





AN EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES: A CASE OF CITY OF JOHANNESBURG, SECTION 79 COMMITTEES

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ABSTRACT

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This research investigated the effectiveness of oversight committees in the City of Johannesburg, focussing on Section 79 committees which are constituted under Section 79 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998, and which are tasked with performing oversight on departments. The problem with the separation of powers is that the performance and effectiveness of the oversight model in the City of Johannesburg Legislature (committees) has not been assessed and its performance level is still unknown. The objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the oversight model in holding the executive accountable. Interviews with thirteen respondents aided the researcher to gather valuable information, understanding, and insight, into the oversight model and its reporting function at the City of Johannesburg. The research findings show shortcomings in the oversight model, which include late reports, Executive absence from committee meetings, lack of tracking and implementation of committee resolutions, lack of political will and integrated reporting framework. The study recommends that the City of Johannesburg develop an integrated reporting framework in order to assess the efficacy of the oversight model by engaging the services of retired professionals. Also, the City should develop a booklet with all relevant legislation and policies for oversight purposes.

Contribution/Originality: This study documents and highlights the shortcomings in the present oversight model which, since inception, have not been assessed. The programmes and objectives of the oversight committees have therefore not been effectively monitored and evaluated. These factors have hampered the effectiveness of the section 79 committees within the City of Johannesburg.

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Johannesburg's (CoJ) has separated the powers of the Executive arm of Council from the Legislative arm of Council. Oversight over the Executive is one of the core businesses or mandates of the Legislature, and it is crucial in holding the Executive accountable. [Dikobe \(2012\)](#) explains that Section 79 portfolio committees are mandated to perform oversight by monitoring and evaluating the delivery and outputs of the Executive in terms of the defined and agreed key performance areas (KPA's). These KPAs are reviewed annually, to be in line with political imperatives as determined by the five-year Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the City. It is against this background that the research is undertaken in order to assess goal achievement, reflect on

challenges, develop best practice, and learn from the experience of policing such a model at the municipal level. Lessons learned from the implementation of this oversight and accountability model from the 2011 - 2016 political term continue to enhance implementation.

1.1. Background

The main purpose of the oversight model is to introduce standards, establish baseline systems, tools and methods of practice for the Legislature (South African Legislative Sector, 2012). The Johannesburg Governance Model is regarded as a key mechanism to achieve Council oversight and scrutiny at the local government level. RSA (2006) points out that "the separation of roles between the Council and Administration is intended to enhance the oversight function of Councillors, in ensuring accountability by the Executive". Furthermore, the Republic of South Africa Municipal Finance Management Act, (MFMA) (2006) assumes a separation between councillors serving on the Executive which includes the Executive Mayor or Executive committee and non-executive councillors from those serving in the Legislature (Republic of South Africa, 2006). This separation of powers is crucial to ensure that local government sustains its oversight function over the performance of specific and identified responsibilities and the delegated powers of the Executive Mayor and all executive committees (Municipal Systems Act, 56 of 2003). This means that through oversight, the work of the Executive is overseen and scrutinised by the Legislature, through Section 79 committees. The executive may be called to account in order to fulfil a number of roles to explain (explanatory oversight), to account, or be called to make amends. Brugge (2011) states that questions by Section 79 committees to departments may be for asking information or to compel responsibility for difficulties or problems which the Executive is accountable for. Section 79 committees undertake oversight through a variety of means, including briefings by the Executive, who provide explanations, plans and update at committee meetings, and verification of Executive claims through site visits. Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMCs) respond to committee questions, by submitting periodic, legislated performance reports on a quarterly basis and annual basis. Their strategic and operational plans are also submitted to Section 79 committees in order to assist the committee in its oversight role. The "ability to achieve the set standards of performance, as prescribed in the South African Constitution for public administration, or externally through good governance promoting institutions" such as Public Protector, Public Service Commission and other Section 9 committees, depends upon sound and effective monitoring and evaluation systems (Naidoo, 2011). Monitoring and evaluation interventions are widely used globally to improve and enhance service delivery. Cloete (2009) points out that "in South Africa Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (GWM & ES) were introduced in 2005, so as to assess the performance of government and enhance intended service delivery. The GWM & ES is intended to coordinate a systematic programme of policy monitoring and evaluation throughout the public sector in South Africa". The CoJ monitoring and evaluation framework (2012) shows that the Executive has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework to be used in order to improve service delivery. Similarly, the Legislature has standardised reporting in order to measure the performance of the Executive, however, measures put in place are not used to the optimum. There is limited information regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the oversight model as a monitoring and evaluation tool. Oversight enhances public participation. In line with Section 152 of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, local government has to be democratic and accountable and enhance the involvement of communities and organizations in matters of local governance. This gives the community the right and opportunity to be involved in municipal affairs and also ensures that communities participate in the business of the municipalities they live in. The current challenge has been on how to monitor and track the implementation of Council resolutions by the Legislature. It is against this background that the study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the oversight committees of the COJ Legislature. The study seeks to find out to what extent the above challenges impacted on the mandate or goal of the oversight model.

1.2. Research Problem

It is important to mention that the performance and effectiveness of the oversight model in the CoJ (committees) have not been assessed, and its performance unknown. Further, there is no standard method used to collect data on the specified indicators to provide progress on the oversight model. As it stands, there is no tool used to measure the effectiveness of this model at the CoJ. Failure to measure progress on the implementation of the resolutions means that committees cannot engage the Executive on progress made against each resolution or reported information. It denies the committees the opportunity to verify data provided or get an explanation or independently clarify and verify information. A major challenge is the timelines where reports are received late from the Executive. Each department from the Executive submits quarterly and annual reports to Section 79 committees, and in most cases the reports are submitted two months after the end of the quarter, meaning that committees always monitor and assess the performance of events which have long passed.

1.3. Research Questions

The following questions were formulated with the objectives of the study in mind.

- Do current measures or tools implemented by the City of Johannesburg Legislature affect or contribute to the effectiveness of the oversight model?
- What are the problem areas in the oversight and accountability implemented by the City of Johannesburg?
- How can progress towards improving the oversight mandate be achieved?

1.4. Significance of Study

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the oversight committees in the City of Johannesburg has been ignored and neglected for a long time. The researcher believes that the study on the evaluation of the effectiveness of oversight committees will assist the CoJ in ensuring accountability and scrutiny, including the implementation of committee recommendations which become Council resolutions. Since approval of the new governance and institutional model at the CoJ in 2006, a separation of the roles of the Executive and Legislature came into effect. However, to date, claims that the oversight model is successful at the CoJ are anecdotal. There is no evidence provided regarding the effectiveness of this model, hence this study.

