

**ENHANCING SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN  
MOGALE CITY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

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I, Kgoori Aubrey Makgahlela, hereby declare that this study “**Enhancing service delivery through records management in Mogale City Local Municipality**” is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been shown and acknowledged by means of complete references. The work has not been submitted either in whole or part to any other University.



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SIGNATURE

31 JULY 2020

DATE

## ABSTRACT

Records are essential to the efficient administration of municipalities and more critical to the facilitation of good governance, transparency and accountability. Despite this, the records management processes of many municipalities in South Africa have remained ineffective and inefficient. The study investigated the extent to which records management enhances service delivery in Mogale City Local Municipality. The objective was to determine how far sound records management goes in enhancing the public services, accountability, transparency and good governance. The study sought to address the following research questions: “What contribution, if any, does records management play in enhancing service delivery?”; “Are there any suitable standards and practices for creation and maintenance of records MCLM?”; “To what extent does records management impact on transparency and accountability in Mogale City Local Municipality?” and “Identifying the benefits derived from records management in the municipality.” The study was underpinned by the record life-cycle and records continuum models. The literature reviewed was based on themes derived from the research questions, the underpinning models and broader areas of the study.

The study adopted an interpretivist paradigm, which is associated with the qualitative research approach. The study adopted a single case study design and data were collected through the use of interviews and observation. The qualitative data collected were presented and analysed in narrative description. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive correlation between records management and effective service delivery. In conclusion, it is evident that the future well-being and quality of basic service delivery depend on the ability of the MCLM to utilise records management strategic planning processes. Records contain information that will assist the municipality in determining the required resources, and moreover, in setting or improving service standards. The records management policy in the municipality must be adhered to and practiced consistently to ensure compliance and sound records management. This affirms the need for reformed records management strategies to enable administration efficiency and improved service delivery in the municipality.

**Key words:** Records; Records management; Service delivery; Accountability; Good governance; Transparency; Records procedures manual; Local government; Municipalities

## OPSOMMING

Rekords is noodsaaklik vir die doeltreffende administrasie van munisipaliteite en meer krities vir die fasilitering van goeie bestuur, deursigtigheid en verantwoordbaarheid. Ten spyte hiervan het die rekordbestuursprosesse van talle munisipaliteite in Suid-Afrika ondoeltreffend en ondoeltreffend gebly. Die studie het die mate waarin rekordbestuur die dienslewering in Mogale City Plaaslike Munisipaliteit verbeter, ondersoek. Die doel was om te bepaal hoe ver klankrekordbestuur gaan om die openbare dienste, verantwoordbaarheid, deursigtigheid en goeie bestuur te verbeter. Die studie het probeer om die volgende navorsingsvrae aan te spreek: "watter bydrae, indien enige, doen rekordbestuursspel in die verbetering van dienslewering?"; "Is daar enige geskikte standaarde en praktyke vir die skepping en instandhouding van rekords MCLM?"; "Tot watter mate het rekordbestuursimpak oor deursigtigheid en verantwoordbaarheid in Mogale City Plaaslike Munisipaliteit?" en "die identifisering van die voordele wat uit rekordbestuur in die Munisipaliteit afkomstig is." Die studie is gerugsteun deur die rekord lewe-siklus en rekords kontinuum modelle. Die literatuur is gebaseer op temas wat afgelei is van die navorsingsvrae, die onderliggende modelle en breër areas van die studie.

Die studie het 'n interpretivist paradigma aangeneem, wat geassosieer word met die kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering. Die studie het 'n enkele gevallestudie aangeneem en data is ingesamel deur die gebruik van onderhoude en observasie. Die kwalitatiewe data wat ingesamel is, is aangebied en ontleed in narratiewe Beskrywing. Die bevindinge van die studie het getoon dat daar 'n positiewe korrelasie tussen rekordbestuur en effektiewe dienslewering is. Ten slotte is dit duidelik dat die toekomstige welstand en gehalte van basiese dienslewering afhang van die vermoë van die MCLM om rekordbestuur-strategiese beplanningsprosesse te benut. Rekords bevat inligting wat die Munisipaliteit sal help om die vereiste hulpbronne te bepaal, en verder in die opstel of verbetering van diensstandaarde. Die rekordbestuurbeleid in die munisipaliteit moet nagekom en konsekwent beoefen word om nakoming van voldoening en goeie rekordbestuur te verseker. Dit bevestig die behoefte aan Reformatoriese rekordbestuurstrategieë om administrasiedoeltreffendheid en verbeterde dienslewering in die Munisipaliteit moontlik te maak.

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The dissertation is dedicated to my late father and Sister, Mosibo Abner Makgahlela and Morufa Makgahlela.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND: SETTING THE SCENE

#### 1.1 Introduction

Chapter seven of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) lays down norms and standards for local government as the sphere of government in the forefront of facilitating community participation and provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner. The Constitution provides the operational basis for local government to provide a framework for good governance, accountability and transparency in municipalities. A properly functioning public service is a reflection of the integrity and accountability as the focus point for service delivery and poverty eradication (Muthaura, 2003; Vatala, 2005). In addition, the Government Municipal Structures Act, No. 117 of 1998, mandates municipalities to implement constitutional principles in order to ensure well-grounded adequate municipal services to improve and dignify the lives of citizens (Andoh 2009:104). In this regard, municipality operational success for efficient service delivery is reliant upon the implementation of sound records management practices that enhance accessibility to required reliable and authentic recorded information for informed decision-making. Better service delivery always begins with sound records management practices, because records are created to manage the work of an organisation effectively and to further document reasons for transaction, activities and responsibilities (Ketelaar, 1999; Ngoepe, 2008).

Shepherd (2006:10) outlines that “an appropriate record management programme will help the organisation to conduct business in an efficient, accountable manner, deliver services consistently, informed decision-making, transparent and clean administration”. According to the Public Service Commission (2013), administrative efficiency is obligatory in public services for effective service delivery and to advance the strengthening of the South African democracy. However, for good governance to be achieved, it is important that the municipalities utilise records management as a strategic tool for operational efficiency and service delivery. Good governance reform is integral to the enhancement of the transparency and accountability of the municipality, as well as to promote community participation for improvement of informed decision-making and a more rational use of public resources (Schenkelaars & Ahmad 2004).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005) puts forward that the fundamental elements of responsive service delivery were: transparency, participation, satisfying user requirements and accessibility. According to the International Federation of Accountants (2013), good governance is an imperative component of public services as it ensures that the public sector encourages informed decision-making and adequate use of resources, and it strengthens accountability for protection in the management of public resources. Nambalirwa and Sindane (2012:15) thus define good governance “as the ideal type of governance to correct societal ills, founded on structural attributes such as the rule of law, transparency, citizen participation, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and in a manner that is free from corruption”. The foundation of good governance can be achieved through proper management of information, which is held in records. Fust and Graf (2002) affirm that sound records management is the foundation any government needs to provide public services, thereby accomplishing its obligation of accountability towards its citizens and economic development.

## **1.2 Background and contextual setting of the study**

Mogale City Local Municipality (hereafter referred to as MCLM), previously known as the Krugersdorp Local Council, is situated at the western side of the Gauteng province. The MCLM also forms part of the broader West Rand District Municipality. The municipality is confronted with the challenge of ensuring access to adequate basic services such as water and sanitation, housing, electricity, and other services to its inhabitants, including low and middle-income households who solely depend on the municipality for such services, as stipulated in the White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998:92). Furthermore, Mufamadi (2008:11) asserts that “municipalities continue to face challenges posed by the reality of having significant numbers of households that are without easy access to critical life-sustaining resources”.

Thornhill (1995:6) argues that South African local government is confronted with the following challenges, among others: “lack of financial sustainability in municipalities; the lack of capacity to deliver constant and regular services; and the failure of officials to comply with regulations”. Failure by municipalities to address the challenges of service delivery has led to the eruption of violent service delivery protests across the country. Municipal IQ (2016) reports that 137 service delivery protests were reported in South Africa. Municipal IQ (2017) indicates that 173 service delivery protests were recorded for 2017, an increase of 26% from 2016, and with 191 (the

highest so far) in 2014. Mogale (2003) asserts that municipalities need determinative legislative measures to speed up services and these include: funding, qualified personnel and policy compliance to realise local government objectives for provision of quality service delivery. Municipalities should maintain records “to prove accountability when they need to show that they have met their obligations or complied with best practices according to the established policies” (Okello-Obura 2012:15). Furthermore, it is only through record-keeping that MCLM can maintain and uphold its responsibility to provide efficient service delivery as enshrined in the South African constitution. The availability and accessibility of relevant and timely information empowers citizens’ and civil society groups, enabling them to effectively participate in the governance process as well as hold government accountable (Mutula and Wamukoya 2009:333).

Municipalities in South African are mandated by the Constitution to manage their own records to be transparent and accountable to the citizens they serve. The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (NARSSA Act), No. 43 of 1996, provides municipalities with a legislative mandate to manage its records in a well-regulated records system, and to put the necessary policies, standards and procedures in place to ensure that sound records management practices comply with the requirements of this Act. According to Thurston (1996:2), “records management is a key component of any public sector reform program, the efficiency of which includes enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public service”. There is a positive relationship between effective records management and enhanced service delivery, therefore effective records management is essential for municipalities to implement a sound records management programme to improve service delivery and administration efficiency (Kemoni & Ngulube 2008; Blake 2005).

Thurston and Cain (1998) argue that if governments are to be held accountable for their actions, and if the citizens are to exercise their constitutional rights and access government information, the information must be genuine and precisely safeguarded for accessibility. Outlining the records management programmes, the NARSSA Act stipulates the proper management and care of the records of governmental bodies, including municipalities. Records are essential for administrative efficiency, as well as to corroborate human action, promote good governance and improve service delivery (International Council on Archives 2005; Musembi 2003). However, despite the substantive valuable action being undertaken by government to ensure proper records

management systems in municipalities, sound management of these records remains a challenge. Records are only viewed as important by municipal executives when a crisis has occurred, and the required records are unavailable, lost or destroyed.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

With the aforementioned in mind, the researcher, as a resident of the MCLM, has over time observed the alarming rate of misplaced and lost information in the MCLM, which leads to delays in accessing of municipal services by the residents. Residents are often seen in the municipality's offices complaining about inconsistency in provision of essential services and incorrect billings, among others. The situation poses adverse consequences for the MCLM in providing efficient and timely public service to its residents. Chinyemba (2011) asserts that effective records management underpins compliance and obedience by providing authentic information of activities, as well as administration capabilities, by providing an audit trail of the execution of activities. However, poor records management attracts corruption and malfeasance which compromise public service provision. This study sought to investigate effective records management practices in the MCLM in enhancing the provision of service delivery. In this regard, the researcher is of the view that success in effective service delivery is dependent upon the implementation of effective records management practices that enhance accessibility to required recorded information for better decision-making.

### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the enhancing of service delivery through records management in the MCLM. The overall purpose is to further demonstrate how records management can assist to fostering of good governance with the intention to improvement of services.

### **1.5 The objective of the study**

- i) investigate to what extent records management contributes to enhancing public service delivery in the MCLM
- ii) investigate how records are created, accessed and used, stored and maintained in the MCLM
- iii) investigate to what extent records management contributes to enhancing public service delivery in the MCLM

- iv) determine the extent to which records management impacts on good governance, transparency and accountability of the MCLM
- v) identify the benefits derived from records management in the MCLM.

## **1.6 Research questions**

The dissertation seeks to address the following questions:

- Are there suitable standards and practices for creation and maintenance of records management activities?
- What contribution does records management play in fostering enhanced service delivery in the MCLM?
- To what extent does records management impact on the transparency and accountability of the MCLM?
- What are the benefits of effective records management, if any, in the MCLM?

## **1.7 The significance of the study**

Ngulube (2003:136) stresses that “without proper records management, accountability, transparency and efficiency in public service would be heavily compromised, leading to corruption and loss in confidence in the civil service.” Therefore, the finding of this study is expected to create awareness for a municipality to embrace records management as the fundamental tool to promote good governance and foster accountability in the provision of effective and efficient public services. It is also hoped that this study will provide some insights to the policy makers (municipal executives) to comply with legislative framework and policies regulating records management. Furthermore, although the study focuses on the MCLM only it will be conducted with the expectation that its contribution will extend beyond the MCLM to other municipalities and provide sufficient guidance and recommendations.

## **1.8 Delimitation and scope of the study**

The study is set to examine the link between contributions of effective records management in enhancing the provision of public service delivery. According to the Local Government Handbook (2017), there are 257 municipalities in South Africa. Due to limited financial resources and time constraints, the study will be restricted to one municipality out of the 257

municipalities in the South African sphere of local government. Another limiting factor is that the municipal environment is political in nature and some staff members might feel unhappy about divulging and sharing information honestly, which might hamper the researcher to achieve viability of the study. The study was confined to the MCLM, situated in Krugersdorp. Key issues to be addressed include the following:

- Records management is not seen as a priority area in municipalities
- Lack of sufficient funding for records management.
- Organisational culture on records management.
- Skills and competencies of staff in records management.

## **1.9 Theoretical frameworks for the study**

The main coverage of the theory/models underpinning this study is presented in Chapter Two (Theoretical framework). This section, however, is intended to provide an introduction to the theoretical models that are covered in the next chapter. The study is primarily supported by the records continuum model and the life-cycle of records model. The logic behind the combination of the two theoretical models is that no one single theoretical model was found adequate to address the study questions. Firstly, the life-cycle model will assist the study as the starting point for creating an effective records management programme, because it allows the development of appropriate tools, systems and procedures to adequately manage each phase of the life cycle of a record (Yusof & Chell 2000).

On the other hand, Duranti and Preston (2008:5) describe the continuum model as “an integrated record-keeping framework that facilitates provenance, underpins accountability and provides authoritative sources of value-added information.” The substantive analysis of the theory/models underpinning this study is presented in chapter two (theoretical framework), including literature review.

## **1.10 Literature review**

The literature is substantively reviewed in Chapter Two (Literature review) and covers the empirical and theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. Creswell (2014) posits that a literature review helps to determine whether the topic is worth studying and provides insight into ways in which the researcher can limit the scope to a needed area. This section serves to

introduce key aspects of literature that are discussed in Chapter Two. The literature reveals general reasons why records management is among the most important strategic resources that organisations and municipalities need to emphasise. According to Slote (2000), setting up a sound records management programme is beneficial to companies and includes safeguarding the quantity of valuable records, accessibility of information, efficient client services and informed judgement. Roper and Williams (1999:95) concur with above statement by stating that “without effective records management fraud cannot be proven, audits cannot be carried out and citizens cannot make an informed contribution to the governance process”. Kargbo (2009) describes characteristics of good governance as transparency and accountability, community participation, sustainability, advance of equity and equality, and obedience of the rule of law, among other things.

