

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

**NURTURING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN URBAN COUNCILS. THE CASE
OF NORTON TOWN COUNCIL.**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BSc HONOURS
DEGREE IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

GWERU, ZIMBABWE

JUNE, 2018

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TITLE OF DISSERTATION: NURTURING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN URBAN COUNCILS. THE CASE OF NORTON TOWN COUNCIL.

DEGREE IN WHICH DISSERTATION WAS PRESENTED: BSC HONOURS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

YEAR GRANTED: 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the Midlands State University at large, my immediate Local Governance Department lecturers among other University staff members not mentioned. Special mention also goes to the researcher's direct Academic Supervisor Dr E P Mutema whose efforts, commitment, support and contributions resulted in several positive changes and finalization of this research project, without his effort this work would not have been completed.

Secondly, this research was made possible through the invaluable compliments, contributions and support from Norton Town Council staff. My success in this research project would not have been possible without mentioning their invaluable support, cooperation and participation.

Last but not least, my deepest appreciation goes to my family, relatives, and close academic colleagues among others, who were my pillar of strength for their unwavering support, encouragement and financial aid during this research project and academic period. May the good Lord bless them abundantly in all their endeavours, for this empirical research project and learning was made possible only because of their support, knowledge, commitment and cooperative participation.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my family for the unwavering support and to God who helped me out through the whole research.

ABSTRACT

Norton Ton Council has over the past two decades plagued corruption and mismanagement by both elected and non-elected officials. Resultantly service delivery has been very poor as the interests of the residents are cast aside. The study therefore focused on the nurturing of social accountability at Norton Town Council. The study sought to examine and assess the extent to which social accountability was being promoted at the local authority. A descriptive research design was used using qualitative research approaches since the research required a better understanding and need to get a dimension of human expression and experience. Primary data for the research was obtained from semi structured interviews and questionnaires which were used on 50 of the target population that included council employees and residents. Secondary data was gathered from internet sources and council archives. Data was analysed using thematic analysis mode. The target population was selected using the non-probability sampling techniques like purposive, convenience and simple random sampling. Research findings indicated that Norton Town Council was finding it difficult to nurture social accountability. This was evaluated and measured on how the town Council applied social accountability mechanisms like budget reviews, periodic elections, and community score cards among others. The findings suggested feelings of overwhelming discontent among residents about the service delivery they were being offered by the municipality. Residents highlighted issues of corruption, conflict between elected and non-elected officials, lack of resources and central government influence as one of the major causes that were undermining the nurturing of social accountability at the town Council. The research recommends increased information accessibility to residents so that they are aware of what will be happening at the Council. There is also need to train officials at the council

on social accountability since the majority of them were not aware of the phenomenon. Thus, inevitably they were finding it difficult to nurture it.

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List of abbreviation

NTC –Norton Town council

ZANU PF – Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front

MDC – Movement For Democratic Change

CHAPTER I

1.0 Introduction

Social accountability is one of the most important features of democracy that public officials owe to citizens. In modern day societies being accountable for the work and policies that public official put in place is now a prerequisite. The need to nurture and enhance social accountability is more profound in urban councils because they act as a breeding ground for good governance. Norton Town is one of the fast growing urban centres in Zimbabwe. Its growth has been as a result of its close proximity to the capital city Harare, affordable rates and rentals and less population density has made it a more ideal town to live in compared to other Harare satellite towns. Such growth has come with the need to improve the management. Thus the need to nurture social accountability by the Town Council so as to meet the expectations of the expanding population in terms of service delivery. However, over the years the upholding and implementation of social accountability by the town council has proved to be challenging. There has been rampant corruption, nepotism and general poor service delivery at the Town Council. At Norton Town Council primordial loyalties like ethnicity continue to play an important role in determining people's political choices instead of issues of governance and accountability. Moreover, many officials at the Council who are largely responsible for implementation of various policies and schemes, do not even have to face elections. This situation therefore absolves them of any kind of accountability, which underscores the need for devising new ways and mechanisms to exact accountability from elected officials. Thus, sometimes relationships between elected and non-elected officials has severely compromised accountability at NTC.

1.1 Background and Overview of the Study

Fostering social accountability is one of the pivotal ways that must be taken to improve the management of urban councils in Zimbabwe. Such a move is critical in the Zimbabwean context since the country has been plagued by rampant breakdown of service delivery and corruption within urban councils, (Chatiza, 2010).Mushamba (2010), highlights that service provision in Zimbabwe by local authorities started to rapidly decline in 2001 when the socio-economic and political fabric of the country was torn apart. This was to a larger extent triggered by the Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme (FTLRP) which the government

embarked upon, which saw white owned farms being seized to give land to the majority blacks. However, the programme was marred with violence, torture, vandalism and abuse of basic fundamental human rights. This resulted in western countries putting financial restrictions and targeted sanctions on certain individuals and companies. This coupled with the rapid decline in agricultural production which had been the backbone of the country's economy led to the rapid fall of the economy. The Central Government and local municipalities started to embark on policies of self-aggrandisement and in local authorities service delivery virtually collapsed. The rising inflation made it extremely difficult for these local authorities to effectively and efficiently discharge their duties.

Mushamba (2010) highlights that from this period the concept or practice of accountability became weak in almost all urban councils in Zimbabwe. There are varying reasons that led to the development of such a situation but one of the chief reasons has been continued interference by the central government in Council matters. The influence of the central government in local government issues has been one of the major impediments to efficient service delivery and social accountability in a number of municipalities in Zimbabwe. This scenario emanated at the dawn of the 21st century when the new opposition party Movement for Democratic Change came into the scene. The popularity of the opposition party in the first decade of the millennium saw MDC sweeping virtually all the mayoral posts in major urban centres. Such a development infuriated the ruling ZANU (PF) which sought to weaken the foothold of the opposition in urban councils.

One such strategy that was used was to abolish the executive mayor title thus making the mayor only a Ceremonial Mayor with much power vested in the town Clerk who in most cases was a ruling party loyalist. Some opposition Mayors were arrested or suspended on fabricated charges of corruption and abuse of office. In their place some controversial commissions were put in place to manage the operations of urban councils. These officials were not elected by anyone thus they usually felt that there were not accountable to anyone. Thus this triggered widespread incidents of corruption and nepotism within most urban councils including Norton. Therefore, against this background it became extremely difficult for social accountability and service delivery to continue flourishing as there were always power struggles in the management of the urban councils. In Norton several councillors were suspended on perceived and sometimes real cases of abuse of office.

Low citizen engagement, corruption, nepotism and inadequate resources are also some other reasons that have led to the disfunctioning of urban Councils in Zimbabwe, Machingauta (2010). According to the Government of Zimbabwe 2010 Medium Term Plan (MTP) the major catalyst to the deterioration and inefficient service delivery in the country are decaying service infrastructure, balancing between administrative, service delivery expenditure, outdated systems, planning, and monitoring (GoZ, 2011). In addition, urbanization in Zimbabwe has not been associated with corresponding economic growth (UNHABITAT, 2010). As a result, there is massive under provision of urban services and there has been a widening gap between supply and service provision in most urban councils including Norton Town Council.

According to the 2012 Zimbabwe Population Census Report satellite towns like Norton and Chitungwiza have witnessed a remarkable increase in population. This has been attributed to the availability of cheaper residential stands and accommodation that is found in these areas. Resultantly, a significant number of people see it as very economical to live in Norton whilst working in Harare. The end result has seen an increase in population in Norton but with no significant improvement in management and service delivery by the local authority. Houtzager et al (2008) defines social accountability as a form of civic engagement that builds accountability through the collective efforts of citizens and civil society organizations to hold public officials, service providers and governments to account for their obligations with responsive efforts. Social Accountability strives to promote equitable development by building a lasting relationship between the public sector and its citizens. Therefore social accountability should be at the pinnacle of urban council management as it allows for monitoring and assessing service delivery in an effort to provide ways to improve the provision of such services by local NTC.

The area of study for this research Norton is satellite town of Harare that is located to the north west of the capital. According to Norton Town Council's Strategic Plan (2014-2018), Norton is situated about 40 kilometres west of Harare along the Harare-Bulawayo highway. The town is situated in Chegutu district in the province of Mashonaland West, Zimbabwe. The town grew as an industrial centre in a rich agricultural area. The settlement began in 1914 when a railway siding was built and was named after the Norton family who were farming in the area in the 1890s and murdered during the Shona uprisings in the First Chimurenga. Norton was developed by the Southern Rhodesian government in the early

1980s as an industrial satellite, designed to cater for an overflow of industry from the then Salisbury (now Harare) as a result of the post 2nd World War industrial boom, (Norton Town Council Master Plan File).

Traditionally, the area now known as Norton, before colonial era, fell under the dual custodianship of Chief Nyamweda and Chief Chivero whose roles were mainly customary in nature. Colonialism crumbled these chieftainships and the area became an agriculture centre. It is believed that the first tractor into Zimbabwe (the then Southern Rhodesia) came to Norton. That is why the Council flag has a symbol/picture of a tractor on it. The Local Government Systems of 1968 gave birth to Norton-Selous Rural District Council which was led by a Township Management Board under the Rural Councils Act. The same Town Management Board had powers to issue land and regulate agricultural activities such as on the maximum number of livestock one was expected to possess. The Rhodesian Government enacted statutory instrument No. 15 of 1974 which upgraded the status of the area to a Town Board under the name Norton-Selous Rural Council. The Rural Councils were run by white commercial farmers and were mainly focused on road maintenances. (Norton Town Council Master Plan File).

After independence the Zimbabwean government sought to normalize the disparities that existed between the native run District Councils and the Settler run Rural Councils which were more capacitated than the former. The Prime Minister's Directive of 1984 gave rise to the amalgamation of the Rural Councils and the District Councils. Thus the Norton Town Board falling under the Norton-Selous Rural Council was amalgamated with Mhondoro District Council, Musengezi Rural Council and Chegutu Rural Council to form what was known as Chegutu Rural District Council. However, the amalgamation was legalized on the 1st of July 1993. The Government of Zimbabwe through statutory instrument No. 75 of 1994 accorded Norton a Town Status on 1 May 2004 The first Chief Executive Officer of Norton Town Council was the late Mr F Zimunya and the first Council Chairperson was Councillor Madzima. (Norton Town Council Master Plan File).

Norton is amongst the fastest growing towns in the Country. In the early 1990s it had three suburbs only; which were Ngoni, Katanga and Twinlakes but now it has got more than ten suburbs. The 2012 census revealed that Norton had 67 591 people. Current projections

indicate that the town's population may grow to a staggering 88 000 by 2025. The rapid population growth can be attributed to the existence of a number of companies, the small scale mines, and farms which are within Norton Town Council's catchment area. It should also be noted that Norton is strategically positioned. Geographically, Norton was strategically positioned to reduce excessive industrial pressure on Salisbury, present day Harare.

On the administration part of council affairs, Norton has 13 elected Councillors. Four of these are from ZANU (PF) and 9 from MDC. The MDC therefore has control over the overall running of the council. For the non-elected officials the town Council employs about 250 employees who are responsible for the day to day management of Council affairs. It is this complement of staff that is responsible for nurturing social accountability at the Council. The research shall therefore seek to explore to what extent NTC has been nurturing social accountability in its day to day management.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The challenges that Zimbabwe as a country has faced over the past two decades has weakened the institutional capacity of local authorities to be accountable for their actions to the residents. The bureaucratic and centralised system that Zimbabwe practices is vulnerable to corruption and polarisation which makes it extremely difficult for citizens to participate in the development processes. At NTC in most instances there is no longer proper consultation done by local authorities before embarking on projects. In the event that there are residents meetings conducted the views and recommendations by residents are not taken seriously and most are left out in the final presentation or implementation. The actual needs of residents are not being met thus such lack of social accountability has led to the NTC service delivery being one of the poorest in the country. The extent of poor social accountability as clearly explained by Chatiza et al (2014) who states that the use of budget consultations and Councillor feedback to communities is not done in a participatory way as such citizens remain ignorant about the operations of the council.

He further notes that most people in Zimbabwe are used to poor service delivery to the extent that they have developed a coping capacity rather than the capacity to call for change. This lack of action has driven urban councils to poor service delivery. NTC for example has been

embroiled in a lot of corruption scandals which involve shady land deals. Some houses have been built in areas that are not designated for housing construction and there has not been proper servicing of the stands. Therefore in light of this predicament this research shall seek to assess the extent to which social accountability has been nurtured at Norton Town Council. The research shall explore the nature of management at NTC and how it is promoting social accountability.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Main Objective

- To assess the extent to which Norton Town Council has promoted social accountability

1.3.2 Sub Objectives

- To establish measures put in place by NTC to promote social accountability.
- To examine the effectiveness of measures put in place by NTC to promote social accountability.
- To identify key challenges that impact on the effectiveness of social accountability mechanisms.

1.4 Research Questions

- What measures have NTC put in place to promote social accountability?
- How effective are the measures that have been put in place to promote social accountability at NTC?
- What are the factors that contribute to the success and failures of measures that promote social accountability at NTC?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The research shall be of paramount significance to a number of stakeholders like the government, corporates sector and academic world. To the government and other urban councils This research shall provide factual information and evidence about importance of nurturing Social Accountability in urban councils and how social accountability can be used a vehicle to improve service delivery at NTC.

This study shall assist local urban Councils to understand and appreciate the role that can be played by its residents in the day to day operations of their councils. This analysis is important because it interrogates the participation of the ordinary citizen in local government.

