generally a poor basis for generalisation to other institutions (municipalities).

- **Participants**

The MSA No. 32 of 2000 (RSA 2000:18), for instance, identifies "the political structures, administration of the municipality, and community of the municipality". These form part of a municipality and there are political, statutory, and other relationships that exist among these stakeholders within a municipality. The Act and other legislation – the Traditional Leadership & Governance Framework Act (2003) and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act (2005) - highlight how important it is for each of these stakeholders, including traditional leadership of traditional communities as legislated, to participate in the affairs of a municipality. These stakeholders were interviewed as key stakeholders because their perspectives are vital, and each had their own worldviews, which together provided a somewhat holistic view. Therefore, their views were obtained on issues wherein they are themselves participating.

Taking into consideration the above points, the researcher conducted interviews with the following seventeen key stakeholders in order to understand the process holistically. It is important to state that the number of key stakeholders that were interviewed should not be an issue as the case study method ensured an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon rather than a large sample for the study. The sample was as follows:

- Three[1] of eleven members of the eThekwini Municipality's Executive Committee representing different political parties represented in the eThekwini Executive Committee. The interviews with these members were conducted on the understanding that these members have their political interests in relation to the MIDP and would be likely to respond in line with their political vision;

- Four Executive members and one ordinary member, which made up five members of eleven members of the eThekwini House of Traditional Leaders. The Traditional Leaders were selected because of their understanding of local communities and demands. They can articulate strategies to foster community participation and involvement in the IDP process. The researcher was directed to one ordinary member of the eThekwini House of Traditional Leaders by the Chairperson who said this person was knowledgeable and could be informative because of his legal, educational and professional background; and

- Five[2] Senior Management Officials, which included three of six Deputy City Managers, the Head of the Corporate Policy Unit, the Senior Manager responsible for the Integrated Development Plan, and the Senior Manager responsible for the Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE). The selection of these stakeholders arose out of the understanding that administrative officials have the technical expertise regarding the operational and management of the Municipality and its plans.

- **Research validity**

The issue of validity was a concern, but to enhance the validity of the research the researcher used multiple sources of information. Individual interviews with different key stakeholders in the MIDP process were an effort to broaden the information base, thus ensuring that the views, understanding, and knowledge of key stakeholders in the MIDP process were represented. Further, literature and document reviews to gather theoretical statements were conducted to ensure that the data gathered through the interviews, representing empirical evidence, can be reflected upon, and vice versa. What was of

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[1] Six members of the Executive Committee were to be interviewed but only three made themselves available. The three members interviewed represent three of the four political parties represented in the Executive Committee, which include the majority/ruling party and the official opposition.

[2] Two Deputy City Managers were interviewed because three positions of Deputy City Managers were vacant while one Deputy City Manager was not available for an interview.

significance in terms of validity of evidence is that interview questions to key stakeholders were about their understanding and interpretation of the process, how and why it is a learning process, and the appropriateness, adequacy and relevance of platforms used or created for the process. The focus was on obtaining evidence relating to the process and on understanding its meaning – the *what, how* and *why* questions. This is notwithstanding the understanding that there is no completely objective research.

Research interview questions were translated into IsiZulu. Amakhosi were interviewed in isiZulu to ensure that they understood the questions and also to allow the participants to respond freely in their vernacular language. The interviewing was easy, as IsiZulu is the first language for the researcher.

While the data was being collected, the researcher began to analyse and decide how the research would be used. The process of analysis was defined or determined for the research and is explained below.

3.5   Methods for data analysis

Thomas (2006:238) states, "the inductive approach is a systematic procedure for analysing qualitative data in which the analysis is likely to be guided by specific evaluation objectives". Thus, in this research, the inductive approach was used as an exploratory-descriptive and interpretative method. This, as Thomas (2006:238) states, "the primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without restraints imposed by structured methodologies". The analysis involved active engagement manually with the data during and after collection with the aim of organizing and interpreting it. Doing this manually was to ensure that data is organised into categories based on the research questions. Similarities and differences in responses are identified as they emerge and redundant statements or those that overlapped with others were removed, leaving the key perspectives of each category of key stakeholders and nothing was overlooked.

The choice to engage with data during and after data collection was because the processes of data collection and analysis influence one another, and the analysis was on-going. Accordingly, while the data was being collected, preliminary comparisons, and interpretations were made of the data collected through the reviews with the participants' perspectives. The perspectives of each participant were juxtaposed against those of other key participants in the process, documented and analysed. Patterns and categories emerged as

the researcher reflected on the data, while questioning and searching for the detail and accuracy demanded by an inductive approach. This occurred as the researcher reread or studied the transcripts, went through the literature and document reviews, and repeatedly listened to the recorded interviews.

The questioning and searching, stated above, arose out of the understanding that "learning is the process of linking, expanding, and improving data, information, knowledge, and wisdom" (Bierly et al. 2000:597). This highlights the complexity and dynamism of the process and therefore, how the process can rarely be clear-cut, straightforward, and linear. Consequently, a systems thinking perspective was used to explore how the formulation of the MIDP is a learning process within a Local Government system. Making use of this perspective the researcher reflected on how the process brings about synthesis or integration.

The researcher kept in mind that organisational learning may be at two levels: single-loop learning which 'within a given framework' or double-loop learning which is 'changing the framework' (Bierly et al. 2000:598). Single-loop learning refers to the level of learning whereby there is "responding to changes in the environment without changing the core set of organizational norms", and double-loop learning refers to "learning responding to changes in the environment by changing the core set of organizational norms and assumptions [or framework]" (Bierly et al. 2000:597-598). Double-loop learning results in an understanding, constructing and deepening of meaning in the process. It is important to note that a number of contributory factors may be at play. Thus, the process should be explored and understood in context and in an holistic manner. Prior knowledge of the process was interpreted, tested, modified and changed during the research activities

From literature reviews and research questions, issues for consideration were identified and formulated. These acted as references during data collection and analysis. Because such tentative categories of data were developed and revised, both as the data were being collected and after the data collection, interview recordings were listened to several times. The interviews, most of which included recorded text that had been transcribed verbatim, were reread to establish any patterns and themes, identifying different topics. During these times, the data from the literature and document reviews were reflected on to determine whether or not there were any alternative explanations. This provided insights into the MIDP process as a learning process, thus developing inferences for empirical reality.

While the researcher was embarking on the data analysis, the research questions remained a foundation and reference point to ascertain and confirm whether the data being gathered

were answering the questions. At all times, connections or relationships between the data and the research questions were explored. Data analysis started with specific data and identified perspectives or understanding of key stakeholders of the MIDP process from the data. More general ideas/ concepts /understanding emerged and these represented categories of data that related to attributed meaning or directly to the research questions. The focus remained on responses that were of interest to the research and on answering the *what, how* and *why* research questions. Thus, transcriptions of the audio data were largely organised in relation to the research questions. In addition, explanations were sought as to why participants held particular viewpoints, what was said and how it was said; how the process embarked upon was described, and what data supported this; and what other factors might have contributed to this situation.

The researcher reflected on what was learnt during the review of literature and documents, along with data collected through the interviews in relation to the research questions. Perspectives of stakeholders in response to the research questions were presented in relation to the offices and institutions that each stakeholder represents. This type of presentation was chosen in order to capture their understanding of how the MIDP process is a learning process that can bring about systemic change.

3.6   Concluding remarks

This chapter presented the qualitative research design and methodology employed during this research. The theoretical-qualitative paradigm or approach as a research design was followed to contextualise the interpretation and understanding of how the MIDP process is a learning process.

The case study method was followed with eThekwini Municipality as a case study. This approach provided understanding of the process in context.

The research methodology focused on the use of multiple sources in collecting data to describe phenomena, while presenting the perspectives of different stakeholders as these related to the MIDP process. Research data were collected by reading the writings of others, studying documents relating to the research topic and related areas of interest and through interviewing key participants in the MIDP process.

Literature and documents relating to the MIDP process were considered from the strategic development planning perspective and related research areas. The documents review started

with International, National and Provincial Legislative and policy frameworks and narrowed down to focus on eThekwini Municipality as a case study.

While the research addressed the *what* questions mainly through a descriptive presentation of the case study in Chapter 4, the focus of the analysis was on the *why* and *how* questions and these are all mirrored in the perspectives or perceptions of different stakeholders of the MIDP process as learning, This is discussed in Chapter 5. This was done to obtain the insider's perspective of the process from key stakeholders within the process. Choosing key stakeholders as interview participants was a natural choice, as these key stakeholders should understand the process and the implications thereof. The key stakeholders are key informants as they are knowledgeable and supposedly well-informed about the MIDP process.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CASE STUDY

4.1   Introduction

Having presented the literature review in Chapter 2, which is the theoretical review or exposition on the subject matter, this chapter presents the context and the background to eThekwini Municipality and its strategic development planning. The chapter presents International, National, Provincial legislative, and policy frameworks that guide local government in development planning; the contextual framework of eThekwini, including the profile of the eThekwini Municipality, and the framework policies and strategies developed by the Municipality to further stakeholder participation its affairs.

This descriptive presentation of the International, National and Provincial legislative and policy frameworks, profile of eThekwini Municipality and its strategies provides means of understanding the *what* and *how* the MIDP process can be defined from the systems thinking perspective. The presentation of the policy frameworks and strategies in this manner is important as it sets the scene for the critical analysis and engagement with the IDP process in eThekwini. In this regard, it was unavoidable that a number of documents relating to the eThekwini Municipal stakeholder participation in the IDP process were also reviewed and their thrust presented in a descriptive manner.

The review of government policy frameworks and organisational materials explores what has been documented. It also reflects how the process of MIDP has been guided, how the guidance of the process has ensured that there is delivery of municipal services, that there is socio-economic development within a municipality; that development is undertaken in a manner that promotes democracy; and that it responds to identified community needs.

Key National, Provincial and Local Governments prescripts or legislations and policy frameworks were reviewed, as said above, for better understanding of the process and the context. This is important, because the MIDP also has to be aligned to the International, National and Provincial imperatives for coordinated and sustainable service delivery. In this instance, the National and Provincial frameworks post-1994, which is the year South Africa attained its independence from the repressive apartheid system, are reviewed.

4.2   National and Provincial Frameworks to guide Local Government

Since the demise of the Apartheid System in South Africa, the Government of the Republic of South Africa published a number of legislative and policy frameworks post-1994. Some of these frameworks focused on the local sphere of government. These frameworks advocated the notion of holistic and integrated development and called for multi-dimensional approaches to development. Further, the legislations or policies called upon the local level of government to take responsibility for developing local areas. This reflected international thinking, which, according to Schwella (2001:10), was to "enhance the legitimacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of municipal service delivery across the world".

With these changes in legislation or policies in South Africa, a participatory approach was to be the process model.   This was in line with the new developmental role of local government, which Binns and Nel (2002: 922) state is "to build social capital and to generate a sense of common purpose in finding local solutions for sustainability".

Following the participatory process model was meant to ensure that strategies, plans and frameworks developed were geared towards improving the services and quality of life for the citizenry at local government level. This was a shift from the Apartheid era where functions of local government narrowly focussed on the provision of basic services to a minority. This shift also saw local government taking the leadership role towards developing a local government system that is developmentally orientated. By taking the lead, local government had to mobilise resources and forge organisational change (RSA 2000:2). This, according to the MSA of 2000, underpinned the notion of developmental local government.

The need for a change in focus and approach to developmental local government systems is acknowledged in the preamble of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 (RSA 1998:2), which states that:

> *"...past policies have bequeathed a legacy of massive poverty, gross inequalities in municipal services, and disrupted spatial, social and economic environments in which our people continue to live and work".*

Further, the Act also defines the new Local Government Plan process, the IDP, as "a plan aimed at the integrated development and management of a municipal area" (RSA 1998:14). A municipality following the Integrated Development Planning process has to follow a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, and review. It is during the planning phase that a municipality has to develop a framework plan showing how it will use its resources in the

most effective and efficient way to address local delivery issues innovatively. Further, it is at this phase that a municipality formulates its long-term shared vision, sets the mid-term municipal objectives with related targets and indicators, decides on appropriate strategies to address the priority issues and identifies programmes and projects.

A number of National, Provincial and Local legislative and policy frameworks have been put in place, that give context and guidelines to the MIDP process. The MIDP process also gives effect to the frameworks. Each framework is explained briefly in the following sessions in terms of what it states about the IDP process and its importance for local government system of governance or how it has given context to, and/or contributed in guiding, the MIDP process.

4.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 108 of 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996, is the supreme piece of legislation in the South Africa. The Constitution calls for the establishment of municipalities, as the local sphere of government for the whole of the territory of the Republic (RSA 1996b: 84). It defines the objectives of local government and the duties of a municipality in Sections 152 and 153 (a-b) of the Act respectively.

The objectives of local government are defined as, among others, to "ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; promote social and economic development; and encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of Local Government" (RSA 1996b: 84). This is a departure from the Apartheid System wherein local government focused on traditional local government functions and played a "minimal developmental or redistributive role" (Pycroft 1998:155).

One of the new developmental duties of a municipality is defined as to "structure and manage its administration, and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community" (RSA 1996b: 85). This new constitutional order provided for municipal planning and entrenched the developmental responsibility of a municipality.

The municipal planning is meant to ensure that citizens, within the locality of a municipality, have access to basic services, that municipalities deal with issues of poverty and inequality, and that they promote local economic development. This placed the responsibility of

ensuring that there is socio-economic development within a locality squarely on a municipality.

With such a responsibility, the MIDP became the strategic planning and development framework for municipalities to fulfil this role. The IDP became the tool to define socio-economic developmental priorities and strategies, as well as to determine how a municipality will use its development resources to guarantee that they are managed efficiently with no wasteful and duplicate expenditure.

To formulate a policy on what was ordered by the Constitution, a White Paper on Local Government of 1998 was developed. The White Paper was to plot the way forward to ensure that there is a shift from an undemocratic and non-developmental system of government to a democratic and developmental government.

4.2.2   White Paper on Local Government of 1998

The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 laid a foundation for the developmental local government system. The new approach of governance was seen as a 'strategic re-conceptualisation' of the local government system in South Africa (Schmidt 2008:121). Municipalities, as the local sphere of government, have to be developmental and therefore, have to be "committed to working with citizens, groups and communities to create sustainable human settlements which provide for a decent quality of life and meet the social, economic and material needs of communities in a holistic way" (DPLG 1998:8).

The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 (DPLG 1998:26) outlines the Government's intention for local government, which is to "become more strategic, visionary and ultimately influential in the way they operate". The Act sees the role of municipalities in developing policies, thinking and being innovative while ensuring that that there are institutions of local democracy. Further, the Act also sees the municipalities as mobilisers of resources, which will ensure that government meets the basic needs of citizens and achieves its developmental goals.

The concept of developmental local government is defined in the White Paper on Local Government (DPLG 1998:23), which has four interrelated characteristics:

- *maximising social development and economic growth;*
- *integrating and coordinating;*
- *democratising development; and*

- *leading and learning.*

Further, the White Paper promotes a need for the development of integrated frameworks to guide various processes that a municipality has to embark on. Integration became a centre point of the IDP as different sectoral plans, such as the Spatial Development and Local Economic Development Plans, are to be consolidated into one strategic development plan, the IDP. Consolidation of plans is undertaken with an aim of developing a shared development vision for the area and to develop strategies to realise the vision in partnership with the local community and other stakeholders.

To ensure that municipalities conform to the new strategic development planning approach envisaged in the Constitution and White Paper on Local Government, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (MSA) was passed in year 2000 by the democratic government of the Republic of South Africa. The MSA was to direct and guide municipalities when developing their Integrated Development Plans, the principal strategic planning instruments that guide and inform all areas of development within a locality.

4.2.3 Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

4.2.3 (a) The aim of the MIDP process

The former Minister of the Department of Provincial and Local Government, Mr Sydney Mufamadi, defined "the IDP process [as a means] to arrive at decisions on issues [at the municipal level] ...in a consultative, systematic and strategic manner" (DPLG 2001:2). The aim of the IDP is "to provide vision, leadership and direction for all those that have a role to play in the development of a municipal area" (DPLG 2001:5). The IDP is about integration, co-ordination, interventions targeting specific aspects of human need and "planning to address local development issues "(DPLG 2001:5). The plans are to be relevant to particular local priority issues

The IDP process is said to be a critical decision-making mechanism about service delivery and policy on governance of a municipality. Therefore, stakeholders are to give their input into the integrated development plan and thus ensure that a municipality incorporates developmental needs of the people. The IDP Guide packs, developed by the then Department of Provincial and Local Government in 2001, guide municipalities in their processes of formulating their IDPs. For instance, Guide Pack III gives the methodology for developing an IDP whereas Guide pack IV deals with "tools" that can be used to achieve this. The

packs assist with procedures and methods for the public and stakeholder participation in the IDP process, the gathering of the appropriate data for an IDP and the strategic planning process of an IDP.

The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000 cemented the notion that municipal planning is important to ensure that there is a developmental local government. Thus, the MSA (RSA 2000:2) states, in its introduction, that it is formulated "to establish a simple and enabling framework for core processes of planning, performance management, resources mobilisation, and organizational change". This, in essence, highlights the importance of, and emphasis on the developmental government system, which in Section 23(1) of the MSA is linked to Sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as stated above.