## **1.11 Definition of key concepts**

### *1.11.1 Records*

Cox (2001:2) defines records as “an extension of human memory, purposefully created to record information, document transactions, communicate thoughts, substantiate claims, advance explanations, offer justifications and provide lasting evidence of events”.

The ISO 15489 define records as “information created, received and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business” (ISO 15489-1 2016, Clause 3.14). Shepherd (2006:10) states that “records which are managed as part of an appropriate records management programme will help the organisation to conduct business in an efficient, accountable manner, deliver services consistently, support managerial decision-making and transparent policy formation and ensure continuity in policy execution, management and administration”.

### *1.11.2 Records management*

According to Newton (1989), records management is the exercise of applying effective standards and proficiency in the control of information, which accumulated within an organisation as a result of its own activities. Cook (2006) opines that records management aims to achieve efficient clarification of trustworthy evidence, demonstration of policies and transactions of an organisation and preservation of records. Furthermore, the National Archives of Australia (2004)

state that good record keeping is essential for the pursuance of accountability in government and enhances the interest of citizens in understanding and exercising their rights.

### *1.11.3 Service delivery*

The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2010:4) explains that service delivery is an “outcome, of which the scale and quality depended on factors such as: clear and realistic policies; appropriate allocation of powers, functions and financial resources; performance and accountability of State organs to implement policies and involvement level of self-reliance of communities”. McLennan (2009:6) postulates that “service delivery is a political issue which involves a complex relationship between stakeholder participation, power and authority, which legitimizes the distribution of resources for development on behalf of government”.

### *1.11.4 Good governance*

Holtz (2000) defines this as the legitimate, accountable and effective ways to manage public resources in promoting fairness and rule of law. Furthermore, Cloete (2000:17) states that “good governance assumes that public service delivery is the implementation of public policies designed to provide concrete services to citizens”. Good governance requires availability of authentic and reliable information to enable transparency in municipal activities. The absence of good governance gives little or no indication of how the public funds are spent, “lack of information is incapacitating citizens from holding officials and politicians answerable for service delivery and financial impropriety” (Semberya 2011:78).

### *1.11.5 Accountability and transparency*

Transparency and accountability are interrelated and mutually reinforcing concepts. Schenkelaars and Ahmad (2004:2) postulate that “without transparency the unfettered access to timely, reliable information and performance decision would be difficult to call a public official to account.” Madue (2014:863) describes that “public accountability entails the obligation of authorities to explain publicly, fully and fairly, before and after the fact, how they are carrying out responsibilities that affect the public in important ways”. Furthermore, Curristine (2005:127) is of the view that “accountability helps address the citizens’ ever-changing needs and wants, at the same time improving the performance of local government to deliver public goods and services”.

## **1.12 Research methodology**

### *1.12.1 Research approach*

According to Creswell (2012:16), “characteristics that define a qualitative research are, exploring a problem to develop detailed understanding when the researcher does not know the variables, more reliance on participants’ views and learning from participants”. Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) contend that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. A qualitative research design is applied to determine the perceptions of the MCLM records’ personnel regarding the contribution of records management in enhancing service delivery to attain value for money in order to gain insight, explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the phenomenon. According to Creswell (2013), the qualitative method is used when a problem needs to be explored or when there is a need for a complex and detailed understanding of an issue, and also when there is a need to empower individuals to “share their stories and hear their voices.”

### *1.12.2 Research paradigms*

The interpretive research paradigm is regarded a suitable framework for this study based on the belief that reality consists of people’s subjective experiences of the external world. According to Manion and Morrison (2017:2), the interpretive paradigm “is characterized by a concern for the individual and its central endeavour to understand the subjective world of human experience”. Furthermore, McQueen (2002:17) reiterates that the “interpretivist paradigm enables the researcher to understand in depth the relationship of human beings to their environment and the part those people play in creating the social fabric of which they are a part”.

### *1.12.3 Research design*

The case study will be adopted and largely informed by the need to develop a rich narrative and reveal records management practices, and its contribution to effective public service delivery in the MCLM. According to Yin (2003:2), “a case study is the qualitative method that allows the researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events, such as individual life cycles, organisational and managerial processes”. Furthermore, Yin (2003)

provides several types of case studies such as explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, single, holistic, and multiple case studies. However, the study will adopt the single case study as it focuses only on the records management phenomenon and its real-life context.

#### *1.12.4 Population*

Bless and Higson-Smith (2006) describes population as a large group of units with which the research problem is concerned and to which the obtained results should be generalised. The population of this study consists of records personnel, information technology officials and registry personnel directly involved in key areas of records from creation, through use to maintenance. Furthermore, the population group will also include unit managers who will assist the study with data for staffing, budgetary and policy compliance. However, those researchers using the purposive sampling technique hand-pick the sample size relevant to the study. A sample can be defined as a group of the target population that a researcher plans to study for the purpose of making generalisations about the target population (Creswell 2014:11).

#### *1.12.5 Purposive sampling*

Creswell (2012:626) defines purposive sampling as a qualitative sampling procedure in which researchers “intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon.” The sample size of the study will consist of 45 employees of the MCLM who are directly involved in records management processes. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilisation of available resources. Furthermore, Grinnel and Unrau (2008) opine that purposive sampling is based on the judgement of the researcher, to identify a sample that is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics, representatives and attributes of the population to best serve the purpose of the study. The reason for choosing purposive sampling in this study is to obtain in-depth information from the role players involved in the management of records in the MCLM.

#### *1.12.6 Data collection tools*

Semi-structured interviews will be used to address key questions and to provide a platform for follow-up questions in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. Tashakkori and Teddie (2009:222) explain that “interviews have ability to simplify complicated questions to a certain

level that can be easily understood by respondents”. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:305) outline the importance of observation, stating that “observational data provides the researcher with an opportunity to collect data from live situations”. These authors add that “observation helps researchers to see things which might otherwise be unconsciously missed and to discover things which participants might not freely talk about in interview situations”.

### **1.13 Ethical consideration**

Babbie and Mouton (2001:520-527) opine that “most important ethical agreements that prevail in social research as being voluntary participation; no harm to the participants; anonymity and confidentiality; and not deceiving subjects”. In conducting the study, the researcher will adhere to the research ethics and the confidentiality of participants will be protected. The participants will be informed that the research is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable to participate in the study any further. Furthermore, Payne and Payne (2004) describe ethical considerations as a moral stance that involves conducting research to achieve not just high professional standards of technical procedures, but also respect and protection for the people actively consenting to be studied. The UNISA Policy on Research Ethics (2013:15) “stipulates guidelines to researchers about confidentiality and anonymity as accepted practice in the research”. Ethical approval will be obtained from the Ethics Committees of the University of South Africa and from the MCLM to collect data for the study.

### **1.14 Chapters summary**

#### *1.14.1 Chapter 1: Introduction*

This chapter sets the tone for the study by providing an orientation overview to the background as well as the contextual setting. The chapter covers the problem statement, research objectives, research questions and theoretical frameworks aligned to the study. The research methodology adopted in the study was qualitative research, with interview and observation as data collection instruments. The limitations of the study as well as the significance of this research, the ethical considerations and chapter outline were presented in this chapter. The following chapter focuses on theoretical frameworks and literature reviews.

#### *1.14.2 Chapter 2: Literature review*

The literature review chapter reviews literature related to the study based on the study's objectives covering records management in enhancing public services. The literature review chapter puts the study into context by highlighting what other scholars have written in relation to records management and service delivery. The review also compares and contrasts different opinions from scholars about records management and service delivery. The literature review is vital to the study to enable the researcher to further understand the phenomenon of records management in relation to service delivery. Furthermore, the alignment of objectives to the theoretical framework underpinning the study will assist the researcher to better understand the phenomenon.

#### *1.14.3 Chapter 3: Research methodology*

This chapter examines the research methodology and methods used to achieve the objectives of the study. The chapter includes paradigms, approaches, research design, choice of method, area of the study, population of the study, data collection methods, research instruments, validity and reliability and ethical issues.

#### *1.14.4 Chapter 4: Data analysis, discussion and presentation of findings*

The chapter provides the presentation and interpretation of refined and analysed data that come from the responses obtained from the case study. It presents the data guided by the objectives of the study. The data presentation tools will consist of plain text that helps the researcher to present data. The chapter discusses the findings of the study, resulting from qualitative analysis of data. The discussions of the findings will be based on the objectives of the study.

#### *1.14.5 Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations*

Chapter Five presents the summary of the findings before providing conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the findings. Future research is recommended with regard to records management and service delivery.

#### *1.14.6 Summary of chapter 1*

Chapter One introduced the area of the study and gave a background to records management programmes in relation to the provision of service delivery. This chapter introduced the reader to

the background of the study in which several issues of records management and constitution were discussed. The chapter also stated the problem of the study, research questions, the research objectives, significance, and scope of the study. Key terms used in the study were defined and a brief research methodology to be used in the study was given. Lastly, the chapter provided a short view on a preliminary literature review which is holistically discussed in chapter two.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter set the scene by providing the introduction and background to the study, problem statement, research purpose and objectives, research questions, contribution of the study, research methodology, ethical consideration, scope and delimitation of the study, as well as definition of key terms. This chapter reviews the existing body of knowledge that is pertinent to this research project and provides the literature review on the importance of records management in the public sector. According to Oliver (2004), the word “review” outlines that the researcher should recap the broad content of the research in a comprehensible manner, thereby ensuring corroboration with other studies in the field. A good literature review needs to critically indicate the multiple views of previous studies, similarities, incompatibilities; and the direction of thought on the topic of research must be accurately portrayed and acknowledged in the text (Stilwell 2000). According to Creswell (2009; 2014a; 2014b), a good literature review follows a series of steps which include: identifying key terms, locating the literature, evaluating and selecting the literature review, organising the literature, and writing the literature review.

#### **2.2 Theoretical frameworks**

McMillan and Schumacher (2000) concur that theories are arranged sets of ideas that may express a particular phenomenon, and they also distinguish a relationship between or among phenomena and how they influence one another. As such, theories are found early in the research plan and basically act as an orienting lens shaping the questions to be asked, who participates in the study, how data are collected and the overall plan of the dissertation (Creswell, 2003). According to Dale (1998), theories enable researchers to generate new ideas, follow well-guided action and they are effective for theoretical advancements. The purpose of this study was to investigate records management in enhancing public service delivery at the MCLM. The study was primarily supported by the records continuum model and the life-cycle of records model. The logic behind the combination of the two theoretical models is that no one single theoretical model was found adequate to address the study questions. Another factor is that in the municipal environment, both paper and electronic records are active.

### 2.2.1 *Life-cycle model*

Newton (1989) elaborates that the life-cycle of records reflects the opinion that all records, irrespective of form and purpose, pass through certain well-defined phases. The phases follow logical steps up until the final stage of disposal. Firstly, the life-cycle model will assist the study as the starting point for creating an effective records management programme because it allows the development of appropriate tools, systems and procedures to effectively manage each phase of the life of a record (Yusof & Chell 2000). The life cycle concept promotes a sense of order through a systematic approach to records management and is aimed at showing action taken in the life of a record: typically, its creation, capture, storage, use and disposal (Atherton 1985; Shepherd & Yeo 2003). Roper and Millar (1999) opines that the sound management of records throughout their life cycle is an imperative programme for civil service reform. The author further states that without the lifecycle concept, vast quantities of inactive records clog up expensive office space, and then it is virtually impossible to retrieve important administrative, financial and legal information. Such a situation undermines the accountability of the state and endangers the rights of the citizen. The life-cycle model has some shortcomings, one of which is its inability to cater for electronic records. Bantin (2008) supports Roper and Millar (1999) by stating that the limitation of the suitability of the life cycle model to handle electronic records has been heavily criticised, hence the development of the continuum model as alternative for both electronic and paper-based records. Tsabedze (2011:13) posits that a record has a “life similar to that of a biological organism in that it is born (creation phase), lives (maintenance and use phase), and dies (disposal phase)”.

### 2.2.2 *Continuum model*

The continuum model, on the other hand, offers different views of records management. Atherton (1985:47) argues that “the creation of records as an on-going process means that a created record can be altered several times in the system during its administrative use.” McLeod and Hare (2006) argue that the continuum has a particular focus on processes and activities, rather than on the records and their status, hence making it valuable within the electronic environment where systems are the central point. The records continuum concept offers a different perspective to the management of records.

Managing records in continuum model is an ongoing process where elements of the continuum pass seamlessly into one another (Sheperd & Yeo 2003). Brothman (2001) discusses the life-cycle and records continuum models in connection to continuity use of information. The author

further argues that the life-cycle model lacks consistency and direction when records reach the final archival stage (Brothman 2001). The combination of the two models helps to facilitate and accommodate both the manual system, which is still relevant, and the electronic system. Despite the challenges experienced with the life-cycle model due to its lack of coherence when the records reach the final archival stages, both models are deemed necessary in a municipal environment where both paper and electronic records exist. The primary purpose of the integrated approach is that, the records continuum model requires the records personnel to develop new ways of understanding various aspects of records needs. Furthermore, continuum model requires continuity of records usage for as long as they useful and valuable. According to Shepherd and Yeo (2003:10) the continuum model is a flexible and inclusive concept that reflects a range of issues surrounding the role of records in contemporary organisations and society

**Table 2.1 Linking the theory with the research objectives**

Research Objectives	Theories	Important variables to be addressed
1. Investigate to what extent records management contributes to enhancing public service delivery in the MCLM.	Life Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Records creation and receipt; classification</li> <li>▪ Records maintenance; Access to records</li> </ul>
2. Records creation, storage and maintenance, accessibility and usefulness in MCLM	Continuum model and Life cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Records keeping ; policies and procedures, creation, accessibility</li> </ul>
The impact of records management on MCLM,s good governance, accountability and transparency	Continuum model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compliance; authenticity</li> </ul>
3. The benefits derived from records management	Continuum model and Life cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Records management policies, retention and disposal</li> </ul>

## **2.3 Local government: roles, responsibilities and challenges**

### *2.3.1 Roles of local government*

The purpose of local government, as stipulated in Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, 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 (SA Constitution 1996). Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997:4) assert that “local government is a very important sphere of government which serves the needs of the communities at grassroots directly”. The structure of South African government allows local government – which is the closest sphere of government to the people – to be better equipped to “render services aimed at achieving a healthy socio-economic and political environment” (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 1997:17). According to Pieterse, Parnell, Swilling and Van Donk (2008:3), “municipalities remain the primary authorities responsible for the many basic services around water, waste management, electricity reticulation, sanitation, roads, storm water drainage, land use planning and control, and transport planning, and are increasingly given more responsibilities by higher spheres of government”.