Participation of residents is an important ingredient in fostering the provision of service delivery in urban Councils. To the general business sector this research shall provide evidence of how social accountability is a critical force in good governance. To the academic world especially Midlands State University this research shall provide valuable in-depth research to their academically rich library. Since the research is a ground breaking research that has brought a new dimension to the practice of social accountability it is hoped that current and future university staff and students will benefit from the research. In addition this research shall be a stepping stone for further research. It is anticipated that this research shall foster and stimulate increased citizen participation, access to information and responsiveness in local government.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

- Due to limited time some areas were not reached during the course of the study.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

- Financial resources negatively affected the undertaking of sound and compressive research since the researcher could not reach some areas and could not spend a considerable time in the field.
- People had negative attitudes towards academic research work thus they were not open to reveal some information
- The study was prone to resistance as a result of organizational policies such as secrecy and confidential Information Act or Code of conducts.
- In answering the above problem of secrecy the researcher informed the Respondents that the study was for academic purpose observed strict confidentiality.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

Nurturing – the act of encouraging, nourishing and caring for someone or something

Accountability – responsibility to someone or someone for some activity

1.9Chapter Summary

Chapter one focused on the background and overview of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, definitions of terms, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and limitations of the study. On the background of the study this research looked at the origins of gross mismanagement in the local authorities. The background of the study revealed that the coming of the opposition MDC and its dominance in the management of local authorities played a pivotal role in disrupting the performance of local authorities in the country as there as increased central government interference into the management of local authorities. Resultantly, the nurturing of social accountability became problematic at NTC. The study shall be of great significance as it shall assist policy makers and council officials on the strategies they could take to promote social accountability in the management of local councils. Limited time restricted the researcher from accessing some areas and among the many limitations that the research encountered the political sensitivity of the research undertaken limited the participation of some targeted respondents.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

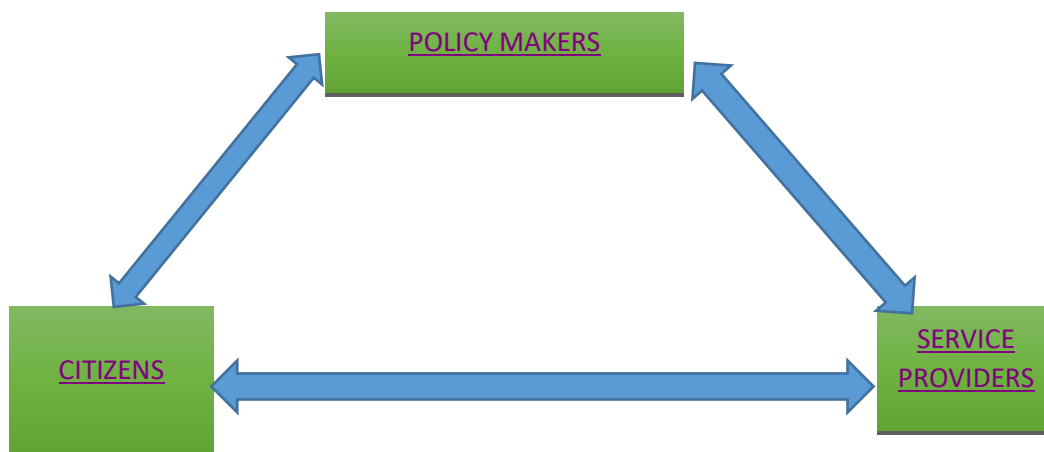
2.0 Introduction

This chapter touches on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. Review of literature shall touch on the types of accountability with special emphasis being given on the applicability of social accountability in the context of NTC. Mechanisms of social accountability shall be touched on in the chapter.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The world development (2004) report conceptualises the research under study by bringing out a framework of relationships that constitute social accountability. The World Development Report 2004 assists the research in the examination of the extent to which social accountability has been nurtured at NTC by providing a framework of relationships between the various actors that are involved in the management of public institutions like urban Councils. These are classified as the clients of services, the service providers and policy makers. The framework of relationships attempts to bring out the relationships between the various actors that are involved in service delivery in urban councils. The framework attempts to bring out whether there is interdependency or dependency between the service providers and the recipients of the services.

2.1.1 Framework of Social Relationships



Source: Repurposed from WDR 2004: Making Services work for the Poor. p.6

In the diagram above the citizens are classified as the clients who pay for the service that are provided by the service providers. In the research under study the citizen are the residents of Norton. The service provider (s) are the agencies or offices which can be either public or private. These service providers provide a direct interface between the citizen and the government. In this research the service provider is Norton Town Council. Policy makers are classified as those elected officials, government officials that are in positions where they can put policies and determine some course of action. These officials have supervisory and monitoring, and disciplining authority over service providers and they are there to reward or penalize the service providers based on performance. Some of these policy makers can also be found in the service provider's category. The Ministry of local Government is classified as the policy maker but there are some instances whereby the members can be the service providers.

The world development report further highlights that the relationship that exists between the citizens and the policy makers is classified as the long route of accountability. This is because in principle, citizens influence policy makers and politicians through existing political processes such as elections. In practice, this is however a slow process which does not always work especially for the poor who have less clout with politicians and the distance between the citizen and the policy makers and elected officials grows because of weaknesses in the electoral system or the slowness of the process itself; i.e. once every four or five years.

Even if poor people can reach the policy makers, services will not improve unless the policy maker can ensure that the service provider will deliver the service to them. Given the weaknesses in this long route of accountability, it is easier to influence service outcomes by strengthening the shorter route, for example the link between the citizens and the service providers. Citizens can play different roles in strengthening service delivery and in making it more responsive to their needs. First, they can influence inputs and help the provider to tailor the service to their needs. Second, they can be effective monitors of service providers since they are at the point of service delivery. The link between all three major players is through the processes of information, communication and advocacy, and monitoring that are facilitated through the tools of civic engagement and social accountability. Therefore, in the final analysis it can be said in order for service providers to be more efficient, effective, and

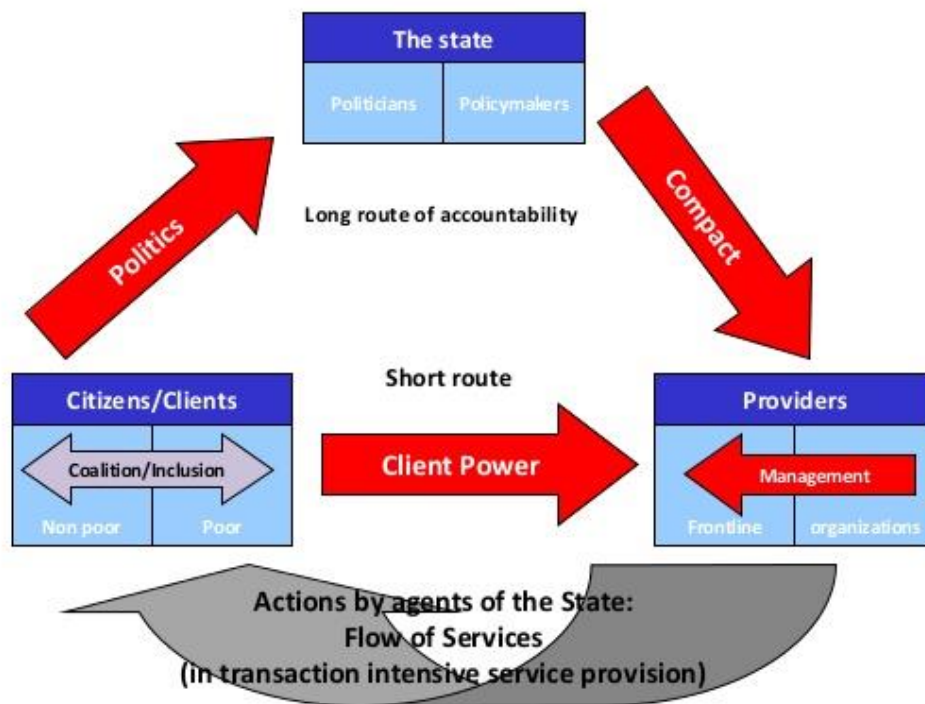
responsive to citizen needs, there is need to develop proactive mechanisms. This can only be enabled if there is a provision that guarantees an enabling legal environment.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The research the accountability theoretical framework that is used by the United Nations organisations. The framework was developed was developed by the World Bank, and established as a framework for analysis in 2004. The framework is essential to this research because it provides an important model for analysis of service provision, using the terms ‘long’ and ‘short’ routes to accountability. The World Bank 2005 report states that under the ‘long’ route, citizens use their voice’ to exert pressure on policy makers to ensure service providers deliver affordable access to services for poor people. However, according to Water Aid (2006) this traditional approach to service provision often fails due to the generally weak voice of poor citizens and the vulnerability of services to patronage politics as well as the weakness or absence of democratic institutions through which citizens’ voices can be channelled. The lack of a clear institutional separation between policy making and service provision may also affect the ability of policy makers to hold providers accountable, and strong independent regulatory institutions are often absent. Franceys and Gerlach (2008) argue that the long route has tended to become so distorted that an adequate voice has never reached the service providers.

The diagram below gives further illustration.

The Overall Accountability Triangle: Four Relationships of Accountability



Source: World Bank 2004

Furthermore, diagram above shows the difficulties that can be encountered if there is citizen engagement using the long route. One such difficult is that the long route can lead to greater reliance on direct user influence to air their views to hold officials accountable. In this case the citizen has to rely on the voice of others like councillor in the case of Norton residents have to rely on the voice of people like Councillors to hold people to account. The short route on the other hand leads to direct application of voice by the citizens to hold providers accountable. This route is enhanced when citizens' voices are accompanied by payment for services. In the short route there is direct communication between the residents and those that they want to be accountable to and there is no need for an intermediary.

However, despite potentially allowing a more direct and immediate influence on providers. The advantages of using the short route should not be exaggerated. The World Bank for example, warns against putting too much focus on this route which neglects the political

context in which service providers operate and abandons other important ways in which citizens can influence accountability, such as through political representation of citizens' interests. In addition, the World Bank (2008) argues that the long route is essential as it gives voice to the unserved, who do not have a direct relationship with service providers like what happens for many poor people in urban areas particularly those residing in informal settlements. It should be noted that Even when they are served, poor individuals face substantial barriers to using their voice to exert demands on service providers, such as lack of collective organisation, lack of information and education, social exclusion (on account of social class, poverty, place of residence, ethnicity, disability or gender) and financial and time constraints, World Bank (2008). It is therefore important that the use of the short route does not result in abandonment of the long route to accountability

2.3 Literature Review

Literature review and analysis shall focus on the work that was done by other researchers on the subject of urban Council management and social accountability. Literature review shall analyse and answer the research questions brought in this research.

2.4 Accountability

In relation to the management of public institutions the World Bank (2013) defines accountability as set of relationships among service delivery actors which involve five key features. These five features include

Delegating: Explicit or implicit understanding that a service (or goods embodying the service) will be supplied.

- *Financing*: Providing the resources to enable the service to be provided or paying for it.
- *Performing*: Supplying the actual service.
- *Having information about performance*: Obtaining relevant information and evaluating performance against expectations and formal or informal norms.
- *Enforcing*: Being able to impose sanctions for inappropriate performance or provide rewards when performance is appropriate. World Bank (2013)

The World Bank further notes that the concept of accountability involves two distinct stages which are answerability and enforcement. Answerability refers to the obligation of the

government, its agencies and public officials to provide information about their decisions and actions and to justify them to the public and those institutions of accountability tasked with providing oversight. Enforcement suggests that the public or the institution responsible for accountability can sanction the offending party or remedy the contravening behaviour. As such, different institutions of accountability might be responsible for either or both of these stages. For example administrative accountability is defined by Carion (1983) as the evolution of appointed career employees and officials with regards to how their actions operate within or outside the bounds of their authority. Feltus C. (2011), highlights that in administrative accountability internal rules and norms as well as some independent commissions and mechanisms are created in order to hold civil servants within the administration of government accountable. Administrative accountability ensures that the behaviour of people is bound by rules and regulations. Administrative accountability as observed by Carole (2010) seeks to ensure that subordinates in a hierarchy are accountable to superiors and there are definite and clear regulations that ensures that this occurs. Nonetheless, Carole (2010) observes that for effective administrative accountability there is need for independent watchdog units who should scrutinize and hold departments accountable at all levels. The legitimacy of these commissions however is built upon their independence so as to avoid any conflicts of interests.

It is important to note that all the forms of accountability have the potential and capacity to improve service provision in local authorities. Such development can however come on condition that the operating environment is open and democratic and the political and public institutions are functional. The 2008 UNDP report states that accountability can be practiced in many forms which can be upward, downward and outward. The upward trend of accountability happens when duty bearers are answerable to a higher office. For example staff at NTC are accountable for their actions to the Ministry of Local Government. This ministry provides an oversight on the operations of the NTC. The ministry reserves the right to effect changes to the NTC in the event that the Council fails to fulfil its mandate to the ministry and residents.