The MSA defines the MIDP as "the primary strategic planning instrument for a municipality, which "guides and informs all planning and development, and all decisions with regard to planning, management and development in the Municipality" (RSA 2000:44).   It is also defined as "a single, inclusive, and strategic plan for the development of the municipality" (RSA 2000:36). Each municipality has to develop an IDP and, according to the MSA (RSA 2000:38), the IDP should reflect the following:

- the long term developmental vision of the municipality as determined by the needs of the community through consultation;
- the situational analysis, assessment of the existing level of development in the municipality to understand the current reality;
- development priorities, objectives, development and operational strategies formulated; and
- a development framework and plans with timeframes to implement and monitor projects and programmes, and the impact and performance thereof.

4.2.3 (b) The Process plan

The MSA (RSA 2000: 40) stipulates that municipalities are to undertake an integrated development plan process at the commencement of every 5-year Municipal Council term and review this annually. Section 28 (1) (RSA 2000:40). of the MSA states that "each municipal council...must adopt a process set out in writing to guide the planning, drafting, adoption and review of its integrated development plan", similar to eThekwini Municipality, as presented

in Table 4-1. The process plan is a regulatory plan, which set out mandatory steps and timeframes for the process that a municipality has to embark upon in formulating the IDP. This is "to ensure certain minimum quality standard of the IDP process and proper coordination between and within the spheres of Government" (DPLG 2001c: 4). This is why the process has to be submitted to MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Moreover, the submission is mandatory because the IDP informs the local government system of what the Municiipality will do and how the performance of the Municipality will be monitored and evaluated, and how the budget of the Municipality will be administered in the coming years.

Further, the MSA specifies areas of consideration in the adoption of the IDP process. Section 28 of the MSA (RSA 2000:40) states that the adoption of the process should take place after the local community has been notified of and consulted over the process that the Municipality intends to follow using appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures. The process plan is communicated to the local community through the media as required in Section 21(1) of MSA (RSA 2000:32-34). This is to ensure that the community or community organisations and other stakeholders are aware of the process or are properly informed about processes and issues for discussion. Furthermore, they are afforded an opportunity to comment on the process plan that is to guide the IDP process before it is adopted. This is important for this research as it is in the process plan that the platforms created, or to be used for, stakeholder participation in the MIDP process are outlined. This is in line with Section 18(1) of the MSA (RSA 2000: 32) that states that "a municipality must communicate to its community, information concerning the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation".

Understanding the process plan is vital for participants and for this research because it is in the process plan that participants become aware of the established mechanisms, processes and procedures that would be used or created to allow for consultation and participation of the local community regarding their developmental needs and priorities (RSA 2000:30). Some of these mechanisms, processes and procedures are mentioned in Section 17 (1-2) as being political structures and councillors, public meetings and hearings, consultative sessions, and others that are important for local communities and other stakeholders (RSA 2000:30).

Thus, the process plan becomes a guide in terms of how "the local community... organs of the state, including traditional authorities, and other role players [are to be consulted in the

process of] drafting of the integrated development plan" (RSA 2000:40). The process follows a predetermined programme with specified timeframes for the different steps, which are highlighted in table 4-1 below.

The process plan highlights the core components of the IDP as indicated in Section 26 of the Municipal Systems, which include: the municipal vision, identification of communities' needs, development priorities and objectives, development strategies, operational plan, financial plan and key performance indicators and targets as components. The plan also refers to Section 28 of the MSA, which states that appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures are to be used when consulting the local community before the adoption of the process. The local community must be notified before the MIDP process commences.

- **Phases of the process plan**

    There are four phases to the formulation of the IDP. The first phase is the preparation phase wherein a draft process plan is tabled in the Municipal Council for noting and has to be sent to the Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). The draft process plan is then advertised for public and other stakeholders' comments. It is during this phase that the public and other stakeholders get to know about the process that will be followed for consultation or for participation in the IDP process. This is an opportune time for stakeholders to have their say in terms of how they are to be engaged.

The second phase is the strategies phase. This phase is when different stakeholders are given an opportunity to influence what should be the strategies that the Municipality has to adoption in pursuit of the aspirations and demands of the stakeholders of a local government entity. Citizens, who are identified as one of the key stakeholders to be involved in terms of Section 29(1) (b) of MSA, are consulted or engaged at zone level whereas senior Municipal Officials referred to in terms of Section 35 (1) (a) of MSA, are engaged at Strategic Issues Workshops. During this phase, a draft Municipal strategy is created outlining, Objectives, Key Performance Areas, Key Performance Indicators and targets that are agreed upon or that are to influence the budget. The first draft of the IDP is presented to the Deputy City Managers' Forum, then to Executive Committee of the Municipality before it is presented to the Full Municipal Council in terms of Section 29(a) and 31(a-c) of the MSA.

2011/2012 IDP Process Plan

Month	Activities
July 2010	Summary of IDP 2010-11 prepared in plain English and isiZulu
	Plain English and isiZulu IDPs printed and distributed
	Advertised Process Plan in local press, website and notice boards
August 2010	Draft a Public Participation Plan for Internal and external stakeholders. commences
	Present Participation Strategy to EXCO
	Technical Review of IDP by Officials commences.
	Strategic Issues Workshop with Senior Municipal Officials
September 2010	IDP Strategic Planning Indaba with DTLGA
	Prepare First draft 2011/12 IDP based on Strategic Issues Workshop
October 2010	Present First Draft to EXCO and Full Council for "Noting of Progress"
November 2010	Councillors Workshops on Strategic Issues
December 2010	Strategic workshop with Plan Owners and Plan Representatives
January 2011	Complete Second Draft of 2011/12 IDP
	Commence Public Participation Process
February 2011	Continue with Public Participation
	Prepare Public Participation Report
	Prepare Third Draft based on Public Comment
March 2011	IDP Draft 3 and Public Participation Report to be tabled at EXCO
	IDP Draft 3 and Public Participation Report to be tabled at Council
	Advertisements Third Draft IDP in press for public comment within 14 days
	Draft 2 IDP to be submitted to MEC for Local Government
April 2011	Public Comment Period for Third Draft IDP
	Present Draft IDP at Cluster Budget Hearings
	Present Draft IDP at Regional Budget Hearings
	Present IDP to Newly Inducted Councillors
May 2011	Draft 2012/13 Process Plan
	Fourth draft 2011/12 IDP Review to be completed
	DCM review of IDP
June 2011	Fifth draft 2011/12 IDP Review to be completed
	Reviewed IDP Draft 5 to be tabled at EXCO
	Reviewed IDP Draft 5 to be tabled at Council
	Adopted 2011/12 IDP to be submitted to MEC for Local Government
	Summary of 2011/12 IDP prepared in plain English and isiZulu

Table 4-1: eThekwini Municipality's Process Plan

Source: eThekwini Municipality's Corporate Policy Unit.

The third integration phase is when programmes and projects are confirmed with external stakeholders. Plans and frameworks are developed and reviewed. This phase sees a second draft IDP presented to a municipality before it is submitted to Council and to the Provincial Government. Public notices are made for the public and other stakeholders to comment on the draft IDP. The public and other stakeholders' comments and input are considered before the third draft IDP is prepared. Sector Forums with National and Provincial Sector Departments are held and the third draft is presented at Cluster and regional meetings.

As presented above, the process gives an opportunity to comment on the draft process plan but does not really allow all stakeholders to determine their preferred channels of communication or platforms for engagement during the IDP process. Nevertheless, the fourth draft is prepared based on the public comments from the regional, cluster hearings and COGTA assessment feedback. The draft is then tabled at EXCO and then at Full Council for adoption.

- **Stakeholder involvement**

By developing and following this plan, eThekwini Municipality follows the prescription of the legislative framework. Further, the Municipality does, in some measure, give an opportunity for the public to influence the process when it invites the public to comment on the draft process plan before the full Municipal Council approves it. This is to meet the legislative requirement. Besides, the process plan details mechanisms for stakeholders' participation in the IDP process. This ensures that the IDP process takes place in a planned environment and different stakeholders have an opportunity to channel their issues in single-built mechanisms. The mechanism will help in channelling thousands of voices through purpose-created platforms for these to be part of the strategic development plan.

How stakeholders participate in the IDP process is of significance to this research and of importance to democratic government, as it is emphasised in Chapter 4 of the MSA that municipalities are to develop a culture of community participation. Thus, Section 17(2) of the MSA highlights "public meetings and hearings [, and] consultative sessions [as] mechanisms, processes and procedure to enable [not just] the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality ...[but] also locally organised community organisations and traditional authorities [(councils)]". In addition to these mechanisms and processes, Section 17(1) states how "through political structures...; other appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures established by the Municipality; councillors ...the local community [can also]

participate in the affairs of the municipality" (RSA 2000:30). The availability of these mechanisms and processes for participation is important, considering Section 29 (1)(c-d) of the MSA. The Act states that the IDP process should "provide for the identification of all plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of National and Provincial legislation, and be consistent with any other matters that may be prescribed by regulation" (RSA 2000:40).

The importance of participation of traditional authorities, now known as traditional councils, and traditional leadership in the affairs of the municipality is not only highlighted in the MSA but in National and Provincial legislations dealing with issues pertaining to traditional leadership and governance.

4.2.4   Traditional Leadership & Governance Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003

The Traditional Leadership & Governance Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003, in Section 4(1)(d), highlights the need for Traditional Councils, in which Traditional Leaders are chairpersons, to facilitate "the involvement of the traditional community in the development or amendment of the Integrated Development Plan of a Municipality in whose area that community resides"(RSA 2003:10). The involvement of traditional communities either through their own representation or appropriate developed structures, such as local houses of traditional leaders, can provide an opportunity for these communities "to advise the district municipality or metropolitan municipality [, like eThekwini Municipality in this instance] on the development of planning frameworks that impact on traditional communities" (RSA 2003:24). The MIDP is one such framework, which determines what, and how a locality would be developed and services delivered. Therefore, traditional leadership should be involved as stated in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Act (RSA 2003:10), that one of the functions of the traditional councils as to support "municipalities in the identification of community needs".

Since the Province of KwaZulu-Natal has about 300 traditional leaders overseeing a number of traditional communities, it decided to develop its own legislation with specificity to the Province.

4.2.5 KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act, No 5. of 2005

The KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act 5 of 2005 is not significantly different from the national Traditional Leadership & Governance Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003, as it reiterates what is stated in the national legislation about the functions of traditional councils in the IDP process. In Section 8 (1) (d), the provincial legislation it states that the traditional councils are "to facilitate the involvement of the traditional community in the development or amendment of the integrated development plan of a municipality in whose areas that community resides" (KZN 2005:13). Further, in Section 8(1(h), it also gives the function of promoting "the ideals of cooperative governance, integrated development planning, sustainable development, and service delivery" to the Traditional Councils (KZN 2005:13).

What has been stated in the above legislation is important as it sets the scene for *what, how* and *why* local government has followed certain routes in their endeavour to develop the MIDP: what mechanisms and processes the municipality had to use or create to engage stakeholders in the process of developing the MIDP. Furthermore, the municipality, in so doing, is fulfilling its mandate as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, while also complying with legislation enacted to guide the municipality in formulating its strategic plan for socio-economic development of areas under its jurisdiction.

The following sections give a brief profile of the eThekwini Municipality and different guiding documents that have been developed by the Municipality to guide or direct the Municipality to achieve sustainable socio-economic development of eThekwini.

4.4   eThekwini Contextual Framework

4.4.1 Profile of the eThekwini Municipality

According to the Draft Integrated Development Plan 2012/13 to 2017/17, "The eThekwini Municipality is located on the east coast of South Africa in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal" and it covers "an area of approximately 2297 km²" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:17). Figure 4-1 shows eThekwini Spatial Regions with Tongaat in the North, Umkomaas in the South, coastline the East and Cato Ridge in the West (eThekwini Municipality 2012b:30).

EThekwini Municipality is the authority that presides over the eThekwini Municipal Area including the City of Durban. The present Municipality was established after the 2000 demarcation, which increased the boundary of the previous Durban Metropolitan Area by 68% (eThekwini Municipality 2003: 1). During this consolidation, the Municipal Council brought together seven local councils that were administered by a number of entities, as well as Transitional Local Council portions of former Ilembe and Ndlovu Regional Councils (eThekwini Municipality 2012b:19). This process also saw a number of rural, semi-rural and semi-urban areas being incorporated into eThekwini Municipal Area (EMA). The rural areas are now about 67 percent of the spatial footprint of the Municipality. The incorporation of rural areas also brought about the dual leadership system where the elected municipal politicians and traditional leaders were to work side by side to ensure that there is development in traditional communities within the eThekwini Municipal Area.

- **Census Data**

According to Census 2011, the eThekwini Municipal Area is a cosmopolitan society with a population of about 3.44 million people. One third (34%) of the population of Province of KwaZulu-Natal resides in eThekwini (Census 2011). The population of eThekwini is racially and culturally diverse, with influences from Africa, Asia and Europe (eThekwini Municipality 2003:1). This "diverse society faces various social, economic, environmental and governance challenges" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:17). Moreover, the approximate 2297km² Municipal Area has physical and spatial characteristics, which are a challenge; for example, the topography of many of the areas is an obstacle to development in that it makes it more costly and difficult. The spatial structure imposes high social and economic costs on many black people of eThekwini, as they are located in areas far from places of work and recreation, and on non-arable land.

The IDP of the eThekwini Municipality highlights eThekwini as the economic powerhouse of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, as it "comprises 65.5% of KwaZulu-Natal's GDP" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:18). The Municipality also plays a major role in the South African economy, as it comprises "10.7% of the country's GDP as a whole" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:18). It is well positioned as a port city, which is said to have the busiest container terminal in Africa. It is seen as the central engine of the regional economy as it comprises the second largest industrial area in South Africa, the third largest economic centre in South Africa, and has Africa's first multimodal logistics platform and an international passenger airport.

EThekwini has a history of uneven distribution of resources, which resulted in various parts being developed in different ways. The areas that were more affected were the townships and rural areas, and the Municipality has been working hard to improve these areas. Thus, the Municipality has existing backlogs in the following basic services: water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal and roads. It estimates that it will take the Municipality between 14 years and 103 years to address the existing basic services backlogs (eThekwini Municipality 2012a: 27). The Municipality admits that, even though it has gone some way in addressing the service delivery backlogs, they seem to be growing every year as new demands are made.

- **EThekwini Municipality's quality of life surveys**

Since 1998, eThekwini Municipality undertakes annually a sampled survey wherein in-depth interviews with the public and community representatives; focus group interviews with some members of the public and structured questionnaire interviews are carried out in some individual households of eThekwini Municipality. These surveys have been used to ascertain, among other things, to what extent the residents and communities of eThekwini are satisfied with their quality of life, and what their needs, problems, and aspirations are. The residents answer questions relating to "employment and business opportunities, health and fitness, general happiness and adequate housing" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:39) . In the survey, residents of eThekwini have opportunities to state their opinions on municipal services and their living conditions. The survey is to assist in the prioritisation of development within a Municipal Area. Surveys provide a platform for residents to voice their needs to the Municipality. Respondents to the survey were households in 40 different areas of eThekwini. The findings of the survey are incoporated as part of the situational analysis in the MIDP..

Such understanding is important for eThekwini Municipality as the satisfaction of residents and communities can be impacted by their access to municipal basic household services and facilities, economic conditions and standard of living, among other aspects. Provision of basic household services and facilities is a core mandate of the Municipality. Table 4-2 below highlights residents and communities' satisfaction with their lives over the years, starting from the 1998 survey.

4.4.2 eThekwini Municipality's Long Term Development Framework

For eThekwini Municipality to be a responsive local government entity and to ensure sustainability in all its facets, it developed a Long-Term Development Framework with Vision 2020, which was adopted in 2001. The development of the Framework and Vision was to ensure that the Municipality has Long-Term Development objectives to guide its strategic plan; the MIDP.

Further, the Framework and Municipal Vision ensures that the development and management thereof is such that eThekwini becomes mindful of its short- and long-term goals. The envisaged future of eThekwini is that of becoming safe, accessible, environmentally sustainable, socially cohesive, and financially sustainable and in a position to create sustainable livelihoods (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:46).

The Long Term Development Framework (LTDF) and the Long Term Vision 2020 developed and adopted by eThekwini Municipality in 2001 focuses on planning. It details how the Municipality is to respond in a sustainable way to developmental challenges in the future. The framework allows for continuity between each of the 5-year IDP cycles.

The LTDF was revised and adopted by Council in January 2010. The span of the Vision of eThekwini Municipal Council was changed from 2020 to 2030 in 2012 for it to be in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) timeframe. The Vision states: "By 2030 the eThekwini Municipal Area will enjoy the reputation of being Africa's most caring and liveable city, where all citizens live in harmony" (EThekwini Municipality 2012a:42).

The Framework maps out the strategic vision and priorities of the eThekwini Municipal Area to year 2030. The LTDF identifies a number of developmental challenges that the Municipality has to address to improve the quality of life of communities and other stakeholders within the municipal area. These challenges are how to meet basic needs, how to remove the legacy of Apartheid, how to strengthen the economy by building on our strengths, and how to build skills and technology for the future.