In order to ensure effective oversight and to hold the executive accountable, the Legislature must be effective and efficient (Public Service Commission, 2013a). The effectiveness of the oversight model depends on a number of factors and depends on the expertise and competence of the officials or administrative staff. Without skilled staff to analyse and verify information reported by the Departments, oversight is compromised. In addition, the ability and skills of the councillors serving in respective committees are also crucial (Baai, 2016).

The organogram of the Legislature is not complete. A number of funded and unfunded positions remain vacant, and filling these posts is rather slow, which has resulted in internal staff acting in the vacant positions for long periods of time. For oversight to be effective there must be adequate human resources to ensure that the correct positions are filled by competent people. Administrative staff will then function at their optimum and offer an enhanced standard of service. It is among these challenges that the study seeks to assess the effectiveness of oversight committees in the CoJ Legislature. This study will also identify challenges faced by committees in the implementation of oversight and accountability model by committees.

There is limited information regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the oversight model as a monitoring and evaluation tool. It is hoped that the study will assist in adding to the current knowledge of business science and help the Legislatures to enhance the oversight function and the role of the Legislature. The study will generate baseline information for the implementation in the next political term starting after 2016.

In addition, the study may also be used as a yardstick to inform other studies, particularly in municipalities, that wish to develop a guide to be used by policymakers and also those working in the oversight sector in South Africa.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Municipal Councils in South Africa execute both Legislative and Executive or administrative functions. The City of Johannesburg is one of three municipalities which piloted a governance or oversight and scrutiny model at municipal level in 2006. The model separates the roles of the Executive and Legislative arms of Council. It is based on strengthening the role of the council and enhancing its oversight role, to ensure public participation in Council activities (RSA, 2016). The Legislature uses the council meetings and mandated committees to hold the Executive accountable (RSA, 2006). With 130 seats, Council is made up of 130 ward and 130 proportional representative (PR) councillors who constitute the municipal Council. The Legislative arm of the council is made up of the Speaker of Council, Council's Chief Whip and Chairperson of chairpersons, Section 79 portfolio and standing committees (RSA, 2016).

As the political head of the Legislature, the Speaker oversees both the portfolio and standing committees. The Speaker's role is no longer solely ceremonial, but he presides over Council meetings; performs duties and exercises powers as delegated by Council, maintains order in Council meetings, presides at meetings of the Council, ensuring compliance with the code of conduct by councillors. Legislative functions "include the approval of the by-laws, municipal policies, and appropriations of budgets, the IDP, municipal tariffs, rates and service charges (RSA, 2016). In the IDP, short and long term plans which are meant to contribute to effectiveness and efficiency as well as promoting citizen participation in the municipality's activities, are stated.

At the City of Johannesburg, Section 79 committees are custodians of the oversight function on behalf of Council. They are the key drivers of the core business of law-making, oversight and public participation (Dikobe, 2012) and portfolio committees are mandated to perform oversight on the activities of an identified executive portfolio (Maoni, 2013) while standing committees are not paired with any department. All committees of Council perform an oversight function as provided for in the Standing rules and orders of Council, the code of conduct of Council and agreed to terms of reference (RSA, 2016).

Brugge (2011) states that Section 79 committees are responsible for oversight and are mandated to monitor the delivery and outputs of the Executive. They may call on the departments and the MMC to account for their performance in terms of their function, appear before them and produce any document required or provide further information. Since these committees are not delegated any decision-making powers, they may make recommendations which, if agreed to, may become enforceable as Council resolutions. Committee oversight reports are submitted to and debated in Council in line with the City's legislative framework. Chairpersons of committees report to the Chair of Chairs who is mandated to provide strategic leadership and to ensure harmonisation of Section 79 committees.

2.1. *The Leader of Executive Business*

City of Johannesburg standing rules (2016) posits that every member of the mayoral committee must submit to the Legislature, annual and quarterly reports on the performance of departments and municipal-owned entities within 60 days from the end of the quarter and annual report at the end of the financial period. The leader of Executive Business facilitates effective interaction between the Executive and Legislature; this is usually a senior and experienced councillor (RSA, 2016). Under section 12 of the Municipal System Act, establishment notice of the City does not include the position of Leader of Executive Business as a full-time councillor and official office bearer.

2.2. Legislative Oversight and Accountability

Oversight responsibility is to ensure that the Executive delivers on set targets and agreed priorities made in their strategic plans or annual performance plans which are approved by the Legislature (Hlanganani and Rudzani, 2013). By monitoring the performance of the Executive, oversight takes place. Section 129 of the MFMA reporting mechanism by the Executive should include the following Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plans (SDBIP), business and performance plans are used to monitor the performance of the Executive (South Africa, 2005). Rapoo (2003) mentions that there are two oversight methods, namely, house-based and fieldwork oversight. "House based oversight methods refer to internal oversight methods and they are techniques that are used by the Legislature committees within the premises. This includes the submitting of the key performance indicators (KPI), the departmental strategic plans, annual and quarterly performance reports, and the appearance of officials before committees. House-based oversight methods call for meetings so that Council or committees can interrogate and analyse the Executives' performance. It is through these scheduled meetings that the Executive heads and political officers appear to account. In addition to meetings, fieldwork-based oversight takes place, this method includes undertaking oversight outside the premises of the Legislature in the form of field trips or site visits by the committee members to verify claims made by the Executive. From what has generated above, it can be concluded that the tools of oversight are necessary to enhance the performance of Section 79 committees.

2.3. Separation of Powers

The separation of powers and roles between the Council administration and the Legislature is aimed at strengthening the oversight function of the Legislature. The "MFMA assumes a separation between councillors serving on the Executive, for example, Mayor or Executive Committee and non-executive councillors" (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2013). The separation of powers is crucial to ensure that Council performs its oversight function. Establishment of Section 79 committees through the Municipal Structures Act replaced previous Section 80 committees. The main difference is that in Section 80 MMCs served as chairpersons of portfolio committees whereas with Section 79 they account to oversight committees which are chaired by ordinary councillors (Maoni, 2013). Section 79 committees report directly to Council, and not to the Executive. Thus improve the efficiency, economy and effectiveness of government operations. It is also to ensure policy implementation as pronounced by government. This function involves monitoring the set goals and priorities and, oversight aims to improve government transparency and increase public trust. It is clear that with oversight there would be better running of the municipality, increased accountability by the administration and better public participation.