2.4.1 Social Accountability

The World Bank (2005) defines social accountability as a type of accountability that relies on civic engagement. This means that ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. A key component of social

accountability is that it involves independent evaluation of the performance of an organization as it relates to the attainment of social goals Bekele (2011). Arroyo (2005) highlights that the prevailing view of social accountability is that it is an approach that is used towards the construction of an accountability that relies on civic engagement, namely a situation whereby ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. In order to fully achieve social accountability it is important to construct a healthy relationship between the state and society so that social actors and individual citizens are empowered to oblige the government to uphold the rule of law and fulfil its promises. It is also important for citizens to have the freedom to express their views and priorities when it comes to service delivery in urban councils. This is because citizens pay their rates to the council so they should have services that is valuable and professional. In addition they should be able to demand their rights and entitlements to better services from any service provider. These rights and demands can be expressed through participation in local decision-making processes. The voice of citizens must be met by the responsiveness of service providers who must be willing to take the views of citizens into consideration and modify their actions accordingly.

2.4.2 Types of Accountability

There are multiple types of accountability that exist and they come in various forms. In the context of Zimbabwe there are four types of accountabilities should be taken into practice by urban Councils. The four types of accountabilities are as follows administrative, vertical, horizontal and political accountability.

2.4.2.1 Vertical Accountability

The vertical accountability is a downward accountability used by social actors like citizens, civil society organisations and media to hold their central and local government to account. This is done through petition, participatory mechanisms and public debates (IDEA, 2011). This type of accountability is crucial as it involves the participation of residents in budget consultation forums organised by the council.

2.4.2.2 Horizontal Accountability

The second one is horizontal accountability whereby the council officials are accountable to the executive i.e. councillors. Horizontal accountability is a mechanism of checks and

balances within a system or a local authority which are purposed to oversee other council departments. This time of accountability is nurtured within the council itself to promote good governance Horizontal accountability can be practised through political oversight and judicial accountability (Jelmin, 2011). This type of accountability is sometimes key because it fosters accountability to the residents since officials are able to account for their actions themselves. Thus that culture of being accountable is cascaded outside.

2.4.2.3 Political Accountability

The third type of accountability known as political accountability is implemented through the use of elections, parliamentary portfolio committees and political parties to demand accountability from different sectors of government and also monitor and track actions of the executive arm of government (IDEAS, 2011). According to Hirschman (1970), political accountability is the accountability of the [government](#), [civil servants](#) and [politicians](#) to the public and to legislative bodies such as a [congress](#) or a [parliament](#). Hirschman makes substantial contributions to accountability theory when he notes that the relationship between those in positions of authority to govern and the governed functions in such a way that each of the two is dependent on the other for smooth functioning.

Cavill (2004) notes that Political accountability usually manifests itself in the concept of individual ministerial responsibility, which is the cornerstone of the notion of responsible government. Aucoin and Heintzman (2000) in Yilmaz, Beris & Serrano-Berthet (2008) see political accountability as a process whereby, citizens hold elected officials to account, for their behaviour and performance through elections. Political accountability can also be improved by having elected local officials oversee local executives, increasing awareness about policy performance of local governments, or involving citizens directly in decision making, beyond elections, Heintzman (2000).

Hence, strengthening the political dimension of local accountability requires some safeguards in local electoral systems and local Council oversight. On the demand side, political accountability-measures allow for citizen-initiated legislation (petitions), referendums, or recalls of elected public officials. They include procedures for public petitions to adopt, amend, or repeal an act, law, or executive order. They also empower citizens to demand public hearings on policy decisions and actions and to appeal to citizen ombudsman offices in local governments, Heintzman (2000) According to Ugandan (2010), a useful perspective

from which to approach an understanding of political accountability is the idea of sovereignty. Political accountability he contends, is therefore the accountability of the government, comprising civil servants and politicians, to the public and to legislative bodies such as congress or parliament.

2.4.2.4 Downward Accountability

Downward accountability refers to a situation whereby a higher authority is accountable to a lower level authority. In this case Councillors are answerable to their electorate or citizens. However, in most cases this situation is not practiced especially in developing countries where those that are elected into office quickly forget that they are the servants of the people. In most case scenarios those that are elected into office vanish after being elected only to resurface when they want to be elected again. Goetz (2005) further analyse this situation when he points out that in most countries most of the actions that are taken by office bearers do not take into consideration the needs of those that elected them.

In some cases what would have been promised before elections is different from what is practiced after elections which makes it difficult for these officials to remain accountable to the voters. The best scenario according to Mcgee (2010) is a situation where an elected officials is accountable for his action before, during and after he has implemented a policy or done an activity. However, in most cases retrospective accountability is practised. This accountability occurs when the office holders account for their actions when they would have already taken action. This type of accountability is the one that is most commonly practiced in Zimbabwe where citizens react to action of the duty bearers after they have implemented policies or they have taken action.

2.4.2.5 Administrative Accountability

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regulations that ensures that this occurs. Nonetheless, Carole (2010) observes that for effective administrative accountability there is need for independent watchdog units who should scrutinize and hold departments accountable at all levels. The legitimacy of these commissions however is built upon their independence so as to avoid any conflicts of interests.

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2.5 Value of Social Accountability

Eshetu (2011), pointed that social accountability mainly is important for two major reasons among other things: on one hand to hold service providing agencies accountable to citizens by providing accessible, affordable and quality, and on the other end to empower citizens and ultimately to enable them demand about their rights. Thus, it contributes to improved governance, increased development effectiveness through better service and empowerment.

2.6 Mechanisms of Social Accountability and Their Effectiveness

Social accountability mechanisms allow citizens to engage with powerful actors in either state institutions or the private sector contracted by the state, across an array of platforms that are social rather than political, institutional or bureaucratic. As such they aim to go beyond the formal democratic institutions of elections, the recall of representatives or internal government audits, though they may serve to trigger these political and institutional mechanisms (Claasen et al., 2010, McNeilandMalena, 2010, Houtzager et al., 2008). Social accountability is thus vertical accountability defined as a broad range of actions, beyond voting, that citizens can use to hold the state accountable. Social accountability mechanisms

are participatory governance mechanisms defined as institutional arrangements that aim to ‘facilitate the participation of ordinary citizens in the public policy process’ (Andersson and van Laerhoven, 2007: 1090).

They involve citizens in decision-making in the distribution of public funds between communities and the design of public policies, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of government spending. Although thematically related, social accountability mechanisms differ from community-based development schemes in which community members participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of particular development projects within their community (Speer, 2012: 2379). Arroyo (2005), highlights that the term social accountability is, in a sense, a misnomer since it is not meant to refer to a specific type of accountability, but rather to a particular approach (or set of mechanisms) for exacting accountability. Mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up. It is generally accepted that social accountability mechanisms are an example of vertical accountability. The mechanisms are as follows;

2.6.1 Half Yearly Budget Review

Participatory budgeting is a process through which citizens participate directly in the different phases of budgetary formulation and decision-making and the monitoring of budgetary execution. According to McGee and Gaventa (2010), of all the types of social accountability mechanism, those related to budgetary processes are the most developed. This is among other things due to the impact of the democracy and good governance agenda, the emergence of the large number of independent budget groups in developing countries. In many countries around the world, usually national, urban municipality and local government budgets and plans are designed by expert teams and bureaucrats behind closed doors with little chance for ordinary citizens or community members to provide input or influence decision-making processes. Consequently, government budgets and plans do not always reflect social priorities and may ignore the needs of different social groups, particularly the marginalized, such as women, young people and the poor. Participatory budgeting is an entry point and mechanisms through which citizens have attempted to influence local government decision-making processes. There is evidence from various pilot studies at the local level that the social accountability mechanism of participatory budgeting in particular has contributed to making budgets and plans more responsive to citizen preferences and better adapted to their

needs (Malena, 2009). Furthermore, participatory budgeting has improved citizens' knowledge of and interest in key public decision-making, thus creating increased opportunities for involvement and influence over the allocation and use of local government resources and follow-up (Malena, 2009: 7). With regard to national budgets, social accountability approaches have served both to influence budgetary allocations (bringing them more in line with public priorities) and to enhance the transparency and accountability of budget processes.

Ramkumar (2008), states that in line with good economic governance, budgeting should take place in an environment of transparency and accountability. Budget transparency refers to the inclusiveness and openness of the budgeting system to public engagement and scrutiny, Ramkumar (2008). The participation of residents at all stages of a budget from the development, implementation, review and audit of the budget is critical as it fosters greater social accountability, Ramkumar (2008). This is in line to the standards that are set by the International Budget Partnership (IBP). The IBP measures budget transparency in terms of public access to budget information and opportunities to participate in the budget process. The IBP brings out 7 key documents that are available in the budget cycles and that should be made accessible to the general public These include are pre-budget statement, executive budget proposal, Enacted budget, In-year and mid-year budget reports, Annual budget report, Audit report and Citizen Budget, IBP (2010–11). In light of this it can be said that budget reviews are important since without access to information, it is difficult for civil society and other stakeholders to engage in budget analysis. In cases where budget transparency is below expected standards, civil society should advocate for the enactment of right to information laws; use other formal and informal ways to get the information they need to analyse government budgets; network with other agencies; and lobby for increased transparency in public finance management. Budget transparency enhances the integrity of the budgeting process, Save the Children (2012). Scholars regard participatory budgeting as having a potential democratic and developmental outcome in terms of greater participation in local democracy, improved public service delivery and the re-direction of resources to the poor

2.6.2 Periodic Local Government Elections.

Elections are fundamental to democratic governance systems and the primary means for citizens to hold their governments to account and choose the ones that they think will meet their needs. However, they need to take place within the context of a broader democratic

system to ensure transparent and accountable governments are in place. For social accountability to be effective there is need for periodic local government elections to be conducted. Elections are important because they create an enabling environment which gives citizens the legal rights to participate in electing representatives they like and hold the local government accountable for their actions. Periodic elections are essential as they ensure leadership renewal which brings with it fresh ideas. In addition, those that are elected are obliged to ensure that they meet the demands of those that elected them thus inevitably promoting social accountability. The relationship between public officials and the ordinary citizen has been weakened to the extent that those in public officers feel that they do not owe their positions to anyone. This has been more prevalent among those officials that are not elected.

This argument is further enlightened by the Centre for Governance and Accountability (2012) which states that many public servants, who are largely responsible for implementation of various policies and schemes, do not even have to face elections. This absolves them of any kind of accountability, which underscores the need for devising new ways and mechanisms to exact accountability from elected public officials and non-elected public servants. This kind of scenario has been prevalent in most urban Councils in Zimbabwe including NTC where unelected officials who are engrossed in corrupt activities knowing fully well that the blame is often passed to the elected officials. This kind of scenario has often created tensions between officials within the Council and ultimately compromised service delivery.

Elected officials or ward councillors are the representatives of the people within their jurisdiction and owe their primary loyalty to those voted for them for the Councillor post. These officials are therefore deemed more accountable for their work than non-elected officials. The elected officials are deemed policy makers hence the policies should tally with the interests of the residents. However, it is also the duty of the elected officials to establish cordial relations between the residents and the local authority or the unelected officials since they are the ones that work on the ground with the people. Elected officials therefore can be classified as middle men that stand between the residents and the Council management. They ensure that social accountability is promoted and enhanced at all levels and with each activity. This can be achieved through communicating with the residents about the situation at stake especially when the local authority is facing challenges in providing effective and

efficient services to the clients. Joseph (2012), therefore postulates that the greater burden of nurturing social accountability lies with the elected officials.

However, it should be noted that conducting periodic elections as a mechanism for promoting social accountability sometimes is only a means not an end unto itself in promoting social accountability in local Councils. Bello, (2013), notes that in most cases the need to promote social accountability is fostered by elected officials compared no non-elected officials because elected officials have an electorate who to answer to. This is unlike non-elected officials who are mostly accused of corrupt tendencies because they have no fear of losing out much than elected officials. Therefore, periodic elections cannot be regarded as a full proof mechanism that promotes social accountability in urban councils.

2.6.3 Expenditure Tracking System.

An expenditure tracking system or also known as Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) are a key ingredient in promoting social accountability in the public sector. According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York (2005), the system involves tracing the flow of public resources for the provision of public goods or services from origin to destination. It can help to detect bottlenecks, inefficiencies and/or corruption in the transfer of public goods and resources and is a key tool for the government and CSO to guard against corruption and work towards ensuring transparent, accountable and effective public financial management. According to (Sundet, 2004), PETS have been widely recognized as one of the few mechanisms that can have a positive impact on reducing corruption in public service delivery in poor countries with weak systems of governance. High rates of leakage of public expenditure have severe consequences for public service delivery performance.

Therefore, PETS have been developed to improve governance by assessing performance and measuring corruption in public service delivery through the production of micro-level data in weak institutional contexts where accounting, monitoring and reporting procedures are often absent (Gauthier, 2006). (Sundet,2004), further highlights that by providing exact information about how many of the resources allocated to public service provision actually reach the users, PETS provide important input for informing citizens about their rights and entitlements to public services. Furthermore, the testimony of citizens regarding the services they have

actually received constitutes an important source of information in the surveys when compared with more ordinary revision reports.

However the use of this mechanism has not been effective in most urban Councils as they is less consultation done by the local authorities in the implementation of the budget cycle. The local authorities ensure that people are less aware as possible of the equipment they would want to purchase thus rendering the expenditure tracking system less effective.

2.6.4 Citizen Report Card /Charter

The report card method is a survey that directly aims to obtain feedback from users of public services by asking citizens to rate the providers (or provision) of public services, such as water authorities, primary schools or municipal councils. It then compiles the data from service users' perceptions, collected during a random sample survey, into publicly released concise reports called report cards. Citizen report cards were pioneered in Bangalore, India, in 1994 (repeated in 1999 and 2003) due to the deficient service provision in the city. The report card tool was developed to give service providers systematic feedback from users of public services and consequently put pressure on public officials to deal with complaints.