The development of the LTDF is the result of stakeholders' engagement and involvement. The process involved meetings, consultation sessions, focus group discussions and other methods of engagement. The LTDF guides the development and reviews of the MIDP, the 5-

year strategic plan of the Municipality. It also serves as a frame of reference during the IDP process.
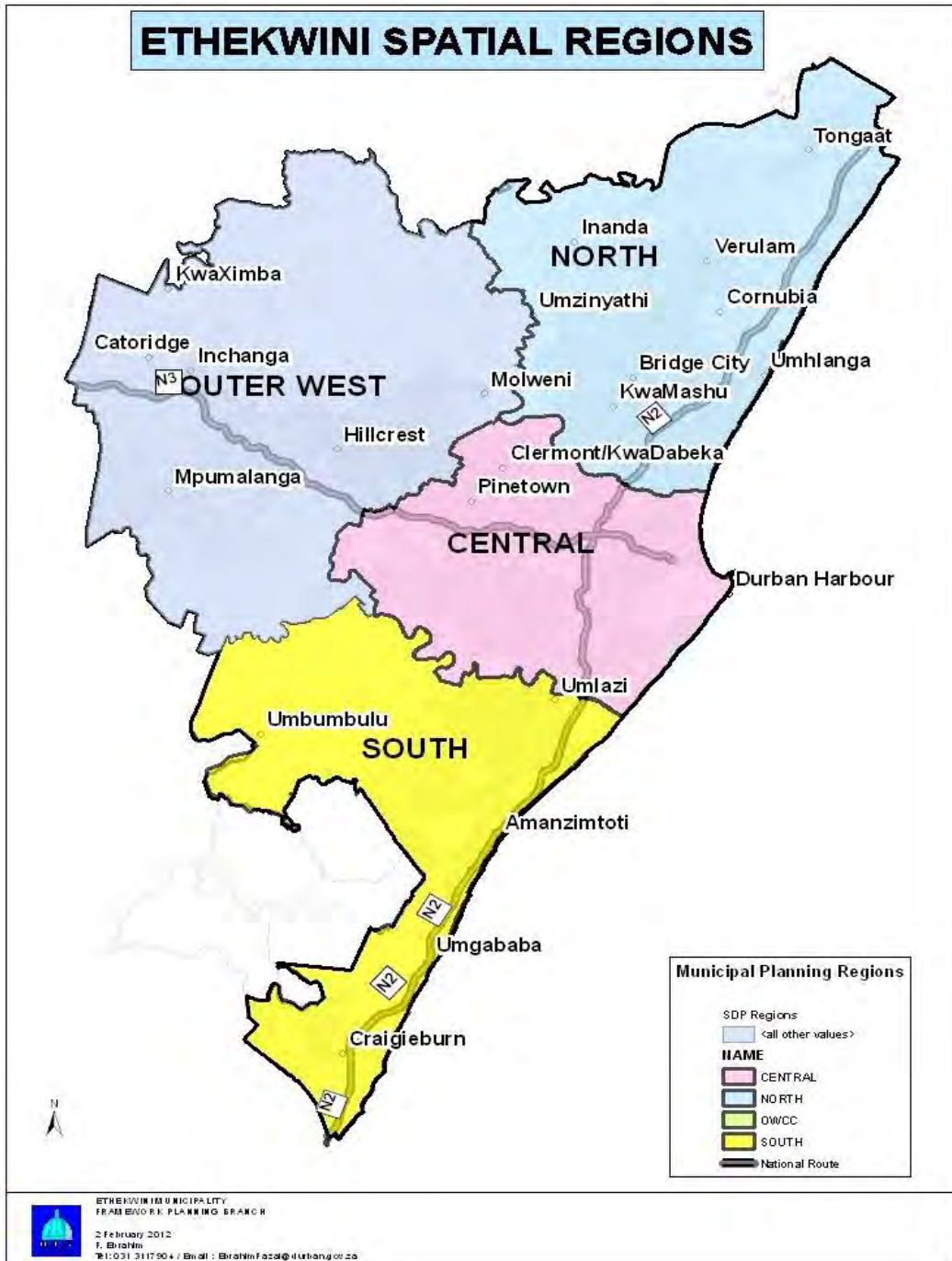
Figure 4-1: EThekwini Spatial Regions
Source: eThekwini Municipality's Development and Environment Management Unit

Years	Overall Life Satisfaction (%)		
	Satisfied/Very Satisfied	Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied	Indifferent
1998 – 2002	40%	30%	9%
2002 - 2004	40%	29%	31%
2004 -2005	39%	35%	26%
2006	No quality of Life survey done		
2007 - 2008	38%	23%	39%
2008 - 2009	36%	28%	35%
2009 - 2010	32%	31%	37%
2010 - 2011	25%	35%	41%
2011 - 2012	42.3%	19.8%	37.9%

Table 4-2: General Satisfaction with Quality of Life by eThekwini residents
Source: eThekwini Municipality Corporate Policy Unit

4.4.3   eThekwini Municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

The development of a MIDP is a statutory requirement for all municipalities in terms of the MSA No. 32 of 2000. A strategic framework gives directions to solutions instead of being a prescriptive and rigid blueprint for action. It is an holistic and result-based approach. The focus is on the process as well as the product. The responsibility of the IDP rests with the Office of the City/Municipal Manager for it to be effectively managed. In fact, the IDP forms the basis of the City/Municipal Manager's 5-year performance management contract.

The IDP strategic approach ensures that "the Municipality is a more responsive, efficient, effective and accountable" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:8). The process furthers the local

democracy and local governance, which is of importance in South Africa as citizens have a democratic right to be part of such processes. Therefore, the IDP is "a tool for transforming local governments towards facilitation and management of development within their areas of jurisdiction" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:8). Furthermore, embarking on the IDP process is a way for local government to ensure that development planning, within the locality, happens in an integrated manner and all developmental needs of local communities and area are structured and prioritised.

4.4.3 (a)   The content of the IDP

Bryson (2004:6) sees strategic planning as a process that is about "what an organisation is, what it does, and why it does it". Thus, there are sections in the eThekwini MIDP which are of significance to the planning process and to the platforms used. Some of these sections demonstrate how the IDP process as a planning tool is more of a synthesis than an analysis. Further,it envisages the MIDP process as a continuing process. For Bryson (2004:11) the benefit is "the promotion of strategic thinking, acting, and learning, especially through dialogue and strategic conversation among key actors". This is important when considering that local government operates in a dynamic and changing environment, and that stakeholder engagement has to happen all the time. Furthermore, different mechanisms and measures have to be used to plan for responses to the service delivery issues and demands. These mechanisms and measures should follow an holistic approach or view (big picture approach) and should promote public interest and active participation by all stakeholders.

- **The municipal vision**

EThekwini Municipality has developed its vision (as stated above) that "by 2030, eThekwini Municipality will enjoy the reputation of being Africa's most caring and liveable City, where all citizens live in harmony" (EThekwini Municipality, 2012a:42). Programmes and projects implemented in future are to be consistent with and should support the Municipality's vision and development objectives. The main development objective is to ensure that stakeholders have "access to services, in particular municipal, health and education services" among other elements (eThekwini Municipality, 2012a:42).

A number of strategic policies inform the MIDP. The policies include the Millennium Development Goals, National Program of Action and Outcome 9, National Spatial Vision, State of the Nation, KwaZulu Natal Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, KwaZulu Natal Provincial Priorities, State of the Province, KwaZulu Natal Provincial Spatial

Economic Development Strategy, Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework, Infrastructure Sector Plans and Community Access Model (eThekwini Municipality, 2012a: 36). This ensures that an holistic view or approach is taken.

- **The eThekwini Municipality's IDP Eight-Point Plan**

The eThekwini Municipality's leadership, in consultation with other stakeholders, identified the strategic priority areas. The areas ensure that the Municipality addresses the development challenges within its area of jurisdiction. The areas are also to achieve the vision of the Municipality of being Africa' most caring and liveable city. Furthermore, the areas are aligned with long term strategic priorities, which are set out in the Long-Term Development Framework Plan of the Municipality.

The Eight-point plan are:s
  - *Develop[ing]and sustain[ing]our spatial, natural and built environment;*
  - *developing a prosperous, diverse economy and employment creation;*
  - *creating a quality living environment;*
  - *fostering a socially equitable environment ;*
  - *creating a platform for growth, empowerment and skills development;*
  - *embracing our cultural diversity, arts and heritage;*
  - *[ensuring]good governance and responsive local government; and*
  - *[managing] a financially accountable and sustainable city. (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:48)*

Each of these plans has an owner and representatives within the Municipal Structure. A strategic workshop is held with these plan owners and representatives. The workshop gives the plan owners and representatives a chance to discuss and to give input on their respective plans. It is at this stage when the institutional plan of the Municipality is refined to deliver on the municipal strategy. This is a project phase where IDP priorities are set and agreed upon.

Through the 8-Point plan, the municipality facilitates and ensures the provision of infrastructure, services, and support, thereby creating an enabling environment for all citizens to utilise their full potential and to access opportunities. This in turn empowers the citizenry to contribute towards a vibrant and sustainable economy and thereby towards creating a better quality of life for all.

The 8-Point Plan reflects on the national key performance areas of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. As such the Municipality allocates its capital budget in accordance with the plan. Therefore, the success of this approach is in "ensuring that the Municipality focuses its limited resources on the challenges expressed by the people of eThekwini, aligning with other spheres of government" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:214)

The eThekwini Municipality, as Peter Drucker (1995) points out, acknowledges that its greatest asset is its people. Hence, it strives to ensure that human capital is harnessed and that necessary conditions are created for developing future potential. It also aims at involving them in all development decisions that are aimed at addressing issues of service delivery and economic development. By involving communities and other stakeholders, the Municipality furthers the vision of a developmental local government as stated, in the White Paper on Local Government (1998:8), "which centres on working with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and to improve the quality of their lives". The IDP provides a process, which can make the Municipality to become, as states Binns and Nel (2002:922), "more strategic, visionary and ultimately influences the way [the Municipality] operates".

The process of formulating "the IDP is managed internally through a structured and co-ordinated participation process" (eThekwini Municipality, 2012a:41). There are various forums that are said to be used by the Municipality to engage different stakeholders, including councillors, Ward Committee members, Amakhosi, business and Civil Society (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:41). The involvement of these stakeholders in the IDP process, as acknowledged by the plan, is said to be important, as they are "the key role players with an interest in the integrated development of the Municipality" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:41).

The IDP goes through the cycle and Figure 4-2 below depicts how different stakeholders participate in the process. Further, the process MIDP presented in this Figure highlights the importance of participation of the public, the citizens, community structures, and groups in this MIDP process. It is through such a process that the needs of communities are ascertained. For example, after the establishment of eThekwini Municipality, as a Unicity in 2002, the Municipality embarked on an IDP process in which ward-based mass meetings were held. These workshops presented a list of community needs, which prioritised "housing and household services, safety and security, jobs/economic development, community

infrastructure, and health services", amongst others (eThekwini Municipality 2003:3). The needs listed confirmed the community needs as in the Annual Quality of Life Survey.

In light of the importance of engaging communities and other key stakeholders, eThekwini Municipality developed the Community Participation Policy to guide the Municipality when creating methods, procedures and mechanisms for participation. This is required of the Municipality in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act.
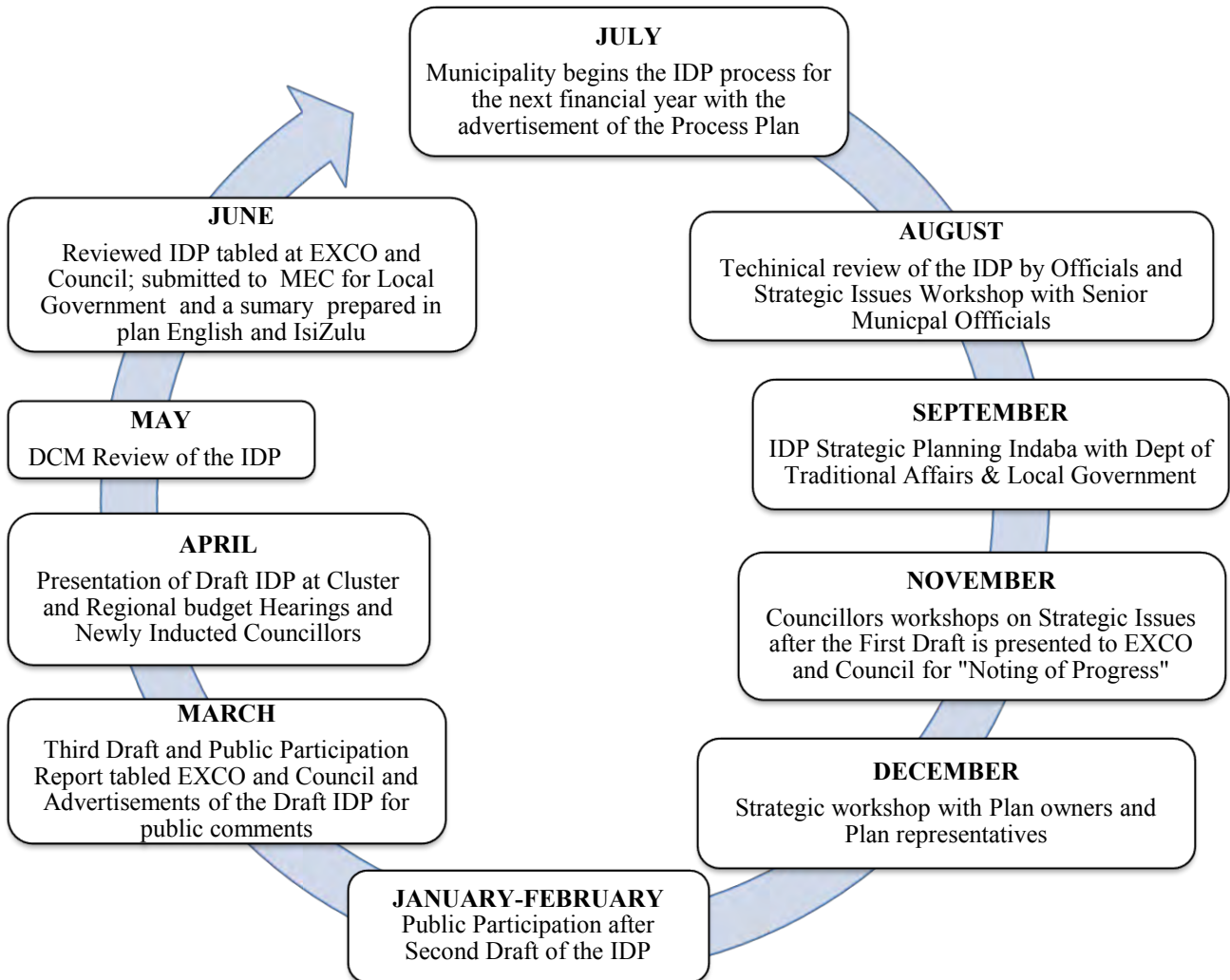
4.4.4   eThekwini Municipality's Community Participation Policy

EThekwini Municipality took a decision in 2006 to formulate a policy that would provide guidelines on how to increase "the level of active citizen participation in the decision-making process of local government" (eThekwini Municipality 2006:14). Community Participation Policy (eThekwini Municipality 2006:14) states aims as "to create an enabling environment for civil society, [especially] ordinary citizens and social groups [to] find platforms upon which [to] voice their concerns and to take part in fundamental decision-making on issues that affect their lives". The Policy (eThekwini Municipality 2006:7) lists different tools and techniques for participation within different aspects of local government. The tools and techniques include different written and face-to-face engagement platforms with citizens. Examples of these tools and techniques are informational brochures, talk shows, interviews, general public surveys, and public hearings.

The eThekwini Community Participation Policy (2006) rests on the principles as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, "which grants all citizens a right to meaningful participation in the [Municipal] affairs, thus a right to shape and determine their own destiny" (eThekwini Municipality 2006:10). The principles that should govern the participation of communities of eThekwini, according to this policy are structured participation, clarity of purpose, commitment, communication, flexibility and responsiveness, timelines, inclusiveness, collaboration and diversity.

Further, the Policy states the levels of participation that communities can participate in over a given issue. Two perspectives of interest to this research are that of "citizens as policy makers and issue framers ... [, and as] vision builders (eThekwini Municipality 2006:20). The former is when communities help in building a vision that defines the desirable future and strategic plan and the latter where they are contributors to the lives of communities by being visionaries (eThekwini Municipality 2006:21). This occurs when citizens articulate their "desirable future and broad strategies to get there as part of community visioning and

strategic planning... active and engaged citizens shall contribute new ideas...” (eThekwini Municipality 2006:21).

Figure 4-2: How stakeholders participate in eThekwini MIDP Process
Source: Developed from eThekwini Municipality, 2011, p. 197

The Policy also details the processes of community participation, which include mere sharing of information (information), obtaining community and public views (consultation), working with the public (involvement), participation in every step of decision-making (participation), and a process where the community carries out decisions and plans (empowerment) (eThekwini Municipality 2006:22-24). For learning during the IDP process, the process should be not just about consulting but also about empowering to ensure the free flow of information and sharing.

In terms of the Policy, the preparation, implementation, and review of the IDP are negotiable. This means that the "eThekwini Municipality shall encourage and create conditions for communities to enter into negotiations in the affairs of the Municipality" (eThekwini Municipality 2006:25).

In ensuring that there is full participation, communication becomes a powerful force that creates an environment where stakeholders know and understand what is happening around them as well as how they can get involved.

4.4.5   eThekwini Municipality's Communications Policy

Communication becomes a strategic element for government as it ensures that government informs, advocates for and engages with citizens. These interactions and processes must be responsive; that is, government must know the citizens' needs and respond to them, thus creating effectiveness through building support and legitimacy for government programmes and projects. For a municipality to know the citizens' needs and to be responsive to them, it has to develop a communications policy as a framework and strategy for implementation.

