CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Pietersburg/Polokwane municipality is faced with the challenge of ensuring an effective provision of services in its extended area of jurisdiction. This municipality therefore has to manage its resources in such a way as to achieve more with less. This chapter will provide answers to the stated hypothesis in Chapter 1 and also propose recommendations on the basis of the findings in Chapter 4 as to how capacity within the Pietersburg/Polokwane municipality can be enhanced.

5.1 Conclusion

Local government is the sphere of government closest to the community. Traditionally, local government has always been seen as a service delivery agent. It has, however, been pointed out in this study that a local authority need not necessarily have to deliver the services itself. However, it has to take responsibility for rendering services to a clientele base that increased at a rate faster than that of available resources.

Given this dilemma, and in order to try to live up to expectations, local authorities must further develop management approaches which support the process of renewal as well as deliver change (Newman, 1996:16).

It has been emphasised throughout this study that capacity building is a very important ingredient for sustainable development and effective service delivery. The personnel and councillors within local authorities should undergo intensive training in local government policies and procedures. What then becomes vital is a
mechanism to enable local communities to govern themselves, with a view to maintaining and promoting their well-being and the development of their areas. Proper local government should exhibit the classic features of being responsive, approachable and accountable.

The stated hypothesis has been confirmed as follows, viz:

The Pietersburg/Polokwane municipality does not have sufficient capacity to effectively deliver services in its extended area of jurisdiction and building capacity among both the officials and councillors is required to achieve sustainable development by the municipality.

5.2 Recommendations.

The following recommendations emerged from the research undertaken.

5.2.1 Co-operation with neighbouring municipalities.

There is a need for co-operation (co-operative governance) among municipalities that share the same geographic area. This will assist in maximising the developmental impact in their area of jurisdiction. This can take the form of municipalities pooling their scarce resources with the sole objective of optimising returns. This proved to be practically feasible during the second national elections when the Pietersburg/Polokwane municipality and the Northern District Council co-operated during the entire process. Another example is where Pietersburg/Polokwane municipality and the Northern District Council pooled their resources in the provision of emergency services.
5.2.2 Transformation of the municipality

Transformation of the municipality should be a priority. This should be driven by the office of the CEO and should also include working to achieve representivity both in terms of race and gender. The awarding of municipal contracts should also take into account previously disadvantaged individuals.

5.2.3 Educating the community to pay for services

Although incorporation of rural villages and townships is encouraged, a parallel campaign to persuade all residents to pay for services consumed should be embarked upon. Prepaid meter systems should, where feasible, be installed to ensure that defaulters are excluded from the services. However, a policy on the indigent needs to be implemented as a matter of urgency to ensure that the poorest of the poor are accordingly subsidised. The implementation of this policy must ensure non-abuse of the system.

5.2.4 Equitable awarding of contracts on the basis of a database.

There must also be equity in the awarding of projects to be implemented in the municipal area, which should also take on board emerging contractors from previously disadvantaged communities. A non-discriminatory database of contractors and other service providers must be introduced by the municipality and be updated on a regular basis. Such a database will inform the decisions of Council in awarding tenders and contracts. Contractors and other service providers who evade municipal taxes should be excluded from being awarded these contracts. This will encourage contractors to pay their municipal levies, thereby increasing the revenue base.
5.2.5 Striking a balance between income and the level of service delivery

In providing a service, the Pietersburg/Polokwane municipality should be mindful of the affordability levels of the people. The level of investment should be commensurate with the level of service. This is critical because it has huge financial capacity implications for the municipality if not implemented well.

5.2.6 Relevant training programmes

Training is an important way of creating additional human capacity within the municipality. The capacity of the municipality can be sustained through continuous and appropriate training programmes. The municipality’s surplus, for which it always budgets, may be utilised for funding capacity-building programmes. These programmes should include:

- institutional capacity which involves beneficiaries in project identification and implementation;
- cost-recovery programmes for any form of investment; and
- human resource development programmes relating to specialised skills training.

A training policy is one obvious activity in which local government could usefully be engaged since it has a sound knowledge of local education resources. The need for an efficient administration, both at national, provincial and local level is equally pressing. Local officials have to be equal in ability to those doing similar work in other levels of government, and if they have to be promoted, it must be on merit (Mawhood, 1983:18).
Thus, there has to be a fundamental shift towards enhancing a locality’s indigenous resources through advanced training for councillors and officials. Municipalities need to establish a training vote (budgetary support) through which a locality’s human resources can be developed through investment in training and high-powered scientific research, as a long-term strategy that may result in sufficient dividends to warrant that investment (King, 1991:282).

5.2.7 Improvement in municipal culture

The culture of municipal officials and councillors has to change to one of efficiency and commitment to sustainable development. For local government to be sustainable, local authorities have to be run on sound business principles. As Pascale and Athor (1982, as quoted by Clarke, 1994:2) remind us, "the art of the Japanese management has been to achieve an excellent fit between super-ordinate goals, strategy, structure, system, style, skills and staff". All these have to be integrated into the corporate culture that reinforces the beliefs and values of organisations (Clarke, 1994:2).

The most important aspect of a positive vision for local government is political and social peace, and this is attained only through a common culture of accountability, transparency, high public service ethics and through an inclusive, just, effective participatory decision-making and effective management of local government (i.e. through good local governance).
5.2.8 Public-Private Partnerships

Strong emphasis should be placed on local government as a vehicle to ensure effective service delivery and not only as direct provider of a set of discrete services. Wherever feasible, a local council may partner with the private sector to ensure effective provision of services to residents.

5.2.9 Reprioritisation of the municipal budget

This requires of local authorities that they reprioritise their budgets with a view to achieving some equity in the reinvestment of the revenue collected. It is therefore imperative that every effort be made to ensure that the budgeted income is realised and that strict financial control be exercised over the budgeted expenditure. Any variance, whether positive or negative, should be investigated and corrective action immediately taken (IDP for Pietersburg/Polokwane TLC, 1998:184).

5.2.10 Need to review Council policies and procedures

There is a need to ensure compliance with the Integrated Development Plan for the entire Pietersburg/Polokwane Municipality. All future developments should be guided by the need to accomplish this plan and to maximise the development benefits for the municipal area.

On the other hand, cumbersome procedures with regard to land use development, control and applications within specified strategic development areas should be overcome by means of allowing Council to delegate certain powers. This will expedite the process of development and also reduce the administrative responsibilities of the planning personnel. Municipal by-laws and regulations
should also be reviewed instead of simply making them applicable to the overall municipal area without actually taking into account the adjacent areas to be incorporated.

5.3 Summary

The above recommendations can serve to improve the effectiveness of the Pietersburg/ Polokwane municipality in pursuit of its constitutional mandate of ensuring an effective delivery of basic services.