2.4. Public Participation as an Oversight Mechanism

Effective public participation in oversight ensures and "promotes citizens constitutional rights and also makes an obligation on councillors to provide feedback and share information with communities" (DCG, 2013). Good governance includes public participation or citizen participation in the affairs of the municipality. Public participation may be done in any of three ways, namely, through informing the public, in consultation with the public and through public empowerment (Mngoma, 2010).

2.5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are not interchangeable. Monitoring is the on-going or continuous tracking and tracing of progress with regard to performance from the identified objectives or set targets, where evaluation may be formative or summative, and in that it evaluates the overall impact of the intervention (PSC, 2008). Evaluation may be done once the project is complete, or at midpoint. However, monitoring is an on-going process. The City of Johannesburg approved and introduced oversight in order to ensure accountability by the executive, however, there

has been no evaluation of the efficacy and effectiveness of the model. It is critical for Legislatures to assess the efficacy of oversight as this is a monitoring and evaluation tool.

2.5.1. Monitoring and Evaluation in Government

The impact is measured through summative evaluation of government programmes, using data collection tools such as public participation, surveys, observations, and interviews. The intention is to assess whether government programmes result in the achievement of key performance metrics such as poverty reduction, job creation, safe and healthy communities among others. Impact assessment assists in assessing compliance, improving transparency, accountability, and deciding on the future of any project (South Africa, 2011).

2.5.2. Formative or Ex-Ante Evaluation

Formative evaluation commences before the implementation of a project. It is carried out during the implementation of a project so as to indicate and highlight problems timeously and put the necessary corrective measures in place, it is thus undertaken in order to enhance performance. "Ex-ante evaluation is a forward-looking assessment of the upcoming possible effects of a new policy or programme (UNDP, 2009) or UNDP. It is done before the implementation of a policy or programme" (UNDP, 2009).

Ex-ante oversight tools include reviewing policies, budgets and plans before they are approved, thereafter generate submitted recommendations whilst ex-post oversight includes non-financial oversight service delivery monitoring as well as a fiscal oversight (Stapenhurst *et al.*, 2012). Ex-ante evaluation measures the efficacy of a program in terms of goal attainment. Evaluations are done during operation of a programme at different stages or intervals, or at the end of the programme. Sartorius *et al.* (2013) state that "impact evaluations are a sub-category of summative/ex-post evaluations and as compared to other approaches of evaluations, use control groups to assess the impacts of an effort". From this discussion, it is interesting to note that ex-ante evaluation checks for possible problems so as to allow for self-correction before completion of the programme.

2.5.3. Summative or Ex-Post Evaluation

Summative evaluation is done at the end of the project to present achievements or failures. The ex-post evaluation takes place after the project has been completed, usually carried out two or more years after completion. Its purpose is to assess how well the policy or government programme served its objectives and goals, also to assess the viability of the policy and draw from the lessons learned (UNDP, 2009). It is conducted at the end of the implementation of the policy or programme so as to assess the extent or impact, and value of the programme. Sartorius *et al.* (2013) add that summative evaluation is different from formative evaluation in that the emphasis is placed on the outcomes and impacts, and measures effectiveness of the project upon completion. Summative evaluation seeks to find out if there were any unplanned effects and the extent to which they affected the programme. The essence of summative/ex-post evaluation is to establish the changes that have taken place as a result of the intervention. The oversight model has to be evaluated to assess the viability of the model itself, areas for improvement and any improvement in accountability by the Executive.

2.6. Implementing a Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System in South Africa

Up until the year 2005, staff performance evaluations were institutionalised and systematically performed in the South African government (Engela and Ajam, 2010). However, policy programme monitoring and evaluation were not performed, meaning that the performance of public service institutions was not measured. Oversight includes monitoring and evaluation (M&E), which serves as an early warning system, data collection, verification, and analysis, and finally, reporting. The biggest criticism of the reforms relates to a lack of integration with other government spheres. In 2004, the former president Thabo Mbeki's, in his state of the nation address (SONA)

announced that M & E would play a critical role within government (Mouton, 2010). The objective of M & E being to assess performance, draw features contributing to service delivery outcomes and to identify connections between policy priorities, and the allocation of resources in line with the objectives. Other factors that assisted in the emergence of GWM&E were the need for “continuous and regular national government reports-back to the International United Nations Millennium Goals Initiative on the status quo or progress of countries with regard to halving poverty in South Africa by 2014 (Cloete, 2009). The commitment made by South Africa to constantly inform citizens about the progress and status quo regarding the government’s national programme of action (POA) made it necessary to form a GWM&E system (Cloete, 2009). Donors were also increasingly seeking a systematic M & E of funded projects and programmes in order to safeguard their investment. Lastly, institutionalising a national M & E system has proven and demonstrated to be an international good governance practice (Cloete, 2009). It is anticipated that a GWM&E system will ensure improved performance in the programmes of national and provincial departments and municipalities, Improved monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impact across government spheres, Increase sectoral and thematic evaluation reports, monitor and evaluate provincial growth and development plans, including an enhancement of M & E systems, and the development of a culture of governance which responds to M&E findings South African Presidency, 2007. One of the weaknesses of the GWM&ES framework is clarity on exactly what needs to be monitored and evaluated (Cloete, 2009). It is important to highlight that more government institutions are increasingly beginning to institutionalise the GWM&E even though the pace is very slow

2.7. Theoretical Foundation of Legislature Oversight

2.7.1. Principal-Agent Theory

The principal-agent theory is, on the one hand between the Legislature, acting as principal on behalf of citizens, and both the executive and the bureaucracy on the other hand”. The principal-agent theory also called the agency theory come from the information economics (Macias, 2012). Gailmard (2012) reveals that public accountability requires a specification of who is accountable to whom, which is a core ingredient of this theory. The Executive and the Legislature are equally both principal and agent which requires transparency. Furthermore, the Executive must account to citizens through the electoral process and to the Legislature which represents citizens, through a performance oversight function over the Executive (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2012).