The Communications Policy of the eThekwini Municipality, adopted by eThekwini Municipality's Full Council in 2009, states that the Municipality is committed to two-way communication. The two-way communication is in relation of the flow of information and knowledge from and to the Municipality. It ensures that the Municipality acknowledges the importance of communications as a strategic management function and that the Municipality keeps its commitment to a transparent and effective relationship with its stakeholders through a process of consultation and information dissemination. According to this policy, it is the responsibility of the Municipality to inform its stakeholders of its programmes, including the IDP process. EThekwini Communications Unit has been tasked with co-ordinating all communications activities and providing communications services, which include providing communications platforms and/or tools for the municipality with the aim of ensuring that there is information sharing even during the IDP process.

Additionally, the policy highlights the need for the Municipality to adhere to its Language Policy, which is based on the Constitution and the MSA of 2000.   This is of importance, as the Municipality has to use the language preferred by residents when communicating. Thus, public information has to be in both English and isiZulu. Further, it must be inclusive, accessible and relevant to stakeholders.

The strategy for implementing a policy is important, which is why eThekwini Municipality developed its Communications Strategy, which will guide and direct the implementation of the Policy.

4.4.6 eThekwini Municipality's Communications Strategy

The Communications Strategy, first adopted by the eThekwini Municipality's full Council in 2009 and reviewed annually, is the cornerstone of the communications plans of eThekwini Municipality. The strategy lists mechanisms for making local government information available and accessible to all stakeholders. Thus, it ensures that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the programmes and projects of the Municipality as they are to be encouraged to participate in the affairs of the Municipality, as stated in Section 152 (1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, and that there is greater understanding of governmental communications. It states how government is to interact with different stakeholders and how the interest of different stakeholders could be generated. It also provides strategic direction and guides the actions of stakeholders. Municipal strategy aims to ensure that there is an effective and efficient communication approach.

The 2012 reviewed Communication Strategy of eThekwini Municipality acknowledges that the Municipality "operates in an environment that is influenced by different interests in which daily personal needs play a significant role in how the public view, approach and respond to certain issues" (eThekwini Municipality 2012c:2). The 2012 reviewed Communications Strategy advocates that the Municipality should be relevant in its communication. Further, it states that the eThekwini Communications Unit, as the Unit responsible for communications within the Municipality, should embark on a mission "to connect the public and other stakeholders with eThekwini Municipality by creating awareness, information sharing and communication for people-centred service delivery" (eThekwini Municipality 2012c:2). This is in response to the Section 6 (2) (d) of the MSA, which states that it is the duty of the Municipal administration to "establish clear relationships, and facilitate co-operation and communication between it and the local community" (RSA 2000:22). This duty is emphasised in the eThekwini MIDP where the Municipality commits to the call for greater community involvement in decision-making.

EThekwini Municipality's 2012 reviewed Communications Strategy also acknowledges that "well-informed residents are more likely to be satisfied with Council services and to be supportive of its work"(eThekwini Municipality 2012c:3). Furthermore, the strategy states "people are unlikely to participate actively in the developmental agenda unless they have

information" (eThekwini Municipality 2012c:3). Effective communication becomes vital if the Municipality is to embark on a participatory Integrated Development Plan. Section 18 (1) of the MSA highlights this and states, "a municipality must communicate to its community information concerning the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation" (RSA 2000: 32).

The Strategy lists a number of communication tools that the Municipality uses to promote and enhance public awareness and understanding of Municipal programmes, including the IDP process. These channels include the Council newspaper – Metro Ezasegagasini, the Council website, the ward committees, the Mayoral Izimbizo, the Masakhane road shows, the IDP Reviews, the use of local commercial and community print, and electronic media and Stakeholder Forums (eThekwini Municipality 2012c:10-11). This research will determine which of these communication channels have been used in the IDP process and what the perspective of the key stakeholders is in terms of their appropriateness, adequacy, and effectiveness.

Besides these legislative and policy frameworks, eThekwini Municipality adopted an IDP strategic approach that ensures that the Long-Term Municipality Vision is aligned with international, national, and provincial development objectives.

4.4.7   International, National and Provincial Development Frameworks

The development of the MIDP gives the Council an opportunity to reassess its development objectives in the context of international, national, and provincial policy frameworks. It also affords the Council an opportunity to align its long-term development objectives, programmes, and projects. This is important if a municipality is to present a holistic outlook in its strategic development plan.

- **Millennium Development Goals**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that the Republic of South Africa signed with 191 other United Nations member states and which they agreed to achieve by 2015. The MDGs is a framework for the entire international community by which the UN member states aim "to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:35). It aims to ensure that "human development reaches everyone, everywhere" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:35). The focus of the MDGs is on three main areas in relation to human development,

which are "bolstering human capital, improving infrastructure, and increasing social, economic, and political rights" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:35).

The Republic of South Africa, as a signatory to the framework, agrees that it will ensure that in its development planning it keeps in mind what has been agreed upon in the MDGs. Thus, development planning and implementation within the boundaries of the Republic should be such that they further or aim to achieve the goals as set out in the Millennium Development Goals framework. The development of the MIDP is no exception to this commitment. This means when developing eThekwini, the Municipal Council has to take into cognisance the objectives of the MDGs.

The MDGs give the international long-term development perspective and goals for governments who are signatories, which they have to pursue and thus consider in their development planning. Each government has its national goals, mainly derived from the winning political party's manifesto, and these goals form part of the national strategic framework. In South Africa, the Medium-Term Strategic Framework gives the national perspective and goals in the medium-term, and municipalities as third tier of government have to consider these in the spirit of cooperative governance.

- **Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2009-2014**

After every General election in South Africa, the new administration coming into office comes with "a new electoral mandate, which defines the strategic objectives and targets of government for the period' of office (RSA 2009:1). The strategic objectives and targets of government are incorporated into the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which is "a statement of intent, identifying the development challenges facing the country and outlining the medium-term strategy for improvements in the life conditions of South Africans" (RSA 2009:1). Coupled with the Medium-Term Strategic Framework, a five-year Medium-Term Expenditure Framework is developed to guide government spending in the ensuing years.

Developing the MTSF, there are a number of reference points, which include electoral mandate and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, among other reference points. One of the electoral mandate objectives relevant to the local sphere of government is to ensure universal access to basic services, which includes electricity, water, and sanitation in decent community settlements. The priority area to give effect to this strategic objective is

"the infrastructure investment programme aimed at expanding and improving social and economic infrastructure to increase access, quality, and reliability of public services" (RSA 2009:16).

In terms of the Medium Term Strategic Framework (RSA 2009:1), "municipalities are expected to adapt their integrated development plans in line with the national medium-term priorities". Each of the priorities contained in the MTSF that are relevant to the local development should be reflected in the IDPs. This is important as "the national agenda should define the common and shared vision for growth and development as a nation" (RSA 2009:5). For South Africa to reach such a state, a process of social dialogue should be pursued within all spheres of government so that an agreement can be reached that would be supported and a commitment is made by all major stakeholders in society.

- **Delivery Agreement: Outcome 9**

In 2010, the South African Government agreed on the delivery agreement that would see the Government focusing its efforts on the 12 outcomes. Each of the outcomes has a delivery agreement reflecting on the Government priorities for a period up to year 2014. The 12 Outcomes are based on the Election Manifesto of the ruling party and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework.

Two of the seven critical issues to address as part of the Outcome 9 – a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system - are to ensure improved access to essential services and to strengthen participatory governance. These two critical issues, and the role and responsibilities defined in the Outcome 9 Delivery Agreement (RSA 2010:8) of "municipalities are seen as the key delivery partners in the field of implementation", make this Agreement important to understand for this research.

The Agreement (RSA 2010:12) identifies sub-outputs such as to "improve universal access to basic services by 2014" at a determined percentage. For example, a sub-output on water is to increase access from 92% to 100% by 2014. Such determination impacts on the local development planning as "the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that the three spheres of government cannot function in isolation as the three spheres of government are interdependent and interrelated" (RSA 2010:17).

In instances where municipalities are weak capacity, the Agreement proposes that a special purpose vehicle should be used to support these municipalities to "delivery of new infrastructure to eradicate backlogs, rehabilitate existing infrastructure and provide for effective operation and maintenance of infrastructure" (RSA 2010:12). EThekwini Municipality is not one of the targeted municipalities but nonetheless such support shows how national imperatives impact on different spheres of government and thus require planning from all spheres of government for achievement. EThekwini Municipality and other metros, are seen as "engines of national growth and development" (RSA 2010:19).

The South African Government has also seen fit to develop a national plan that would give perspective and development direction for government in the medium to long term. This plan is the National Development Plan, and it provides a national vision up to 2030.

- **The National Development Plan**

The NDP is a long-term outlook developed by the National Planning Commission appointed by President Zuma in May 2010. The Commission was to draft a vision and NDP for the Republic of South Africa that would define the desired future of the Republic by 2030. The NDP is a plan for the whole country; therefore, municipalities, as the third tier of government, are to ensure that they drive the implementation of the plan at local government level.

The main objective of the NDP is to eliminate poverty and to reduce inequality by 2030. To eliminate poverty and reduce inequality, the economy must grow and benefit all South Africans. The people of South Africa should have access to services. The Commission's Diagnostic Report, released in June 2011, listed as two of the nine primary challenges that the infrastructure is poorly located, inadequate and under-maintained, and that public services are uneven and often of poor quality.

Municipalities, as the local sphere of government, are to ensure that the rights of citizens to expect government to deliver certain basic services are honoured. Improving infrastructure is also important, as it is essential to development because its provision improves citizens' lives. Moreover, municipalities, being at the coalface of delivery by government, are to ensure that they actively support citizens' participation in drafting local government plans and that collective interests are put ahead of narrow, short-term goals. Thus, the municipalities, when developing their strategic development, need to keep in mind the

NDP's long-term strategy and ensure that citizens are actively involved in their own development. Further, they are to ensure that there is alignment of their local development plan, the MIDP, with the National plan. Thus, the development of the MIDP has to take into account what is contained in the National Development Plan.

The International and National development goals are not the only priorities that have to be considered when developing the Municipal development strategic plan. A municipality has to align its plan with Provincial strategies and plans in order with for this to have a contextual framework. One of these strategies is the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy with its plan. Such a strategy is aligned to the National Development Plan.

- **Provincial Growth and Development Strategy and Plan 2011**

Using the Global, National, Provincial policy frameworks, the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal developed its Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) and Plan with the Vision 2030. The strategic plan is a long-term strategic development perspective of, and vision for, the province. This is to ensure that there is coherent development and planning across the Provincial Government.

One of the strategic goals of the PGDS is human and community development. This goal is to ensure that there is "improvement of the quality of life for citizens of KwaZulu-Natal" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:38). To achieve this strategic goal, interventions have to take place at a local level as this is where development is effected to make meaningful impact on the citizenry in their communities.

The Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) of the PGDS describes the desired outcome in respect of each strategic objective and identifies the key performance indicators and strategic interventions in relation to the Strategic objectives. The KwaZulu-Natal Planning Commission has been tasked with facilitating and supporting the implementation of the Strategy and Plan to achieve the 2030 Vision for the Province.

The developed strategy and plan have an impact on the development of a municipality's integrated development plan as some of the interventions are implemented at local government level. For example, to achieve the Human and Community Development goal, there should be sustainable human settlements. Thus, even though the provision of housing structure is a mandate of the provincial government, which eThekwini Municipality has a

delegated authority as an implementing agent by the Province, local government has a responsibility to provide basic services - water, electricity, sanitation, waste and refuse removal – to contribute to liveable human settlements. This, then, establishes that the Municipality has to consider the designed outcomes and strategic objectives during its development planning process.

The Provincial Government has created the Provincial IDP Forum as an intervention, which is a platform for planning and coordination between Provincial Government and municipalities, to ensure an integrated development planning for the provision of public services and facilities. As such, MIDPs are to follow the seven goals of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy and Plan. This is important for the alignment of the MIDP with the Strategy and Plan, and also to facilitate alignment between national, provincial and municipal level plans. This will ensure that the relevant Plan targets and interventions are contained in the MIDP.

Furthermore, the implementation of the PGDS relies on an effective and efficient governance system that is also responsive. The developmental local government system plays a pivotal role in ensuring that local government is focussed and puts the developmental needs of the communities first. Moreover, that in its undertakings local government consults with stakeholders and communities in the formulation of its plan as required by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other of the Government's regulated planning processes.

One of such planning processes is the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework which had to be developed to ensure that "all backlogs in the provision of infrastructure are removed" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:50). Consideration of the framework in the development of the MIDP is of importance as the infrastructure delivery has to be such that a municipality has to "remain financially viable and has a capacity to operate and maintain the infrastructure" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:50).

- **Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework**

    Understanding that the Apartheid system had developed cities, towns and rural settlements in an uneven manner, the new Democratic Government of the Republic of South Africa adopted the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework. The Framework is "an on-going initiative to review the investment requirements for the municipal sector and assess the financial status of municipalities in the future, based on projected investment' (DBSA

2011:7). Bond et al (2000:13) states that the municipality used "an economic modelling exercise to estimate service backlogs, assess the capital costs that are involved in removing these backlogs, and calculate the recurrent costs of operating and maintaining the services". Further, the Framework is a mechanism to assist municipalities in ensuring that government addresses backlogs in the provision of infrastructure and that "the goal of having basic services to all South Africans by 2014' (DBSA 2011:3)

Since the local government is at 'the frontline of the municipal infrastructure programme', eThekwini Municipality, through its Infrastructure Cluster, has undetaken this process with an aim to guide the Municipality in delivery of a quality and integrated service, which is the broad goal of the framework. The outcomes of this undertaking feed into the MIDP to ensure that the Municipality is responsive, that it highlights areas of distribution and that there is an understanding of the conditions, challenges, needs and more importantly how municipal and social service delivery is to be organised.

In addition to the MIIF, eThekwini Municipality has a model that it uses to match the demands for facilities and the provision thereof. The model is referred to as Social Facilities Accessibility Model.

- **Social Facilities Accessibility Model**

The Apartheid system has left a legacy where "many people still do not have convenient and easy access to ...social facilities", such as ...libraries, community halls, police stations, and other necessities (eThekwini Municipality 2010:10). EThekwini Municipality, through its Municipal Engineering Unit and social services departments undertake the assessment of social service facilities within eThekwini Municipality. The aim of the assessment is for the Municipality to develop a plan projecting where and by when "adequate access to a full range of social facilities" can be achieved for the residents of eThekwini Municipality (eThekwini Muicipality: 2012a:50). The assessment highlighted that the demands for social facilities outweigh the resources available to provide such facilities. This made eThekwini Municipality realise that a model has to be developed that would ensure equitable distribution of the social facilities and thus "improving the quality of life of eThekwini citizens" (eThekwini Municipality 2012a: 44).

The Model tries to match "the demand for facilities based on the population density and distribution, with the supply of social services based on spatial location, capacity of service

and the levels of accessibility based on public transport travel time' (eThekwini Municipality 2012a:51). The model is also designed to meet the 2030 target of the Municipality that "all citizens of Durban can easily and affordably access the facilities and services that they require for a sustainable lifestyle" eThekwini Municipality 2010:10).

It becomes imperative that during the process of formulation of the MIDP the demands of citizens, when it comes to social facilities, are considered in relation to this model. Furthermore, if truth be told, citizens have to be made aware that their demands will be considered in reference to the Model. Therefore, the implementation plan derived from the MIDP process can somehow be influenced by the standards as set out in the Model.

4.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, the overview of local government in South Africa post-1994 has presented the shift in local government. Key national and provincial legislative and policy frameworks were presented that guided and defined the nature of MIDP. These frameworks include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the White Paper on Local Government, Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act and KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the supreme piece of legislation in South Africa, gives effect to the MIDP. The Constitution defines the duties of a municipality in Section 153 (a), which includes planning processes.

The White Paper on Local Government laid the foundation for the new integrated development planning while defining the concept of developmental local government. The new local government approach and concept was sealed with the passing of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act. This Act legislated the developmental local government system and the MIDP process.

The MIDP process involves key stakeholders, and the National Traditional Leadership and Government Framework Act and KwaZulu-Natal Traditional and Governance Act stipulate the nature of the roles and responsibilities of Traditional Leadership in development, and thus the participation of traditional leadership in the MIDP, as also stated in the Municipal Systems Act.

In this chapter, a profile of eThekwini was presented with the aim of giving context to the case study and it also highlights the challenges that the MIDP process has to consider during the planning process. Further, in this chapter eThekwini Municipality's Long-Term Development Framework, the Integrated Development Plan, Community Participation Policy, Communications Policy, and Strategy were presented. This was to highlight the organisation materials available to promote the MIDP Process among other developmental processes undertaken within eThekwini Municipality. These policies are to ensure the alignment of processes and plans for better management and coordination of the planning process.

Lastly, the MIDP, as it is developed, aggregates the International, National, Provincial development objectives and mandates of government, and targets and standards as set out in strategies, plans and model. It is not just about input at local level, even though such input is strongly recommended as it is stakeholders at this level who would be affected by the local development planning and implementation.

This chapter assists in the understanding of the next chapter as it presents the contextual frameworks for the case study, while the next chapter presents the findings of the research and discussion thereof.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter presents the empirical findings from the interviews with key stakeholders who are participants in the MIDP process. It presents their perspectives in relation to the MIDP process. This gives a better understanding of what is said and understood by the stakeholders in relation to how the MIDP process is a learning process.