According to Cameron (2010:99-100), “a classical definition of a decentralised local government would be as follows:

- Local authorities should be constitutionally separate from central government and be responsible for a significant range of services;
- They should have their own treasury, separate budget and accounts and their own taxes to produce a significant part of their revenue;
- They should have their own personnel with the right to hire and fire staff;
- Local policy should be decided by local councils, consisting predominately of local representatives;
- Central government should play an indirect advisory, supervisory and inspectorate role”.

### *2.3.2 Responsibilities*

Section 152 of the South African Constitution mandates the local sphere to provide a democratic and accountable government for local communities ensure the provision of services to

communities in a sustainable manner and encourage the involvement of communities in matters of local government. Services have to be provided based on the constitutional obligations (Koma, 2010:111). The mandate of local government is encapsulated in the preamble of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, No. 117 of 1998, which states that it is a vision of democratic and developmental local government in which municipalities fulfil their constitutional obligations to ensure sustainable effective and efficient municipal services, promote social and economic development, encourage a safe and healthy environment by working with communities in creating environments and human settlements in which all the people can lead uplifted and dignified lives. Pretorius and Schurink (2007:19) makes it clear that “in a post-apartheid South Africa, access to effective public services is no longer seen as an advantage enjoyed by only a privileged few in the community, but as a legitimate right of all residents, particularly those who were previously disadvantaged”. Nleya (2011:11) writes that “service delivery remains a central real and symbolic part of the actualisation of a meaningful life in poor areas”.

According to the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa (IDASA) (2010:8), “the failure of municipalities to deliver basic services not only causes immense hardship for the residents of municipalities, but can have a detrimental impact on social and economic development.” Although authority has been given to local authorities to render services and manage their own affairs, most municipalities fail to achieve their mandates as set out in the South African Constitution (National Treasury 2011). The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2010:4) further explains that service delivery is an “outcome, of which the scale and quality depended on factors such as: clear and realistic policies; appropriate allocation of powers, functions and financial resources; performance and accountability of State organs to implement policies; co-ordination between organs of State; public participation and involvement as well as the level of self-reliance of communities.”

### *2.3.3 Challenges facing local government*

South African municipalities are statutorily enacted to observe legislative requirements as far as service delivery and development issues are concerned. However, “in a developing country such as South Africa, with its large poor population and social inequality, the need for service delivery is greater than in developed countries where larger numbers of people are self-reliant” (Gauteng

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development 2010:34). However, Sebugwawo (2013) states that South African municipalities are faced with a wave of protest actions, demonstrations and petitions because of inadequate service delivery that illustrate the municipalities' failure to take action regarding community challenges. According to Solanes and Jouravlev (2006:20), "one of the main reasons for loss of credibility of local government, is their inability to meet the basic needs of the population they are meant to serve". The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs report (COGTA 2014) identified problems related to poor service delivery, poor financial management, rampant corruption, as well as a lack of transparency and accountability in the municipalities.

Motshekga (2008:2) opines that "many local government structures suffer from a shortage of skills, particularly in the financial and administrative areas, which compromises their ability to change their approach to development and to deliver public services effectively and efficiently". The Public Audit Act, 2004 (Act No. 25 of 2004) states that the Auditor-General (AG) must audit and report on the accounts, financial statements and financial management of the public sector. The Auditor-General of South Africa (2018:2) "has consistently shared audit messages that emphasise the importance of accountability in the management of municipal affairs, starting with appropriate planning focused on the needs of citizens, and instituting appropriate internal control and supervision that will ensure proper financial and performance management". Unfortunately, most municipalities fail to develop the administrative and managerial infrastructure needed to deliver the services assigned to that sphere of government.

This concern is in line with the AG's media report which was released on 23 May 2018 regarding the financial status and the management of municipalities "... out of 257 municipalities audited, only 33 municipalities (13%) managed to produce quality financial statements and performance reports, as well as complied with all key legislation, thereby receiving a clean audit" (AG 2018:3). The Auditor-General, Kimi Makwetu, notes that credible financial statements and performance reports are crucial to enable accountability and transparency, but municipalities are failing in these areas. However, the AG demonstrates that "in some municipalities there was a blatant disregard for controls (including good record keeping) and compliance with key legislation, as it enabled an environment in which it would be easy to commit fraud" (AG 2018:3). From a similar perspective, Mnjama (2004) asserts that without

accurate and reliable financial records, audits cannot be carried out, fraudulent activities cannot be traced and accountability cannot prevail to those responsible for financial mismanagement of the organisation. Furthermore, the World Bank (2000:6) states that “poor record keeping affects the entire accounting function, with the result that reporting and auditing may become virtually impossible.”

## **2.4 Legislative framework for Records Management in South Africa**

### *2.4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*

The objectives of local government, which should lead to stated outcomes in relation to the local communities within which they function, are entrenched in the Constitution of South Africa, No. 108 of 1996, chapter 7, subsection 152:

- “To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- To ensure the provision of services in a sustainable manner;
- To promote social and economic development;
- To promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government” (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Furthermore, section 153 of the Constitution, 1996, “implies that a municipality must 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” (Craythorne 2006:146).

### *2.4.2 Municipal Structures Act of 1998*

The promulgation of the 1996 South African Constitution, the White Paper on Local Government (Republic of South Africa 1998a), and the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (Republic of South Africa 1998b) serves as the basis for well-structured local government institutions through the promotion of good governance. The Municipal Structures Act (Republic of South Africa 1998b) is the central legislative guide for local government matters within South Africa. This Act provides statutory guidance on how the municipal boundaries, municipal councils and administration should be structured. Section 19 in chapter two of this Act charges

municipalities to work towards achieving the objectives of government as per the Constitution (Republic of South Africa 1996) with due regard for their capacity and authority to do so.

#### *2.4.3 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000*

The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, No. 32 of 2000 (Municipal Systems Act), provides the machinery and procedures to enable municipalities to uplift their communities socially and economically, and guarantee affordable universal access to basic services (RSA 2000). Section 17(1) of the Municipal Systems Act sets out the mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation in the affairs of a municipality. The Municipal Systems Act “encouraged municipalities to promote democratic participation by citizens in the way they are governed, and also defined how a municipality should provide municipal services to citizens” (Naidoo 2000:8). Section 4(2)(d) of the Municipal Systems Act states that the council of a municipality, within the municipality’s financial and administrative capacity and having regard for practical considerations, has the duty to “strive to ensure that municipal services are provided to the local community in a financially and environmentally sustainable way” (RSA 2000). Coetzee (2000:12) is of the opinion that a “developmental local government should adopt a strategic, creative and integrated approach to governance so as to address challenges related to service delivery and meeting basic needs”. Geddes and Sullivan (2007:10) furthermore “ascribe four important areas of responsibility to local municipalities, namely being a vehicle for socio-economic development, exercising of local leadership, the protector of democratic accountability, and an exemplar of good governance.”

#### *2.4.4 The National Archives and Record Service of South Africa Act of 1996*

Section 13(2)(a) of the NARSSA Act prescribes that no public records, either from national or provincial sphere, shall be transferred to archives, destroyed or destroyed without the recommendation of the national archivist. Section 13 of this Act provides the provincial archivist with powers to pursue effective records management in the public sector. The sole responsibility of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARS) is to ensure the compliance and standards of sound records management in all government bodies, in this context, municipalities (NARSSA Act 43 of 1996). The National Archives of South Africa Records Management Model (2005) advocates a sound records management programme for both paper and electronic records through the presence of structured guidelines that include records

management policy and records management procedures. The NARSSA act is crucial in a local government environment to facilitate public transparency and protection of information. Miller (1999) postulates that one of the reasons for keeping records is to provide accurate proof of organisational transactions and to further facilitate accountability needs.

#### *2.4.5 Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003*

The Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, No. 56 of 2003 (MFMA), was promulgated in 2003 to secure an effective financial management of the affairs of the municipalities in the local government sphere. The aim of the MFMA is to establish the treasury norms and standards for the local sphere of government (RSA 2003). The South African Local Government Association (2015:16), in their 2014/15 Annual Report, articulated that the “Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003 was established to secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of municipalities and other institutions in local sphere of government.” In terms of section 5(3) of the MFMA, provincial treasuries are responsible for assisting, guiding and monitoring municipalities in terms of compliance with the MFMA and its related regulations (RSA 2003). According to Pauw, Woods, Van der Linde, Fourie and Visser (2002), section 215 of the Constitution, echoes that municipal budget allocation and spending processes must promote transparency, accountability and sound financial management of the municipality.

#### *2.4.6 Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000*

The Promotion of Access to Information Act, No. 2 of 2000 (PAIA) seeks to fulfil the constitutional mandate which grants communities and citizens the right to access state-held information or state-owned information that is held by another person and is in the public interest. With respect to municipalities, the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000b) and the MFMA (RSA 2003) require municipalities to publish certain finance-related information on the municipality’s website and in local newspapers which circulate within the province. Dirk (2004) maintains that the call for greater transparency has led to the passing of freedom of information and protection of privacy laws, which have reached into the private as well as the government sectors. The aforementioned information includes performance reports on the municipality, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the annual budget and all other notices as set out in

applicable Acts (Dirk 2004). As part of the promotion of access to information protocols, municipalities are further required to provide accurate, timely and authentic information.

#### *2.4.7 Records management practices and standards*

Adherence to legislation and standards has an effect on how records are created, used, retrieved and preserved. Bantin (2001) opines that the activities of creation and capturing of records would be more effective with the participation of records management professionals, together with other parties. On the other hand, McLeod and Hare (2006) point out that compliance with legal and legislative obligations is imperative for the reinforcing of sound records management practices in organisations. Furthermore, “records creation and capturing involve developing consistent rules to ensure integrity and accessibility, deciding on systems to log and track records, and procedures for registering, classifying and indexing” (Yusof & Chell 1999:10). In addition, Shepherd and Yeo (2003:130) state that “when assessing the need to create and capture records, it is essential to consider the organisational requirements which provide evidence and information for operational activities of an organisation, to ensure accountability and the processes of records preservation.” Records storage facilities “should protect records from unauthorised access, theft, damage, loss, destruction, and natural disaster” (RSA 2003:26).

## **2.5 The nature of records**

There are three types of records that exist within an organisation, namely “current or active, semi-current, and non-current records” (An & Fiao 2004:33). The active stage is an imperative period when records are effectively used to maintain information on the operation of the organisation’s daily performance. The semi-active stage “is the period when the records are no longer required to support the everyday operations of the organisation directly” Mrwebi (2000:33). According to Tsabedze (2012:15), “once the primary value of records to an organisation lapses, then they are regarded as inactive, hence the requirement to destroy ephemeral records that take up valuable office space, and to transfer valuable records to the archives”. Subsection 13(2) of the NARSSA Act gives guidelines for the provision that inactive records shall be archived or destroyed through provincial archivist command.

### *2.5.1 Formats of records management*

There are two main types of records formats, namely manual records and electronic records. According to Borglund and Oberg (2006:5), “there is no difference in the expected functions between manual records and electronic records but there are differences in structure and form”.

### *2.5.2 Manual records*

Hedstrom (2000:163) explains that “organising large volumes of digital information into manageable electronic record keeping systems that will satisfy the demands of both day-to-day operations and future access and retrieval is another significant challenge.” Nsibirwa (2007:32) stresses the need for “records officers and users to understand the importance of properly handling records, particularly paper-based records, since they require support and protection when moved.” Manual records are stored in different locations and other variables lead to higher costs in copying, faxing and transporting them (Okeke 2008). According to Tsabedze (2012:14), “in order to ensure proper maintenance of records, all the information regarding the records storage and retrieval must be gathered and proper strategies implemented before the records are created.”

### *2.5.3 Advantages of manual records*

According to the State of Queensland (2010), manual records are cheaper to set up because they do not need expensive software program to set up; rectifying manual records entries for errors may be easier, compared to electronic records, which risk losing its originality and corrupted data when altered.

### *2.5.4 Disadvantages of manual records*

A paper-based record takes a notable larger amount of storage space compared to digital records. Furthermore, Schneider and Wagner (1993) explain that paper-based records impede the flow, because once information has been recorded within a set of tons’ paper records, it may not be effortlessly obtainable later, and it might be challenging to compile more complete manual records. Unlike electronic records, paper-based records lack diversity as it can only be used in one place at a time. The information is only as secure as the paper itself exist, should the document be lost, misplaced or damaged, the entire record is lost because there is no backup file.

Furthermore, Okeke (2008) asserts that a manual record requires multiple locations when needed and the costs are exorbitant, especially for copying, faxing and transportation. ‘

#### *2.5.5 Electronic records*

Electronic records management may be defined as management of records in an electronic form; this includes having the necessary software tools to capture the records. Robek, Brown and Stephens (1996:201) define e-records as “records containing machine-readable, as opposed to human-readable, information”. According to Johnston and Bowen (2005:132), “this includes the creation, use, maintenance and disposal of electronically created records for the purposes of providing evidence of business activities”. Wamukoya and Mutula (2005b:71) observe that “e-records support the day-to-day operations of government services in the same way paper records did”. There is “increasing pressure on organisations to ensure that their electronic records meet legislative requirements of authenticity, reliability and originality” (Myler & Broadbent 2006:2). Furthermore, Leroux (2004) asserts that for electronic records management to be satisfactory, it must have all the features of exemplified authentication. Electronic records must conform to legislative rules, be of undisputed origin, be complete, and be trustworthy (Leroux, 2004).

#### *2.5.6 Advantage of electronic records*

Maguire (2005) identifies the benefits of managing electronic records as including: ability to incorporate documents across multiple files, easy accessibility and timeous of information retrieval, cost-efficient by reducing replication of records, and sort records according to needs and specifications. Wamukoya and Lowry (2013:72) emphasise that “digital records must be stored in trusted digital repositories in accordance with international standards, good practice and in rooms with good environmental controls, with much documentation and much regard for their continued accessibility in the face of changing technology.”