According to Sundet (2004), Citizen report cards can be effective in situations where respondents are asked to rate a wide range of providers and permit relative rankings to be made, which have proved to be an effective way of providing incentives for improvement. The citizen charter is used to provide the service benchmarks which need to be adopted and assessed in line with service of delivery. The adopted benchmarks should be communicated to citizens using different communication modes. These include preparing a citizen charter detailing all services and the timeframe for compliance which should be displayed on boards in different part of the city, government offices and ward offices, and distributed among citizens. Progressive local authorities that need to promote social accountability should be able to adopt the citizen charter. However most local authorities in developing countries with particular focus on Norton Municipality has not yet fully adopted the use of the citizen charter to foster social accountability. Therefore, the effectiveness of this mechanism has not been realised.

2.6.5 Community Score Cards

According to the World Bank (2004), Community score cards are a community-level tool for exacting local-level accountability that links service providers to the community and facilitates assessments of services in order to negotiate improvements. Community score cards are essential because they are used to facilitate discussions in focus groups to encourage qualitative assessments of projects, processes or service provision. They often begin with collective discussions of service delivery problems and move to the participatory development of action plans, followed up by the assessment of results by using score cards. They provide localized feedback that can aid or trigger immediate action to rectify identified problems, but they do not provide data that can be aggregated on a wider scale of the kind than what citizens' report cards do

Putting in place community score cards is one of the most effective mechanism that can promote social accountability in urban Councils. It is important for local authorities to assess their performance from the service recipient/client point of view. Community score cards should be available at local authorities' offices, halls, sports centres and other private offices. The use of community score cards however is less used in most Councils in Zimbabwe, thus making them a less effective tool in fostering social accountability. They are less used in Zimbabwe because of the following challenges the score cards require a well thought out dissemination strategy so that public agencies take note of citizen feedback and take the required action to correct weaknesses. In addition, in locations where there is not much technical capacity community cards may be difficult to design and implement and finally If there is an error in sampling, the quality of service may not be reflected in the survey results and application of the community cards is worsened by the fact that most people are not even aware that such mechanisms exist thus making the practice of the mechanism less effective.

2.6.6 Citizen Complain Structure

This mechanism involves citizens engaging in collecting evidence-based information that is used to expose or deter the corruption or mismanagement of public funds. Putting in place a resident's complaints structure is a critical mechanism that promote social accountability. Most local authorities make use of customer suggestion boxes that will be available at Council offices. Cavili (2004), highlights that establishing a centralised citizen grievance redresser system is a very effective mechanism to improve service delivery. All citizens should be able to lodge complaints about any local service and the complaint should be

responded to in an agreed time period, as specified in the citizen charter. The complaints structure should always be in apposition to respond to the complaints of residents efficiently and effectively. In most local authorities the use of the suggestion or complaints box has been effective and has to a larger extent shown the desire by the local authorities to foster social accountability.

2.6.7 Phone-In Session

Social accountability can be promoted through conducting periodic live phone in sessions either on radio or television. This gives the residents to get the opportunity to talk to their representative's directly in a far much easier way than going to their offices to have a meeting. However, a key weak characteristic of this mechanism is that some phone in sessions have tended to be mere talk shows whereby what the officials say and what is done on the ground are worlds apart.

2.6.8 Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalism play a key role as a watchdog to the actions that are taken by municipal officials. Investigative should be there as an oversight to see whether social accountability is being promoted. For this to be effective it should not rely only on professional journalists but everyone should be a citizen journalist who should act as a watchdog for the actions taken by the municipality.

In the final analysis it can be said that a number of social accountability initiatives collect, digest and repackage information in such a way that it is accessible and useful to citizens or the media and can be used to hold governments to account. Civil society has an important role as an information intermediary or bridge between the government and people, empowering them with the data with which they can use to exercise their rights. Information and communication technology is not the central part of the process, but it can empower citizens in new ways with the information needed to engage in existing processes. Therefore, it is important to see social accountability mechanisms and the tools they use, such as communication technology as one important element in the relationships between citizens and their governments.

2.7 The Promotion and Practice of Social Accountability in Urban Town Councils

Social Accountability has emerged as a critical component of development and good governance in recent years. The demand for greater transparency, participation and empowerment of communities from service providers like urban Councils has not been greater like it is in contemporary times. The concept and practice of social accountability has evolved significantly over the years. In contemporary times social accountability involves the direct engagement of citizens with institutions of the state. This is critical in development because it is a process that attempts to influence policies and monitor functions of public institutions like urban Councils. The emphasis is now on influencing the policies and monitoring operations either by being a part of the state apparatus (Porto Alegre, Brazil) or at least working very closely with it. Posner (2007), observes that social accountability is a practice that is implemented in different ways according to different contexts. This therefore assists in the shaping of mechanisms and tools which can be used by urban Councils to tailor make responses needed for a specific operating environment. Good Governance is closely linked to social accountability and this can be best practised at a local government level. The promotion and practice of social accountability in urban Councils shall therefore be analysed in detail and assist this research to see the extent to which it can lead to improvement in local government service delivery with particular focus on Norton Town Council.

The practice of social accountability in developing countries has proved to be inadequate. This is supported by Goetz et al (2001) who highlights that in developing countries some of the most commonly encountered shortcomings in conventional social accountability include secrecy in auditing, the extended time delays between elections, ineffective policy reviews in legislatures, excessive delays in courts, and inadequate sanctions for failure to apply administrative rules or respect standards. These shortcomings have created pressure for establishing better channels for vertical information flows and new accountability relationships between the state and citizens. Posani (2009), observes that to most people in the developing countries, the state institutions and other public institutions like town Councils appear to be distant, unaccountable and corrupt.

There is a growing perception by people even in Zimbabwe that all the public institutions especially local Councils are so corrupt. The level of corruption and unaccountability has become so entrenched and institutionalised to the extent that it has become like a normal thing. This has therefore slowly eroded the whole practice of social accountability at local

level. Posani (2009), further highlights that it is at the urban Council level where greater social accountability should be practiced and it is also at this stage that should provide the starting point or breeding ground for social accountability. If social accountability is not practiced at this stage it becomes complicated for it to be practiced at central government level because at this stage, the general perception is that the state institutions are either not accountable to anyone or accountable only to the politically connected and powerful. This view and evidence is based on concerns of corruption and lack of responsiveness to the needs of the poor that is often exhibited by public institutions in developing countries.

2.8 The Role Played By Elected and Non-Elected Urban Council Officials in Promoting Social Accountability

Goetz (2001) notes that the participation by ordinary citizens, especially the poor, in determining the contours of policy are almost absent especially in urban Councils. Resultantly service delivery by urban Councils in Zimbabwe remains very poor because of the absence of greater practical social accountability by the citizens. In some instances as observed by Brown et al (2008), the citizens themselves are not even aware of their rights to participate in decision making and policy formulation processes brought about by their local authorities. He notes that in most developing countries the voice of the citizen has been silenced by fear or general lack of awareness and this has resulted in passive participation of the citizen in urban Council policy formulation.

The relationship between public officials and the ordinary citizen has been weakened to the extent that those in public officers feel that they do not owe their positions to anyone. This has been more prevalent among those officials that are not elected. This argument is further enlightened by the Centre for Governance and Accountability (2012) which states that many public servants, who are largely responsible for implementation of various policies and schemes, do not even have to face elections. This absolves them of any kind of accountability, which underscores the need for devising new ways and mechanisms to exact accountability from elected public officials and non-elected public servants. This kind of scenario has been prevalent in most urban Councils in Zimbabwe including NTC where unelected officials who are engrossed in corrupt activities knowing fully well that the blame is often passed to the elected officials. This kind of scenario has often created tensions between officials within the Council and ultimately compromised service delivery.

2.8.1 Elected Officials

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- Identifying and prioritising the needs of communities living within the area of jurisdiction.
- Developing strategies and programmes to address the needs taking into account on financial and economic implications of the desired services.
- Determining the methods or mechanisms for delivering services.
- Developing criteria for and evaluating performance in service delivery.
- Put into consideration the participation of external stakeholders especially when the Local Authority does not have adequate resources to partake in service delivery (Joseph 2012)

In light of the above it can therefore be alluded that the contribution of the elected officials towards provision of service delivery is very essential as they will furnish substantially required initiatives to managerial transformation pushing for new attitudes such as implementing new programmes

According to Joseph (2012) involvement by elected officials i.e. Councillors at local authorities is of the utmost importance because they will provide much needed leadership for

administrative transformation, promoting new attitudes and approaches and managing the implementation of programmes and policies that will improve service delivery .He further on elucidates that councillors are the representatives of the people and owe their primary loyalty to those who voted for them .This maybe in their personal capacity and/or because of their political affiliation if they are ward Councillors and/or as members of a particular party if they are elected from their party lists .Whatever the case it is the duty of Councillors to act at all times in the best interests of the residents and the local authority as a whole, Joseph (2012). Therefore, it is from the elected officials that grater practice of social accountability should be exhibited. However, Centre for Governance and Accountability (2012) argue that social accountability should come from all officials whether they are elected or non-elected. The centre further notes that accountability of any public official whether elected or unelected is the cornerstone of a good government and a prerequisite for effective democracy. This is fundamentally important because it leads to improved development outcomes through improved public service delivery and through a more responsive, sensitive and informed policy design. Increased accountability results in improved governance and development effectiveness, which has implications for empowerment of the people, especially the poor and marginalised sections of society.

2.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter touched on the definition of key terms to be used in this research. The definitions mostly touched on accountability in general and what social accountability entails. The concept of social accountability was analysed in the conceptual framework where it examined in the context of framework of relationships. In this framework the relationship that exists between policy makers, service providers and citizens in promoting social accountability was analysed. The theoretical framework analysed the institutional theory which play a key role in the management of public institutions like Norton Town Council. In addition, the accountability framework also provided the different routes that can be taken to promote social accountability.Literature review touched on the application of social accountability and the mechanisms that govern social accountability like periodic election and community report cards among others. Review of literature also touched on the practice and promotion of social accountability in urban councils and the role that elected and non-elected officials were playing in promoting social accountability.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the research methodology that was used in this study. The chapter looks into the philosophical research approaches that were used followed by an analysis of the study design, study population and study settings. Research methods that were used in collecting data shall also be presented. Sampling strategies that were used in this research like convenience sampling, snowball sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling shall be analysed together with other data collecting tools like interviews and questionnaires. Data analysis presentation and analysis and procedures shall be critically examined in the chapter. Challenges that were encountered during the process of collecting data shall be brought out in this chapter. Lastly, the chapter focused on the ethical contemplations that should be considered during the course of the research.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is explained by Saunders et al (2007) as a process which is comprised of data collection, analysis and interpretation proposed by a particular research. In addition, it can be said that a research design brings out the strategies that are used to guide a particular research. This research adopted two research designs which are descriptive and explanatory research. These descriptive designs played a pivotal role to the outcome of this research because they enabled this research to bring out the extent to which social accountability was being nurtured at Norton Town Council. The explanatory research design played a key role in bringing out the various determinants that were fostering or hindering the nurturing of social accountability at NTC. Cohen and Manion (1991) note that, the significance of a research design is that it reduces the risk of collecting irrelevant information.

Descriptive research analysis provided this research with an accurate description of observations that were found in the research. Descriptive research was important to the outcome of this study because it added knowledge on the extent to which social accountability was being nurtured at NTC. It also managed to bring out the perceptions that residents of Norton had towards their local authority. Therefore, descriptive research analysis was essential as it managed to provoke the 'why' questions of explanatory research. For

example, why is the NTC finding it difficult to nurture and adopt social accountability practices.

These kind of questions are asked against the background of corrupt tendencies that have plagued the town Council over the past few years. Therefore, if social accountability is being nurtured we ask 'Why is this happening?' But before asking 'why?' we must be sure about the factors that are influencing the nurturing of social accountability at NTC and in Zimbabwe as a whole. Descriptive design will be useful in the application the theory that was adopted for this research.

3.2 Research Approach

Kvale (1996) postulates that qualitative as a methodological approach is sensitive to human circumstances and includes emphatic dialogue with participants. Creswell (2009) explains a research paradigm as plans and processes for research that span the result from wide assumptions to rather detailed methods of data collection and analysis. Creswell (2009), further outlines three research paradigms which is qualitative, quantitative and mixed method. Qualitative method makes use of questions which gather information through interviews which can later be analyzed. Quantitative on the other hand test objectives theories through examination of relationships that exist amongst variables. This research used the mixed/triangulation method type which integrates both qualitative and quantitative.

3.3 Triangulation Analysis

Mixing the two research methods played an instrumental role in gathering more accurate information about the research under study. Triangulation also ensured that the research results were easy to understand and decode. Creswell (2009), brings out the importance of mixing the two research methods when he notes that, the different types of data needed for research are most easily understood using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Moreover, mixing both qualitative and quantitative data analysis enabled the research to develop analytically the theoretical concepts that were used in the research and precisely evaluated and analyzed the theories to come up with a fair conclusion. Ultimately triangulation led to a much more well-rounded understanding of the research topic and research question as data was collected accurately in line with the objectives of the research.