2.7.2. Informational Theory

“Based on the theory, if policy outcomes are highly uncertain, such as in periods of rapid social and economic change, committees tend to be granted much power to gather information” (Wang, 2013). Lawmakers are unaware of important variables that have an impact on policy outcomes and legislative committees can assist by providing data or information on the variables (Battaglini *et al.*, 2016). “The greater are the different views between the committee preferences the less information the committee will be able to deliver successfully” (Groseclose and King, 2000). This theory suggests that legislators do not have complete information to predict the outcomes of policy instruments (Groseclose and King, 2000). It is through oversight taken by committees that the Legislature will be able to gather information and assess progress on the outcomes set by the Executive.

2.7.3. The Partisan Theory

Committees are creations of parties which maintain control over policies. The majority party members with more seats may collude among themselves and disregard the wishes of minority parties (Groseclose and King, 2000). The influence of committees exists only when they serve the ends of the majority parties. Snowberg *et al.* (2007) confirm that majority parties tend to control the agenda and use their power to influence the approval of

policies. It can be concluded that the number of seats that the party has in Council has an impact on the decisions and resolutions taken, thereby impacting on the effectiveness of oversight.

2.7.4. Distributive Theory

Wang (2013) explains that according to the distributive theory, committees are created to assist members to secure spending for their areas or regions. Clearly, there is a need for accountability to citizens by both the Executive and the Legislature. Financial and non-financial oversight over the performance of the executive and Legislature must be carried out. Legislative oversight must focus on accountability and not on addressing management challenges (South Africa, 2005) this will ensure transparency, good governance and much-needed feedback to communities. The provision of adequate, timely and correct information to communities is anticipated to result in informed citizens and to encourage their involvement in the business of government.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research methods and application of these methods show how the study was carried out (Gupta and Gupta, 2011). The choice of methodology relies upon the paradigms or research orientation that guides the research activity. There are multiple approaches to social science studies and the objective of the research will determine which approach to use, which may be positivism, interpretive and critical. This study used the interpretive orientation as it was most suitable based on the objectives of the research.

3.1. Constructivism or Interpretive Research Orientation

In the qualitative interpretivist approach, the researcher observes or talks face-to-face with individuals from different groups, while observations and conversations are carried out to solicit information on the topic being researched. As compared to positivism, interpretive research approach is a social study, seeking to understand the social experiences and perceptions of people. The study adopted an interpretive orientation. The researcher conducted interviews and interpreted data which were turned into text format. In the end, the researcher presents the findings with recommendations.

3.2. Research Design

Kothari (2012) states that research design refers to the procedure of how to collect and analyse data in a way that combines significance and relevance to the research objective. The research design is the approach within which the research is to be conducted. The choice of the approach is further explained in detail below, first, a brief comparison between different research designs is made. This study used an exploratory approach because the researcher intended to pursue and explore new insights. It can also be used to investigate and measure occurrences in a new light. Zikmund (2003) describes exploratory research as “preliminary research conducted to explain the nature of a problem”. It is supported by a review of the literature, followed by data collection and interpretation. Exploratory research formulates a problem with the intention of undertaking a detailed investigation. It is considered to be more flexible than descriptive research (Kothari, 2012).

3.3. Research Population

The sample was made up of participants from political parties, officials from the Executive and Legislature from the City of Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. The small pool of knowledgeable staff and councillors were target population.

In total interviews with 13 participants from a pool of 50, were carried out and these were:

- Twenty (20) Councillors from the majority party, the ANC, who serve on oversight committees and in the leadership in the Legislature

- Four (4) Councillors from the official opposition, the Democratic Alliance (DA), including the Caucus leader of this opposition party.
- One (1) Councillor from the Minority Parties, which normally have one seat
- Twenty (20) officials participated, and they were not from the Legislative arm of Council. Five (5) from the private office of the Speaker, the research unit, Council and committees, legal advice office, assistant directors of oversight committees, committee coordinators, and governance.

The final sample of 13 respondents made up of officials and politicians was selected. The sample was diversified in order to get opinions from as many people as possible.

3.3.1. Trustworthiness and Credibility

Positivists apply the measures of validity, reliability and objectivity in contrast to that of interpretivist who refer to trustworthiness and credibility). Qualitative researchers do not use the same criteria used by positivists to assess the outcomes of research. Research has to be credible and to realise this, investigators need to have a close orientation and knowledge of the topic being studied. The researcher ensured credibility and trustworthy by asking questions that ensure valid accounts and events of phenomena. In addition, the research instrument was piloted on two senior staff in the research unit to ensure due consideration. In order to increase rigour, the researcher ensured credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability which are discussed below.

3.3.2. Credibility

Establishment of credibility can be done through prolonged engagement with informants, triangulations of data from a variety of sources such as documents and interviews, sharing of the transcript on the individual interviews. The investigator or researcher works and is part of the Legislature at the City of Johannesburg, therefore spending time with the participants was prioritised. This enabled the investigator to have sufficient time to engage with the participants with the intention of verifying the data. The investigator experiences worked to an advantage because the issues of biases are not known and approach was to be open-minded on the when approaching the study.

3.3.3. Dependability

The researcher recorded and documented all the variations so as to produce a reliable or dependable account of developing research focus. [Saunders et al. \(2013\)](#) “dependability means recording all changes to produce a reliable account of the emerging research focus that may be understood and evaluated by others”

3.4. Data Analysis

From the proposed study, the researcher identified themes from the data and present them in groups or themes ([Kothari, 2012](#)). Information was classified on the basis of common characteristics. [Neuman \(2003\)](#) content analysis is an approach to gathering and examining the content of the text. In order to gather and analyse the data, the researcher followed a number of techniques such as formulating the research questions to ensure that analysis focused on the aspects of content relevant to the research, and how to record the data collected. To assist in analysing, the researcher made copies of the transcripts and brief notes from the transcripts, different data and information gathered was listed. The process allowed the researcher to develop, compare and examine the categories or themes. The researcher collected the data through interviews, the data were then categorised according to themes and the patterns that were observed and recurrences in the data provided were interpreted. The patterns were compared with the theories, thereafter the data was analysed from a holistic view in order to draw conclusions and provide recommendations. The use of the content analysis is relatively cheap enabling the researcher to ensure the reliability of information as procedures are replicated.

3.4.1. Pilot Study

For the purpose of the study and prior to developing final interview list, a pilot study was undertaken and conducted with at least two (2) respondents from the City of Johannesburg Legislature. Respondents in the research unit from the City of Johannesburg Legislature participated in the pilot study. This was done to test the data collection method and any possible areas which are unclear or problematic.