The Integrated Development Plan process is the foundation of a developmental local government system in South Africa. This research explores whether or not such a crucial process allows for learning. Thus, the research seeks to understand or gain the insight of the key stakeholders into the MIDP process, highlighting their views of the process, whether and how the process is a learning process or not. Key stakeholders, participants in the research, responded to questions relating to what their understanding is of the IDP, how the MIDP is a learning process, what platforms are created or used, whether or not the platforms are appropriate or adequate, and what ethos underlies the design of the IDP processes.

This chapter also presents the analysis or interpretation of the data collected, highlighting the significant findings of the research. Careful examination and consideration of findings, which involved repeated reading and/or listening, organising, analysing and categorising of data, was undertaken. The findings are presented in the light of their relevance or relationship to the problem statement and the research questions. The themes and patterns that emerged during the data analysis process are considered in presenting findings in relation to research questions.

5.1   Results

With the presentation of results, the perspectives of the key stakeholders interviewed are presented after being organised and categorised as they relate to the purpose of the study, which is to ascertain an understanding of how the development or formulation of the MIDP is a learning process and to address the research questions. Frequent, dominant, or significant themes and patterns, which emerge from the data, are presented as research findings.

The perspectives of the stakeholders, in terms of how they and other participants are involved during the planning process, become important. This is so because strategy development is not an end in itself; rather, in this instance, it is a means for the Municipality to deliver improved services. Thus, it should lead to a better understanding of what is important to different key stakeholders in terms of service delivery.

In the next sections, the interview questions and stakeholders' perspectives in response to the questions are presented as they relate to the research questions below:

- What is the understanding of key stakeholders of how the MIDP process is a process for learning?
- What and how do the spaces or platforms created or used as mechanisms, measures and processes allow stakeholders to share, interact, engage, learn, and relearn from one another about service delivery challenges and possible solutions for eThekwini Municipality while in a strategic planning dialogue?
- How and why have the IDP planning processes and/or measures been designed? Were the platforms for stakeholders appropriate and adequate for them to inform or influence the vision and framework plans?
- What is the ethos that underlies the design and what are the underlying values that underpin this design of the MIDP process? How does the design process encourage holistic thinking?

However, before the responses are presented, each interview question, as it relates to the research questions, is explained.

5.1.1 The Understanding of key stakeholders of the MIDP

Three questions were asked to get insights from key stakeholders of their perceptions of the MIDP. These questions relate to what the IDP is, what it aims to achieve, and who is involved in the IDP process. The questions were asked to gauge how stakeholders understand the 'common purpose' of the IDP. This also gives an insight into whether or not stakeholders recognise the IDP as a map that sets out the service delivery and development plan of a municipality. Further, the question was asked how the MIDP is perceived by stakeholders to be a tool for improving service delivery through better understanding of stakeholders' needs or demands, as it is an expression of government investments and activities in a given locality, which is why government embarks on such a process.

5.1.1.1 Definition of the MIDP

Table 5-1 below presents the understanding of stakeholders of what comprises the MIDP. This is important as it may influence the development of strategic options to address service delivery at local government level.

Table 5-1:   **Perspectives of key stakeholders concerning the MIDP**

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	The IDP is a map, a programme of action, or an implementation plan that guides and informs all service delivery. It is their Municipal 10 Commandments. The IDP allows for the holistic approach to development instead of looking at individual elements of development. It assists in identifying the critical areas of development, prioritises them for the municipality to focus on to achieve development, and speaks to the needs of the people or community. The IDP is a plan that plots the way forward and puts in place a whole range of imperatives within all Municipal service units. This dynamic document highlights political decisions, which are not cast in stone but require opinions, input or comments from communities.
Traditional Leadership	The IDP is about community needs and getting communities to agree on the priorities in relation to development in the rural areas. Thus, the plan is aimed at developing rural and other areas in an integrated manner.
Senior Management	The IDP is a 5-year strategic area development plan or document that is a statutory or legislative requirement for a municipality and is reviewed annually. It is a developmental tool or map, which guides a municipality strategically, and operationally to ensure that there is a focused and coordinated plan. The IDP is a key document, which drives the strategic implementation, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation within a municipality. It has to be endorsed by all stakeholders; that is, community, councillors, management, workers, and general members of the Council, and other spheres of government.

Table 5-1: Perspectives of key stakeholders concerning the MIDP

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

5.1.1.2 The objectives of the IDP

A common understanding of the objectives of the MIDP is important, as it is through the MIDP process that the Municipality clarifies how it intends to ensure that there is common understanding and alignment of resources. Further, the objectives of the MIDP process facilitate the paradigm shift as a catalyst for change and creator of innovation in the local government strategy process. The shift is to focus on meeting and satisfying the needs of stakeholders.

Table 5-2 below indicates what stakeholders understand as being the objectives of the IDP. This gauges their understanding against what is understood to be the main objective of the IDP, which is to develop a strategic intent or to define the strategic direction for the Municipality. Therefore, the question of understanding the purpose of the IDP gives a process context and content as shared by those that are part of its formulation.

Table 5-2: **Perspectives of key stakeholders on the objectives of the IDP**

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	The IDP is the municipality's Bible and in principle, all things find their way into the IDP because it informs everything. It is to provide for amenities, facilities and utilities, and thus ensure that citizens are happy and services are delivered to achieve the 2030 vision of being the most caring and liveable City. The IDP informs how the available money can be used or divided into various service units. It provides a vehicle to register complaints or offer suggestions, as it should provide for constant communication. Ultimately, the objectives of the IDP are to ensure that a municipality is well organised, focused, and to fast track development.
Traditional Leadership	The objectives of the IDP are to conduct a situational analysis, gather community needs through izimbizo, prioritise community needs, and budget to bring services such as clinics, schools, post office, and Sizakala centre, closer to be people.
Senior Management	The objectives of the MIDP, as a future strategic planning tool, are to gain understanding of what is happening; identify areas of greatest need, deprivation and maintenance; and understand the aspiration of communities. It is a responsive process designed to deliver goods, services, and infrastructure while making sure that there is equitable focus on the development of the area in its totality. The IDP consolidates the implementation plan for the municipality to avoid duplication. It determines budgets after costing, and prioritises, monitors, and evaluates the progress of a municipality in terms of identified strategic projects, programmes, processes, goals, aims, and outcomes. It provides strategic planning to respond from an economic and social point of view and to ensure that there is a safe, learning, healthy, and sustainable City.

Table 5-2: Perspectives of key stakeholders on the objectives of the IDP

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

5.1.1.3 Stakeholders' involvement in the IDP process

Ascertaining whether key stakeholders understand why different persons, groups, structures, or formations are involved in the IDP process is important. This is especially important in the South African context because the country has emerged from an apartheid era where there was limited or no engagement with some of the stakeholders in such processes. The non-involvement of stakeholders in the collective development planning process defeats the purpose and is against the democratic planning process advocated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other legislative and policy frameworks.

Table 5-3 presents key stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of who is involved in the MIDP process and why.

Table 5-3: **Perspectives of key stakeholders who are involved in the IDP process and why they are involved.**

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	The stakeholders involved include councillors, officials, businesses, and industry, community/citizens of Durban, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, churches, and ratepayers. Involvement of stakeholders is a legislative requirement. The reasons why they are involved are: • The Councillors/politicians are involved because they are decision-makers and they finally approve the MIDP and must take ownership of it. Furthermore, they are held accountable or responsible to the community and their buy-in is, therefore, required. • Officials obtain a mandate from the councillors to draft the IDP. They must undertake a proper analysis or research and they must guide and advise on things that are critical. • Businesses and communities contribute by way of rates, taxes, and utility charges. These come directly from the people of the city and, thus, they keep the city afloat and naturally should have an input into how the money is spent. • Communities are the beneficiaries. They need to participate in the IDP because, in the end, the community judges the Municipality, based on the effectiveness of the IDP. • The involvement of civic society is mandatory because democracy is about public participation, and our constitution speaks very clearly to that. For any development to be effective, citizen participation is relevant.
Traditional Leadership	Stakeholders that should be involved are the Amakhosi, izinduna, the traditional council, councillors, ward committees, churches, business representatives, other spheres of government, and all sections of the municipality, including administration, municipal departments, and community structures. Participation of these stakeholders is important because they have different roles and responsibilities. For instance: • Amakhosi are 'landowners' in the rural areas and their participation is important for any development to happen in the rural areas. • Administration, councillors, and Amakhosi are to analyse requests from the community and communicate with the community itself. • Councillors, as members of the Municipal Council have a responsibility to 'deliver' services within the communities. • The involvement of other organs of the state is to give effect to the principles of co-operative government contained in Section 41 of the Constitution.
Senior Management	The IDP process is an open process, and all people should be involved in the decision-making or in the strategic direction. The involvement of many people is essential because people come with different experiences, skills, and views and can bring many solutions to problems through dialogue with everyone. Furthermore, they represent internal and external stakeholders, and the participation of internal stakeholders is to achieve compliance. But for the other stakeholders, the reasons are: • Administration (senior management) defines the objectives in the IDP and provides the impetus for the annual reviews; • Politicians (Executive Committee, Mayor, the Speaker, Chief Whip) are the ultimate policy- and decision-makers, and they make significant input in terms of documentation and how the document is delivered; • Various sectors of society including NGOs; CBOs; FBOs representing religious bodies; Durban Chambers of Commerce representing business; sporting bodies; community associations; community forums; ward committees; women's organisations; ratepayers' associations; taxi associations; academic institutions; unions; Amakhosi through public participation processes; organisations for the disabled and for minorities are included, because all these participants have their various needs. • The public sector is represented by national and provincial sector departments to limit or alleviate duplication of services and to co-ordinate service delivery • Involvement of communities is per definition of local government in the Municipal Systems Act, which includes communities. Furthermore, public participation is to get the public involved in the consolidation of their needs and priorities into a document they can see in terms of their development options.

Table 5-3: Perspectives of key stakeholders who are involved in the IDP process and why they are involved

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

5.1.2 MIDP as a learning process

The openness of the system to learning is critical if an organisation is to change, be innovative, and increase its relevance in its response to the demands of stakeholders. This is because learning is about how we comprehend or get to know about things. Therefore, the research questions had to ascertain the understanding or views of the key stakeholders of the concept of learning, and how the MIDP is, in their opinion, a learning process.

5.1.2.1 The concept of learning

How people get to know or comprehend is important if their engagement is to be fruitful. A question was posed therefore to different stakeholders relating to their understanding of the concept of learning. Learning is considered as being beyond just the gathering or assimilation of information and the development of ideas. Instead, learning in this context is about bringing organisational transformation and interacting in such a way that there is better or deeper understanding and knowledge about current situations in an ever-changing environment while developing a demand-responsive approach.

Table 5-4 below presents key stakeholders' understanding of the concept of learning. Such understanding is of importance as the research was about the MIDP process as learning. Furthermore, learning is essential to bring about understanding and to gain knowledge of what and *why* of the current situation as a system.

Table 5-4:   **Perspectives of key stakeholders on the concept of learning**

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	Learning is a process of acquiring, questioning, informing, creating awareness, acknowledging, and gaining new knowledge and practical experience. It is about interaction, sharing, being informed, honesty, and acknowledging the facts. Structures are used to facilitate understanding, purpose and to create a better opportunity for learning.
Traditional Leadership	Learning is about knowing or how one get to know, about what is happening or could happen. It explains how something happened or what is going to happen.
Senior Management	Learning is a continual and systematic process. It is about knowing, understanding what is, better interaction, imparting and sharing knowledge and experiences, and the creation of understanding in order to create an impact.

Table 5-4: Perspectives of key stakeholders on the concept of learning

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

5.1.2.2 Learning in the MIDP Process

Learning is a process that should bring about change in how things are viewed. The process is based on interrelationships. Table 5-5 below shows stakeholders' understanding of or insight into the MIDP process in terms of how the process is a learning process.

The question is to understand how different stakeholders involved in the MIDP are allowed to interact, engage, share, learn, and relearn while in a strategic planning dialogue. This is of interest because for municipalities to continue to be developmental and meet their developmental outcomes, they have to be relevant in their approaches to service delivery. They have to ensure that there is learning during the planning process; furthermore, that there is an understanding of the stakeholders' demands and how the Municipality, in partnership with stakeholders, will focus on meeting and satisfying the needs of the stakeholders. Understanding the development plan process as a learning process to guide the transformation makes it possible to refer back to the opinions and suggestions of the stakeholders for reviews or further comments.

Table 5-5: Perspectives of key stakeholders on the MIDP as a learning process

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	Political leadership has different views on how the IDP is a learning process. Some say the IDP is a learning process because it allows for a feedback from the community, thus allowing the community to warn the municipality if it deviates in implementation of declared policy. Through the IDP process, the municipality learns about different ways of doing things and about better approaches in managing the community. Others say that the IDP process should be a learning process, but that it is not, as it does not allow any learning. They say that for it to be a learning process it should involve people, and that there should be community engagement and direct communication with the community. Furthermore, issues raised by the community should be noted, documented, and sent back to the municipality.
Traditional Leadership	The IDP process is not yet a learning process at this stage, as it does not allow learning. It is a top-down approach, and a councillor only comes to relay progress over a project once implemented. Instead, councillors should take up issues from the community and present them to the Council. Once the Council has taken decisions, the councillor needs to give feedback to the community. The IDP meetings should share knowledge about the IDP, provide information regarding the service delivery needs of the people, and allow people to communicate these needs. The process should allow all stakeholders to take part in the process.

Table 5-5: Continued

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Senior Management	Senior management has different views on how the IDP is a learning process. Some state that opportunities for learning are created through the IDP process and that learning comes through the public participation processes. It creates a platform where the citizens are able to interact more effectively with the Municipality. However, the IDP itself is not a learning process; instead, it is a development and information process. Furthermore, it sheds light on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, including community, government, NGOs and individuals. It allows for the correct needs of the community to be known and understood. Moreover, through the IDP, there are conversations that help people to understand actual conditions better. Others state that the IDP is about compliance. Communities are being consulted instead of driving the process. In hearings, a process is created to present or tell, but there is a need to learn. Communities have to participate directly, take their budgets, and allocate based on what affects their lives. Opportunities are not created for ordinary people to drive the process and turn it into a reality where they live.

Table 5-5: Perspectives of key stakeholders on the MIDP as a learning process

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

5.1.2.3 Platforms as a means of sharing, learning, and relearning

There should be a closer relationship and engagement between the different stakeholders - the communities, municipalities and other stakeholders - to avoid planning unpopular projects, programmes, or policies. Atkinson (1992:48) sees the participation of citizens as empowering to the citizens vis-á-vis public officials. Furthermore, Faludi (1973:249) is of the opinion that "more channels linking the planning department [IDP Team in this instance]   to the outside world [different stakeholders] could create a network enabling a much more 'divergent' form of thinking to take place".

Table 5-6 below presents the perspectives of key stakeholders on how the platforms are a means for stakeholders to share, learn, and relearn. Their understanding is crucial, as it is through such spaces that different stakeholders are able to share, engage, learn, and relearn from one another about service delivery challenges facing eThekwini Municipality while planning. The focus is on how the designs of the platforms influence the creation of an environment conducive for sharing and engaging.

Table 5-6: **Perspectives of key stakeholders on platforms as a means of sharing, learning, and relearning**

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	Communities are consulted or engaged in the form of workshops or through outreach programmes where the draft IDP is presented so that they understand the programmes planned for their areas. Comments or contributions are invited from the communities, allowing communities to give feedback or to suggest how things might be done differently. Opposition parties comment on the municipality. There are ward committees, which are the vehicle through which people can express concerns, dissatisfaction, or satisfaction. People have no concerns regarding the IDP as long as their neighbourhood services are delivered and it does not affect them financially.
Traditional Leadership	There is no interaction or engagement during the IDP process. Traditional communities are not engaged or involved in the IDP process. Instead, people's needs are decided upon and imposed on them without a meeting being held with them to ascertain their needs. This leads to implementation of something that the people have not identified as priority number one or two. Further, Amakhosi are not involved or consulted, instead they receive information from the councillors who update them on projects being implemented in the areas.
Senior Management	Regarding going to the public for interaction, the long-term development plans are drafted and presented at the IDP workshops, meetings with Chamber of Commerce, and learning conferences to name a few, to allow for discussions. These are two-way processes, from the Municipality to the community (loosely referring to residents, business, sporting, and cultural groups) and from the community to the Municipality. Debates and discussions take place with sector departments. Traditional leaders are now engaged through a body set up by the Council instead of through public participation processes. Comments received are incorporated, and what is new in terms of national policies is also taken into consideration. The IDP process involves situational analysis, review of the previous IDP, and forward planning. The platforms for engagements need to be fine-tuned, and different methodologies need to be used to engage stakeholders during the IDP process.

Table 5-6: Perspectives of key stakeholders on platforms as a means of sharing, learning, and relearning

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

5.1.3   Platforms for Dialogue

Brynard (1996:134) states that participation is about obtaining information about local conditions, needs, desires, and attitudes. Section 17 (1) (a)(d) and (2)(c)(d) of the MSA (RSA: 2000:30) list "the mechanisms, processes and procedures for participation in municipal governance". These include" political structures...; councillors...; public meetings

and hearings...; [and] consultative sessions with locally recognised community organisations and, where appropriate, with traditional authorities".

Municipalities are said to use different approaches to consult communities and other stakeholders. They use community development workers (CDWs), ward committees, councillors, IDP representatives, and Mayoral Izimbizos or outreach programmes to collect information about the community needs and demands of local government. Through these approaches, all structures of communities, including organised business, local traditional leaders, women and youth organisations, are engaged through meetings, workshops, or sessions. Section 17(3) of MSA (RSA 2000:30) states that "the municipality must to take into account the special needs of people who cannot read or write; people with disabilities; women and other disadvantaged groups".