#### *2.5.7 Disadvantages of electronic records*

Hedstrom (2000:163) indicates that “electronic records are also difficult to maintain and preserve for the long term, because they are stored on magnetic or optical media which are much more fragile than traditional recording and storage media.” Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) observe that frameworks that support electronic records are mostly easily broken or damaged due to the complexity of the systems used. Furthermore, Asogwa (2012) opines that protection of classified electronic records files containing personal and financial statements of an organisation cannot be

guaranteed if proper security protections are not put in place. The reliability and authenticity of electronic records may be questioned because they are easy to alter and open to tampering. The “authenticity of electronic records is threatened whenever they are transmitted across space or time, necessitating the means for assessing and maintaining authenticity to support the presumption that records continue to be as claimed and free from corruption or undocumented modification” (MacNeil & Gilliland-Swetland 2005:49). Shepherd (2003:108) stresses that “the capturing of records should take the internal needs of the organisation and the needs of employees and customers into consideration”.

## **2.6 The importance of records management in an organisation**

Effective management of records is important for organisational goals, mission and activities. According to Ricks, Swafford and Gow (1992), records are imperative for a number of reasons within an organisation as they document and validate decision-making, safeguard organisational documentation, and document evidence for future references, amongst others. Thomas, Schubert and Lee (1983:162) suggest that “the outcomes from establishing records centres in institutions include effective storage and retrieval systems and comprehensive records transfer and storage programs”. According to Shepherd (2006), comprehensive records management programmes in organisations are a clear identification of organisations’ attempts to deliver efficient services and aids management decision-making, policy execution and the general administration of organisations.

Schellnack-Kelly (2013:5) asserts that “accessibility and authenticity of information sources determines the integrity and persona of the South African public sector” (in this context, the municipalities). Schellnack-Kelly further states that information sources are evidence which exhibit governance commitments, both to citizens and the global community. Rhoads (1983) note that records management is an integral part of democratic government because it provides platform for efficiency and accountability in the administration of public sector. From a similar perspective, Hare and McLeod (1997) allude that records are organised units of information that are complete, authentic, spot on and reliable. Records must possess sufficient reliable content, clarify action to be self-evident and to facilitate evidence of a particular activity (Day & Klein 1987).

According to Tagbator, Adzido and Agbanu (2015) the essence of proper records management cannot be overemphasised. Records management is an important function in strategic decision-making that helps cut down operational costs and reduces risks associated with litigation, loss of information and reputation (Erima & Wamukoya 2012). Roper and Millar (1999) explain that records are fundamental to the effective operation of the country's legal system and more crucial to the administration efficiency. They further outline several legislative functions such as: (1) they support legal rights and obligations within the legal system; (2) they provide evidence or proof that a particular activity took place; and (3) they contribute to accountability in organisations and in government. According to Shepherd (2006:6), "organisations use records to support accountability, when they need to prove that they have met their obligations or complied with the best practice or established policies".

Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) point out that organisation need to embrace records as a strategic tool like any other corporate resources, such as finances and human resources. Thus, efficient and effective management of records helps the critical stakeholders of an organisation or institution as well as its administrators who require records to facilitate accurate, timely decisions (Nwankwo, 2001). Ricks, Swafford and Gow (1992:8) emphasise that "accurate records are crucial to provide background information for planning for the future, while taking advantage of the past". Hurley (2005:224) also points out that "record-keeping and accountability advocates seem to agree that in support of accountability, good record systems must exist which are complete, authentic, reliable (dependable), accessible and usable". The International Council of Archives (2008) emphasises that good records management is fundamental to a well-functioning organisation since it supports business activity and provides a basis for efficient service delivery.

## **2.7 The benefits of records management**

Kemoni (2007:2) asserted that sound records management is beneficial to public sector by improving provision of services timely, informed decisions hence contribute to sustainable socio-economic and political development. This means that good records management ensures that sound decisions are made based on full, accurate and up to date information, and that the rationale for and the impact of such decisions can be traced, scrutinised and justified as required (University of Glasgow, 2006). What is evident from this explanation is that municipalities needs

sound records management programme to achieve effective decision making. The aforementioned corroborated by Piggot (2002) that without access to good records, officials are forced to take decisions on an ad hoc basis without the benefit of institutional memory. In contrast, a study by (Ngoepe & Ngulube 2013) took a different approach by further stating that effective records management processes are beneficial for demonstration of transparency and accountability as well as for manifestation of corruption and other irregularities public sector.

Records serve as a major source of information and provide permissible authentic and legally confirmable information that can serve as evidence of decisions, activities and transactions in organisations (Wamukoya 2000). According to the University of the State of New York (1994:8), “accurate, reliable and trustworthy records are the cornerstones of effective programs for auditing and accountability”. Adu-Oppong and Asante (2014) contend that a sound records management program captures organisational activities and evidence, and preserve the existing information in an organisation. Thurston (2000) opined that if governments are to be held accountable for their actions and if the public is to have legally enforceable rights of access to government information, then it is essential to ensure that evidence is accurately and securely preserved. Records provide one mechanism by which individuals, institutions, governments, and societies can be held accountable for their actions and ultimately serve as a foundation upon which public memory is constructed (Marshall 2006:1).

## **2.8 Records management in promoting good governance, accountability and transparency**

A well-formed and structured public service is essential for the social wellbeing of citizens. Sebina (2004:45) argues that “good governance is predicated on the adoption of functional records management and the enactment of freedom of information legislation by government”. Mat Isa (2009) argues that record-keeping is just a tool to document evidence to ensure accountability and promote good governance, upholding ethical standards of those involved. Thus, Hodges (2005:40) defines democratic good governance, “as a political regime that is based on liberal-democratic policy which protects human and civil rights, linked to a competent, non-corruptible and accountable administrative system”. The precondition of accountability and transparency can be achieved through the adoption of good governance and free flow of information that is held in records for openness about government activities. Cox and Wallace

(2002:67) express a similar view by stating that “transparency and accountability cannot be achieved in an environment where information is not available”. Mashinini (2008:96) asserts that “good governance should be used to highlight the extent of democratisation through the decentralisation of decision-making, devolution and community participation in the planning process”. Kargbo (2009) identifies the following features of good governance: openness, accountability, participatory, sustainability, ethical standards, and legislative compliances, among other things.

The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) of the United Nations (2010) indicates that a major contributor to poor service delivery in South Africa, especially at local government level, is poor governance practices, which include uncontrollable corruption, and a lack of decisive and competent leadership government officials in their management of public resources. Wamukoya (2000) argues that the state of records management in many African countries makes it impossible to document evidence, action and responsible officials to hold them accountable for that responsibility. Ketelaar (1999) alludes to the fact that records are created in an organisation to efficiently document organisational information, validate activities and transaction in an organisation, record the date of an activity and explain responsibility and accountability of officials involved. According to Woods (2000:825), good governance means, “rooting out corruption and rent-seeking activities, primarily by focusing on transparency and information flows and by ensuring that appropriate information is collected and released about the policies and performance of institutions so that citizens can monitor and scrutinize the management of public funds”. Municipal accountability is an initiative that needs to be supported by the availability of reliable and accessible information.

In addition, most scholars agree that records management does contribute to good governance. Scholar Akotia (1996) explored the “implications of the management of public sector financial records for good governance”. Akotia (1996) argues that preserving quality and authentic financial records management was imperative to public sector reform effort and therefore it is required that public sector officials should be encouraged to do proper records management. The author further states that sound records management is essential for operational efficiency, transparency and accountability in public sector. On the other hand, another scholar, Pillay (2016), in her studies on “ethics and accountability in South African municipalities” concludes

that the battle against corruption alludes that South Africa's legislative structures should be compelled to strengthen the accessibility of information as a key issue of trustworthiness and good governance, and public participation is an imperative part of the country's constitutional rights. Additionally, Ngoepe and Ngulube (2013) explored "the role of records management in corporate governance in South Africa". Their study confirmed that records management is neglected and its functionality underemphasised and even when government bodies establish audit units and committees, records management officials are not consulted or even included in such committees. The authors argue that a better incorporation of records management as a strategic and functional tool would promote good corporate governance.

## **2.9 The link between records management and public service delivery**

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005) suggests that the key components of responsive service delivery were: transparency in activities, participation of citizens, meeting the demand of citizens, and availability of information. Mampe (2013:5) argues that "service delivery is about the ability of governments and parastatals to make available the tangible public goods and the intangible services to the public and its customers". Effective service delivery is when a government strives to provide efficient services that are accessible, of a high quality, standard and value for human dignity (Eigema 2007). Kanzi (2010) asserts that a sound records management programme is fundamental to providing high quality services delivered to the public and to provide a basis for managing resources. Atulomah (2011) observes that sound records management reforms are imperative to eliminate maladministration, and administrative problems and weaknesses that cause inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the institutions.

Akor and Udensi (2013) opine that proper records management could help the public sector to manage their information effectively, achieve organisational objectives, protect the organisation from litigation, preserve institutional memory, and encourage accountability and good governance. Furthermore, the above statement expresses that the unavailability of sound records undermines quality in the provision of services in municipalities. Municipal accountability is an initiative that needs to be supported by the availability of credible, accurate and accessible information. According to Ngulube (2010), the issues of trust, accountability and improved

service delivery can only be attained if government records are properly managed and accessible to members of the public.

A Kenyan study conducted by Kemoni and Ngulube (2008) concluded that records management was necessary for resource allocation, decision-making and economic development. It further highlighted that records management was essential to public sector management and enhances service delivery. Therefore, poor records management practices lead to poor public service delivery and uninformed decision-making by officials. According to Slote (2000), establishing a comprehensive records management programme offers both immediate and long-term benefits to companies, including: managing the quantity of records in an organisation, accessibility of information, improved customer services and well-informed decisions. Concurring with this, Wamukoya (2000) maintains that records management is a fundamental and core activity of public sector management. To him, records represent a major source of information and are almost the only reliable and legally verifiable data source that can serve as evidence of decisions, actions and transactions in the public service.

In support of the above scholars, Sanderson and Ward (2003) further explored the importance of records management in an organisation. The authors explain that records prevent loss of information due to disasters or theft, ensure business continuity, maximise the efficiency of operation and usage of information, and respond in a timely and effective way to requirements of customers. Blake (2014) also states that properly managed records can help reduce operating expenses, enhance customer service and ensure that the company is in compliance with laws and regulations. Furthermore, Makhura (2005) in his study found that records management makes a significant contribution to the efficiency of an organisation's operations and its competitiveness. He further explains that proper records management improves performance of an organisation and ensures efficiency in the provision of services.

## **2.10 Chapter Summary**

By reviewing literature, this chapter has established that records management is becoming an essential strategic aspect in the democratic society to promote transparency and accountability in public sector reforms. Sound records management can assist municipalities in the provision of

timely and efficient services due to easy retrieval of information that is contained in records. In the absence of effective records management, municipalities are likely to experience corruption and maladministration which will affect the provision of services to community members. However, although the management of records is recognised as an essential strategic tool for delivery of efficient services, legislation alone may not guarantee sound records management in municipalities but qualified records personnel are needed for operational efficiency. The record life-cycle and continuum theories further guided the foundation base of the study. The following chapter examines the adopted research methodology for this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter takes the reader through the methodology applied during the course of the study. A research methodology provides a map of how the study was conducted. In this chapter, the research approach, research paradigms, population and sampling, data collection methods and instruments are discussed. According to Ngulube (2015:6), “methodology is central to the research process, because it is the lens through which a researcher looks when making decisions on acquiring knowledge about a social phenomenon and getting answers to the research questions”.

#### **3.2 Research approach**

A research design, according to Creswell (2009:3), refers to “plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” and this “involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods”. There are three common methodological approaches to research used in social research, namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods (Ngulube 2015:5; Creswell 2014:32; Neuman 2011; Creswell 2006; Leedy 1997). The study was underpinned by the qualitative research approach. The intention in qualitative research is to gain an in-depth, holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied, through exploring “the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell 2013:44). Qualitative research thus entails an interpretive, naturalistic approach, in which phenomena are studied in their natural settings and interpreted in terms of the meanings people ascribe to them (Denzin & Lincoln 2011).

The qualitative approach was more relevant to the study because it sought to study things in “their natural settings attempting to make sense of a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Merriam 2009:14). Furthermore, the focus of the qualitative approach is fundamental to extracting meanings that people associate with experiences, circumstances and situations or embed into texts, images and other objects (Hesse-Biber, 2016). Qualitative approach methods allow the researcher to dig much deeper into human experiences (Rubin &

Babbie 2013). This ties into this study as it investigates the contribution of records management in enhancing service delivery. The qualitative approach will assist the researcher in finding out about MCLM staff members' experiences and behaviours about records management.

The above statement is further elaborated by Guest, Namey and Mitchel (2013), who view the advantage of qualitative research as relating to the ability to probe into responses as much as needed to gain more information about the participants' experiences and behaviours. Rubin and Babbie (2013:56) assert that "...interpretive researchers believe that the best way to learn about people is to be flexible and subjective in one's approach so that the subject's world can be 'seen' through the subject's own eyes". Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) opine that "qualitative research methodology locates the observer in the real world and consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible". Qualitative research design investigates "how the participants in an ensemble records management environment understood and interpreted their experiences" (Creswell 2013:43). Research embedded in a qualitative approach implies that the researcher is interested in how people make sense of the world, how they experience events and the meanings they attach to these events (Willig, 2008). The primary aim of qualitative research is to "obtain a better understanding of events and actions undertaken by an organisation through a detailed explanation" (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2015:4).

As with any approach, qualitative research has limitations in the study. Qualitative research relies heavily on the researcher's interpretation of the social reality found within the data (Denzin & Lincoln 2008). Gillham (2000) describes how human behaviour, inclusive of both thoughts and feelings, is influenced by the environment. Gillham (2000) therefore suggests that in order to understand people in real life, researchers need to study people in their context if they are to truly understand their behaviour. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to provide rich descriptions through less structured methods of data collection. Furthermore, Creswell (1994) posits that a researcher chooses a qualitative approach because of the need to explore and give an informative view.

### **3.3 Interpretive research paradigms underpinning the study**

A paradigm is the basic belief system or worldview that guides the research (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Research paradigms are often referred to “as a set of assumptions or beliefs of the researcher that highlights the basis that drives the orientation of inquiry” (Groenewald 2004:44). Collins and Hussey (2009:55) affirm that “the research paradigm as a philosophical approach, guides a researcher on how to conduct a scientific research based on the assumptions and beliefs that people ascribe to the world and the nature of knowledge”. This research is underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm. Neuman (2011:102) defines the interpretive approach as “the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds”. The interpretive paradigm, on the other hand, shares its philosophical foundations with qualitative research (Goldkuhl 2012). Furthermore, qualitative work is largely based on empirical data and contextual understanding of that data. It forms an understanding of the different worlds through the use of empirical data collection, which is then used to interpret social realities (Bauer, Gaskell & Allum 2000; Denzin & Lincoln 2008; Flick 2006).