3.4.2. Elimination of Bias

Saunders *et al.* (2013) bias include any form of influencing the results by the researcher, in order to show certain results. The researcher in the study ensured sound scientific principles and focused on the human element of the research process, in order to eliminate the risk of being biased. In addition to eliminating bias, the researcher ensured that the integrity of data is not compromised and that his personal opinion did not play any role in analysing the data provided, this allowed for the data to be correctly and accurately interpreted.

3.4.3. Ethical Considerations

Kumar (2011) "all professions are guided by a code of ethics that has evolved over the years to accommodate the changing ethos, values, needs and expectations of those who hold a stake in the professions". Saunders *et al.* (2013) confirm that "ethics refers to the standards of behaviour that guide conduct in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of the research work, or are affected by it".

3.4.4. Informed Consent

According to Kumar (2011) in every discipline or study, it is considered unethical to gather information or data without the knowledge of the participants, and their expressed willingness and informed consent. The researcher signed a letter of consent before engaging the respondents to the interview questions. Furthermore, the researcher mentioned that participation in the study was purely voluntary.

3.4.5. Ensuring no Harm

Kumar (2011) states that it is considered unethical to search and seek information in a way that creates anxiety or causes harassment. The researcher was sensitive to any harm to the participants, precautions measures and consequences of the study to the participants.

3.4.6. Confidentiality and Anonymity

The researcher assures the participants of the confidentiality of information provided during the study. Kumar (2011) explains that any sharing and distributing of information about a respondent with others for purposes other than research is regarded as unethical and is not encouraged. The researcher removed or discarded the names or addresses of subjects and used codes such as referring participants as councillors and officials. This is done to protect the privacy of the participants. Information collected from the participants are not linked to a specific individual.

3.4.7. Permission

Saunders *et al.* (2013) state that an introductory or information letter requesting access should outline in brief the purpose of the research to be conducted and also how the person being contacted might be of assistance and help, and what is probably included in participating. The researcher formally submitted a request for permission to conduct research to the City of Johannesburg Legislature for approval.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study sample constituted 13 participants from the City of Johannesburg Legislature which is made up of the Councillors and support staff or officials. All the participants' answered questions from an interview schedule which was specially designed by the researcher. All the participants took part in the study, therefore there was a 100% response rate. The highest number of years served by participants is 15 years and only one participant falls in this category, the lowest number of years being 2 years with two respondents falling into this category. The modal category of years of experience is 9 years, with three respondents in this category. The section below presents data on participant qualifications. All the participants confirmed their qualifications with and two participants have a Master of Business Administration degree one has a doctor of philosophy (PhD) and one with the lowest qualification is a Matric or grade 12.

The employment levels of the respondents are senior members and few of junior staff members of the organisation or senior political leaders who are involved in oversight duties on a daily basis.

Table-4.1. Participants Employment Level

Employment Level	Frequency
Legislature: Chair of chairs	1
DA Party: Caucus Leader	1
DA Party: Caucus Strategist	1
Chairperson of Section 79 committee	1
ANC Governance committee Whip	1
Public Representative and member of African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	1
Deputy Director: Research unit	1
Deputy Director: Council and committees	1
Legislature: Legal Advisor	1
Assistant Director: Committees	1
Specialist Corporate Governance	1
Senior Researcher	1
Committee Coordinator	1
Total	13

Source: This is data analysis material

4.2. Section B: Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Does the Legislature have adequate resources for councillors to oversee Executive performance? Please explain in detail?**

Out of the thirteen respondents interviewed, a total of 3 or (23%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative that the Legislature has adequate resources for councillors to oversee the performance of the Executive, ten (10) or (77%) answered that the Legislature has no adequate resources for councillors to oversee the Executive performance. Respondents who indicated that councillors do not have adequate resources explained that some councillors are not sufficiently capacitated in terms of business tools and other resources to undertake this function. However, it is also important for councillors to be capacitated, through training for them to improve their oversight role. The focus should be on providing councillors with Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) tools that will allow them to access instant, real-time developments on service delivery issues. It is also critical that all councillors have constant access to emails and social media in order to communicate with their constituencies and Legislature officials. The findings show that most of the respondents indicated that resources for the councillors are not adequately available and this calls for capacitation of councillors, and providing them with required training and the necessary resources for oversight thus enable the Legislature to effectively undertake its oversight functions. A lack of resources impacts on the effectiveness of the oversight model.

- **How often do you report or receive executive performance reports?**

Section 35 (1) of the City of Johannesburg Council Standing Rules (2016) states that “every member of the Mayoral Committee must submit to the Legislature quarterly reports on the performance of Departments and Municipal Owned Entities within 60 days from the end of the quarter”. In response to this question, all the thirteen respondents answered that the Departments do submit monthly and quarterly performance reports to committees for oversight purposes. The findings show that there are systems in place which enable oversight committees to analyse the performance of departments, which assists with knowing where the areas of improvement should be and what measures have been put in place to deal with challenges.

- **Are these reports enough for monitoring purposes?**

A total of eleven 85% or 11 respondents responded in the negative while, two 15% respondents said the reports are enough. Those who answered that information on reports is inadequate explained that critical data or information shortage is experienced on the reports containing financial performance, risk mitigations and Council resolutions.

- **Do you think that the committee’s support staff have adequate skills, abilities and the competency to assist committees in performing their oversight function? Please explain in detail.**

Eleven respondents thought that support staff has the adequate skills and competence to assist their oversight committees, however, one of the respondents mentioned that most support staff lack passion to their job and on-going training is needed, a retention strategy also needs to be investigated since the institution losses competent people. However, two respondents felt that support staff are not adequately qualified for the job. It is noted that councillors feel that their support staff are competent in their support of committees for the oversight function. How has the Legislature provided consultation and feedback to its constituencies regarding the performance of the committees? All the respondents answered this question with six saying that feedback was done through Integrated Development Plan (IDP) on an annual basis, however, seven respondents felt that feedback is never provided to constituencies. Those respondents who stated that feedback on performance is not given indicate that Council also fails to incorporate stakeholder inputs and to report on progress regarding the objectives, priorities or mandate given by the constituency for the given period. It is concluded that government institutions must be accountable to communities and must ensure that their service delivery programmes integrate the inputs of communities, and that feedback is given on time, in a way that communities can understand.