3.3.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis was used in this research so as to test objective theories and the relationship that exists between the application of social accountability by NTC and the perceptions that residents have towards the town Council in managing the affairs of the Council. Therefore, quantitative analysis captured the perceptions that residents have towards their Council. This enabled the research to have an accurate and precision measurement of the extent to which social accountability was being nurtured at NTC. In light of this quantitative analysis brought out the variables of the research which were nurturing of social accountability at NTC and the perceptions of residents and other stakeholders to the operations of NTC in terms of service delivery.

The quantitative H1 hypothesis managed to bring out the core relationship that exists between the variables. The analysis found out that in most cases there is no special cordial relationship that exists between the residents and the town Council. The relationship sometimes only exists when it comes to the payment of rates or other services that need money. In cases which do not need money the town Council does not engage the residents much. In the event that residents are invited to budget review meetings their opinions are not taken into consideration. Therefore, the meetings are conducted as a mere formality. In terms of testing the relationship that exists between the residents and NTC, the quantitative hypothesis of relationships was not existent to a greater extent.

Using quantitative analysis the research sought to measure whether the variables the variable of nurturing social accountability had an impact towards the overall performance of NTC. The hypothesis H2 therefore states that if the level of social accountability either declines or raises it can have negative or positive effect on the overall performance of NTC. This can have an indirect or direct effect on the residents and other stakeholders like the government. Thus, this brings out an intertwined correlation of the variables of this research. Therefore, in that context the H2 hypothesis is accepted.

3.3.2 Qualitative Analysis

A qualitative analysis approach deals with the way people interpret data, through their experiences and patterns of behaviour. According to Denscombe (2002), qualitative research is the approach of collecting and analysing data and this distinguishes it from the quantitative analysis method. In qualitative the reality constantly changes and can be known only indirectly, through the interpretations of people. Therefore, qualitative analysis was pivotal in

this research as it led to the acceptance and the possibility that there are multiple versions of reality to the research that was under study. In light of this the research used qualitative analysis to decode the feelings and perceptions of Norton residents towards the service delivery of their Council. Qualitative analysis ensured a thorough comparative analysis of the extent to which social accountability was being nurtured at NTC and the perceptions that residents had on the quality of service delivery by the town Council.

3.4 Research Population

A good sample must possess all the characteristics of the population from which it has been drawn hence about 33% of the population will be representative, Haralambos and Holdermans (1994). The sample population is 30%. The research population in this research comprises of residents in Norton and NTC officials. As illustrated in the table below;-

Category of respondents	Sample population	Sampling techniques
Rate payers	10	Simple Random, Convenience
Business communities	10	Purposive
Residents association	5	Purposive
Councillors	5	Purposive
Top managers	5	Purposive
Employees	15	Purposive, Convenience
Total	50	

3.5 Sample Size

A sample is a selected small group from the research population whose responses can be said to represent the whole population. A population sample is critical when conducting research because it is almost always impossible to study the entire population that you are interested in. As a result, researchers use samples as a way to gather data. Population sample is a smaller group which is a true representation of the characteristics of the studied population (Catherine, 2002). Therefore, a sample is a subset of the population being studied. It represents the larger population and is used to draw inferences about that population. It is a research technique widely used in the social sciences as a way to gather information about a population without having to measure the entire population. Information was collected from

authorities that are responsible in the management of service delivery at NTC and residents of Norton. In obtaining that information the research shall use the following sampling techniques simple random sampling, convenience sampling and purposive sampling.

3.5.1 Purposive Sampling

Babbie (1990) selecting a sample on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research. The reason it is also called judgemental sampling is due to the fact that the researcher had to select respondents basing on their characteristics. For instance, in this research the researcher is interested in studying about how social accountability is being nurtured at NTC. Purposive sampling was used in gathering information from council employees, councillors and the business community. The officials that captured using this sampling technique were interviewed and this enabled the researcher to have first-hand information on the strategies that were being effected to nurture social accountability at NTC and the challenges that were being encountered to achieve that. The sample size for purposive sampling was not fixed as supported by Calisto (2009) who notes that, sample sizes, may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, and the sample size depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. Thus the sampling size changed in relation to the availability of the targeted population.

3.5.2 Simple Random Sampling

It postulates that every individual has an equal chance to be selected to partake in the research regardless of sex, race, gender or political affiliation. The researcher used simple random sampling to select residents in Norton. The sampling technique is effective due to the fact that it was easy to execute and it saved time. More so, a lot of information will be generated due to the fact that the residents have knowledge on what is transpiring in their town.

3.5.3 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is a qualitative non-probability sampling technique. The respondents that are incorporated in this technique are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The sampling technique mostly relies on chance encounters. The sampling method shall be used in sampling residents of Norton. The sampling technique as used in conjunction with other techniques on the targeted population so as to reach the sample target of residents. Residents who were captured by this sampling technique were interviewed and administered with questionnaires

3.6 Data Presentation and Analysis Procedures

Data presentation and analysis is a process of preparing data for the purpose of analysis and making reading to the larger meaning of data. The research used a descriptive research approach in its analysis of data gathered. The information gathered shall be presented in tables, bar graphs and pie charts. This shall enable easier comparative analysis of the information gathered. It shall enable the research to understand the effect and extent the extent to which social accountability is being nurtured at NTC.

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis Mode

Braun (2006), notes that the thematic analysis mode emphasizes in pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data gathered. He further notes that this mode interprets various aspects of the research topic. The themes in this case become the categories of analysis. Thematic analysis is performed through the process of coding in six phases to create established, meaningful patterns. These phases are: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Braun (2006). This research used the following variables nurturing, social accountability and perceptions as the themes for analysis.

This enabled the research to identify whether there was any co-occurrence between the themes and also enabled the research to graphically display relationships between different themes. In addition, thematic analysis played a pivotal role in the identification of linkages between the themes and the grounded theories used in this research. Most importantly thematic analysis as observed by Guest (2012) is also related to phenomenology in that it focuses on the human experience subjectively. This approach emphasizes the participants' perceptions, feelings and experiences as the paramount object of study. This allowed the respondents to discuss the topic in their own words, free of constraints from fixed-response questions found in the statistical analysis mode.

3.7 Research Instruments

A research instrument is a tool used to collect data desired to find solutions to the problem under study. The research study instruments were selected with the prerequisite demands research design. In this study interviews and questionnaires were used as a research instrument.

3.7.1 Sources of Data and Information

The research employed both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary information was derived from the ground through various data collection methods that are explained in the sections that follow data collection methods. Secondary information entails the use of already existing information to answer research questions, the researcher does not collect the original data. Such data are cheaper and more quickly obtainable than the primary data and also may be available when primary data cannot be obtained at all.

3.7.1.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data is economical, it saves time and provides basis for comparison for data that is collected by the researcher. Instead information that is part of the archival records was used to answer research questions such as Norton Town Council Strategic Plan.

3.7.1.1.1 Instruments Used For Secondary Data Collection:

3.7.1.1.1.1 Internet based research

Data on the general aspects of accountability some information was sourced via desktop research. With technological advancements, the internet proved to be a one-stop source of diverse and informative data. The internet provided a rich store of information. The researcher, through using the internet facility, found a variety of data related to the research topic. However, the internet as a source of information, caused some problems for the researcher. Firstly, the access to some relevant and up to date information proved to be challenging and almost impossible for the researcher as it required one to be a member of the publishing association or company. Secondly, there was need for payment online to get access to documents, which were beyond the capacity of the researcher. Thirdly, internet speed was slow in most instances because of congestion. As a result, additional time was spent on the internet than would actually be necessary, at greater cost and inconvenience. Fourthly, because of the information overload on the internet, some of the information obtained was irrelevant to the study which may made the method expensive for the researcher.

3.7.1.1.1.2 Published and Unpublished articles, journals and textbooks

A significant amount of information in the literature review of the project were extracted from published and unpublished articles e.g. newspapers etc., pamphlets, company journals,

and annual reports. These were utilized because of the associated advantages including simplicity and ease of understanding given the fact that they are presented in simple English. More importantly, journals and textbooks provided valuable information on the research subject with reference to practical examples and previous scholarly arguments in significant instances. Journals and textbooks are a reliable source of information and may give room for comparison since there are numerous writers on the issue.

Undoubtedly, there were drawbacks associated with the use of these published and unpublished articles, journals, textbooks and online articles. The major issue of concern was that some of the data contained in these sources were of questionable authenticity because it did not originate from well known, reputable sources. Moreover, analysis of the documents was time consuming because some of the documents had much detail. In addition data from these sources did not address the real and exact problem that is being researched. For example some materials were outdated thus they did not help much in giving current information.

3.7.2 Data Collection Methods

The researcher employed interviews and questionnaires to collect and gather data on the subject under study.

3.7.2.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires shall be employed in this research. Questionnaires shall be served to the following respondent's representatives of rate payers, business communities, residents association, Councillors and lastly Council officials at NTC. Cooper and Schindler (2008) pointed that a questionnaire is a set of questions for collecting information from people by asking predesigned questions. The researcher's questionnaires were easy to administer to the targeted group and the format seemed to be familiar to the respondents hence they were relatively easy to analyse. In addition the researcher managed to capture sensitive topics which were brought about on the table by the respondents especially the residents who are receiving the services from the Council. The strength of using questionnaires as a research instrument are that questionnaires are cheap to administer with low travel and convenience costs, provide anonymity, responses can be highly structured and easily coded, representatives sample possible and large number of respondents are possible.

3.7.2.2 Key Informant Interviews

According to Kuman (1999) an interview is regarded as a direct conversation between the interviewer and the respondent in a suitable environment. Interviews can be conducted in a number of ways which include face to face, by telephone or via the internet. The researcher therefore will have a one on one interview with the targeted people who include the elected officials and Council management. According to Farrant (2009) an interview is a dialogue based on mutual interest and trust between the researcher and the researched so as to gain information about attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, knowledge, experiences and understanding of the subject in question. It can be formal or informal. Interviews differ from ordinary conversations.

The researcher also used face to face interviews to collect data on the subject in question. The researcher shall utilise the interview technique since it involves up close and personal contact and all things considered, respondents could bear the cost of much time and space to give profundity accordingly. This strategy will be reasonable as it gave the interviewer individual contact with the interviewees. Neuman (1997) battles that up close and personal meetings have the most astounding reaction rates and allow longest polls accordingly in light of the above decision the scientist figured out how to accomplish a high reaction rate. However, this method had the cost of time consuming in terms of setting up, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, and feedback. The reasons why the researcher chose interviews as research instrument are easy correction of speech, development of relationship, selection of suitable candidate, less costly, saves time and flexible.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical matters are fundamental to take into consideration while doing a study research. Cooper (2008) characterized ethics as the standards or principles of conduct which guide moral decisions about the conduct or behaviour and our associations with other people. For data to be collected the researcher sought an ethical clearance from Midlands State University and NTC so as to carry out the research. Due respect was upheld towards participants while carrying out this research study. The researcher clarified the motivation behind the study to the participants and clearly told them taking part was purely by choice and not a must. The researcher also put into consideration that there was going to be some respondents who wanted to remain anonymous and their wishes shall be respected. Therefore in the light of this some names were not included in the questionnaires as well as in the research without the

green light from the participants. In some instance where names were used the names that were used were not real so as to protect the identities of the participants.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at research approach, research design, targeted population, sampling procedures, population sample sizes, research instruments, sources of data and data analysis procedures and modes and finally ethical considerations that were adopted in this research. Descriptive research design as adopted as it enabled the research to measure the extent to which social accountability as being nurtured at NTC. It also provoked the why questions on certain aspects that were being done at NTC. Triangulation analysis was used in the research. The use of triangulation was pivotal as it ensured that the research results were easy to understand and decode. The quantitative analysis aspect came into play in measuring the extent to which the different variables were interlinking with each other. Qualitative analysis dealt with the different views and opinions in which people interpreted data. The target population for the research included residents, councillors, council employees, business community and representatives of residents associations. Primary data was captured from 50 respondents who were interviewed and administered with questionnaires. The respondents were selected using sampling techniques like purposive, simple random and convenience. Secondary Data was obtained from internet sources and published/unpublished articles and journals. Thematic analysis mode was used in the research since it captures human experiences and their opinions on the research under study. Thematic analysis mode also enabled the research to link and analyse the literature reviewed, research questions and the various theories that were adopted in the research. Research ethics were followed and these included voluntary participation and withdrawal of participants and the right by the participants not to disclose their names during the course of the research.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter gave a detailed synopsis of how data for the research was to be gathered. This chapter presents an analysis and interprets the collected data. The discussion compares the results obtained with the literature review. The findings are analyzed, presented and interpreted in the confines of the research objective and research questions. The findings were postulated by respondents under this study by aid of to the research interviews and questionnaires which were conducted by the researcher.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics.

The participants of the research were 50. These were drawn from residents and council officials. 35 residents from Norton who were composed of 20 Females and 15 males participated in the research. The remaining respondents were drawn from Norton Town Council.

4.2 Response Rate

Table 1

Study Area	Targeted population	Target	Response	Percentage
Norton	Residents	35	35	100%
Norton	Council Officials	10	7	70%
Norton	Councillors	5	3	60%
Total		50	45	90%

Source: Field Data

The table above gives a clear illustration of the response rate. Bryman and Bell, (2007), assert, response rate as the percentage of a sample that does not agree to participate in a study. Generically the response rate is perceived as an essential indicator of the research quality, (Rea and Parker, 2007). Wheat, (2004), infers, on average, the response rate of a research study should be in the 50 to 70 % range and further asserts that the concepts and

methods applied to gather data are highly credible and a vivid impression of occurrences on the ground. The research managed to get a 90% response rate which was a fairly high response rate and therefore portrays varied opinions from the respondents and thus a fair representation.