5.1.3.1 Existing or created Platforms in the IDP process

Various platforms are available to enable stakeholder participation. These platforms or techniques include focus groups, print publications, workshops, and electronic participation using technology or through providing information on a website. The type and form are said to depend on the various contexts in which each technique is used.

Table 5-7 below presents key stakeholders' understanding of the existing or created platforms in the current eThekwini MIDP process. These platforms are said to be made available to stakeholders to participate in the MIDP process.

5.1.3.2 The choice of platforms created or used

There is a notion in South African politics that the people shall govern and this notion emanates from the Freedom Charter of 1955. Taking impetus from this notion, municipalities, as local spheres of government, have to ensure that the various stakeholders, including the citizens, take part in all decision-making processes. The MIDP process is seen as one of the critical processes wherein stakeholders, including communities, have to participate. Participation is a means of fostering equality. Therefore, whatever the choice of platforms or techniques, "all citizens [and other stakeholders] should have an equal opportunity to exert influence [in the planning process of the municipality] if they choose to do so" (Atkinson 1992:7). Furthermore, any chosen platforms should allow stakeholders to articulate, interact, learn, and engage in dialogue, thus engage in an art of thinking together about ways to address service delivery demands, needs, or issues.

Table 5-7:   Perspectives of key stakeholders on existing/created platforms

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	The following platforms are made available to different sectors to participate in the IDP process: • Presentation of the draft IDP to councillors; • Community meetings or public hearings held to present the IDP so that the community understands the programmes or projects planned for their area; • IDP workshops with members of the public so that they can offer suggestions or reject what is being presented; and • Consultation or outreach programmes in different areas and with the business sector through the Durban Chamber of Commerce, community organisations and opposition parties. The process is advertised in newspapers, and communities are invited to comment/contribute to the process. After all the contributions have been made, they are referred back to each standing committee for input and to Council for approval. What has been noticed, though, is that there is general public apathy towards the IDP processs, and some people in the townships and rural areas may not be aware of the avenues open to them. This makes it important that the IDP is advertised on radio (all black radio stations), in mainline newspapers, attached to consolidated bills, on posters as during elections, and that IDP officers go out and interact with people.
Traditional Leadership	Currently, the councillors are doing this themselves and the platforms are political. Nevertheless, there are platforms such as workshops, Big Mama and community meetings to ascertain basic service needs per area and to prioritise. The community needs must become the point of discussion. Otherwise, the Municipality still needs to go to the people as they have done with Full Council meetings, which have been taken to different parts of eThekwini. Further, stakeholders have to be invited to the Traditional Council meetings so that they are involved in the process. Amakhosi and community mobilisers can be used to engage stakeholders. Amakhosi can be used because they also hold meetings with their communities to identify and agree on service delivery needs.
Senior Management	There are stakeholders' consultations and presentations at community, zonal/regional and municipal wide level through: • community meetings, regional IDP workshops, and Big Mama/IDP festivals; • meetings with the business community through the Durban Chamber of Commerce; • briefings and discussions with politicians, religious communities, traditional leaders, National Government and utilities – ESKOM and Umgeni Water and other groupings; for example disabled communities; and • Ad hoc presentations on request and a Learning conference where we advise on the IDP. Besides the above, there are other platforms, such as : • writing to the Municipality as individuals or representing interest groups; • participating in conversations that happen through different engagements or open forums; • via Facebook, since the Municipality has a Facebook account, and the IDP is linked to this account:. • elected representatives and ward committees represent communities and are a link with the municipality; • Operation Sukuma Sakhe which creates avenues for ward-based information dissemination; and • communication channels that are provided for stakeholders to comment and/or provide input on the IDP document, and that include call centres, newspaper advertisements, kiosks or IDP made available in libraries, Municipal Sizakala centres, and the Municipal website for comments and input.

Table 5-7: Perspectives of key stakeholders on existing/created platforms

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

Table 5-8 below presents the understanding of key stakeholders relating to the choice of platforms. This follows on who participates, how they are to participate, and why particular mechanisms/techniques are used.

Table 5-8:   **Perspectives of key stakeholders on reasons for choice of platforms created or used**

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	Several reasons are given by political leadership stakeholders for the choice of platforms created or used. These include: • the Batho Pele principles; • the need to fulfil a requirement in terms of Local Government Structures and Systems Acts; and • seeking to gain in-depth knowledge and ensure meaningful participation for the community in guiding the choice of platforms. Furthermore, the choice is also based on the notion that choices are tried, tested, and aligned to legislation and seem to be the best approach and besides people are not thinking out of the box. Percentage wise, the use of these chosen platforms is perceived to produce a greater success than failure rate. The criticism of the current platforms for public participation by these key stakeholders though is that they are not all-inclusive and that there should be more ways of constructively dealing with IDP participation. Careful consideration should be given to sectors, how people are mobilised, and very importantly, informed of the IDP. The issue is not so much with the process itself but rather with how the process is implemented.
Traditional Leadership	The choice is political, even though the platforms encourage people to participate and teach them about how the Municipality works. The choice is nonetheless political. The use of political ways and means is because of our level or lack of understanding of politics, and of what constitutes a municipality, and its mandate.
Senior Management	The choice of platform used is for legal compliance, and there is 12 months for this process to be completed. Furthermore, the tools or platforms used have worked in other municipalities. The Municipality is obliged by law to ensure that discussions happen, and public participation is required as part of the IDP process. People or the public should participate or contribute to the IDP process. The methods used encourage relevant comments from the public and afford all citizens opportunities to comment. They also cater for communities who engage better with physical documentation and through written comments, as well as for those who prefer to speak out at presentations. Nonetheless, legislation or national government determines much of the process and often municipalities have a checklist that they have to follow in terms of compliance. Therefore, to ensure that people have access to IDP, conventional ways are used, like libraries and ward committees.

Table 5-8: Perspectives of key stakeholders on reasons for choice of platforms created or used
Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

5.1.3.3 Relevance and adequacy of platforms

The question of the relevance and adequacy of the platforms design is critical in understanding how and why the platforms are effective for learning. Furthermore, their relevance may contributes to their usefulness in terms of how they become spaces for active participation and the engagement of key stakeholders, and how they have allowed stakeholders to share, learn and relearn from one another. The focus is on how the design of the platforms may influence the creation of an environment conducive to sharing and learning. Cognisance has been taken of what is said by Galer and van der Heidjen (1992:11) that there will be no learning without feedback. Therefore, platforms used or created should be such that the learning loop is closed.

Table 5-9 below gives the status of the platforms in terms of their relevance and adequacy, as perceived by key stakeholders. This is necessary to know, as effective learning mechanisms are essential to bring about improved service delivery and response to unforeseen issues with clarity of purpose. Furthermore, platforms can help in changing ways of thinking and helping stakeholders to unlearn their 'mental models' in addressing service delivery. They do this by creating spaces for interaction amongst stakeholders, which leads to change or to abandonment of current mental models or worldviews, which might be an impediment to learning. Relevant and appropriate platforms created or used for engaging stakeholders can help them to clarify their mental models or assumptions, uncover internal contradictions in models or assumptions, or think through new strategies in accordance with new thinking.

Table 5-9: **Perspectives of key stakeholders on relevance and adequacy of platforms**

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	Platforms are inadequate, as not all people are reached or informed. This is not so much because of the process *per se* but the implementation thereof. Hosting public meetings for a cluster of wards in a venue in one of the wards is not effective because it becomes a challenge to access such a venue owing to transport difficulties. Moreover, it is also not working effectively because approximately 125 000 people in the clustered wards need to attend. Additionally, the IDP is pitched at a level beyond that of the less sophisticated people. There are just not enough 'man hours' allocated to the process.
Traditional Leadership	Platforms created and used are inappropriate and inadequate as Amakhosi are not part of the process. Communities, Izinduna and Amakhosi get to know about the projects when the councillors present them to the communities. What should happen is that the councillor should meet with the Inkosi and Traditional Council before they jointly approach the people and other stakeholders.

Table 5-9: Continued

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Senior Management	The IDP is a statutory process, and there are statutory timeframes, which have to be followed in order to be compliant in terms of the regulations. Platforms that are used or created are inadequate, but the IDP processes are adequate and efficient from the strategic perspective. One of the shortfalls is the ward committees; only 40% of the wards had committees that were functional and even fewer that were active. Ward committees could have been used to take the IDP process down to a ward level so that localised needs could be dealt with and structured in-depth engagement is localised. It is unfortunate that some councillors have political issues with the communities they are supposed to be representing, which causes communities not to have a better IDP development process. There can always be more done in the public participation process as there cannot be too much participation. There is also a need to ensure that participation is focused, as opposed to being completely open and a 'free for all'.

Table 5-9: Perspectives of key stakeholders on relevance and adequacy of platforms

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

5.1.4 The values or principles underlying the design of the MIDP process

It is important to know whether the designed MIDP process encourages holistic thinking or not. Section 16 (1)(a)(i) of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (RSA 2000:30) states that a municipality must have a culture that encourages and creates conditions for the local community, including its other stakeholders, that promote and ensure that they participate in the preparation of its integrated development plan. Thus, the research establishes what principles guided the MIDP process.

Table 5-10 below presents the perspectives of key stakeholders in terms of the principles or the values that guide the MIDP process. This is with a view to ascertain how these principles contribute in encouraging stakeholders to participate meaningfully.

5.2 Discussion

Having presented the theoretical review (literature review) in Chapter 2; the International, National and Provincial legislative and policy frameworks (case study) in Chapter 4; and perceptions of key stakeholders in the eThekwini MIDP (empirical evidence) in this Chapter, this section presents what has been learned. It presents the significant findings (what do the findings mean); reflects on the findings (how they complement or challenge the common understanding); and interprets these findings in relation to the research questions and the purpose of the study.

Table 5-10:   **Perspectives of key stakeholders of the values or principles underlying choice of platforms created or used in the IDP process**

Key Stakeholders	Perspectives
Political Leadership	Politicians have differing views on this aspect. One may say that the easiest platform format has been chosen because it meets the legislative requirements in terms of the Municipal Systems and Structure Acts. The underlying principle is to fulfil these requirements. That is the bottom line, and it is not working. Another may say that the principles that guide the choices of platforms created or used are to make sure that an in-depth knowledge is gained and that there is meaningful participation by the community. The Principles of Batho Pele guide the process and choice of platforms, as these bind us. Yet others may say that the needs of the citizens of the city and service delivery are the principles that guide the IDP process as the IDP is about everything the city does: provision of streetlights, building of houses, provision of new clinics, building of libraries and so on.
Traditional Leadership	Instead of answering the question on the ethos or values underlying the design of the MIDP process, the traditional leadership opted to take issue with the process and sought alternative platforms. They highlighted that the current choice is a result of laziness and politics. They also recommended the need to involve traditional leadership (Amakhosi and Izinduna) and councillors in the IDP process. They highlighted a need to hold community meetings in order to consult together and to discuss the IDP. They raised that COGTA and the Office of the eThekwini Mayor should assist in ensuring that Amakhosi play a role in the affairs of the Municipality.
Senior Management	IDP is a governance issue and thus it is about transparency, good governance, communication, public participation, and citizens being able to access information that is critical to participatory development. EThekwini Municipality has opted for a representative democratic process, since we cannot talk to every one of the four million citizens. Assumptions are made that organisations such as the Durban Chamber of Commerce represent the aspirations of business and can articulate the views of business; the religious fraternity can also articulate the views and aspirations of their members; and similarly, the sporting bodies, residents or ratepayers associations.

Table 5-10: Perspectives of key stakeholders of the values or principles underlying choice of platforms created or used in the IDP process

Source: Siphiwe Ngubane

Furthermore, the section presents the intersections or connections and conflicts in the findings from the data collected through interviews and from the literature and documentary reviews. There is also a discussion of the findings and explanation of data collected, and inferences are made in relation to the broader contextual and conceptual statements.

With all of this, a systems thinking perspective has been taken wherein all aspects relating to or interrelated variables or elements in the MIDP process are considered from the holistic and integrated point of view. The focus is to understand the whole process in relation to how it is learning that affects the entire process, and that it is the effects of this learning that give rise to further learning, broader perspectives and enhanced vision.

5.2.1   How the process of a MIDP is a learning process

The MIDP process is a facilitated strategic planning process where a 5-year strategic area development plan is developed, which is reviewed annually. The process is facilitated to steer the process to arrive at the intended destination and within a stipulated timeframe. Relating to the MIDP as a document, one key political leadership stakeholder interviewed likens it to a municipality's bible, because it guides and informs everything in relation to service delivery and takes an holistic approach to development instead of looking at individual elements of development. This supports its ideal of inclusiveness or wholeness, which is embedded in the local government system, as a system, is defined by Cabrera, Colosi and Lobdell (2008:301) "a complex whole of related parts". It is also in its status, stated in Section 35(1)(a) of the Municipal Systems Act 2000, that it " is the primary strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning and development, and all decisions with regard to planning, management and development in a municipality"(RSA 2000:44).

The context of the development of this strategic planning instrument is the legislative framework and the socio-political thinking, which influences the approach followed and the perceptions of the MIDP process. For instance, senior management stakeholders see the document as a statutory/legislative requirement as stated in the Municipal Systems Act of 2000. The political leadership sees it as a dynamic document, which also highlighted political decisions, while for traditional leadership the IDP is about development of rural and other areas in an integrated manner. From the literature, Thomas Plant (2009:26) states that "to ensure that the strategic plan is a guiding document and meaningful for all stakeholders, it has to become a 'living plan'". The understanding of this context plays a pivotal role, as

the IDP is a strategy for the Municipality, which creates or decides on the direction of the Municipality in addressing issues of service delivery. Denhardt (1985:175) states that public organisations undertake strategic planning "to give clarity and direction to the organisation, to choose from among competing goals...and to bring together the thoughts and ideas of all participants ..."

For the Municipality to achieve collectively, it has to be open to allowing interaction between its parts to produce a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. Consequently, there should be an integration of strategic and operational plans, and such integration can result in an holistic and dynamic approach. This point was raised in the interviews by one senior management stakeholder who felt that once there has been engagement or interaction at strategic level, there is very little input from the public participation processes, especially in engaging more efficiently with projects. This is contrary to the understanding of the IDP as a developmental tool. The IDP is to guide a municipality both strategically and operationally to ensure that there is coordinated and focused planning. This drives the strategic implementation, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation. What this says is that the MIDP defines the strategic direction or municipal intent that lays the foundation for the operational or implementation plan.

The MIDP process allows for some reflective thinking. This is to gain better understanding of what is and what could possibly be. Fiol and Lyles (1985:811) maintain that learning is being about "the development of insights, knowledge, and associations between past actions , the effectiveness of those actions, and future actions". The provision of such an opportunity is significant when considering what Haines (1998) claims, cited by Skarzauskience (2008:105), when he says that "one way to improve the quality of results of an activity is to enhance the quality of thinking". One way that the MIDP process does this is through annual IDP reviews, which are conducted to assess the performance and to revisit the strategies employed by the municipality to address service delivery. Stakeholders are given an opportunity to engage or to participate in the process and they give their input or comments, having listened to the presentations during the IDP workshops, consultative meetings or having read the draft IDP posted on the Municipal website or made available in the Municipal libraries. Process facilitators also have an opportunity to revise the IDP, having considered the input or comments from stakeholders in the number of platforms created or used during the MIDP process. The result is double-loop or generative learning where the integrated information received and reviewed is considered and used beyond developing,

adapting and improving what already exists. Instead, there is relearning and a renewed mind-set concerning strategies to address issues of service delivery.

The formulation of the MIDP is not limited, though, to the engagement of stakeholders during the process. Situational analysis is conducted to assess "the existing level of development in the municipality" understand the current reality (RSA 2000:36). Some data or information on the existing conditions within the municipality for situational analysis is derived from other municipal processes such as the Quality of Life surveys (now Municipal Services and Living Conditions Survey), and the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework and Social Facilities Accessibility Model, which are presented in chapter 4. In addition, Government's sector development plans are drawn from the State of the Nation Address, State of the Province Address, and the Provincial Growth Development Plan.

Examining data from the above sources and the International development imperatives, such as the Millennium Goals and Universal Access declarations, is important given what Bryson states in relation to the strategic planning. He states, "learning occurs ... about what mandates are and mission should be; the outside environment...; the major strategic issues; alternative strategies for addressing the issues, and ...the politics surrounding any change effort" Bryson (2010:262).

Some concerted effort has been made to go beyond the best efforts of the past and to make the MIDP process interactive. This is critical, bearing in mind that the MIDP, according to the key stakeholders interviewed in this research, is a forward development-planning tool. It provides for amenities, facilities and utilities, and thus, brings services closer to the people. Strategic planning, the MIDP process in this case, is an interactive process and if it is a learning process, it means that learning is an interactive activity. Bierly et al. (2000:597) state that learning links expands and improves data, knowledge, and wisdom. This view supports what Blockley (2010:192) states when he points out that the process aims to understand and gain insight into issues and to ensure that facts or statements correspond to contexts.