- **Explain as to how committees were able to track and monitor the Council Resolutions Implementation**

Four (4) respondents indicated that there is no tracking system in place, whereas nine (9) respondents said there was a matrix used to track resolutions in the form of matters arising and minutes. One of the respondents explained in detail the actual process of monitoring. Committee researchers capture and track committee recommendations and Council resolutions. Resolutions being tracked are those resolutions emanating from Section 79 committees oversight reports on departments and Municipal entities quarterly performance reports, committee's oversight site visits reports and study tour reports. Some of the challenges experienced in monitoring as stated in the respondents' interviews are that committees are not consistent in the manner they deal with resolutions. All respondents agreed in the interviews that it did not happen and resulted in the resolutions being difficult to verify by the committees. Respondents further pointed out that The Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reliable and Time-bound principle (SMART) principle is not always followed when crafting committee recommendations.

- **Did committees manage to achieve commitments and set targets contained in their individual action plans or mandate? Explain**

Standing Rules of Council (2016) state that every committee determines its own procedures, and determine its own annual programme. In addition, the RSA (2006) states the importance of annual reports to assess performance against targets and budget implementation as reflected in the business plan and SDBIP or annual performance plan. Three respondents agree that the committees did achieve their set targets, while five (5) disagreed and another five (5) said that only a few of the committees achieved their set targets, therefore most of the respondents mentioned that committees did not achieve their set targets. Some of the respondents explained why the targets were not reached. Some of the committees did not undertake oversight site visits or perform field-based oversight, annual performance or targets was not adequately evaluated, and there is no standardised system to monitor and evaluate performance. Councillors being part-time also contributed to non-achievement of targets and therefore little or no follow up of committee's recommendations.

- **How do committees ensure that they have all the necessary access to required documents in order to undertake oversight?**

The respondents were asked whether committees have access to required documents in order to undertake oversight. One respondent said no, but the rest confirmed that this is the case because there are no systems in place to ensure that committees receive the reports as requested. This participant stated that to ensure accessibility, national treasury reporting regulations and requirements, including the standing rules of the City of Johannesburg should be followed and practised. Twelve respondents said that reports are received through the committee coordinator and are usually requested by the oversight committee chairperson through the office of the Leader of Executive Business.

4.3. Section C: Compliance

This section focused on compliance by Section 79 committees in holding the Executive accountable. The first question was about how respondents understand the legislation put in place to perform oversight. Although twelve respondents concurred that the Standing Rules of the municipality and the Municipal Systems Act stipulate the procedures of carrying out oversight duties, one respondent pointed out that legislation on local government does not state in detail how the oversight responsibility and authority should be carried out. The focus of the Systems Act is only on the establishment of Council and its committees. However, the mandate and powers of Council committees are not fully stipulated, therefore there is a lack of clarity on the oversight mandate local government. In an attempt to understand if the municipality complies with the requirements of oversight, all of the respondents agree. They stated that the Legislature is required to do oversight over the performance of the Executive and this is done by considering, interrogating and analysing the quarterly and annual performance reports of departments. The Legislature also ensures that during the consideration of annual reports, the budget and IDP, communities are invited and they are allowed to comment and submit their inputs. The study wanted to know in the case of municipal non-compliance what measures are put in place. Nine (9) of the respondents said that the Council is supreme and any matter that is not resolved can be referred to it. In addition, committees have the power to subpoena or order any representative from the department to account before it, should the need arise. In case of non-compliance after the matter has been referred to Council, the provincial and national government may be requested to intervene, and the last resort will be the Constitutional Court. Three respondents mentioned that there is no recourse available, meaning there are no consequences in case of non-compliance and that recourse can only prevail once there is political will to do so, in most cases recourses or accountability are affected by political allegiance, therefore no consequences for wrong-doing. One respondent explained the process which can be followed for non-compliance. Firstly the matter needs to be referred to the Chairperson of chairpersons for

escalation and intervention by the Leader of Executive business, thereafter, the LoEB will be expected to bring the concern to the Executive's attention and endeavour to resolve the matter.

- **Are you confident with separation of powers between the executive and Legislature? How has it helped oversight duties?**

When asked if they are confident with a separation of powers between the executive and Legislature, nine respondents said they are especially that accountability by the executive has improved, service delivery has been enhanced, and community involvement has improved. On the other hand, four respondents said that they are not confident with the separation of powers and some of the reasons alluded to were a lot of interference by political parties and the Executive in the affairs of the Legislature. Because the Executive allocates the budget, this compromises the oversight process because decisions are made based on political loyalty.

- **What frequency of oversight sittings/or meetings are recommended?**

Ten (10) of the respondents mentioned that one committee and Council meetings are recommended on a monthly basis. Two (2) of the respondents stated that there are three to four committee meetings per month and one (1) of the respondents confirmed two committee and Council meetings took place per month. The frequency of meetings was said to be enough by eight respondents while five said that the frequency should be increased. The respondents further elaborated that increasing the sittings will enable the committees to engage with the public more, and increase the number of field-based oversight through site visits to verify claims by the departments.

4.4. Section D: Challenges to Holding the Executive Accountable

The first question related to the effectiveness of by-laws in the 2011 to 2016 political term and ten respondents answered that by-laws were not effectively reviewed, which in turn affected their enforcement in areas such as revenue collection, and resources management which discourages a sense of responsibility in communities. They further mentioned that they do not remember the last time by-laws were reviewed by the Legislature. It was also mentioned by one of the respondents that by-laws lapsed before they could be reviewed, and the advertisement took long or never happened. However, two respondents mentioned that by-laws were extensively reviewed especially in areas of property by-law, public open spaces air pollution, cemeteries and crematoria, and credit control and debt collection. One respondent was not sure how to answer this question. By-laws cover various local government issues including parking grounds, public health, street trading, culture and recreation services, public roads and encroachment on property, among others. Six respondents said that committees do not take oversight site visits as planned, which impacts negatively on service delivery. Councillors could not engage robustly with departments due to a lack of understanding and knowledge of the level of service delivery provided. Irrelevant questions are asked because of misalignment of knowledge on problematic areas, and a concern was raised regarding the approval of questionable reports due to lack of debate and engagements. One respondent pointed out that it is common for visits to be arranged and the ward or PR councillor does not show up, then the Chairperson and support staff end up undertaking the visit on their own. Fieldwork is an essential part of oversight and it involves committees undertaking trips or visits to where government has committed resources.