4.3 Results

The results are presented below in relation to the objectives and research questions of the study. Major issues that arose as the research unfolded and the data captured as presented below.

- To establish measures put in place by NTC to promote social accountability.
- To examine the effectiveness of measures put in place by NTC to promote social accountability.
- To identify key factors that contribute to the success and failure of measures put in place to promote social accountability at NTC.

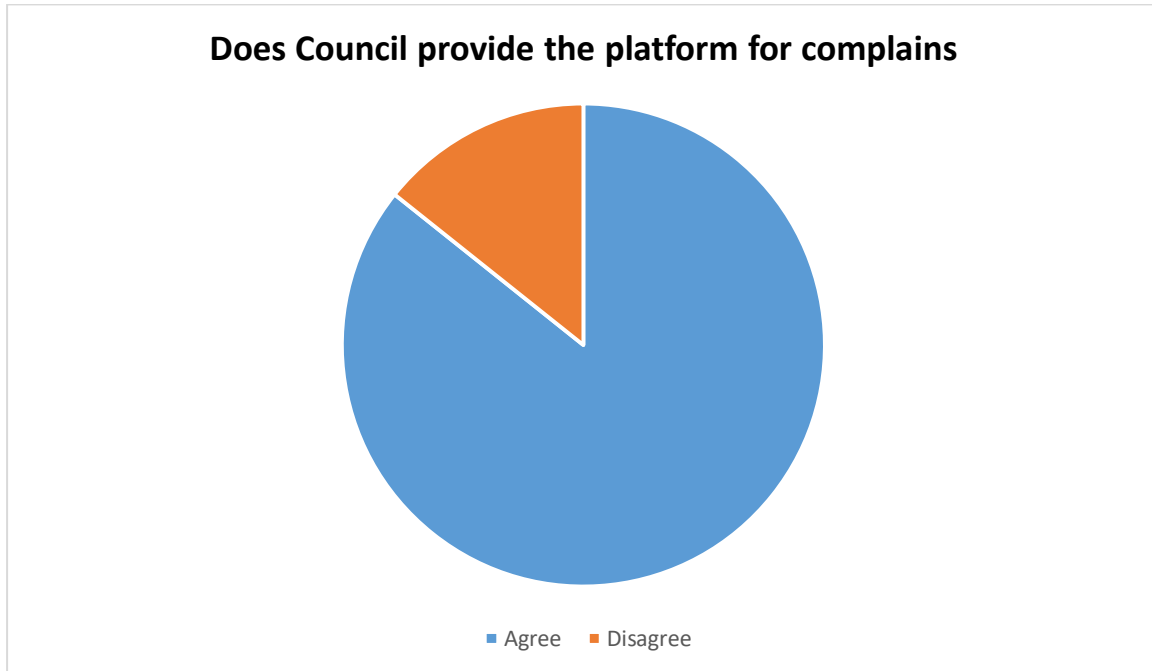
4.3.1 To establish and examine the effectiveness of measures put in place by NTC to promote social accountability.

Over the years issues of accountability have also fallen below the required standards as such there has been a period of conflict and disengagement between Councils and communities (BUPRA, BCC and Chatiza, 2014). NTC has over the years strived to ensure that social accountability is nurtured in its day to day operations. There was great consensus among key informants that were interviewed at NTC that service delivery in the town had fallen below acceptable standards. The economic and political challenges that have plagued the nation over the past two decades have been a major contributing factor to the rapid decline in the nurturing of social accountability at the town council.

4.3.1.1 Mechanisms That Promote Social Accountability

4.3.1.1.1 Complains Structure

Figure 1



Source: Field Data

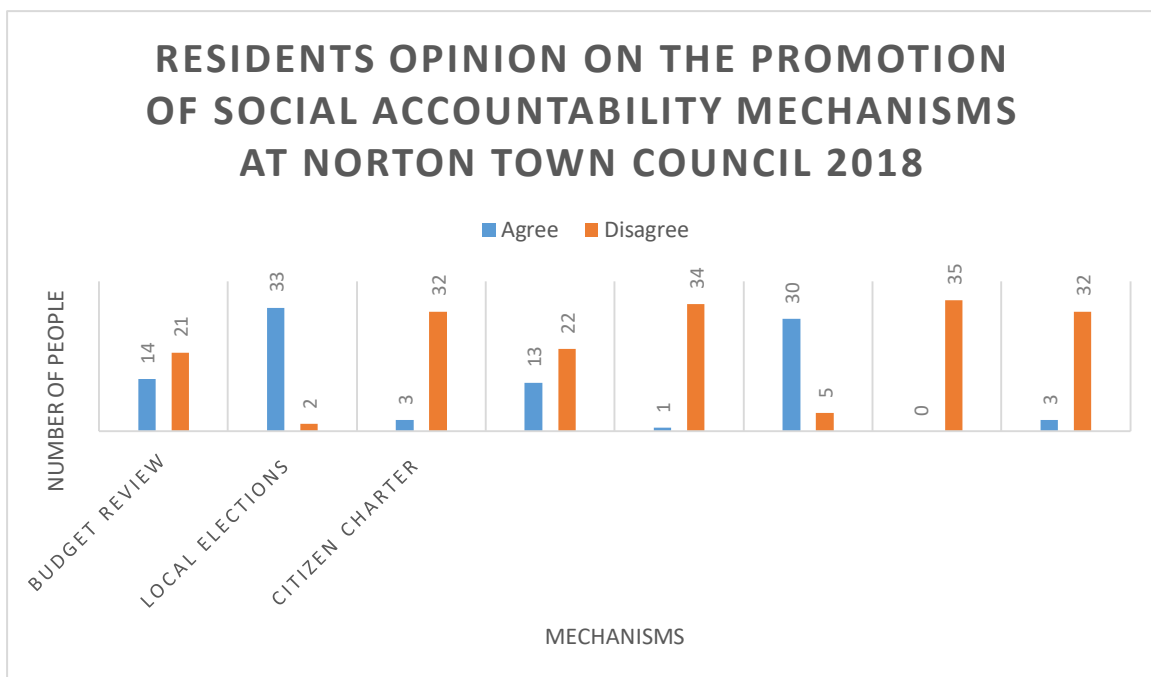
The pie chart below shows the results of the survey. The Council has put measure in which residents can lodge complains, conduct budget consultation meetings among others in a bid to promote social accountability at the Town Council. A questionnaire survey to assess whether the Council was providing residents with the platform to lodge complains was therefore conducted with 35 residents who were selected using convenience sampling techniques.

According to the results above 30 out of the 35 residents (86%) who agreed with the view that the Council had platforms which they raised their complains based their opinion on the fact that there were customer/residents suggestions boxes that are available at Council offices. However all the respondents noted that they had never utilised the facility as they are supposed to do. One respondent highlighted that:

'....though the facility to raise our concerns is available I have never utilised the facility as I believe that it is a waste of time since the council does not attend to many of our concerns'

Therefore, against this backdrop it can be said that the facility for raising concerns is just there as a formality as council is not using the facility to promote social accountability. The remaining respondents 14% noted that they had never heard of any platform that set up by the Council to hear the complaints of residents. This goes against the views of Cavili (2004), who stated that establishing a centralised citizen grievance redresser system is a very effective mechanism to improve service delivery and promote social accountability. He further notes that all citizens should be able to lodge complaints about any local service and the complaint should be responded to in an agreed time period, as specified in the citizen charter. The complaints structure should always be in a position to respond to the complaints of residents efficiently and effectively. In that light it can be said that the complaints structure at NTC is there but not operating to the prescribed standards that ensure the promotion of social accountability.

Figure 2



Source Field Data

The bar graph above shows the results of the survey. NTC has over the years adopted several mechanisms that nurture social accountability. The performance of the council was measured against the following social accountability mechanisms: budget reviews, periodic elections, expenditure tracking systems, citizen charter, citizen complain structure, community score cards, phone in session and investigative journalism. Residents were asked if the council was

putting into effective use the aforementioned social accountability mechanisms. 35 residents who were selected using simple random and convenience sampling techniques participated in the questionnaire survey.

4.3.1.1.2 Budget Review

Participatory budgeting is a process through which citizens participate directly in the different phases of budgetary formulation and decision-making and the monitoring of budgetary execution. 21 residents representing (60%) of the total respondents indicated that budget review meetings that were conducted by Council on an annual basis were being done as per tradition. However, to a lesser extent these meetings were fostering social accountability since the outcome of the final budget was different from what the council and the residents would have agreed. Residents indicated that most of the ideas they shared during these meetings were never taken into consideration by the Council. One resident highlighted that:

‘ what we say at the budget meetings and what is finally presented by the council are worlds apart therefore we do not trust the Council and we are now reluctant to participate in these meetings since there is no change that comes..... ’

As outlined in the bar graph above 14 residents representing (40%) agreed with the view that budget review meetings were at least fostering accountability since the Council was taking time to consult them on this important aspect. They noted that some of their views and considerations were at one point taken note of thus they agreed that this was an effective mechanisms that nurtured social accountability. This is supported by the observations of (Ramakumar 2008) who states that the participation of residents at all stages of a budget from the development, implementation, review and audit of the budget is critical as it fosters greater social accountability.

4.3.1.1.3 Local Elections

Research findings revealed that the majority of 34 residents representing (94%) of the target population agreed that elections were an effective way of promoting social accountability at NTC. Elections are fundamental to democratic governance systems and the primary means for citizens to hold their governments to account and choose the ones that they think will meet their needs, (Makumbe 2008). Residents in Norton indicated that having periodic elections was a good way that ensured that councillors always adhered to the demands of the residents. However, residents noted that these elected officials only surfaced when they were elections

that were due and disappeared afterwards. Nevertheless despite this obvious set back is a common characteristic amongst politicians worldwide. The 6% of the residents that disagreed with the view that elections were an effective mechanism used for promoting social accountability argued that elections in Zimbabwe were generally not free and fair thus this also meant that the leadership that was being chosen at local Town Council level did not reflect the will of the majority.

In addition respondents noted that it was important to have all officials who worked at NTC to be elected. They based their argument on the fact that non-elected officials were the one who mostly were involved in corrupt activities and were not promoting social accountability. The relationship between public officials and the ordinary citizen in Norton has been weakened to the extent that those in public officers feel that they do not owe their positions to anyone. This has been more prevalent among those officials that are not elected. This argument is further enlightened by the Centre for Governance and Accountability (2012) which states that many public servants, who are largely responsible for implementation of various policies and schemes, do not even have to face elections. This absolves them of any kind of accountability, which underscores the need for devising new ways and mechanisms to exact accountability from elected public officials and non-elected public servants. This kind of scenario has been prevalent in most urban Councils in Zimbabwe. At NTC research finding revealed that unelected officials were engrossed in corrupt activities knowing fully well that the blame is often passed to the elected officials. This kind of scenario has often created tensions between officials within the Council and ultimately compromised service delivery.

Elected officials or ward councillors are the representatives of the people within their jurisdiction and owe their primary loyalty to those voted for them for the Councillor post. These officials are therefore deemed more accountable for their work than non-elected officials. The elected officials are deemed policy makers hence the policies should tally with the interests of the residents. However, it is also the duty of the elected officials to establish cordial relations between the residents and the local authority or the unelected officials since they are the ones that work on the ground with the people. Elected officials therefore can be classified as middle men that stand between the residents and the Council management. They ensure that social accountability is promoted and enhanced at all levels and with each activity. This can be achieved through communicating with the residents about the situation

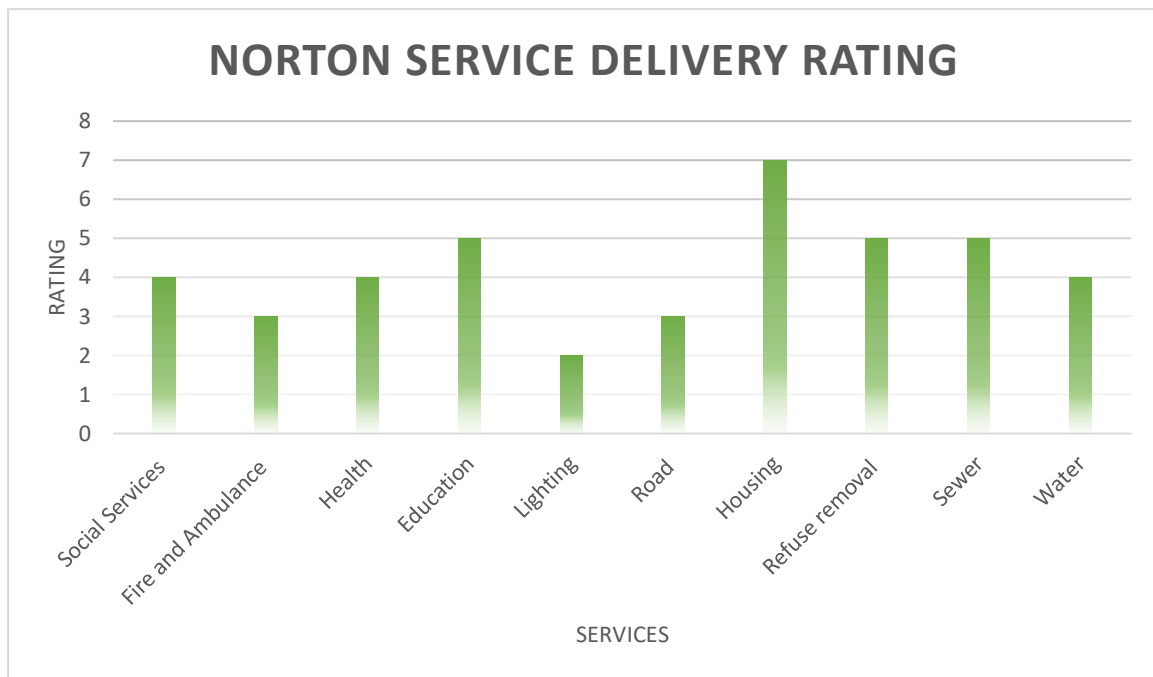
at stake especially when the local authority is facing challenges in providing effective and efficient services to the clients. Joseph (2012), therefore postulates that the greater burden of nurturing social accountability lies with the elected officials.