Interpretivists try to understand the world around them, as there are different interpretations of reality; therefore, reality is viewed in multiple perspectives (Creswell 2009; Mack 2010). The interpretivist paradigm was suitable for this study as it “allows the researcher to understand participants’ perceptions about the world around and experiences” (Guba & Lincoln 1994:107). Mertens (2007) refers to an interpretivist paradigm as a way of viewing the world where the researcher and the participants are interlocked through an interactive process prescribing a more personal interaction of answering the questions.

The aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the individuals’ perceptions of the world around them and their experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2012). The paradigm was relevant to interpret records of management officials and the MCLM management’s experiences and behaviours, as well as their feeling towards the records on good governance and service delivery. The interpretivist paradigm maintains that the research participants are varying in understanding and experiences of a given phenomenon. An interpretive paradigm accommodates multiple versions of the truth and this is founded on the premise that reality is not inherently naturally and is understood through the subjective, complex and ever-changing human

experiences (Thanh & Thanh 2015). The responsibility of the researcher within an interpretive paradigm is to capture the participants' experience near constructs and connect them to established theory in order to construct the architecture of social reality and make interpretations about social reality (Smart 1998).

### **3.4 Research design**

A case study research design was used to conduct the study and it allows the researcher to explore real-life contemporary bounded systems over time through detailed in-depth data production strategies (Creswell 2013). Yin (2014:16) divides the definition of case study research into two specific components. Firstly, Yin (2014:16) defines case study research as a “practical review that probes a current event within a day-to-day environment, when the limitations between the event and environment are not well defined”. In the second component, Yin (2014:16) states that “the case study review manages the unique scenario where there will be multiple variables of concern and information facts to be considered with a desired outcome”. Kumar (2014:155) asserts that a “case study is a very useful design when exploring an area of which little is known, or of which one wants to have a holistic understanding of the situation, phenomenon, episode, site, group or community”. Creswell (2007:73) refers to “case studies as being a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a case over a certain period of time through the use of detailed, in-depth data collection that includes multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews and documents”.

The researcher used the case study for better understanding of the MCLM environment and to investigate the impact of sound records management practices to improve service delivery. The single case study was the most suitable design for this study because the main objective of a case study is to deliver a comprehensive interpretation and make sense of phenomena. The above statement correlates with the assertion of Siggelkow (2007) assertion that single case studies can richly describe the existence of a phenomenon. According to Yin (2003), it is better to make a single case study when the researcher wants to study, for example, a person or a group of people. The single case study was relevant to explore the records management personnel in the MCLM. The use of the case study approach enables the researcher to delve into the details and discover things that might not have become apparent through other research approaches (Denscombe 2003).

### **3.5 Population**

Records management is an inter-departmental shared responsibility in Mogale City Local Municipality. The role players involved in the management of the MCLM's records include the administration office, registry, records unit and information technology. The overall number of personnel in these units is 125 staff members. The registry personnel are accountable for the physical management of documents, retrieval when requested and allocation of file reference numbers. The administration office is responsible for updates of file records as instructed by the records management unit. The records management unit is responsible for ensuring that public records are properly managed, safeguarded and preserved. The ICT unit is responsible for the maintenance of electronic records of the municipality.

Babbie (2017:117) postulates that “the population for a study is that group about whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions”. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2011:52), a population refers to “the study object that consists of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and the conditions to which they are exposed”. A population includes “every person, object or place from which the researcher draws the sample” (Lasley 1999:160). Thus, the aim was to select a “sample that will be representative of the population about which the researcher aimed to draw conclusions” (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2012:133). The target population in this study was the records managers, registry personnel who deal with records management processes and executive officials responsible for the implementation of policies concerning records management in the MCLM.

### **3.6 Sample**

A sample is a “smaller set of cases, which a researcher selects from a larger pool of the population” (Guthrie 2010:53; Neuman 2011:219). Purposive sampling was the technique adopted for this research. Babbie (2016:187) explains purposive sampling as a “type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher’s judgment about which ones will be the most useful. Purposive sampling, therefore, allows the researcher to use his or her own judgement in selecting the sample. Thus, “the

participants are selected purposefully” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont 2011:391). These participants are selected “decisively because of their knowledge, understanding or experience of the phenomena that is studied” (De Vos et al 2011:391). The researcher deliberately chose 45 participants consisting of male and female employees of the MCLM head office. The researcher chose only the head office of the MCLM and excluded the satellite offices because all submissions of records go through head office. Forty-five participating employees were sufficient to elicit the required data within the time (one month) available to the researcher. In particular, Fakude (2012:65) advises “that the sample size in a qualitative study need not be too large to distract the main purpose of the study”.

### **3.7 Research instruments**

Data collection refers to the “procedures used to gather information from the sample population” (Retief 2013:15). In a qualitative study, more than one method can be used in a study to collect data (Maxwell 2013:102). In this study, more than one research instrument was used to gather information, namely semi-structured interviews and observation from the employees of the MCLM.

#### *3.7.1 Semi-structured interview*

There are various forms of interviews within qualitative research, namely structured interviews, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Harding (2013:31) is of the opinion that “semi-structured interviews are more frequently being utilised in qualitative research than structured interviews.” In a structured interview, “the questions are asked in the same order and in the same way to all participants of the research, with little flexibility available to the researcher” (Edwards & Holland 2013:30). The semi-structured interviews were adopted for the study. The semi-structured personal interviews enabled the researcher to “enter into the world of the participants’ experiences, which assisted to understand their actions and emotions as the basis of their experience of the world and the ways in which their actions arise from, and reflect thereon” (Retief 2013:12). Therefore, it can be argued that a qualitative research approach allows the researcher to obtain rich, first-hand and truthful explanations and opinions from the lived experiences of the participants, namely the records manager, registry clerks and executive officials from the MCLM who deal with records management processes.

### 3.7.2 *Observation*

Mason (2002) argues that not all knowledge is articulable, recountable or constructible in an interview. Observation “allows the generation of multi-dimensional data on social interaction in specific contexts as it occurs, rather than relying on people’s retrospective accounts, and their ability to verbalise and reconstruct a version of interactions, or settings” (Manson 2002:85). Yin (2009) defines observation as a way of gathering data by watching behaviour, events or noting physical characteristics in their natural settings. Observation relies on first-hand and eye-witness experiences of places, activities and events. The researcher chose non-participant observation. This type of observation relies on gathering primary data by the researcher’s actual observation of pertinent people, actions and state of affairs without inquiring from participants (Motupu 2015:66). Furthermore, this observation gives additional and more accurate information on phenomena being studied. According to Oates (2006:202), it is very important to “minimise respondent bias”. The following were observed in the MCLM during data collection on the contribution of records management in MCLM:

- Records management infrastructure
- Records security
- Records filling

### **3.8. Data analysis**

According to Patton (2002), data analysis is whereby generated data is transformed into findings by generating raw data and sifting it so as to remain with the most significant relevant information which will best suit the study. The purpose of conducting data analysis was to collate different but related categories of obtained information. There were 34 interviews carried out with officials from MCLM, through the following sections; records unit, registry, information technology and managers. The interviews varied differently from participants perspectives, from nine minutes to 26 minutes respectively. The interviews were arranged sectional according to Groups in the study and the recording were recorded in different folders name according to participants groups. The process was to ensure that the outcome of the interview are not mixed and reflect validly of findings. The researcher encouraged open discussion to take place in keeping with qualitative frameworks. The researcher recorded the conversations and also took field notes during the interviews. The researcher also used field note during observation of the infrastructure in MCLM. The researcher listened to the interviews

through audio-recording of participants and cross-reference with the field notes information from the interviews.

### **3.9 Validity and reliability**

In a qualitative study, the systematic analysis and the soundness of the interpretation are very important when it comes to reliability. It is also important, according to Mouton (2001) that the researcher refrains from common errors in construction of research questions by avoiding ambiguous or vague items, fictitious constructs and leading questions. Reliability, as described by Denscombe (2010), is concerned with the quality of methods and techniques used to give consistent results across a range of settings. In view of this, the engagement of multiple methods such as observations and interviews leads to more valid, reliable and diverse research findings. The pretesting was done successfully through a panel of peer experts in the field of records management, with the aim of finding alternative opinions regarding the instrument. This was crucial for the researcher to identify shortcomings and rephrase some of the questions to be clearer and more relevant to the study. The validity of the research was also enhanced, as the interviewees were informed of the theoretical background of the study prior to the interviews.

### **3.10 Ethics**

Ethical clearance and full approval of the university are required before conducting any field work. The application had to clearly specify if the research would be recorded or not, and had to include the questionnaire or interview schedule, an informed consent form, declaration, title of the project, location of the study and research approach and methods. The study was guided by the Department of Information Science Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Babbie and Mouton (2001) point out that in the research context, ethical practices involve:

- Avoid causing harm, distress, anxiety or pain to the participants
- Providing participants with opportunities for informed consent on all relevant aspects in research before agreeing to participate or decline

- Informing potential participants about the purpose of research and anticipated means in disseminating research findings

#### *Privacy and the right to participate*

Specifics and the risks of the project were explained in a language that the participants understood, and they were assured that they could leave the study at any time they deemed necessary, without repercussions (Creswell 2012). Participants were not coerced to disclose information they were not comfortable with. Participants were informed of their rights to privacy where they could decide to decline taking part in the study.

#### *Informed consent*

Participants were asked to complete the consent form after it was read to them. Therefore, they perused it and then they acknowledged that their participation is voluntary, that they understand the aims of the research and that they can withdraw from the research at any time should they wish to do so. The researcher also outlined the purpose of the research to all participants before the actual interviews began.

#### *Confidentiality*

Confidentiality is the researcher's management of collected information that must not be shared with others without authorisation by the participant. Denscombe (2007:129) argues that "the usual standards of research ethics must be observed: permission obtained, confidentiality maintained and identities of participants protected." This means that information shared with the researcher would not be disclosed in a way that can publicly identify a participant. The researcher assured the participants that anything that was discussed during the research process would be kept confidential and would not be used for purposes other than this study. Participants were assured that all information they provided would be strictly confidential and kept in a safe place under lock and key. The data would be discarded five years after the interview process as per UNISA's Research Ethics Policy.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

This chapter presented a step-by-step procedure on how the study was conducted. The qualitative research design that encompassed the use of a case study was used, because it allowed the

researcher an in-depth understanding of records management enhancing service delivery. The in-depth interview and observation was the method of data collection.

### **3.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the research design of the study. It outlined the methods and techniques used in investigating enhancement of service delivery through records management practices in Mogale City Local Municipality. The topics discussed included research approach, design, research paradigms, the study population and sample, data collection instruments and validity and reliability of research instruments, data analysis and ethical consideration.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS: RECORDS MANAGEMENT ENHANCING SERVICE DELIVERY IN MOGALE CITY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study sought to explore records management enhancing service delivery in the Mogale City Local Municipality. This chapter presents the findings of the study and it explores laws, regulations and standards in records management. This chapter discusses the data analysis and main findings. The research objectives that were formulated at the beginning of the study had to be answered in this study through research questions.

#### **4.2 Presentation of results in accordance with the study objectives**

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the sampling technique adopted in this study was purposive sampling and the researcher had an opportunity to formulate his own judgement in selecting participants. Purposive sampling, therefore, allows the researcher to use his or her own judgement in selecting the sample. The initial sample was 45 participants. During the data collection, the researcher decided to withdraw eight participants. These participants were withdrawn because the researcher felt they would not add any value to the study because they knew very little about records management. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling, in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones will be the most useful (Babbie 2016:187). In particular, many scholars advise that the sample size in a qualitative study should not be too large so as to distract from the main purpose of the study (Fakude 2012:65). Three participants withdrew from the study and the sample was therefore reduced to 34 participants from the initially proposed 45.

**Table 4.1 Themes to be discussed**



The qualitative data were obtained from the semi-structured interviews and observation which had been conducted by the researcher. The interview questions were created in accordance with the objectives of the research and were divided into five sections, namely, A, B, C, D and E: part A focused on legislation and policies, parts B and C focused on infrastructure, and parts D and E focused on staff skills and service delivery, respectively. Observation was also part of the data collection instrument to supplement the interviews. Participants were drawn from four categories:

Group A: Staff in the records management unit

Group B: Registry staff

Group C: Information technology officers

Group D: Records manager, assistant manager

**Table 4.2 Break down of participants**

<b>Population Category</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Records management unit</b>	19	56%
<b>Registry</b>	8	24%
<b>ICT</b>	5	15%
<b>Managers</b>	2	6%
<b>Total</b>	34	100%

### **4.3 The contribution of records management in enhancing service delivery in the MCLM**

Municipalities predominantly generate considerable amounts of records such as invoices, receipts, expenditure and accounts billings. It is therefore imperative to have effective records management programmes in place to manage the large volume of records being generated. The main goal of records management in the municipality is to ensure that records are created and maintained as evidence of daily business transactions, in order to facilitate their continued accessibility and availability. The municipality signifies its mandate by giving precedence to the basic needs of the community it serves, as required by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act of 1996. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005) suggests that the key components of responsive service delivery were: transparency, participation, satisfying user requirements and accessibility. Records in a municipality are imperative for operational efficiency and administration duties. They support accountability by making the service delivery system more transparent. Accurate and accessible municipal records reduce the potential for the unlawful manipulation resulting from delays, corruption and inaccuracies. Unanimously, all study participants from the MCLM are of the opinion that records management plays a significant role in enhancing efficiency and effective service delivery. The participants demonstrated that proactive sound records management is essential for enhancing service delivery. Sound records management in a municipality is fundamental to the efficient and effective provision of service delivery.

Participants were asked if they considered records management as the key to fostering enhanced service delivery in MCLM. Twenty six participants, sixteen from Group A, five from Group B, three from Group C and two from Group D were agreed to records management as the key to fostering enhanced service delivery in MCLM. Three participants from Group B indicated that records cannot ultimately enhance and solve challenges of service delivery. Five participants did not respond to the interview question. The researcher probed three participants who explained that records management cannot enhance service delivery for further elaboration. The participants explained that although deemed records management important, it cannot solve the challenges of service deliveries in MCLM. The participants further indicated that the challenges of service delivery emanated from high expectation the councillors and municipal official declared to communities during elections time. The participants mentioned unrealistic targets,

insufficient timelines and irresponsible commitments with lack of sufficient/informed budgets. The participants further indicated that municipal official, ward committees and councillors must be transparent, honest informed when dealing with communities. One of the participant explained that the MCLM need to recruit qualified personnel's and competent staff members in order to provide service delivery efficiently, records management without competency of personnel's meant that service delivery will continue remain poor. Furthermore, participant that the MCLM was threatened to be put under administration due to poor governance and malfeasance because of incompetent management.