- **Has oversight improved accountability by the executive?**

The respondents were asked to give their perspective as to whether the oversight improved accountability by the executive. Although a majority (10) respondents agreed that oversight improved accountability, the other three did not. Those who thought that accountability had improved said it was because MMCs attend committee meetings and respond to questions raised by the committee members, however not all MMCs attend committee meetings and this is unacceptable because they are the political heads of their departments. In some instances, there

was also non-attendance by the Executive heads of departments, which compromises oversight. The findings reveal that oversight should improve accountability. However, there are still areas of concerns which include the following: implementation of resolutions by the executive, late receipts of reports, and some of the MMC's not attending committee meetings without consequences.

4.5. Section E: Challenges to Oversight

This section measures the challenges faced by the Section 79 committees in holding the executive accountable.

- **What challenges were experienced by committees regarding the implementation of Council Resolutions?**

The respondents mentioned a number of challenges experienced by committees in undertaking oversight, in addition to late receipt of reports from the Executive, there was no standard resolution matrix developed by committees, and tracking of Council resolutions was standardised in the committees Action Plan, there was no monitoring of the Council resolutions and the Executive Mayor as required. There was also no report on the return on the Council resolutions, in other words, there was no plan in place to track resolution implementation. Council resolutions must state that if Council approves or rejects a report of the department. Rule 39 of the Standing Rules prescribes that the Executive Mayor must report on a quarterly basis on the implementation of all Council resolutions. The agenda of Council must include a return showing the status of the implementation of each decision. However, the findings reveal that most of the respondents believed that there are a number of challenges in ensuring accountability by the Legislature. Most of the respondents said that the Legislature does not have a standard template for resolution tracking, and there are no measures in place to enforce where the Executive does not implement Council resolutions. The study reveals that the nature of work of councillors does have a bearing on oversight as they are part-time, and because communities vote every five years, there is always the anticipation that administration may change and so change some of the priorities at the beginning of each political term. Continuity of members is crucial as members are trained at the beginning of each political term, which is expensive and time-consuming. Participants were asked to make recommendations to further enhance oversight and thirteen suggested that oversight committees be chaired by the opposition parties to allow for independence, objectivity and impartiality. Further suggestions include an increase in the number of committee sittings to allow more time for in-house and field oversight. Some participants were concerned with the manner and process of electing the councillors. This needs to be reviewed in order for councillors to be better placed within areas of competence, and for them to add better value in the respective committees. Although councillors are inducted on the oversight model, their understanding has to be assessed so that they have full knowledge of relevant legislation and Council policies. Public consultations are important as they are public representatives, who are expected to link Council with communities and continue giving feedback and obtaining mandate from the communities.

4.6. Section F: Effectiveness of Oversight

With regard to setting oversight objectives, eight respondents said that the objectives for oversight were not set or developed in the current political term, whereas five respondents explained that committee action plans were usually developed at committee planning sessions, thereby integrating objectives and priorities of the Legislature when planning for oversight. Each committee has to ensure sound financial management, enhancing accountability, ensuring meaningful public participation, and governance and scrutiny. Because section 119 of The Standing Rules of Council (2016) states that every committee may determine its own procedures, and determine its annual performance, committees have the leeway to determine their annual priority areas in line with the [National Treasury Republic of South Africa \(2011\)](#) requirement that strategic objectives clearly articulate what the institution aims to achieve. Each objective should be presented as a performance statement which is SMART. All

the respondents doubted that committee priorities and plans were SMART, this was not used when planning committee activities or when crafting committee recommendations, making these recommendations impossible to implement.

- **Has committees matrix to monitor recommendations to Council understood by all committee members, if any?**

The respondents were asked to provide their views on the extent to which the matrix to monitor recommendations to Council was understood by all committee members and officials. A majority of the respondents (8) or 62% said that there was no matrix in place to monitor recommendations to Council. The concern registered by the respondents is that there is no standard tracking matrix for oversight committees, however, five or 38% of the respondents explained that the matrix was understood by all committee members. It is clear that there is no standardised tracking system applied by oversight committees, and without a tracking system, it is difficult for committees to know whether committee recommendations have been implemented or not. The tracking system ensures that follow-ups and oversight site visits are undertaken. This implies that the committees are also able to keep track of their own programmes and areas for further investigation. Seven (7) or 54% of the respondents denied that there is a planning committee and felt that the chairperson's committee is responsible for the planning of Section 79 committee's programmes of action. Standing Rules 23 of Council suggest that the chairperson or committee chairpersons must guide and ensure that Section 79 committees perform their oversight responsibility and intervene where necessary, not plan their programme for them. The findings reveal that oversight measures are mostly used by the Legislature and its oversight committees, however, it is important to assess the effectiveness of oversight tools and use them in a relevant way to effectively holding the Executive accountable. Majority of the thirteen (13) respondents said that the process of oversight starts with the Executive referring the department's performance reports for tabling and consideration to programming. Thereafter, programming committee decides on items that go or to be tabled at committees and Council. Immediately after the reports are referred to the committee's political causes and study groups discuss them before they serve in committees.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Thirteen people were interviewed and a majority have more than seven years working experience at the Legislature, this implies that for councillors, this was over two terms of political office. The study finds that the effectiveness of the oversight model is affected by a number of factors such as a lack of adequately skilled, able and competent staff to oversee the Executive. This was cited as a major challenge for the Legislature to hold the Executive accountable. Councillors also need to have the required knowledge regarding how the Council Legislature functions, understand how local government systems, oversight model and separation of powers function. The study found that a majority of councillors and officials lack both professional governance and oversight skills. A missed opportunity to engage the technical skills of retired professionals such as judges, chartered accountants, medical personnel, including knowledgeable members of the community is a shortcoming of the Council Legislature. The support staff in the form of committee researchers close the gap, as they possess sound technical skills to analyse and verify the technical executive reports, thus improve accountability and adequate interrogation of departments' performance.