For social accountability to be effective there is need for periodic local government elections to be conducted. Elections are important because they create an enabling environment which gives citizens the legal rights to participate in electing representatives they like and hold the local government accountable for their actions. Periodic elections are essential as they ensure leadership renewal which brings with it fresh ideas. In addition, those that are elected are obliged to ensure that they meet the demands of those that elected them thus inevitably promoting social accountability.

4.3.1.1.4 Citizen Charter/Report card

According to Sundet (2004), Citizen report cards can be effective in situations where respondents are asked to rate a wide range of providers and permit relative rankings to be made, which have proved to be an effective way of providing incentives for improvement. The citizen charter is used to provide the service benchmarks which need to be adopted and assessed in line with service of delivery. According to the bar graph above 32 residents representing (94%) of the total respondents highlighted that they were not even aware that such initiative like report cards existed. Respondents highlighted that the Town Council had never designed such cards that enabled them to give feedback on the performance of the local authority. On that note the researcher created a report card survey that sought to get feedback from the residents about the service delivery they were receiving from the town council. Service delivery was measured against the following, social services, fire and ambulance, health services, education services, lighting services, road services, housing services, refuse removal, sewer services and water services. Residents were asked to rate the service delivery that was being given by the Council. A scale of 1 to 10 was developed on which 1 was very poor and 10 was excellent. The graph below shows the results of the survey:

Figure 3



4.3.1.1.5 Community Score Cards

Community score cards function in an almost similar manner as a citizen report card. According to the World Bank (2004), Community score cards are a community-level tool for exacting local-level accountability that links service providers to the community and facilitates assessments of services in order to negotiate improvements. Community score cards are essential because they are used to facilitate discussions in focus groups to encourage qualitative assessments of projects, processes or service provision. According to the Fig. 2 bar graph 34 residents representing (97%) of the targeted respondents did not agree that community score cards were an effective mechanism that was promoting social accountability at NTC. The fact that these were not being fully utilised was an indicator that the Council did not have the method to conduct a self-introspection of its performance. This was playing a major role in the council's inability to nurture social accountability.

These are more or less similar to the aforementioned citizen cards. Community score cards go further because they are used to facilitate discussions in focus groups to encourage qualitative assessments of projects, processes or service provision. They often begin with collective discussions of service delivery problems and move to the participatory development of action plans, followed up by the assessment of results by using score cards

4.3.1.1.6 Phone-In Session

All the residents 100% disagreed with the view that this mechanism was instrumental in promoting social accountability. They noted that a majority of Council officials were not educated thus they were most likely not to put in place social accountability mechanisms like a phone in session.

Social accountability can be promoted through conducting periodic live phone in sessions either on radio or television. This gives the residents to get the opportunity to talk to their representative's directly in a far much easier way than going to their offices to have a meeting. However, a key weak characteristic of this mechanism is that some phone in sessions have tended to be mere talk shows whereby what the officials say and what is done on the ground are worlds apart. In relation to Norton Town Council such kind of phone in sessions have not been existence for a long time thus it has not been effective.

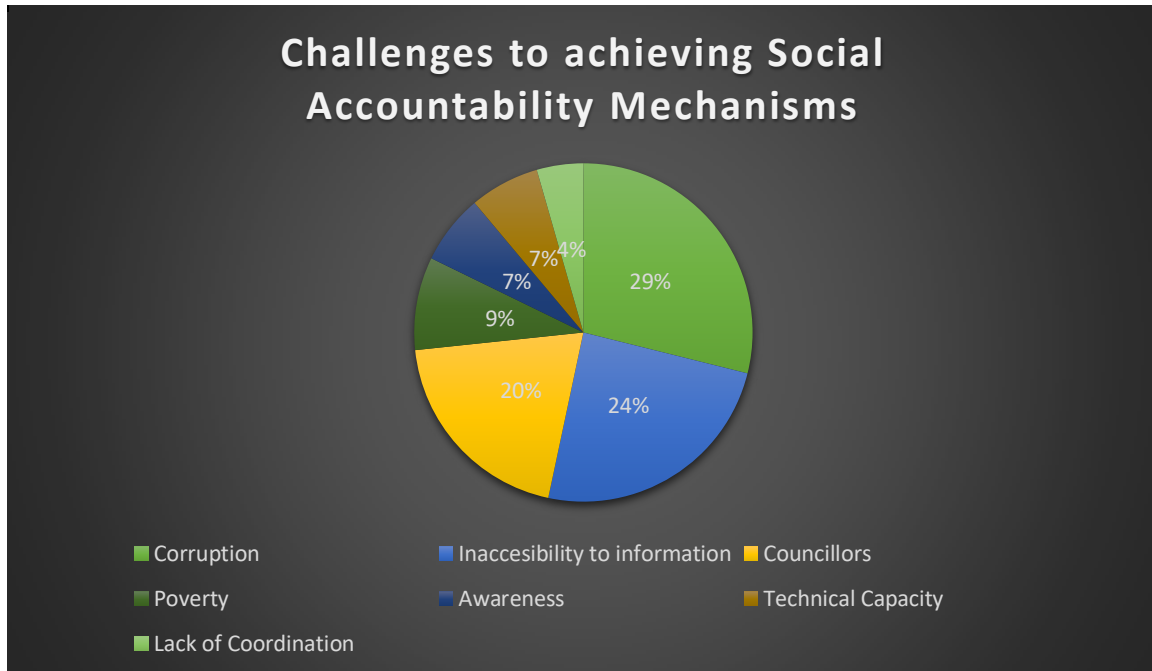
4.3.1.1.7 Investigative Journalism

32 respondents representing (91%) of the targeted population revealed that at most times access to information that concerned Council operations as difficult to gather. Thus against this background the majority of residents correctly indicated that they were in disagreement with the fact that investigative journalism was instrumental in promoting social accountability. The residents highlighted that most of the issues about Norton that were written in newspapers or reported on television or radio did not reflect the real situation on the ground. Most coverage of Norton touched on battles between politicians and overlooked the operations of the town council which they said was performing below standard.

Investigative journalism plays a key role as a watchdog to the actions that are taken by municipal officials. Investigative should be there as an oversight to see whether social accountability is being promoted. For this to be effective it should not rely only on professional journalists but everyone should be a citizen journalist who should act as a watchdog for the actions taken by the Town Council.

4.4 Challenges That Impact on the Effectiveness of Social Accountability Mechanisms

Figure 4



The pie chart below shows the results of the survey: The nurturing of social accountability is affected by a multiplicity of factors at NTC. The factors shall be discussed in detail below. A research survey was conducted with 35 residents and 10 council officials to find out the factors that were hampering the promotion of social accountability in Norton.

4.4.1 Inaccessibility to Information

Research findings pointed out that social accountability can be instrumental at enhancing service delivery if there is a greater civic engagement and most importantly if communities are aware of the importance and meaning of the concept. The pie chart above shows that (24%) of the respondents both at council officials and residents revealed that they were not fully aware of what social accountability was all about. The respondents highlighted that they were aware of what accountability was all about but what social accountability was all about was a mystery to them. Thus it is against this background that it can be said the promotion of social accountability is most likely to be a failure since people are not aware of the concept they should be practicing or looking forward to seeing. Putting in place the different social accountability mechanisms thus become difficult to enforce.

Inaccessibility to information is further worsened by the fact that residents are required to purchase Council minutes which basically was a luxury to many. Members of the Norton Residents Association highlighted that it was very difficult for them to obtain the minutes from Council. This means that residents rely on feedback meetings by the Councillors which do not take place regularly as provided for by the Urban Councils Act. The residents have limited access to information and knowledge of what transpires in the Council hence cannot effectively demand accountability from the council. Information should be readily available to citizens to enable them to monitor revenue sources and usage and how decisions are arrived at and how they respond to the needs of the communities.

4.4.2 Corruption

Research findings as illustrated in the preceding pie chart revealed that the majority of people (29%) in Norton attributed corruption as the major challenge to promoting social accountability mechanisms at the institution. Residents in particular highlighted that there were high levels of corrupt activities being done by officials at NTC but virtually nothing was being done to bring the perpetrators to book. Respondents highlighted that corruption was more prevalent in the implementation of social accountability like elections and budget review meetings. Posani (2009), further highlights that it is at the urban Council level where greater social accountability should be practiced and it is also at this stage that should provide the starting point or breeding ground for social accountability. One respondent highlighted that:

‘the election of council officials is marred by corruption as some councillors are involved in vote buying and rigging antics’

Against this background the nurturing of social accountability thus becomes a challenge at the town Council. Therefore, it can be said that if social accountability is not practiced at this stage it becomes complicated for it to be practiced at central government level because at this stage, the general perception is that the state institutions are either not accountable to anyone or accountable only to the politically connected and powerful. This view and evidence is based on concerns of corruption and lack of responsiveness to the needs of the poor that is often exhibited by public institutions in developing countries. Residents in Norton pointed corruption as the major factor that was hindering the promotion of social accountability at NTC.

4.4.3 Limitations of Councillors to Perform an Oversight Role

Research findings pointed out (20%) of the respondents highlighted that councillors were an impediment towards the nurturing social accountability mechanisms at NTC. Resident's revealed that their councillors were not providing them with information concerning the operations of the council or informing them about upcoming meetings that concerned them. One resident highlighted that:

'I do not even know the name of my councillorhe is only available when it is election time and thus there is no information about what is happening at council that comes to us.....'

On that note it can therefore be said that virtually all the social accountability mechanisms are not being promoted. This is because councillors act as a link between the residents and the Town Council. If the link is incapable of discharging its duties it means the promotion of social accountability mechanisms becomes a major challenge.

Residents also pointed out that the Councillors' inability to read and understand some issues meant that Councillors could not engage meaningfully during Council deliberations. This also presented a challenge when Councillors had to give feedback to the communities. The Councillors limited capacity in terms of educational qualifications and local government experience to monitor and enforce local authority officials' accountability was severely hampering the council's ability to nurture social accountability mechanisms.

Research findings also revealed that Councillors did not have the knowledge, experience to monitor whether decisions made in full council meetings were implemented or not. The unavailability of social accountability mechanisms like citizen cards, Community score cards, phone in sessions and investigative journalism as playing a pivotal role in contributing to this situation. This limitation is serious challenge for the executive to hold the Council administration accountable, thus the accountability of Council officials to Councillors is very weak. It was also pointed out by one of the Councillors that the Council officials tend to be very bossy in discussions on planning and implementation of Council projects and programmes. This was due to the fact that they have more knowledge than the Councillors, as such Councillors will not be able to input and even present the priorities of their respective communities in these meetings.

Council staff also pointed out that, they do not have resources to take the information to the Councillors in their respective wards well before the meetings. Also linked to the above is the fact that most Councillors have challenges in understanding technical issues like interpretation of budgets and financial reports for them to influence decisions. The problem of accessing and interpretation of information by Councillors present serious challenges for Councillors in discharging the oversight role in Council operations. This also limits also their ability to engage with their communities and elaborate or give feedback to their constituencies. This problem has made worse by the fact that central government does not have resources for effective induction and training of Councillors when they are sworn into office. To make it worse the Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing does not allow CSOs train and capacity build councillors without first getting approval from the Ministry.

4.4.4 Poverty Levels among Communities

(9%) of the respondents highlighted that Council was not responsive to the community needs hence it was a sheer waste of time to participate in efforts to demand accountability from the local authority. In addition, because of high levels of unemployment and poverty in Norton most people are preoccupied with finding ways to fend for their lives this makes most of the people not finding time to take part in social accountability processes. There also high levels of apathy and mistrust of Council to the extent that people do not see the value of investing their time in engaging with Council. One resident indicated that:

‘ I see no reason to put a complaint in the suggestion box at council offices since there is nothing that is done ...so it better for me to improve my way of living instead of chasing after the council’.

Research findings indicated that because of this challenge social accountability mechanisms like citizen cards or community score cards were not effective in Norton.

4.4.5 Lack of Awareness of Citizen’s Rights

Responses from the questionnaires and interviews revealed that(7%) of the respondents were not aware the functions of the local authority and how they can effectively engage with the Council. It was also noted that most of the people are not aware of their rights as citizens hence cannot confidently engage with Councillors to demand accountability from the council. Decentralisation presents opportunities to all citizens to participate in issues that affect their

lives and communities. Citizens in any democratic system are entitled to participate and demand accountability from the service providers.