The twenty six participants who indicated that records management as being essential in enhancing service delivery in MCLM, shared with the researcher about the importance of records management in service delivery. The participants explained that the inaccessibility of records occasionally pressures officials and management to make uninformed decisions regarding service delivery allocations. Thus, efficient and effective management of records helps municipal officials and stakeholders to be aware of the vital importance of information for planning, and budgeting, and transparency is critical. Furthermore, Shepherd (2006) explained that comprehensive records management programmes in organisations are a clear identification of organisations' attempts to deliver efficient services and aids management decision-making, policy execution and the general administration of organisations. Some of participants confirmed that the municipality had sometimes experienced delays in dealing with residents queries due to the unavailability of information; the situation affects municipality services negatively. Lack of concrete evidence in the form of records can lead to failure of the municipality to facilitate efficient services delivery and account for the decision taken.

To gain insight into how records management impacts on service delivery in the municipality, the researcher further probed participants to disclose their experiences. Majority of participants from the twenty six explained that failure to locate or provide accurate account billing of services rendered like water, electricity and sewerage means that the municipality cannot give clear precise billing, which will then have a negative impact either on the municipality or the individual involved. This confirmed an earlier assertion by Slote (2000). The author explained that, establishing a comprehensive records management programme offers both immediate and long-term benefits to companies, including controlling the volume of records, improving access to information, better customer service and informed decisions. The absence of accurate records

poses delays in determining the actual correct billing of services rendered. Without sound records management, decision-making is unresponsive to the needs of the community and undemocratic, thereby undermining people’s livelihoods and interests. One participant shared with the researcher about a newspaper article, which was written in the *Krugersdorp News* on 21 September 2017, about inconsistency in municipal bills, in which the municipality acknowledged the challenges and measures to curb the situation. The participants explained that sound records management in a municipality is fundamental to the efficient and effective provision of service delivery and effort to significantly increase efficiencies in service delivery provision. Furthermore, this means that good records management ensures that sound decisions are made based on full, accurate and up-to-date information, and that the rationale for and the impact of such decisions can be traced, scrutinised and justified as required (University of Glasgow 2006). Two participants from the twenty six also shared with the researcher about the incident where a list for Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing allocation was manipulated by a municipal official due to the lack of an accurate records system. The RDP housing allocation process prioritises individuals according to who enlisted their name first for allocation. Unfortunately, in the absence of proper records management, such corrupt incidents will continue and undermine the democratic process of the South African Constitution. One respondent explained that because councillors owes favours to community that voted/campaigned for them, corruption tend to take place to rewards such. Participants provided multiple responses on how records management was a key to fostering enhanced service delivery in MCLM including:

**Table 4.3 Records Management Enhancing service delivery**

Contribution of records in fostering enhanced service delivery in MCLM	No of Participants
Records provide reliable billing for service rendered in municipality	12
Records improve administrative efficiency to accelerate customer services timely	22
Provide accurate and reliable information about services which are needed in communities	21
Promote accessibility, accountability and	16

transparency of services	
Records provide citizens participations by encouraging transparency of actions and decisions taken	9
Records provide audit trails of services rendered, achieved and needed to ensure continuity	11

Makhura (2005:27), in his study, stressed “the contribution of records management towards an organisation’s operational efficiency and competitiveness”. He asserted that proper records management improves the performance of an organisation and ensures efficiency in provision of services. The participants emphasised that records management must be recognised as one of the cornerstone strategic tools, and contributes towards the realisation of effective service delivery in the MCLM. It was clearly evident from majority of respondents that MCLM is faced with the challenge of a lack of service delivery and this is manifested in a lack of accountability, transparency and good governance. To overcome some of these challenges, the MCLM could consider strengthening the oversight bodies in records management to ensure compliance with policies. The participants believed that sound records provide clear and substantial evidence of what the municipality has done and what services it has provided and how it has spent public funds. Such processes will allow the MCLM to further prioritise essential services based on the available information held in records. This study has uncovered that better enhancement of service delivery can be achieved through the implementation of sound records management practices and systems, among other things.

#### ***4.4. Records creation, storage and maintenance, accessibility and usefulness in MCLM***

The purpose of this objective was to investigate protection and preservation of records of enduring administrative, scientific and permanent value. Findings are presented according to the following sub-themes:

- Records management policy
- Creation and maintenance of records
- Skills, training and competences of staff members in records management

➤ Records Infrastructure (Observation)

*4.4.1 Records management policy*

Since the dawn of the new democracy, municipalities have had to comply with the principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. This resulted in the introduction of new legislation and policies to transform the public sector. Legislation and policy play an imperative role in ensuring compliance with organisational records management requirements. As already described in the literature review in Chapter Two, adhering to legislation, standards and policy guidelines is a cornerstone of effective records management. The above statement corroborates Ngoepe's (2008) findings that for the policy to be effective, it has to be endorsed by the head of the government department as well as the top management team. Throughout the study conducted on the MCLM, the researcher sought to establish if there was a records management policy that governs the management of records, and subsequently the compliance with such policies. Compliance with legislation, as stated in Chapter Two, such as the NARSSA Act, the PAIA, the MFMA, the Auditor-General Act 12 of 1995, the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 and the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000 is extremely important in the MCLM.

Records are vital in a municipality, especially when facing potential embarrassment or even financial prejudice in the event of litigation if it could not produce evidence of its actions. According to ISO 15489-1 2016(E), "records, regardless of form or structure, should possess the characteristics of authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability to be considered authoritative evidence of business events or transactions and to fully meet the requirements of the business." Furthermore, the broad objectives of public finance are to achieve overall fiscal discipline, allocate resources to priority needs and deliver efficient and effective public services (World Bank 1998:17). Lennie and Tacchi (2013:88) mention that where there are effective relationships of financial accountability, financial control and financial reporting, performance is likely to be managed and reported fairly and honestly.

The researcher wanted to establish if the participants were aware and familiar with the policy that regulates the management of records in the MCLM. Fourteen participants from Group A said that they are sufficiently aware about the records management policy and the need of its implementation in the MCLM. The researcher established that most of the participants were the

able to articulate the role of the policy and implementation. While two participants from Group A acknowledged that they have indeed seen the record policy but were not familiar with the content and the core function as they were never oriented fully about the application policy. The researcher further probed the participants to understand the reasons for not being aware of the records policy while they work in records management unit. The participants explained that both were absorbed into records as permanent employees after their contracts in another department in the municipality had expired. One participant further explained that the absorption process was because of council resolution of the municipality to do away with contract workers and absorb all contract workers in various units permanently to create employment in MCLM. The above statement corroborates the finding of study by Maseh (2015) in her study “Records Management Readiness for Open Government in the Kenyan Judiciary”. The study finding revealed inadequate number of staff not qualified in records management and those personnel were wrongly designated and placed in the periphery of records management.

Another twenty participants explained that they are not aware about the records management policy and the need of its implementation in MCLM. The researcher established that the majority of participants who are not aware of the records policy are from Group B and C respectively. The researcher further probed participants to furnish reasons for not being aware of the policy. Seven of the participants indicated that there was no direct clear communication between records unit and their unit. Participants explained that they are usually required to keep information from municipal activity that has taken place in order for records unit to compile a record file of that activity. They shared with the researcher that although they do that sometimes the information are not collected from them and after certain period mostly by a month they then destroy the document for purpose of space. The finding from this study was similar to the findings of Kanzi (2010:93), an investigation into the role of records management with specific reference to the Amathole District Municipality. The author stated that “the danger in not forwarding correspondence to the records office is the likelihood of losing valuable records as it would be easy for officials to destroy them when they want to clear up space in their offices.” The participants explained that if there was a direct sound communication they would understand the policy clearly and the type of information to forward to records management unit. The researcher probed both managers when they were interviewed about records policy awareness in MCLM. The participants explained that as managers of records management unit they had experienced

non-compliances from other units in MCLM regarding forwarding of accumulated information. One manager explained that they have been very vocal about the records policy and consequences of not forwarding records to the relevant unit for preservation of institutional memory. Without formal records management policies, organisations may not effectively demonstrate to their employees and stakeholders that managing recorded information is essential for their organisations' performance and accountability. Chachage and Ngulube (2006) argue that compliance with legislation and standards plays a major role in how the records and information are created, transmitted, used, stored, retrieved, controlled and preserved. The manager emphasised that the compliance of the policy is mostly advocated to units within the MCLM about the benefits of records management and compliance with records management policy. The statement contradicted the sentiments echoed by other participants who mentioned that they were not aware of records policy due to lack of communication of policy awareness. The study finding corroborates Seniwoliba, Mahama and Abilla (2017), in their study "Challenges of records management in higher education in Ghana". In their study, they found that implementation of records management legislative framework has proven to be a failure whereby the stipulated requirements are not adhered in practicing records management. The authors further stipulated that a clear policy document or legislative instrument should therefore be carved out to regulate records managers and records management staff on the functional roles of managing records effectively and efficiently. It is an essential requirement for every organisation to keep its records in accordance with the national records management standards such as the NARSSA Act. Adherence to the Constitution, and basic values and principles governing records management is not an option, but a must.

As mentioned in Chapter One, municipalities are the closest sphere of government to citizens. Therefore, they are obliged by the Constitution's mandate to provide effective service delivery in the most efficient manner. Through availability of information, records management facilitates the process of efficient service delivery through transparency and accountability. Although a formal records management policy can signify recognition of record keeping and management support, implementation of the policy is imperative. On the other hand, McLeod and Hare (2006) point out that adherence to legal and regulatory framework is imperative for the strengthening of records management practices in organisations.

A policy that is not put to use is as good as having no policy at all. This explains the need for monitoring compliance with the policy, including mandating an appropriate person or unit to undertake monitoring and prepare reports. Again, this was a clear reflection that executive management and the records manager in the municipality do not prioritise records management as a strategic tool to ensure good governance and transparency. The view emanating from interviews regarding management policy support can be shown through aspects such as provision of specific budget lines for records management activities, including records management projects, specialist records training and approval of policies for records. Establishing records management awareness amongst staff was one way of meeting this objective. The interviews were therefore designed to establish the records management awareness amongst staff from their understanding of whether there is a records management policy; whether the current records management practices in MCLM comply with the prescripts regulating the management of public records.

#### *4.4.5 Creation and maintenance of records*

The purpose of this objective was to assess the roles of participants in the process of creation and maintenance records in the MCLM. While staff creates records in accordance with municipal activities, the undeniable fact is that the management of those records requires the direct intervention of qualified records practitioners to support the making of adequate records. In organisations where records are not properly managed, record will often be inadequate for the purposes for which they are needed, records will frequently be lost, some records will be destroyed prematurely, and others retained unnecessarily (Shepherd 2006a:7). The process of records creation requires individuals who understand the activities for this to be undertaken successfully. The above narrative is generally comparable to NARS's Records Management Policy Manual (2007:10) where it states, "the immediate objective of the policy is the creation and management of authentic, reliable and useable records, capable of supporting the business functions of the office." Schellnack-Kelly (2013:205) performed a study on the role of records management in governance-based evidence, service delivery and development in South African communities. Her study found that "records officials also revealed challenges exacerbated by the design and roll-out of information management systems that fail to meet the operational purposes and needs of the entity."

The researcher probed the officials to indicate the extent roles they played in the MCLM activities that lead to creation and maintenance of records. Findings indicated that nineteen of participants create files, file classification, indexing and closing of files. The nineteen respondents were from records unit (Group A). While eight of participants from registry (Group B) explained that their roles in records included, file storage, tracking file use and file distribution. The researcher probed participants if they understand basics of creating records and they explained that they are not involved in the creation. The life cycle concept promotes a sense of order through a systematic approach to records management and is aimed at showing action taken in the life of a record: typically, its creation, capture, storage, use and disposal (Atherton 1985; Shepherd & Yeo 2003). The statement of participants indicates that they are not fully compliant with systematic approach of records management and there must be a need to understand all fundamental basics of records keeping. Four participants from the eight explained that file movements must be recorded to ensuring that records are managed very effectively and safe keeping in records. The participants further explained that they have lost many files due to lack of tracking. Their purpose is to show the location at all times of all and under which official was the file requested.

Five participants from Group C who are IT officials explained that their role is to ensure that paper based records are transferred to electronic records and maintenance of such records. The study findings indicated that IT staffs were concerned with systems management of records and ensures the availability of records in digital format. The participants explained that because they were not familiar with the processes and procedures involved in the creation of paper-based records, their involvement is only limited to electronic records system management. The statement contradicts continuum model theory in regard with management of records. The continuum model theory the records personnel to develop new ways of understanding various aspects of records needs. The officials are only focusing on electronic records and not fully the starting point of creation. The researcher further probed the IT staff to establish if they understand the implications of poor records keeping. Three, did not respond and the other two mentioned, loss of vital information for the municipality and lack of accountability for decision taken respectively.

Recordkeeping usually receives particular attention when a query or scandal hits the organisation. This is the case because well maintained records and documents provide evidence of and information about the organisation's activities. It generates reliable records which are essential in decision making. The study findings indicated that two participants from Group D who are managers explained that they are not fully involved in creation and maintains of records in the municipality. Furthermore, one participant explained that managers establishes plans and budgets, staffing and monitor controls performance of records management. It can be argued that records managers had limited authority to direct recordkeeping. The mandate usually rests within the governance structure. In essence, they needed to be part of the solution to problems of records management compliance in facing MCLM, including information management problems. The researcher further probed how managers ensure that to understand their role in effective records management. The other manager explained that the other duties are to ensure that other managers are informed about consequences of not forwarding accumulated records within their units through management meetings and workshops.

#### *4.4.5 Skills, training and competences of staff members in records management*

The purpose of this sub-theme was to assess the qualifications, skills and competences among officers, and the training needs in the records management department within the MCLM units. Members of staff with skills and knowledge of how to manage records are necessary to ensure that the MCLM records management systems are working well. According to Kalusopa (2011:200), "the need for staffing and professional training in records management is one of the critical areas in understanding the depth and breadth of records management". The respondents who were investigated in the study were requested to indicate their level of education. This has been significant for the study because education determines the level of decision-making, thus helping the participants to understand the questions in the study. Only 10 (29%) participants from Group A who are in records management unit have relevant qualifications towards records management. The qualifications were six diplomas in records management and four higher certificates in records management. Seventeen (50%) participants Group A & B had only matric certificates, eight respondents from Group B respectively. The eight participants from Group B from registry had only matric certificate. The five (15%) participants from Group C who are IT officers only 1 had a relevant degree to IT and the last 4 were Office admin qualifications. The

two (6%) participants who are managers from Group D had Public admin diploma and Project management respectively but not relevant to records management.