It is further noted that there has been little or no review of by-laws in the current political term which means that Council failed to influence and contribute to policy-making, in addition to the enforcement of the approved by-laws. Section 79 committees have not complied with the standing rules of Council (2016) as they have not introduced, initiated or reviewed by-laws in this political term. The oversight model has to be monitored and evaluated to assess, amongst other things, its relevance, coherence and responsiveness. It is important to put measures in place in order to assess the performance of the oversight and scrutiny model. This will result in

knowing where gaps are and identifying areas needing improvement. At the end of the political term, the governing party must provide feedback to stakeholders regarding their performance, they also have to prepare a handover report detailing the priorities and objectives which were agreed on and the extent to which they were achieved. If performance is not assessed, then it becomes difficult to measure progress with regard to outcomes, and lessons learned. When resolutions have been developed by the Council Legislature they are then forwarded to the LoEB and back to the relevant departments. Systems must be put in place to track resolutions with clear time frames. All recommendations and resolutions are followed-up, particularly when there is a delay or absence of responses by the Executive and departments. Another challenge to gauge the effectiveness of the oversight model was a lack of tracking the recommendations of oversight committees and the resolutions of Council. Perrin (2012) suggests that the implementation of monitoring should include tracking and tracing of progress with regard to identified plans or objectives, using measurable data on an ongoing basis. Evidence of this could not be found at the Johannesburg municipality.

5.1. Recommendations

5.1.1. Monitoring and Evaluation by Section 79 Committees

The effectiveness of oversight can be improved by engaging the services of retired professionals and active community members who are not aligned to any political party. With a misalignment of councillor skills and abilities to serve certain committees, outsourcing the services of retired judges, doctors, civil engineers, and chartered accountants and social workers may be worthwhile. It is a missed opportunity that ward committee members do not make inputs into oversight, as these are people who are assumed to be knowledgeable in the portfolios they carry inward committees. This will also deal with the issue of reports which are laden with technical information and sector-specific jargon. It is recommended that the Executive and their support staff present the performance reports in a clear and simple language and that political parties allocate councillors with the relevant knowledge of the department they intend to oversee so that they are well-capacitated and skilled to perform their oversight role.

Following through with the committee plans should be mandatory, and not optional. Also, the business plans of committees have to be in line with those of the Speaker, Chief Whip of Council and the Chairperson of chairperson's. These action plans must be understood by all committee members as they inform their oversight functions, clearly showing not only the number of oversight site visits but also what the committee wishes to achieve by performing oversight on specific programmes. Oversight can be committee driven if all understand and actively participate in the development of committee objectives, understand the reporting cycle, the scope and focus of each oversight committee and work continuously consult the community. It is further recommended that Section 79 committees lead by example, by complying with municipal laws and policies, for instance, allowing no by-law review process to lapse. Adding to the above the committee business or strategic plans must outline the oversight approach and be linked to the entire institutional goals or objectives.

Arising from the conclusion made that the effectiveness of oversight by committees is affected by lack of necessary ability, skills, and capacity to discharge oversight duties. It is therefore recommended that the capacitation, skills, training, and development for all members of committees and those responsible to carry out oversight especially councillors should be done and should cover the legal framework such as South African Constitution, Municipal Structures Act, Municipal Systems Act, Municipal Finance Management Act and the separation of powers.

It is disturbing that oversight committees at the CoJ are not aware of the government-wide oversight tools that have been developed by the national department of monitoring and evaluation. Even more perturbing that not all participants were aware of a matrix to track oversight recommendations. It is thus recommended that the CoJ Legislature train its staff and councillors on the already existing tracking matrix so that implementation is

standardised. All Section 79 committees to report on the use of this tool, on a quarterly basis. The CoJ may also engage the department of monitoring and evaluation to assist them with implementing tools for M&E.

It is indicated that the performance assessment of the government oversight and accountability model is not done. It is recommended that the City of Johannesburg Legislature develops a reporting framework to be used in order to measure the performance and effectiveness of the model. This framework must be clear in terms of its objectives, mandate, performance indicators, and reporting periods. A standardised reporting template must be developed for committees to report on their progress with regard to the achievements of their plans in line with the council objectives and mandate. The Chairperson of chairpersons office may develop a monitoring framework to be used to track progress and hold oversight committees accountable, in other words, it will guard the guards.

The Legislature has to ensure that its recommendations are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) and collaborative, limited, emotional, appreciable and refinable (CLEAR). This has implications for the implementation of Council resolutions by the Executive and also makes follow-up by committee staff much easier. Reporting to both Council and members of the community through bi-annual *imbizos* may enhance public participation.

5.1.2. Compliance by the Section 79 Committees

The separation of powers and relevant legislations prescribes and made a ruling that items be decided on the basis of majority votes in Council and committees, therefore it is recommended that members of committees must attend their respective meetings especially when they have to vote for the items that are referred to Council for final resolution. A conclusion has been made that the intervention from the political management is needed in addressing and prescribing the flow of the reports from the executive to the Legislature and to arrest the concerns relating to late reports received from the executive. It is recommended that the political management team consisting of the Executive Mayor, Speaker to Council, Chief Whip and the chairperson of chairpersons must be able to define and agree to a cycle of reports from the executive to the Legislature. The late receipt of reports can be best dealt with when there is a commitment from the political management team.

5.1.3. Inclusion of Communities in the Affairs of the Municipality

Because citizens are the ultimate principals, municipalities must not only engage them in the affairs of the municipality ensuring that this consultation is meaningful. There has to be concerted effort to include residents, social partners, businesses, communities and other spheres of government in the affairs of the Johannesburg municipality. It is important to develop instruments and tools for effective consultation with both internal and external stakeholders as they have a stake in effective oversight. Council has the responsibility to engage communities and to bring the Council to the people. Also, the standing rules may need to be amended to accommodate public participation by being open to all members of the public, to participate not only by invitation as observers, but to make inputs where relevant and possible. Councillors have the responsibility to account to communities, therefore consolidated feedback reports and findings from councillor's community meetings and house-based and field-based oversight must form part of the oversight performance report and be tabled at committee and community meetings. Participants agree that there is no framework guiding councillors on how to undertake oversight. In light of that, a consolidated Legislature process manual containing all of the steps to be undertaken in oversight must be made available to councillors and officials at induction to orientate them on how to undertake and exercise oversight.

5.1.4. Committee Action Plans

It was concluded that explicit action plans are not well developed and cascaded to all parties involved in the oversight duties. It is critical therefore that committee action plans be developed with a template to measure their

outcomes. The progress on the committee action plans needs to be part of standing quarterly reports, so as to ensure that performance is measured regularly. The quarterly reporting of the committee action plans needs to be followed by the annual performance assessment which is done at the end of the financial period.

5.2. Areas of Further Study

Monitoring and evaluation are evolving in the South African context especially in the public sector, it is, therefore, critical to conduct a detailed study in this field. Studies of a similar nature may assist in highlighting similarities and differences from various government institutions, and document the findings so as to contribute to the enhancement and effectiveness of the oversight model in the government sector.

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