The MIDP, as a strategic planning tool, connects context, a process, and designed outcomes. Thus, the process cannot be a top-down approach as one of the Traditional Leadership stakeholders who was interviewed believes. Nor can it be a mechanistic and linear process. If it becomes the latter, Bryson (2010: 260) asserts that this can be a "serious error". This is understandable because the MIDP process guides, tells, shapes, involves, communicates, and gives feedback. Giving feedback is critical as Galer and van der Heidjen (1992:11) state:

"without feedback, the learning loop will not be closed, and [therefore] learning will not take place". Moreover, as Vanttinen and Pyhalto (2009:788) state, "a mechanistic planning process is not able to create chances, learning, and innovations in an organisation".

The eThekwini MIDP process has some generative aspects as some political leadership and senior management stakeholders stated that some platforms and opportunities are created for conversations and feedback. It does allow for rethinking of creative outcomes on the part of the stakeholders and for the development of new approaches through the interaction of different stakeholders during the process. The focus of the MIDP process is on what Berry (2007:332) and Eadie (1983:448) highlight as important in strategic planning, which is understanding the views of stakeholders, and "understanding and interpreting an organisation's environment" through the eyes of its stakeholders. This is in contrast to what is stated by Halachmi (1993: 126) that some local governments are seen to be "geared to restore the fit with governmental environment rather than to determine the destiny of the community".

Nonetheless, looking into others' views has a potential for stakeholders to redefine their mental models of the others, of service delivery issues, and of the world. This is important as the stakeholders' views of the MIDP process are based on their mental models, their worldview determines the way they see the process. In fact, mental models shape perception, which is understandable. Stacey (2011:203) refers to Ackoff (1981 1994) who holds that "obstructions to change lie in the minds...in their mental models"

What is presented above responds to the purpose and the main question of this research or study, which is to ascertain how the MIDP process is a learning process. This is important, in view of the fact that the IDP represents the Municipal intent and Pycroft (1998:154) states that the White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998:23) identify "leading and learning' as one of the four interrelated aspects. This is worth noting considering that the White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998:23), is the foundation of the Local Government legislative framework.

5.2.2 Processes and /or measures used to engage stakeholders

Having looked at the findings relating to how the MIDP is a learning process, the next issue was to discuss the processes and/or measures used to engage stakeholders. The issue of stakeholders' participation and involvement is of importance as a determining factor in

understanding how strategies, programmes and projects are developed and how the limited resources are allocated for use. Therefore, exploring the stakeholders' perspectives of the process afforded an opportunity to understand or to gain insight into their perceptions of the process.

This was done in light of the fact that for learning to happen, there should be processes and/or measures as platforms to facilitate such an undertaking. In the next few paragraphs, findings are presented and an attempt will be made to make sense of these findings.

The focus of the MIDP process is on the process, structures, and consultation with stakeholders. The focus on process is consistent with the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (RSA 2000:40), which in Section 28 does not only dictate that "each municipal council ...must adopt a process", but states, in Section 29 that the process "must be in accordance with a predetermined programme specifying timeframes for different steps". In a way, the process is said to have become what Hamel (1996:70) calls "a calendar driven ritual, not an exploration of the potential". The MIDP process consistently follows the process steps as set out in the Process Plan and IDP Guide Pack. The structures have been used as 'platforms for dialogue' or platforms through which stakeholders are consulted or participate in the MIDP process.

The process is systematic, but somewhat rigid and inflexible. The relative inflexibility of the process is in contrast to the guidelines highlighted by Kabir (2007:6), citing Ramamurti (1986), that the strategic planning process "must be flexible to avoid bureaucratisation". Nonetheless, the systematic and somewhat rigid and inflexible nature is in a sense owing to the fact that it follows a sequence of planning events. The planning events start with a situational analysis, then it goes through a strategic discussion and decision-making on priorities, and strategic choices before the Municipal Council assesses, aligns, and approves/adopts the draft IDP. Flores et al. (2008:571) state that "strategic planning allows [an organisation] to acquire information or knowledge systematically" while, according to Poister and Streib (2005:46), it acquires the understanding of the wider context or environment. Such an undertaking results in the acquisition of useful knowledge and understanding, and thus results in organisational learning, if one follow the definition by Huber (1991), as cited by Flores et al. 208:570). Understanding context is important as Bodhanya (2008:4) states that "all new learning by individuals occurs within a social context".

The MIDP process is both a means to an end and an end in itself. This means that the MIDP, as a strategic planning process, is both 'a plan and a process' said Denhahadt (1985:179). As a process, it is a means and thus about action orientation of the process in terms of strategies developed, programmes, or action plans drawn and resource allocation. As plan, it is an end and thus relates to the aspirations of the Municipality and its stakeholders in terms of mission, purpose, goals, and strategic intent. The duality of the process in terms of process being both the end and the means to an end talks to the advice by Vanittinen and Pyhalto (2009:789) that the development of the plan should be beyond just the "content and aims of the strategy but also the way in which the strategy is constructed and implemented".

The MIDP process is consultative at least to some extent. It has encouraged stakeholders – citizens, businesses, officials, and politicians – to take part in the development of the strategic development plan. Platforms have been created and used, but they are somewhat inflexible relating to changing structure and process. Fiol (1994:404) states that "learning in organisations entail not only the acquisition of diverse information but the ability to share common understanding" This concurs with a view stated by Bodhanya (2008:4) that "organizational learning... exists to the extent that individuals make their knowledge available to others through a process of sharing ..."

What is clear is that the MIDP process may not be that inclusive. The point of non-inclusivity of the process was raised in the interview with traditional leadership stakeholders. They stated that they are not part of the process and thus are not given an opportunity to participate actively or to be involved. This is against the objectives of local government and the IDP, which are "to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government" (RSA 1996b:4), and "where appropriate, [consultations] with traditional authorities" (RSA 2000:30).

This is a concern, as the process is to be consultative, strategic, and implementation-orientated. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996b:85) states that the MIDP is a tool required to be utilised by municipalities. This is important considering that the MIDP is a strategic planning tool. Eadie (1993:447) and Mintzberg (1994a:107) state that strategic planning is a participatory process, which provides for the development of tailored strategies and detailed plans or "step-by-step instructions for carrying out those strategies" to achieve the vision of an organisation.

Taking a holistic approach to understanding the process is based on the premise that a municipality, as a local government system, is made up of different elements, and all these elements are interrelated and interdependent. As a result, all stakeholders engaged, and all mechanisms and processes employed for stakeholders' participation in the process, would affect and effect the process as it developed a shared vision: a statement of the ideal situation in the long term. A strategic vision is a result of strategic learning during strategic planning. Therefore, the stakeholders, through the mechanisms and processes provided in the system, prioritise strategic development goals and initiatives aligned with the vision, thus focusing on finding the best way to meet its development objectives. This confirms the assertion by Bodhanya (2009:2) that "it is not possible to stand outside the system and analyse the organization and the environment and the design strategy". The environment is a learning area and influences the process.

Furthermore, the objectives of local government and IDP are to allow stakeholders participation or involvement in determining what they required or choosing activities that will address stakeholders' needs and the demands of the Municipality. This supports the view of Mintzberg (1994:270) of a need for a "detailed and intimate knowledge of the situation". Furthermore, Maier (2000:250) sees the involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning as necessary to identify the needs and to prioritise development initiatives within their locality. This is imperative for a developmental local government system, which is to bring about change in service delivery by bringing government services, goods and infrastructure closer to the communities. Besides, stakeholders' engagement, as Denhardt (1975:175) remarks, brings together what in the organisation would be thoughts and ideas of different stakeholders.

What is stated above is of note as the MIDP process is about developing a comprehensive plan to address service delivery at local government level in an integrated manner. This being the case, systems thinking advocates looking at the whole, that is, taking an holistic approach to an issue or matter in line with the view that a whole is more than the sum of its parts. As such, Senge (1990:3) states that there should be no "illusion that the world is created of separate, unrelated forces". It is not surprising then that with eThekwini's MIDP, the analysis of the service delivery issues uses different mechanisms and processes outside the MIDP process. This indicates that systems are interconnected and interrelated. Through these mechanisms and processes, different stakeholders are involved, and there is a consideration of interrelated variables. There is consolidation of the input and comments

received before the synthesis of the holistic approach in order to address the service delivery issues in the IDP.

What is important to note is that key stakeholders interviewed and documents reviewed, including the IDP, list methods that can and have been used to collect, share or engage with stakeholders. Such methods are said to ensure the incorporation of the knowledge and experience of all stakeholders because strategic planning, as Bryson (2004:6) states, requires a "broad-scale yet effective information gathering". This is important considering that learning "exists to the extent that individuals make their knowledge available to others through a process of sharing..." (Bodhanya 2008:4). Therefore, if platforms (mechanisms and measures) are not available to individuals, this hampers learning because learning starts in this context from individuals who interact (Argyris and Schön 1978:16-17 and Wang and Ahmed 2003:9). Furthermore, through such platforms, Bryson (2004:6) states, there is accommodation of "divergent interests and values".

5.2.3 Relevance, appropriateness and adequacy of platforms

The MIDP is a social construct and an emergent vision. The process of formulating or reviewing the MIDP is outlined and publicised for comments or input by the public before being embarked upon. A variety of different platforms are said to be made available in order for different stakeholders to participate in the process. Through such platforms, Bryson (2004:6) states, the strategic planning process (MIDP process) allows stakeholders' divergent interests and values to be accommodated. Therefore, any interaction among stakeholders brings about blended views or new ways of thinking and doing. This being the case, the choice of platforms has a bearing on improvements in the planning process and thereafter on the outcome, because if relevant and appropriate platforms are used, stakeholders are in a position to understand and to contribute to a plan that relates strategies, programmes and budget. This also helps in creating better understanding of the issues raised by different stakeholders in relation to service delivery.

Traditional Leadership stakeholders are of the view that these platforms are political. They asked why stakeholders are not invited to the Traditional Councils and why they are not involved as traditional leadership in the process. The latter is a pertinent question when consideration is given to what is stated in the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003, and in the IDP Guide Pack developed by the National Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs as a

resource guide. It also hints at the warning by Vanttinen and Pyhalto (2009:788) that "if the strategic process does not promote the participation and activeness of all the actors in the organisation[, which in this instance are the stakeholders within the Municipality,]there is a risk that the strategy will not be implemented...". Furthermore, the absence of stakeholder participation might undermine the legitimacy of a MIDP, as the plan will not reflect the community needs and priorities, but it will be imposed on a section of the community that was unrepresented in its formation. Traditional Leadership stakeholders expressed this view in the interviews. This then raise a serious issue as the process happens within a local government system.

The consultation with and participation of Traditional Leadership and their structures is important. The MSA of 2000 states that Traditional authorities (now Traditional Councils) chaired by Traditional Leaders, are to be consulted on the drafting of the MIDP. Their consultation is pivotal considering the function of Traditional Councils in terms of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, which is to facilitate "the involvement of the traditional community in the development or amendment of the Integrated Development Plan of a Municipality in whose area that community resides" (RSA 2003:10). The participation of Traditional Leadership was also noted in the IDP Guide Pack, which states that traditional leaders should be part of the IDP Representative Forum.

 What is stated above then raises the question of the adequacy of the platforms created and used. It can be said that adequacy of platforms can result in different stakeholders being given an opportunity to open up and be listened to. Consequently, the Municipality could then be seen as adhering to the characterisation of developmental local government in the White Paper on Local Government of 1998. Developmental local government is characterised as local government that is "committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs, and improve their quality of life"(DPLG 1998:23; Schmidt 2008:121).

Furthermore, stakeholders should also have an opportunity to consider alternative interpretations of prevailing circumstances or courses of action. The platforms can be processes or measures that can set the stage for a municipality to gather, share, and learn from different stakeholders. Moreover, institutional solutions can be derived using the processes or measures to meet and satisfy the needs of stakeholders. The IDP can be a true instrument for meaningful learning while being a planning and decision-making tool in relation to medium and long-term development.

Mechanisms and measures have been put in place to give meaning to developmental local government. These legislatively required mechanisms, processes, and procedures are to allow for notification, consultation, and the participation of the local community in the affairs of the municipality (RSA 2000:30). This is paramount if consideration is given to what is described by Bryson (2004:6) in defining strategic planning as "a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions..." As such, the mechanisms and measures create an opportunity for people, as different stakeholders, to be informed and listened to, and for stakeholders to partake in the art of thinking together: to engage, think, interact and rethink. Through these processes, there are opportunities for learning and unlearning, while planning as learning, states Mintzberg and Waters (1985:270), involves adaptation. Furthermore, there is a focus on strategic decisions in relation to "a locality's future and implementing those decisions" (Pindur 1992:102). The focus on strategic decisions, states Eadie (1983:448), shows that the priority of strategic planning is beyond the operational level improvement of outputs.

What one key political leadership stakeholder noted, though, is that there is general apathy towards the IDP process. This should not be the case in a country like South Africa, where any engagement on issues of development has been largely limited or non-existent. This raises the issue of the appropriateness of the platforms or perceived relevance of the content for discussion as some people in the townships and rural areas, states one key political leadership stakeholder, may not be aware of the avenues open to them. However, other stakeholders state that there are adequate and appropriate platforms for different sectors of the community to participate in the IDP process. The platforms include regional IDP workshops, public hearings, meetings, *ad hoc* presentations, Big Mama/IDP festivals, and other communications channels and the IDP documents are provided for comments on the Municipal website and in libraries and Sizakala Customer Centres.

Knowing that there are platforms that have been created or used in the process of IDP is one thing, what is of interest to this research is to ascertain whether learning actually occurs. It is necessary to ascertain whether there is adherence to the prescriptions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other legislative and policy frameworks. Adherence to these legislative and policy frameworks is important because MIDP is a map that sets out the service delivery and development plan for a locality. Therefore, having spaces for dialogue promotes a system of participatory governance. It should be noted that platforms on their own are of no use if stakeholders are not supportive of the idea of engaging or participating. Their involvement or participation is significant, as Argyris and Schön (1978:16 and Wang

and Ahmed (2003:9) state, learning starts from individuals, and it is these "individuals as agents for organisations", who interact.

The MIDP process has been kept simple and compliance-driven as with many other organisations because it is said that creating or using a number of spaces or platforms costs money and time. They therefore limited platforms and have used particular ones to engage or to create dialogue. With eThekwini Municipality, the regional hearings were held instead of ward-based engagements, because the ward committees, as said earlier, were at different times not functional or were non-existent. The ward committees, as legitimate statutory platforms for community participation and drivers of community-based planning, were to lead and facilitate the ward meetings. This is because Ward Committees can be two-way communication channels for both the municipality and the community, as they can give information to communities and obtain information from and about the community.

EThekwini Municipality has chosen a representative democratic process in facilitating its consultation with different sectors, but has also made provision for direct participation through regional hearings, which would have been ward-based. The choice is in line with the IDP approach of inclusive and representative consultation and/or participation. For instance, businesses are engaged through the Durban Chamber of Commerce while ratepayers, or residents are engaged through the ratepayers' or residents' associations. When coming to direct participation with communities, Ballard et al. (2007:265) state that local meetings in each ward are more of a problematic process for the Municipality to use to consult the community rather than for communities to participate. Further, they say, elected representatives feel that community participation at local level competes with their representation as they are to set "the tone and direction for development policy", in this instance a strategic development plan (Ballard et al. 2007:265). EThekwini Municipality wants to venture out of the representative consultation and/or participation approach as it will be looking at using technology – social media (Twitter and blog) - to talk to people about strategies. One senior management stakeholder in the interview confirmed this.

The question mains remains as to whether or not the guidelines provided by the National and Provincial Governments, in terms of the process and how it is facilitated, were in any way guidelines, or were rather to tighten Government's management of the process and the performance thereof. Further, another question was whether these guidelines are to ensure conformity by municipalities while setting out the map on service delivery.

5.2.4   Values of processes and/or measures

What is evident is that there seems to be not a clear understanding among the stakeholders interviewed of the principles that guide or inform the choice of processes, measures, and mechanisms in the MIDP. Stakeholders listed what they themselves perceive as the principles instead of the principles of a consultative, strategic implementation process stated in the IDP Guide Pack. The principles listed by the key stakeholders interviewed include the Batho Pele principles, which guide government in its endeavour to provide goods, services, and infrastructure. Some stakeholders state that, since the process is a governance issue, they highlight transparency, communication, and good governance as the values, which guide the processes. In addition, some stakeholders think that the search for in-depth knowledge and legislative compliance are important factors. Communications and compliance could be the values because presentations are made on platforms provided and most platforms used or created are listed in the legislative prescripts and IDP Guide Packs.

Understanding the principles which informed the choice of design of the processes was important as it shown how the design has led to stakeholders being able to open up to one another and to state their views or listen to others' views while they formulate a strategy.

Further, it questions how the stakeholders have been encouraged by the platforms to enquire into others' views of the process, and how the stakeholders advocated their individual views and engaged one another when there were differing views on the way forward. In the end, it is about how the design of these processes and/or measures assisted in encouraging or developing new ways of thinking during the MIDP process.   Eadie (1983:447) advises that the successful application of strategic planning (the MIDP in this instance), as a technique to plan better, relies on how the process is designed for "the unique circumstances of a particular public organisation". The process should fit the organisation, its environment, and the intended outcome, which is to understand the demands of stakeholders of the organisation.

5.3   Concluding remarks

This chapter presented how the questions posed in this research study have helped in understanding what the IDP is and how the MIDP process is a learning process. It offers

some understanding of or insight into how the vision and strategic priorities for development of eThekwini Municipality are produced with some consultation. Systems thinking, as a theoretical-qualitative framework, assisted in understanding the process as a system for planning and managing the Municipality's development and supported the conclusion that the process had to be looked at from an holistic view or approach.