Apart from the lack of trained records management staff, there was also a shortage of qualified staff in the records management field, or a related discipline, at the MCLM units. Furthermore, the participants were of the opinion that the lack of management support towards records management is evident. The participants indicated that the MCLM management provides little support to the records management directorate, and this is shown through provision of insufficient budget, lack of adequate records training, and non-compliance with the records management guidelines. The above finding corroborates assertion by Ngoepe (2008), which revealed that an enormous benefit for the implementation of a records management system is the commitment of top management. The respondents echoed a similar sentiment that without commitment from executive management to execute an effective records management system, this is doomed to failure.

Twenty six participants indicated that they were not offered adequate training in towards records management. The participants further elaborated that management informed them that they are only able to provide professional training for four members per year due to budgetary constraints. Fourteen participants from twenty six mentioned the budget limitation has been challenging in MCLM, municipal executives' priorities other units especially those that generate income for municipality. The researcher further probed the participants for clarity and the reasons behind the number of trainings per year. One participant explained that they were promised more numbers should the budget the council increase the budget in the new financial year. Only four staff members are prioritised per year for conference and trainings and rotate with the other staff members the following year. The participants explained that the pose dire consequences for official because it became difficult to keep abreast with new developments in records management. Only four staff members are prioritised per year for conference and trainings and rotate with the other staff members the following year. The participants explained that the pose dire consequences for official because it became difficult to keep abreast with new developments in records management. Furthermore, the participants revealed that usually, those who attended professional training on records management hardly ever applied their newly gained knowledge or even shared this with other colleagues. The participants elaborated that the

situation is solely due to the lack of commitment from managers to facilitate a knowledge-sharing environment.

In addition to the above, these findings corroborated Millar's (2004:12) assertion that the lack of adequate training is closely related to the lack of appreciation for and awareness of the importance of records management. This was evident as participants explained that their section was the least prioritised when it comes to resources and funds allocation. This aforementioned finding is consistent with Ndenje-Sichalwe (2010: 306) findings in her studies "the significance of records management to fostering accountability in the public reforms programs of Tanzania". The findings of the study indicated that registry sections were not allocated their own budget, in this instance the insufficient budget was the contributing factor to the lack of sound records management in MCLM. The author established that, inadequate funding was a contributing factor to the lack of proper management of records in the government registries and the inability of registries to purchase registry supplies and equipment.

It is therefore difficult under these circumstances for the records management department to implement comprehensive records management strategies. Insufficient budgets or lack of budgets for records management department is another big factor against achieving sustainable records management in the MCLM. The overwhelming majority of participants indicated that they lacked funds to advance their skills development as well as for continuous training. Majority of participants explained that providing adequate training in records management will assist records personnel to develop more skills. The point being raised here is that the skills and competence of officers affect their performance and the functionality of records management services. The general finding is that the absence of academically qualified staff and lack of training for personnel's becomes a stumbling block for MCLM to achieve sound records management.

#### *4.4.6 Records infrastructure (Observation)*

Observation was for further probing, elaboration and elucidation to complement interviews for an alternative perspective to the study. The process allowed the researcher to be part of the study. These processes are consistent with Creswell (2014) assertion that, "Qualitative research places

emphasis upon exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” In an ideal municipality, a well-organised filing system is essential for the effective storage and retrieval of municipal records. It was therefore essential to find out what type of filing equipment was used at the MCLM for the storage of records. The researcher observed that the municipality records management staff members in two buildings, Ellerines and the old admin building, shared the congested working space with other municipal units. This situation tended to hinder work flow because the office is fully packed with furniture, machines and unrelated documents. This resulted in staff taking time to look for items needed and such delays hinder the process of accessing information timeously. According to Tzabedze (2011:79), inadequate records storage also compromises the security of records, leading to their loss, theft and alteration, thus making them unavailable when required by action officers. The author further explained that inadequate records storage equipment increases the deterioration of records and this would affect the health and safety of registry staff, for example, if the records were dusty

The researcher’s observation checklist revealed that overall; the records in the MCLM are not in good condition. Most of this is due to incapacity to preserve them. Some are kept on the floor because of inadequate space on the shelves and this resulted in the deterioration of the records. The researcher also observed that the registry office that is supposed to accommodate municipal records was too small to accommodate the voluminous records of the municipality. As a result, documents were kept in an improvised storage system, such as spare spaces in offices and other rooms within the municipality. Through observation, the researcher was also able to establish that records offices do not have enough computers, scanners, fax and photocopying machines. This was also confirmed by the majority of participants during the interview process, where they indicated that the municipality does not have enough computers, scanners, fax and photocopying machines.

The researcher observed that each office setup had one computer, which allowed only one person at a time to capture records on the system. The records scanner that they had in their office was not functioning and the situation delays the capturing of records. The researcher has observed that space becomes a challenge to store all records. It was confirmed through the interviews with participants that most believed that in order for records to support effective and efficient

services, the MCLM must move away from paper records systems and implement more automated processes to store and maintain records. There was clear evidence that the records management departments were experiencing space challenges to capture and store their own records. This challenge imposes severe consequences in terms of the loss of important information should it not be addressed. Electronic records can assist in tackling the space shortage challenges.

#### **4.5 The impact of records management on MCLM's good governance, accountability and transparency**

There is an increasing demand for transparency and accountability in municipalities, as communities become more involved and proactive about municipal activities. Without reliable evidence of activities, it would be impossible for the MCLM to prove to its stakeholders and the public that it has used resources responsibly and fulfilled its mandate. Through access to authentication of transactions, the MCLM executives as accounting officers are able to evaluate the efficiency, providences, legality and effectiveness by which responsible individuals assumed their responsibilities. The aforementioned statement is corroborated by Cox and Wallace (2002:67). The authors express a similar view by stating that transparency and accountability cannot be achieved in an environment where information is not available. Furthermore, records management often supports public sector accountability, particularly financial accountability, which is very high on the priority list of bilateral and multilateral aid agency agendas (Barata, Cain & Routledge 2001). When accountability systems become fragile because of inadequate record systems, decision-makers are unable to access the information needed to maintain operational authority and make informed decisions. These leave the MCLM in jeopardy to account for their business transactions of how taxpayers' money was used. Thus, most participants interviewed denoted that good governance principles are linked through the provision and availability of efficient and comprehensive information about the MCLM's business transactions.

Participants were asked if they considered records management as the key to fostering good governance, accountability and transparency in MCLM. Twenty seven participants agreed that records is key to fostering good governance, accountability and transparency, while five replied that they disagree with the question. Two participants did not respond to the question. The

participants who agreed provided multiple responses on how records management was a key to fostering good governance, accountability and transparency including:

- ❖ records promote openness about the activities and services provided by the municipality to the citizens
- ❖ records restores the municipality institutional memory for future references
- ❖ Informed decision making processes
- ❖ Accessibility of information and activities
- ❖ document taken decisions and who was responsible for that decision
- ❖ records curb malfeasances by providing enough information to officials

Five participants who disagreed that records management is imperative in fostering good governance, accountability and transparency in MCLM, further explained that the municipality had always faced with challenge of corruption/mismanagement and no one has ever been arrested or account for such action. One participant even further explained that executives and municipal manager do as they please because they are protecting each other. Furthermore, two participants explained that since they have been working in the municipality they had never seen any officials arrested or disciplined for malfeasances but the municipality is always in the news for mismanagement of funds and services.

The participants are of the view that although records are very imperative and crucial, officials would still disregard them and continue with corruption they have been pushing all along, hence records management is not appropriately appreciated and supported in MCLM. It was noted by Ngulube (2003:136) that without proper records management, accountability, transparency and efficiency in public service would be heavily compromised, leading to corruption and loss of confidence in the civil service. The majority of participants agreed that records management is a crucial element required to implement good governance because corruption, incompetence and negligence by my municipal officials will be scrutinised. For example, the adoption of a transparency and accountability campaign suggests that delivery of basic services can be monitored. Thus, indicative of the nature of openness in good governance where information will be made available to stakeholders for scrutiny and participation, further explained that the records department should be capacitated with enough budget and employees to ensure full functionality.

#### **4.6 The benefits of records management in MCLM**

Twenty-seven participants agreed that sound records management is beneficial to the MCLM and it must be utilised to derive the benefits, while seven participants did not respond. Participants explained that administrative staff required information in order to carry out their official duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively in a transparent manner. Records represent major sources of information and are almost the only reliable and legally verifiable source of data that can serve as evidence of decisions. Other participants explained that records management assist in managerial efficiency within the municipality because managers are able to take well informed decisions when taking responsibilities. However, participants elaborated that MCLM still lack behind in in providing accurate, readily accessible and usable information because of non-compliance from officials and lack of commitment from the executive. Participants also emphasised that sound records management assist the MCLM in combating corruption and maladministration because the transparency of records ensures that documentation of evidence is available for future references this includes auditing of spending expenditure.

The other four participants explained to the researcher that MCLM had other satellite offices which also accumulate more records from staff members and community in general. Some of those records are never brought forward to the main office and vital information is lost because there is no coordination from area managers and records management unit. The narrative contradicts the assertion by the National Archives of Australia (2017:3) that “Information is a key strategic asset and economic resource and like other assets such as budget, property and equipment, its management requires professionals with appropriate capabilities, skills and knowledge.” The abovementioned statement explained that for municipality to enjoy the benefits of records management, the MCLM need to prioritise proper budget for records directorate, skilled and competent workforce in records and compliance to legislative frameworks of records management. The situation pose a difficult situation for municipality to resolve such situation as there is a lack of information to decisively deals with those challenges. A further, noteworthy reason given to the researcher was that the municipality’s lack of anecdotal information in responding to the needs of community. The information is not conclusive and relevant to the struggling communities and irrelevant services are then provided due to lack of accurate

information. Shepherd (2003:108) stresses that “the capturing of records should take the internal needs of the organisation and the needs of employees and customers into consideration.

The participants explained that if the MCLM executives understood the benefits of records management in that situation they can be able to resolve such challenges. The participants further explained that for municipality to benefit from effective records management system, records has to meet daily business transactions in the MCLM and the process of record keeping has to focus on the mandate and functions of the municipality. The qualities of creating authentic and reliable records are lacking because creators of records often do not register records in any formal system, as the MCLM lacks competency and capacity and this validates participants’ responds about poor records management practices in the municipality. The abovementioned situation poses dire consequences to the municipality because, records serve as a major source of information and provide permissible authentic and legally confirmable information that can serve as evidence of decisions, activities and transactions in organisations (Wamukoya 2000). Other participants also varied in terms of benefits of records managements as follows:

- Operational efficiency in services
- documentary evidence of transactions
- Accuracy to details
- Audit trails
- Risk mitigations
- Legal challenges
- Administration efficiency for maladministration
- Informed decision making process
- Accountability and transparency
- Promote community participation
- Readily, availability and useful of information

## **4.7 Summary of result**

### *4.7.1 Records management and public service delivery*

Sound records management occupies a strategic position in the efficient and effective provision of service delivery in the MCLM. It is central in ensuring the credibility of municipal records, because proper records management systems always prove relevant in providing accurate and reliable information in times of dispute. Interestingly, despite the increasing benefits of records

management, it appears that there is a lack of awareness regarding the importance of records management practices and the role it plays in the provision of essential basic services in municipalities. This lack of awareness impact the quality of services rendered by the municipalities and includes inadequate specifications, insufficient internal controls, unfair irregular practices, and the problematic nature of documents and their submission. It has already been shown in Chapter Two that delivery of public services is dependent upon efficient records management practices. The results of the findings indicated that the positive correlation between sound records management and efficient service delivery was more clearly evident in this study.

#### *4.7.2 How are records created, accessed and used, stored and maintained in MCLM*

The issue of providing professional training to staff members arose as one of the factors that negatively affected the success of a sound records management programme in the MCLM. Research findings of the study revealed existence of various causes of poor records keeping in the municipality. The literature review indicated serious implications of the lack of skills enhancement and competences in records management. In ensuring effective records management system, Egwunyenga (2009) contends that there is a need for the effective training of staff in records management. Similarly, the finding of this study through the participants' recommendations was that the MCLM management needs to provide enough budget for training and skills development in the records management section. The process would benefit the staff members to keep abreast of new trends and benchmark with other public sector reforms. Therefore, policy reform in this regard would be a very welcome initiative. It would also avert the perception about records management as being a less critical component of the municipality. The records management unit can reach its potential when there is compliance with policies and legislative frameworks that govern records in public sectors. The general feeling from participants is that to help support the implementation of an effective records management programme, the records managers need to develop a solid administrative structure, records procedures and revised policy reforms to sustain the MCLM. The process will ensure that reliable, authentic and relevant information is captured to provide support for the MCLM service provision mandate.

#### *4.7.3 Records management in promoting accountability, transparency and good governance*

The findings revealed that effective records management protects the rights and interests of citizens, influences officials accountable for their actions and authenticates their action. Well-managed records can be used to assess the impact of service delivery process, cost saving and knowledge sharing between municipalities and their stakeholders. Furthermore, availability of information about the MCLM's business activities will promote transparency, participation and accountability to citizens.

#### *4.7.3 Benefits derived from records management*

The participants explained that records management is very important to the administration efficiency in the municipality. Furthermore, for MCLM to benefit fully from records management program, professional training in records for employees can strongly improve performances and can enhance the success of the records management unit in the municipality. A lack of clarity regarding policies and legislative frameworks related to records management was identified as a challenge for records management reforms in the municipality. This implies that either there are no formalised criteria to share records policy or that staff members are unaware of these. The situation has the capacity to create distrust for records management reforms or raise unhealthy suspicions that disprove the impact of records management.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter presented, discussed and interpreted the findings of the study. It also provided an answer to the research question about records management enhancing service in Mogale City Local Municipality. Through the use of interviews and observations, the researcher was able to formulate the findings. Based on the findings, it has been established that records management plays a significant role in the provision of efficient service delivery by ensuring that information is can be retrieved timeously. Through sound records management, the municipality would be able to document its business activities, citizen participation through transparency and openness and, lastly, to improve good governance.

## **4.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined data presentation and analysis of study findings and gave the evidence relevant themes to address research objectives and questions. The chapter conveys the meaning

of findings and provides linkages to other sections including the research questions, theoretical framework and existing literature.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the data interpretation and discussion of the findings. This chapter summarises, discusses and integrates the main findings and recommendations of this research. It also presents a summary of research findings, conclusions and recommendations to improve records management practices in municipalities. This chapter discusses the main findings of this research against the themes and objectives that were formulated at the beginning of the study.