4.4.6 Limited Technical Capacity amongst the Residents

(7%) of the residents interviewed highlighted that that had no skills and capacity in advocacy, lobbying analysis and interpretation of council budget, understanding of borrowing powers application system, and information in Council financial reports. The implementation of social accountability mechanisms like budget review meetings were likely to become a challenge because of the incapacity of residents to understand the contents of the budgets. One resident highlighted that:

‘Even though I attend the budget review meetings...I do not fully understand what the budgets fully mean....’

Some of the residents and resident’s association representatives alluded to the fact that they had received some capacity building from several CSOs on some other skills but it was not adequate enough for them to play their role effectively. This presents serious limitations in the way residents demand accountability from Council.

4.4.7 Inability of Residents to Coordinate and Develop a Common Agenda

A small portion of the respondents (4%) noted that there were huge divisions among the residents on how to engage Council. Resultantly, respondents interviewed pointed out that council was taking advantage of these divisions among residents to choose what issues to respond or not to respond to depending on what faction is presenting the demands. In addition, residents highlighted that Residents Associations in Norton were spending most time competing against each other for recognition instead of taking the Council to task in promoting social accountability. It should be noted citizens are in a better position to demand accountability from Council when they are well coordinated and are united in the way they operate.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The research managed to reveal the effectiveness of different social accountability mechanisms that were put in place by NTC. Research findings revealed that the town Council was not effectively implementing all the mechanisms thus the reason for its failure to promote social accountability. Mechanisms like citizen charters, community score cards, phone in sessions and investigative journalism were non-existent at NTC. Mechanisms that

were at least being implemented like budget review meetings and periodic elections were not being effectively and efficiently done. This was leading to the development of challenges like corruption which was pointed out by the majority of residents as the biggest challenge to promoting social accountability at NTC. Other notable challenges that were identified included in accessibility to information, technical capacity of councillors and poverty. Some residents indicated that they had little understanding of budgets thus even though they attended budget review meetings they were not participating in their formulation thus leading to the development of budgets that did not address the needs of the residents. In terms of service delivery residents gave the Council an overall rating of 4 out of 10 which indicated that residents were not satisfied with the work that the town Council was doing. The challenges that were identified in this chapter led to the formulation of the proposed recommendations as outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides summaries of all chapters, conclusions of the key findings of this research study that assessed nurturing social accountability in urban councils at Norton town council. The conclusion of key findings are summarised guided by the research objectives and questions as well as discussions elucidated in chapter 4. Guided by the findings of this study, this chapter also provides recommendations to local authorities and policy makers as well as highlight possible areas of future research.

5.1 Chapter Summaries

Chapter one focused on the background and overview of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, definitions of terms, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and limitations of the study. On the background of the study this research looked at the origins of gross mismanagement in the local authorities. The background of the study revealed that the coming of the opposition MDC and its dominance in the management of local authorities played a pivotal role in disrupting the performance of local authorities in the country as there as increased central government interference into the management of local authorities. Resultantly, the nurturing of social accountability became problematic at NTC. The study shall be of great significance as it shall assist policy makers and council officials on the strategies they could take to promote social accountability in the management of local councils. Limited time restricted the researcher from accessing some areas and among the many limitations that the research encountered the political sensitivity of the research undertaken limited the participation of some targeted respondents.

Chapter two touched on the definition of key terms to be used in this research. The definitions mostly touched on accountability in general and what social accountability entails. The concept of social accountability was analysed in the conceptual framework where it examined in the context of framework of relationships. In this framework the relationship that exists between policy makers, service providers and citizens in promoting social accountability was analysed. The theoretical framework analysed the institutional theory

which play a key role in the management of public institutions like Norton Town Council. In addition, the accountability framework also provided the different routes that can be taken to promote social accountability. Literature review touched on the application of social accountability and the mechanisms that govern social accountability like periodic election and community report cards among others. Review of literature also touched on the practice and promotion of social accountability in urban councils and the role that elected and non-elected officials were playing in promoting social accountability.

Chapter three looked at research approach, research design, targeted population, sampling procedures, population sample sizes, research instruments, sources of data and data analysis procedures and modes and finally ethical considerations that were adopted in this research. Descriptive research design was adopted as it enabled the research to measure the extent to which social accountability was being nurtured at NTC. It also provoked the why questions on certain aspects that were being done at NTC. Triangulation analysis was used in the research. The use of triangulation was pivotal as it ensured that the research results were easy to understand and decode. The quantitative analysis aspect came into play in measuring the extent to which the different variables were interlinking with each other. Qualitative analysis dealt with the different views and opinions in which people interpreted data. The target population for the research included residents, councillors, council employees, business community and representatives of residents associations. Primary data was captured from 50 respondents who were interviewed and administered with questionnaires. The respondents were selected using sampling techniques like purposive, simple random and convenience. Secondary Data was obtained from internet sources and published/unpublished articles and journals. Thematic analysis mode was used in the research since it captures human experiences and their opinions on the research under study. Thematic analysis mode also enabled the research to link and analyse the literature reviewed, research questions and the various theories that were adopted in the research. Research ethics were followed and these included voluntary participation and withdrawal of participants and the right by the participants not to disclose their names during the course of the research.

Chapter four managed to reveal the effectiveness of different social accountability mechanisms that were put in place by NTC. Research findings revealed that the town Council

was not effectively implementing all the mechanisms thus the reason for its failure to promote social accountability. Mechanisms like citizen charters, community score cards, phone in sessions and investigative journalism were non-existent at NTC. Mechanisms that were at least being implemented like budget review meetings and periodic elections were not being effectively and efficiently done. This was leading to the development of challenges like corruption which was pointed out by the majority of residents as the biggest challenge to promoting social accountability at NTC. Other notable challenges that were identified included in accessibility to information, technical capacity of councillors and poverty. Some residents indicated that they had little understanding of budgets thus even though they attended budget review meetings they were not participating in their formulation thus leading to the development of budgets that did not address the needs of the residents. In terms of service delivery residents gave the Council an overall rating of 4 out of 10 which indicated that residents were not satisfied with the work that the town Council was doing. The challenges that were identified in this chapter led to the formulation of the proposed recommendations in chapter 5.

5.2 Conclusions

It has been learnt from research findings that for social accountability tools or mechanisms to be effective and influential to local government service delivery there are critical factors that need to be considered. These factors are very important for the success designing and implementation of social accountability at local government level. Against this background the overall conclusion is that research findings have shown that the practice of social accountability at NTC have proved to be inadequate. In Norton some of the most commonly encountered shortcomings in conventional social accountability included secrecy in budget reviews and expenditure tracking systems, corruption, mistrust between elected and non-elected officials, ineffective policy reviews in legislatures and inadequate sanctions to apply administrative rules or respect standards. These shortcomings have created pressure for establishing better channels for vertical information flows and new social accountability relationships between the council and residents. Furthermore, this has resulted in the town Council to appear to be distant, unaccountable and corrupt thus making it difficult to nurture social accountability. Residents were not fully aware of council operations and some indicated that even though they periodically attended budget review meetings they had little understanding of budgets thus their contribution was minimum.

Research findings revealed that reliability and availability of information from public institutions like local authority budgets and Council minutes was a major determinant for the success of social accountability tools. The research has also revealed that there is need for advocacy for legislation addressing freedom and access to public information and build capacity for local authority for information management systems that ensures that relevant data is easily accessible to the members of the public and other stakeholders. In addition the effectiveness and capacity for local authorities to understand and implement social accountability was very important for its success. This is also linked to the how vibrant is the local authority in the current situation in the local government in Zimbabwe most of the local authorities are facing a lot of challenges and as such are finding it very difficult to be responsive to demands from the public. There is therefore need for restoration of the capacity of local authorities so that they are effectively equipped and empowered to respond to the needs of communities. In that light it can be said that the extent to which NTC has promoted social accountability has been far less than expected. Thus, on that note the measures that have been put in place to promote social accountability have not been effective since the mechanisms are shadowed by a plethora of challenges like corruption.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Promoting Social Accountability

Public officials especially Councillors need to be trained to practice social accountability during their term of office. Promoting social accountability among these officials guarantees effective service delivery and less interference from the central government. Social accountability tools are likely to succeed in a democratic pluralistic system which guarantees access to freedom of expression, freedom of association and access to information. There is therefore need for restoration of the capacity of local authorities so that they are effectively equipped and empowered to respond to the needs of communities.

5.3.2 Right to Information

Residents associations should access to certain information on behalf of its members, who are ratepayers. It is important to note that the Access to information and Protection of Privacy Act is the primary legislation which is supposed to give full effect to this right.

5.3.3 Institutional Reforms

Local government reforms should be comprehensive with wholesome changes in institution, legislation and political reforms that seek to ensure that local government systems are responsive and accountable to the demands from the communities.

5.3.4 Enhanced Partnership between Council and Citizens

I recommend that citizens should make use of social movements that use their collective amplified voice to demand quality services from local authorities.

5.3.5 Enhancing Transparency to citizens

NTC should come up with mechanisms of correct billing systems and promptly respond to queries raised by citizens.

5.3.6 Simplifying Planning and Budget Documents

NTC should devise ways that ensure budgets are simple and easy to understand and that these documents should not be very bulk as that discourages people to read such voluminous documents.

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Appendix A

Midlands State University

Established 2000



NORTON RESIDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

(You may opt out of this survey at any time)

This questionnaire is part of the study that the researcher is doing in partial fulfilment of a Bachelor of Social Science Honours Degree in Local Governance from the Midlands State University in Gweru.

My name is **Primrose C Tswatswa Student Reg No. R144581F** and I am a student at the above name University. My research topic is entitled **NURTURING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN URBAN COUNCILS. THE CASE OF NORTON TOWN COUNCIL.**

Please take note that Participation in the survey is voluntary and information from this questionnaire will be kept confidential. Give your honest answers. Please respond to all items by ticking on relevant box or by writing in the space provided. I am kindly asking you to fill up questions that are in this questionnaire so as to help me to acquire information for my research project. The information you will provide will be strictly confidential and strictly for academic purpose only. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Name..... *(Optional)*

Date.....

Questions are framed within the context of the research objectives

- A. To establish measures put in place by NTC to promote social accountability.
- B. To examine the effectiveness of mechanisms put in place by NTC to promote social accountability.
- C. To identify challenges that impact on the effectiveness of social accountability mechanisms.

Other sections of the questionnaire sought a detailed rating of the Norton Town council, its staff and services, to determine the overall level of social accountability it offers to its residents.

NORTON TOWN COUNCIL SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A. TO ESTABLISH MEASURES PUT IN PLACE BY NTC TO PROMOTE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

i. Does the Council have a platform for members of the community to lodge complains.

Agree Disagree

If your answer is yes explain how the platform operates.....

.....
.....

ii. Does Norton Town Council carry the following mechanisms:-

- Participatory budget

Agree Disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....

.....
.....
.....

- Half yearly budget review with members of the public

Agree Disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....
.....
.....

- Periodic local government elections.

Agree disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....
.....
.....

- Expenditure tracking system.

Agree disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....
.....
.....

- Citizen charter

Agree Disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....
.....
.....

- Community score cards

Agree Disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....

.....

- Citizen complain structure

Agree Disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....

.....

- Radio phone-in session

Agree Disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....

.....

- Immediate recall system of Councillors

Agree Disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....

.....

- Investigative journalism

Agree Disagree

If you agree explain how the mechanism operates.....

.....

B. TO EXAMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MECHANISMS PUT IN PLACE BY NTC TO PROMOTE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

- Participatory budget

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

- Half yearly budget review with members of the public

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

- Periodic local government elections.

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

- Expenditure tracking system.

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

- Citizen charter

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

- Community score cards

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

- Citizen complain structure

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

- Radio phone-in sessions

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....
.....

- Immediate recall system of Councillors

Effective not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

- Investigative journalism

Effective Not effective

Explain your answer

.....
.....

C. TO IDENTIFY CHALLENGES THAT IMPACT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS.

i. Have there been periodic council elections?

Yes No

Explain your answer

.....
.....

ii. Do you think these elections have been free and fair?

Yes No

Explain your answer

.....
.....

iii. Have you ever participated in local council elections?

Yes No

Explain your answer

.....
.....

iv. Has there been political interference in council affairs

Agree Disagree

Explain your answer

.....
.....

v. How has been the relationship between elected officials and non-elected officials?

Good Bad

Explain your answer

.....
.....

vi. Do you think there should be government interference in the management of NTC?

Agree Disagree

Explain your answer

.....
.....

vii. Are financial resources are the main obstacle to the practice of social accountability?

Agree Disagree

Explain your answer

.....
.....

viii. Are residents or residents associations participating effectively to promote social accountability?

Yes No

Explain your answer

.....
.....

ix. Do you think the municipality is operating within the legal frameworks of urban council laws?

Yes No

Explain your answer

.....
.....

Appendix B



Key informant Interview: Norton Town Council

1. Does the Council have a platform for members of the community to lodge complains.
2. What stakeholders are responsible in promoting social accountability in the town Council and if any what roles are they playing?
3. What mechanisms and strategies have been put in place or should be put in place to promote social accountability at Norton Town Council?
4. How effective have been these mechanisms?
5. What challenges did you/are you encountering in promoting social accountability at Norton Town Council?
6. What role should the government play in promoting social accountability in urban Councils?
7. What recommendations do you put forward to improve and promote social accountability at Norton Town Council?