Significant findings relating to the purpose and research questions were presented. Discussions relating to the findings were presented with emphasis on explaining the findings and how they relate to the broader understanding of the process and what it aims to achieve in terms of change or improving service delivery. In the end, these findings were reflected upon as to whether or not they complement or challenge the common understanding as stated in the literature and documents reviewed.

What can be said is that the MIDP process is a strategic area development planning process following a legislative framework and guidelines. All municipalities are to ensure that they develop "a single, inclusive, and strategic plan for the development of the municipality" (RSA 2000:36). The MIDP is to achieve social and economic development that is integrated, sustainable, and equitable. (RSA 2000:14). The involvement or participation of stakeholders, which includes community, community organisations, and traditional authorities, is mandatory and this is to ensure that a municipality operates within a collective mandate, sets directions, and mobilises resources to respond to clearly defined and collective needs.

Furthermore, by creating participatory mechanisms and measures (platforms), a municipality learns of the needs and demands of local government as stakeholders share their views and provide input. The stakeholders relearn that local government has a set timeframe for the process, has limited resources, and has to find best possible solutions to improve service delivery, whether from the political viewpoint or through consultation with and the involvement of stakeholders. However, the process may not allow for learning to take place, as some key stakeholders feel that the process is not or has not yet become a learning process.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusion drawn from exploring the MIDP process as a learning process through literature and document reviews, and from the perspectives of the key stakeholders in the process. It highlights the strongest and most important issues of the research that have been considered based on the data or results of the research study. Emanating from the research, new insights are presented, including the broad implications of the results. It also note the limitations of the study before making some recommendations.

6.1   Conclusion

The development of the MIDP is prescribed in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and in the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000). The two legislative frameworks present: what the process is, how it should be undertaken, who should be involved, and why the process should be undertaken.   It is a thus a legislative requirement stated in terms of Section 28 of the Municipal Systems Act. The MIDP must be reviewed annually. It is a strategic plan that "guides and informs all planning and development ad all decisions with regard to planning, management, and development in the Municipality" (RSA 2000:44). In terms of this, before any activity begins, the Municipality should develop a process plan, which outlines the process.

In reviewing the organisational documents and interviews with Senior Management, in this instance, it was apparent that the MIDP process does not commence with the publication of the process plan for comments and approval by the Full Council. Instead, there are stakeholders' engagements using other municipal processes even before the beginning of the 'formal' MIDP process. Such stakeholders' engagement involves research and strategic processes by respective units and departments on issues pertaining to their sectors and functions. These processes are also aimed at establishing the status of service delivery and what can be done to address service delivery. Different platforms were used during these processes and some allow stakeholders to be engaged in such a manner that learning takes place. Some of these mechanisms and measures are presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

The process should be a learning process, especially since Section 26 of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000:38) states that there should be "an assessment of the existing level of development in the Municipality", this being critical as a development barometer for the objectives of the Municipality. Chapter 4 of the MSA details how local communities and groups should be consulted before the adoption of the process, which details when what

activities should be done and by when. The activities and allocation of responsibilities show what will be done and who will do it in the process of developing the MIDP. These include drafting of the document and presentation to different stakeholders through public participation workshops held in zones or regions.

In terms of Section 30(a)(b)(c) there should be a predetermined programme with timeframes (public participation plan), which details how internal and external stakeholders are to participate in the MIDP process. This process details that the mechanisms to be used to effect stakeholder participation include strategic issue workshops with senior municipal officials, strategic workshops with process owners and representatives, Councillors workshops, public participation, advertisements of the draft IDP for public comment, and presentations at cluster and regional budget meetings. It must be noted that these activities take place before the final draft of the MIDP is tabled at an Executive Committee meeting prior to the Full Council meeting at which the IDP is adopted.

In considering the above, it can be seen that the process is currently not a learning process, as the process does not provide for the necessary feedback, as some stakeholders point out. The process seems to be mainly about an information gathering. There is no generative learning which might lead to change in the systems of service delivery within the Municipality.

What is evident from the research is that there is no strategic dialogue, but that there is, rather information collection and dissemination, receipt of comments and views from the stakeholders, and that the Municipality then makes a judgement call as to what is in and what is out in the final Integrated Development Plan. This creates a skewed developmental local government system in which there is the IDP process without the mechanisms and measures that should take stakeholders, as participants, through phases of open-mindedness, conviction and the will to "get things right".

The research reveals a process that does not allow for the following:
- Inquiring - creating or using platforms that would allow all stakeholders to listen to one another with the intention of genuinely understanding one another's thoughts and feelings;
- advocating – stakeholders being given an opportunity to explain their points of view clearly; and

- Connecting – the ability of stakeholders to come to the recognition that service delivery can be improved through understanding, consensus, and engagement.

This can happen only if stakeholders are an integral part of the system or process, as no stakeholder can stand outside the system during the process and claim to have shared in and learnt from the process.

Furthermore, if the process is vigorous, different stakeholders could be encouraged to change their perceptions and beliefs about the local government system and thus cause them to participate actively in the IDP process. Stakeholders could then suspend their assumptions of the process, perceive more broadly together, and engage in a dialogue before formulating a plan of action. Stakeholders would come to understand that anything that happens anywhere in a system affects the whole IDP process, the functioning of the Municipality and the government as a whole. This emphasises the importance of stakeholder participation in the IDP process, as those stakeholders who participate should also have the power to act. There is a need to understand, of course, and take into account that our limited development at this point is the result of our limited thinking and participation.

As a closing thought in this section, the great scientist Albert Einstein once noted that fundamental problems cannot be solved at the same level of thought that created them. This, in essence, says that there is a need to conceive of, design and put into practice new ways of interacting and organising. Experimentation can bring about congruence. Shared platforms should be created, which may include surveys, communities of practice, and other suitable mechanisms or measures. Reflective engagement should be at the centre of stakeholder participation where stakeholders would have an opportunity to engage in the process of thinking to gain understanding, reflect back on issues, and be in a position to become involved in developing plan based on the acquired understanding. The focus should be on the whole instead of attending only to the parts of the planning process. This process should include tackling the mental models, building shared vision, and it should be about aligning and developing a comprehensive strategic development plan.

6.2   Limitations to the research

It is important to note that the findings of this study cannot be generalised beyond Category A Municipalities (that is, Metropolitans). This is because of their differing profiles and functionality. Inference to the results/findings, even to other Metropolitans, should be

cautioned as each Municipality is unique in terms of its conditions and stakeholders within its locality.

Despite this, some sharing of the experience and process with other municipalities is possible because the same legislative frameworks/policies prescribe the IDP process to all local governments. Perspectives of key stakeholders may differ though due to their outlook on the process, experience and other factors.

6.3 Recommendations

A period of preparation of the stakeholders for the process is recommended if the IDP process is to become a true and effective learning process. Training or capacity building of various stakeholders should be considered in order to help them to understand the importance of strategic planning as learning.

Planning should be seen as learning if it is to provide a process capable of bringing about systemic change. There should be a sense of commitment, an open and inclusive dialogue, and a leadership willing and prepared to develop a shared vision. Defending the status quo can dampen the spirit of learning as some stakeholders might well see such a dialogue as a platform intended to reveal their weaknesses. This could therefore result in some stakeholders trying to be 'politically correct' in fulfilling the legislative requirements to ensure that the process is open to the extent that it serves their own interests.

The leadership of the Municipality has a responsibility and a role to play in ensuring that learning takes place in the organisation by changing their mental models and by giving impetus to the process of learning. Thus, they should champion the design of a system – mechanisms and measures – that provide space for learning and relearning. There is a danger, though, that some stakeholders might use what they have learnt for their own selfish goals.

It is imperative that each stakeholder engagement be designed so that the process renews the IDP and rejects ineffective existing preconceptions of what is thought to constitute a suitable process. To achieve an effective systems thinking perspective, there should be an integration of all aspects, all points of view, and the entire spectrum of interests in a local government developmental system. This would result in a holistic and integrated development plan, reflective of learning during the gathering of information or data and analysis.

There should be exploration of alternative measures and mechanisms that can encourage or promote learning, informed decision-making, and assist in building organisational understanding of the issues inherent in successful service delivery. With technological advancements, social networking media such as Facebook and Twitter can be used to engage stakeholders by soliciting their input and comments on the IDP. As a modification of an idea put forward by a traditional leadership stakeholder, research and development teams could be formed to engage continuously stakeholders beyond the IDP process cycle.

The Municipality should adopt and implement a comprehensive communication plan that coincides with the IDP process and should have a programme that clearly understands the need for and aligns with community participation. This is to encourage stakeholders' participation in the IDP process while educating them about the IDP process and how important to be involved. It is vital that communication is recognised as a strategic function, which should play a strategic role in a strategic planning process.

Lastly, if the necessary learning is to take place within the process, the process has to be reflected upon, with best practice defined, and documented. Stories can be written of the process and these can be shared for better understanding of the process.

As Schäffer and Willauer (2003:91) point out, a culture of trust among stakeholders should be cultivated if learning and relearning is to take place. Mistrust might occur if stakeholders do not communicate openly and engage fully instead of holding back on contributing their input or offering their comments at all stages of the process.

6.3   Closing remarks

In concluding this document, it is important to note that the MIDP, as a strategic plan, is a critical plan as it guides all future actions. Most critical for the process, is that stakeholders should be informed about the opportunities to participate in public consultation and other initiatives addressing public engagement. Open and responsive communication is critical to the success of such consultations. The level of participation and the way stakeholders are involved are two of the measures against which success or failure in the implementation of the IDP as a learning process can ultimately be assessed.

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APPENDIX 1:   **LETTER OF REQUEST FOR INFORMED PERMISSION TO ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY**

<div align="center">

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
Graduate School of Business & Leadership

Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies Research Project
Researcher: Siphiwe Ngubane (0718500309)
Supervisor: Prof K Pillay (031-260 1383)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

<u>Request for a Letter of Informed Permission</u>

</div>

Dear Mr Sbu Sithole

The Municipal Manager
EThekwini Municipality

I, **Siphiwe Ngubane,** am a Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Graduate School of Business and Leadership. I request permission to use eThekwini Municipality as a case study for my masters research project entitled:

     Exploring eThekwini MIDP as a Learning Process: A Systems Thinking Perspective

The aim of this study is to explore how the MIDP process is a learning process wherein key stakeholders are given platforms (mechanisms and measures) to articulate their demands of Local Government.

The research questions of the study are:

- How is the formulation of MIDP a process for learning?
- What are platforms of dialogue exist for stakeholders to convey their needs to the Municipality within the IDP process?
- How and why have the IDP planning processes and/or measures been designed?
- What ethos underpins the IDP Planning processes and/or measures?

The study proposes to use two data collection tools:

- **Document and Literature Reviews:**

  This process includes reviews of process documents and other available literature on the IDP process. This is to gain insight or understanding of the context and process undertaken during the development of a MIDP. Further, the review of these documents can give information on what, how and why the process, thereby giving some details on its purpose, objectives, process or procedures and context.

- **Interviews:**

  Some key stakeholders have been identified as participants in this study because of their key role they are required play in the MIDP process in terms of different legislative policy framework. These stakeholders include senior political office bearers within the Municipality, senior administrative officials within the Municipality, and traditional leaders within eThekwini Municipal Area.

  The interviews will be to solicit their perspectives, views, insights or understanding, and construct of the process expressed in their own words. The interviews will be face to face and preferably audio recorded for accuracy of information, and latter transcribed by a professional. Questions for the interviews will be open-ended and the interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

The study is to contribute towards the theoretical knowledge and understanding of the MIDP process as a learning process.

The participation in the project is voluntary. You may refuse the participation of the Municipality or withdraw from the project at any time. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this project. The Graduate School of Business & Leadership, University of KwaZulu-Natal, will maintain confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying the Municipality and/or a participant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Municipality and its stakeholders' participating in this study, please contact my supervisor or me. In addition, I have attached

a letter of approval of my research from the Faculty Higher Degrees Research Proposal Review Committee.

I hope you will give me permission to use the Municipality as a case study and to interview the identified key stakeholders within the Municipality.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature:_____ Date : _____

APPENDIX 2:   **LETTER OF REQUEST FOR INFORMED PERMISSION TO KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF COOPEATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRAITIONAL AFFAIRS (COGTA)**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
Graduate School of Business & Leadership

Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies Research Project

Researcher: Siphiwe Ngubane (0718500309)

Supervisor: Prof K Pillay (031-260 1383)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

Request for a Letter of Informed Permission

Ndabezitha Bhengu

The Chairperson
EThekwini Local House of Traditional Leaders

I, **Siphiwe Ngubane,** am a Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Graduate School of Business and Leadership. I request permission to interview members of the eThekwini Local House of Traditional Leaders for my masters research project entitled:

     Exploring eThekwini MIDP as a Learning Process: A Systems Thinking Perspective

The aim of this study is to explore how the MIDP process is a learning process wherein key stakeholders are given platforms (mechanisms and measures) to articulate their demands of Local Government.

The research questions of the study are:

- How is the formulation of MIDP a process for learning?
- What are platforms of dialogue exist for stakeholders to convey their needs to the Municipality within the IDP process?
- How and why have the IDP planning processes and/or measures been designed?
- What ethos underpins the IDP Planning processes and/or measures?

The study proposes to use two data collection tools:

- **Document and Literature Reviews:**

  This process includes reviews of process documents and other available literature on the IDP process. This is to gain insight or understanding of the context and process undertaken during the development of a MIDP. Further, the review of these documents can give information on what, how and why the process, thereby giving some details on its purpose, objectives, process or procedures and context.

- **Interviews:**

  Some key stakeholders have been identified as participants in this study because of their key role they are required play in the MIDP process in terms of different legislative policy framework. These stakeholders include senior political office bearers within the Municipality, senior administrative officials within the Municipality, and traditional leaders within eThekwini Municipal Area.

  The interviews will be to solicit their perspectives, views, insights or understanding, and construct of the process expressed in their own words. The interviews will be face to face and preferably audio recorded for accuracy of information, and latter transcribed by a professional. Questions for the interviews will be open-ended and the interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

The study is to contribute towards the theoretical knowledge and understanding of the MIDP process as a learning process.

The participation in the project is voluntary. You may refuse the participation of the Municipality or withdraw from the project at any time. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this project. The Graduate School of Business & Leadership, University of KwaZulu-Natal, will maintain confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying the Municipality and/or a participant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the participation of members of the eThekwini Local House of Traditional Leaders in this study, please contact my supervisor or me. In

addition, I have attached a letter of approval of my research from the Faculty Higher Degrees Research Proposal Review Committee.

I hope you will give me permission to interview members of the eThekwini Local House of Traditional Leaders.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature:_____ Date : _____

APPENDIX 3:   **LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

<div align="center">

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

</div>

Dear Respondent,

<div align="center">

Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies Research Project
Researcher: Siphiwe Ngubane (0718500309)
Supervisor: Prof K Pillay (031-260 1383)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

</div>

I, **Siphiwe Ngubane** , am a Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies student, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Graduate School of Business and Leadership. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled:

<div align="center">

Exploring eThekwini MIDP as a Learning Process:
a Systems Thinking Perspective.

</div>

The aim of this study is to explore how the MIDP is a learning process wherein key stakeholders are given platforms (mechanisms and measures) to articulate their demands of Local Government.

Through your participation, I hope to understand whether platforms created or used give space for "strategic planning dialogue" wherein key stakeholders mentioned above learn, relearn while planning. The results of the interviews are intended to contribute towards the theoretical knowledge and understanding the MIDP process as a learning process.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this interview. The Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN, will maintain confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the interview or your participation in this study, you may speak to me or contact my supervisor.

The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. I hope you will take the time to participate in this research.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature_____ Date_____

This page is to be retained by participant

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & LEADERSHIP

Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies Research Project
Researcher: Siphiwe Ngubane (0718500309)
Supervisor: Prof K Pillay (031-260 1383)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

CONSENT

I_____ (full names
of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the
nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I
understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so
desire.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE OF PARTCIPANT   DATE

APPENDIX 4:   **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Question 1:   What do you understand by IDP?

Question 2:   What are the objectives of IDP?

Question 3:   Who are involved (stakeholders) in the IDP process?

Question 4:   Why they are involved in the IDP process?

Question 5:   How are they involved (platforms created or used) in the IDP process?

Question 6:   Why do you think these platforms are created or used in this way?

Question 7:   How and why these processes and/or measures (platforms) have been designed?

Question 8:   What is your understanding of the concept of learning (comprehend/knowing)?

Question 9:   What are your views of the MIDP as a learning process?

Question 10:   How is the formulation (preparation/making) of the IDP a process of learning?

Question 11:   How platforms are means of sharing and learning and relearning?

Question 12:   What do you think of the platforms created or used in the IDP process?

Question 13:   What values do you think informed the choice of the platforms created or used?

APPENDIX 4:   ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

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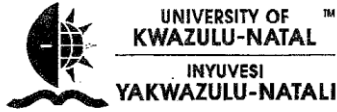
15 June 2012

Mr Siphiwe Ngubane 911354871
Graduate School of Business & Leadership

Dear Mr Ngubane

Protocol Reference Number: HSS/0276/012M
Project Title: Exploring eThekwini Municipal Integrated Development Plan as a Learning Process: A System Thinking Perspective

In response to your application dated 5 June 2012, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
/pk

cc Supervisor Professor Kriben Pillay
cc Mrs Wendy Clarke

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