#### 5.2 Summary of the finding

##### 5.2.1 *Records management enhancing service delivery*

It can be noted through the review of literature (Chapter Two) and analysis of data from participants that there is a positive correlation between an effective records management systems and efficient service delivery. This combination would then drive the process to enable an environment for good governance and help maintain organisational memory. To ensure effective records management to stand the test of time, the records managers need to develop awareness in outlining the importance of records management practices in the municipality. Sound records management is imperative to service delivery, by enabling an environment to deliver superior customer value in a timely manner and uphold the principle of efficient service delivery. The records will ensure that the municipality provides accurate billing, timeous service and informed budget distribution.

In order to build trust within the municipality and community it serves, the records management directorate should strive to create accurate, relevant and reliable records in the municipality. It is also recommended that the significant role of records management should be emphasised at all levels of the municipality, as it plays a crucial role in promoting transparency and good governance. Lastly, an improved budget allocation will enable the records management directorate to attain the core mandate of sound record keeping. The research herein presented has established from the data analysed that there is a positive connection between comprehensively

designed records management and effective service delivery, which affirms the need for reformed record-keeping systems. In conclusion, the evidence shows that poor records management in the MCLM could undermine service delivery and therefore good governance.

### *5.2.2 Investigate how are records created, accessed and used, stored and maintained in the MCLM*

The conclusion for the study objective was presented according to the themes that transpired from the study. The themes are consistent with the study questions which are: legislative and policy, creation and maintenance of records (skills and competences) and records infrastructure. According to the study findings, the state of records management in the MCLM was substandard due to: a lack of policy adherence, non-compliance with regulatory acts, irrelevant record keeping due to personnel incompetency, and unsecured storage environment. The study established that the municipality has inadequate records policy oversight, which also affects the entire records management programme of the municipality. The study finding confirms Mampe and Kalusopa's (2012) assertion that in order for a records management programme to succeed, there should be some level of awareness of the procedures, policies and standards governing the management of records. In this instance, it was clearly evident that the MCLM is still lagging behind in the level of policy and procedure oversight, thus the substandard findings of its records management systems.

Furthermore, the poor records management practices rapidly gained a reputation for inefficiency, corruption and malfeasance. The finding in this study is similar to Kemoni (2007:286), as cited in Tzabedze (2011), that the absence of records management policies in the ministries has negative implications for public service delivery, as it makes it difficult to put in place efficient records management systems that support decision-making.

The input received from the participants in this study highlighted several areas of concern in the records management processes, skills development and policy oversight. It has been established from the data that participants lacked core competencies and skills to manage records effectively despite having records management policies; there was also a clear lack of adequate strategies to manage their records well. For example, there was no clear sense of records policy, and a lack of constant communication among all parties concerned. This therefore suggests that more work

needs to be done to reinforce policies and clearly outline the responsibilities of staff members to strengthen records management structures. It is important to point out that there is no doubt that sound records management indeed plays a crucial role in facilitating service delivery.

### *5.2.3 Records management in promoting good governance, transparency and accountability*

Municipalities predominantly create and store large amounts of records and documents such as invoices, receipts, accounts of expenditure and accounts billings. Such records are a cornerstone for the municipality to achieve clean audits, be transparent and accountable. The pursuit of efficiency in service delivery fulfilment requires functional records management programmes to enable transparency and good governance to be attained. The study found that some of records management failures were largely due to the fact that the records directorate in the MCLM is ineffective in developing awareness about the importance of records management. The participants were of the opinion that records management programmes are an important tool for achieving efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of the municipality and ensuring good governance by providing information available through records. These findings are congruent with what Ngulube (2010) found in his work on lost opportunity to foster e-democracy and service delivery in sub-Saharan Africa, where he asserts that the issues of trust, accountability and improved service delivery can only be attained if government records are properly managed and accessible to members of the public. This study highlighted that records management can play an important role in good governance reform for democratic and a transparent municipality. The availability of information through sound records enables community participation in municipal activities, a democratic principle enshrined in the constitution. This claim is also validated by Schellnack-Kelly (2013) earlier assertion that information sources are evidence which exhibit governance commitments, both to citizens and the global community.

### *5.2.4 The benefits of records management*

The study has established that records management plays an imperative role in the operational efficiency of the municipality. However, the absence of effective record keeping leads fertile ground for corruption and malfeasance due to loss of transactional memory of the municipality. The above strengthens the assertion by Nandain (2006) that effective information and records management provides the foundation for accountability and the protection of human rights, and

increases citizens' awareness of their rights. The above statement complements the study's finding that participants acknowledged records management as a foundation for accountable and transparent municipality to its own citizen to enable democratic governance. Participants also highlighted that without accurate information through sound records management, citizens would not be able to scrutinise wrong-doing by municipal officials and exercise their democratic right of participating in municipal activities. The researcher anticipates that the study will result in a better understanding of records management in the municipality and, ultimately, awareness of records management. Furthermore, the findings will hopefully assist in crafting sustainable solutions, which will see fully functional and reformed records management strategies in the municipality. The study also highlighted a number of components that were believed by the participants to hinder their attempts to establish effective records management in the municipality. These components included a lack of adherence to the records policy, unskilled records personnel and a compromised budget for the records management directorate. The researcher anticipates that through these findings, the decision-makers in the municipality can make efforts to address the challenges that arose from the study.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The study recommends a necessity for a reformed framework that underlines effective records management. Furthermore, to overcome some of these challenges, the municipality could consider strengthening the oversight bodies in records management to ensure compliance. It is on this recommendation that the municipal management critically considers, for urgent attention, to capacitate the records directorate with a sufficient budget, skilled and competent workforce. It was evident from participants that the executive management undervalues records management imperatives because they simply do not comprehend the function of sound record keeping.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for each themes consideration:

- The study recommends that municipal manager, executive mayor and other executives in the municipality put in place measures to assess the role functions of records management through effective oversight mechanisms in relation to service delivery. This

includes creating awareness, enforcing compliance of forwarding important information that might assist the municipality in future references.

- A water-tight records management oversight body that will allow the MCLM departments to be compliant with records policies. In this instance, it was clearly evident that the MCLM is still lagging behind in the level of policy and procedure oversight, thus the substandard findings of its records management systems. The municipality should make it a compulsory requirement to employ qualified personnel with relevant qualifications in records management in order to have the necessary capacity to execute their duties. A provision must be made towards awarding of existing employees bursaries for them to enrol themselves with institutions of higher learning in order to build their capacity and to keep abreast with new developments in records management, especially electronic records. Lastly, an improved budget allocation will enable the records management directorate to attain the core mandate of sound record keeping.
  
- It is also recommended that the significant role of records management should be emphasised at all levels of the municipality, as it plays a crucial role in promoting transparency and good governance. Records managers must enforce forwarding of records from other units in the municipality, this will assist the municipality to ensure that records are handled with the necessary caution and can never be misplaced or go missing, and that information is readily available for any type of submission or accountability. Regular update interaction with community members should be implemented by the municipality in order to present clear information and documentation of activities. The action of transparency and accountability will build trust, and a sense of openness between the community and the municipality to promote community participation.
  
- Records are imperative to the administration of MCLM, because they contain the necessary information that helps municipality programmes function effectively. Records will give grounds for making decisions, administering programmes and providing administrative continuity with past operations. Records will assist the municipality to make its officials accountable.

#### **5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research**

However, the study has some limitations that need to be stated. The objective of this study was not predominantly to achieve generalisable statements about records management enhancing service delivery in the MCLM, but rather to understand one case (Mogale City Local Municipality) and to narrate the experiences of participants in that municipality. Therefore, the significance of the findings of the study should be understood as a description of a single case only. The qualitative approach of the study permitted the researcher to include a manageable number of participants in the study in order for the sample size to draw a generalisation of the findings to one municipality.

As mentioned in chapter one, municipalities are influenced by political powers and some participants might not feel comfortable to divulge all the information needed for the study, although it was explained thoroughly through ethical considerations before the interviews were conducted that participants are protected from any harm and confidentiality was assured. It also must be noted that during the interview process, some participants were rather hesitant and constantly asked if the researcher will ensure that confidentiality prevails due to fear of victimisation. This research study brought forward a number of possible areas that can be researched by scholars of records management. The researcher has identified the following possible subject matter, with reference to records management and service delivery:

- exploring relevance progression of the records management profession in municipalities and steps that can be taken to improve the knowledge base, if insufficient.
- exploring what constitutes a lack of support for records management from municipal executives and the reasons behind this, if any.
- oversight mechanisms of accurate recordkeeping in municipalities should be a notable topic for future research.
- records management as a strategic tool for achieving a clean audit and accountability in municipalities.

#### **5.5 Conclusion**

It has been established from the data analysis that a positive correlation exists between records management and effective service delivery. In conclusion, it is evident that the future well-being and quality of basic service delivery depend on the ability of the MCLM to utilise records

management strategic planning processes. Records contain information that will assist the municipality to determine the required resources, and moreover, to set or improve service standards. The municipality has the responsibility to consult citizens on how the available funds allocated for public service should be spent on different projects and programmes as per chapters four and five of the Municipal Systems Act (Republic of South Africa 2000b). Hence, without adequate records, the municipality cannot establish what resources it has to meet the demands of its citizens and provide efficient service delivery. This affirms the need for reformed records management strategies to enable administrative efficiency and improved service delivery in the municipality.

The study's findings established records management as an essential tool to enable public participation with community members through transparency and good governance, which helps to build a trusting relationship between the municipality and residents. Residents lose faith in their municipalities when they do not deliver on their promises, therefore it is critical for the MCLM to deliver in the accountable, democratic sphere and ensure community participation. The records management directorate in Mogale City Local Municipality requires constant intervention to its legislative framework to ensure that it addresses challenges and has accurate record-keeping systems in place. The study recommends that high-level commitment, skills, personnel capacity and the understanding of records management applicable to effective service delivery should be prioritised. The municipality should facilitate an ongoing training programme for records personnel and policy adherence awareness. More emphasis should be particularly placed on creating records and capturing those records into classified record-keeping systems.

The conclusion is that the records management environment has to be fully enhanced and established to facilitate its strong points as well. The role that it plays needs to be emphasised and re-established. The main discussion stated that it should be established and facilitated through the process of records management and record keeping. Although the roles have shifted, there must be a clear consciousness regarding those. This is the process that enables the growth and the environment of such a situation.

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**APPENDIX I: PERMISSION LETTER**

Kgoori Aubrey Makgahlela  
Unit 42 Monument Park Complex  
Krugersdorp  
1739

Date.....

The Executive Mayor: Mogale City Local Municipality

Dear Sir/Madam

**PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY IN MOGALE CITY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

As part in my work towards fulfilling the requirement for the award in a Master degree in Information Science, through the University of South Africa, I am undertaking a research on Records Management enhancing service delivery in Mogale City Local Municipality. I humbly request for your permission to undertake a study in your Municipality for the purpose in completing my research in Information Science as part of my Master of Degree.

The research seeks to conduct interviews and observation to the selected staff members of the municipality and to understand how records are managed in the municipality. The research findings will be used for education purposes as well as to inform the municipal management and leadership on ways in enhancing efficient records keeping practices. Each participant would be a voluntary participant and letters affirming confidentiality and anonymity will be issued. The participants are encouraged to answer the questions frankly during the interviews sessions.

Kind regards,

Kgoori Aubrey Makgahlela

## **APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MUNICIPALITY RECORDS STAFF MEMBERS**

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Kgoori Aubrey Makgahlela. I am a Masters Student at the University in South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria and am currently undertaking Research Project that focuses on “Records Management enhancing service delivery in Mogale City Local Municipality”. Therefore this interview schedule seeks information on your personal background and records management in your municipality. I kindly request you to take a few minutes and respond to the questions in this interview schedule to help me obtain the required information that will enable me complete this research successfully. Please be as honest and truthful as possible. Be assured that your responses will be treated confidentially and will be used purely for academic purpose. If you have any questions about this Research Project or want to know about the results, please feel free to contact me (Kgoori Aubrey Makgahlela) on 071 482 8381 or email to kgoori@webmail.co.za or contact my supervisors at the Faculty in Human Science, University in South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria

### APPENDIX III: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, ..... confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the Interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname .....

Participant Signature.....Date...02/10/18

Researcher's Name & Surname...Aubrey Makgahlela.....

Researcher's signature.....Date...02/10/18

**APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**A. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT OF MUNICIPALITY RECORDS**

1. What policy is used for managing records in MCLM?

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2. Who is responsible for the implementation of such a policy?

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3. How is the policy communicated to MCLM staff?

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4. Are there any laws governing the use of records management that your municipality adheres to?

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5. Do you have a records management policy for municipality residents' records and if so does the policy cover all records management functional requirements?

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6. Is there a records management or information management committee in the municipality?

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7. How important is the records and Information Department in the municipality?

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8. What is the role of the National Archives of South Africa in this municipality regarding records management?

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9. Are you aware that the National Archives keep all inactive records of municipality that have continuing value?

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**B. RECORDS INFRASTRUCTURE**

10. Where do you keep your municipality records?

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11. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the records?

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12. What are the problems leading to the loss of files records in the municipality?

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13. What are the problems leading to the damage of files records in municipality?

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14. If the resident's file is not located, what are the steps and alternatives to retrieve the information?

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**C. MUNICIPALITY RECORDS SECURITY**

15. What measures are in place to ensure the security of municipal records?

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16. What measures are there to ensure the security of resident's information from unauthorised persons?

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17. How is the municipality's and residents' information protected from unauthorised alterations?

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**D. STAFF SKILLS AND COMPETENCES**

18. What records management skills and competency do you have?

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19. What records management training has the municipality provided?

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20. In what way did the training you receive enhance the management of records?

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**E. SERVICE DELIVERY**

21. What contribution if any does records management have on the service delivery provision?

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22. What problems have you encountered in the management municipality records and service delivery?

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23. What recommendations do you have regarding municipality record management?

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24. Does records management contribute to good governance in the municipality?

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## **APPENDIX V: OBSERVATION GUIDE TOOL**

### **i. SECURITY**

Is the municipality record storage site protected from unauthorised access?

### **ii. INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### a) Storage equipment

Office layout

Floor space

Storage

General cleanliness

Shelving types

Files types

#### b) Environmental conditions

Temperature

Relative humidity

Light intensity

Atmospheric pollution

Insects

Fire

Water

Dust

### **iii. FILING**

#### c) Indexing

#### d) Classification

#### e) Coding

#### f) File retrieval

g) File physical condition