

## **Constraining Factors in Realizing Strategic Plan Objectives by Local Authorities in Zambia: Case of Kitwe City Council**

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Strategic Public Management Journal  
Volume 4, Issue 7, pp. 98-119  
2018 (1)  
DOI: 10.25069/spmj.433191  
Received: 28.08.2018  
Accepted: 05.09.2018  
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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of the study was to determine the constraining factors in realizing strategic plan objective by Kitwe City Council in Zambia. This was a case study that focused on the strategic plan of the Council for the period 2012 to 2016. The research used qualitative methodology that also employed grounded theory methods during the data collection, i.e., interviews and documentary reviews. Content analysis was the main analytical tool utilized for the analysis.*

*The results of the study indicated that, the City Council had an ambitious plan which was unrealistic in the sense that within the plan period, too many priority projects were incorporated in the plan. Furthermore, the implementation of the plan lacked committed leadership drive and visioning at the departmental level of the institution, lacked ownership of the strategic plan document, inadequate financial resources generated by the Council to finance the projects, non-coordination and harmonization of strategies in implementation of strategic activities by the departments within the council, political interference and non-collaboration of potential cooperating partners affected the implementation of the plan, hence achieving virtually insignificant proportion of the expected outcomes of the strategic objectives.*

*The findings of the study provide significant and valuable information to all management of Local Authorities in Zambia and perhaps in the developing economies that perceive that formulation of strategic plan is significant to improve the service delivery to their citizenry under their areas of jurisdiction.*

**Key Words:** *Constraining Factors, Strategic Plan, Strategy Implementation, Local Authorities, Kitwe, Zambia*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Planning as a generic term is used commonly by all and sundry to mean rational and logical approach to solving problems whether experienced or perceived. Thus, within the planning literature different definitions have evolved albeit types of planning and types of management and implementation styles (Andrews, Beynon & Genc, 2017). The definition by Campbell and Fainstein (1996) was adopted as a significant reference in direct association to this paper on strategic planning. Campbell and Fainstein in their paper titled, “*The Structure and Debates of Planning Theory*” defined planning as “*the intervention with the intention to alter*

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*the existing course of events*". With reference to the phrase "strategic planning" which has become a common place activity especially in both public and private sector institutions, all that the institutions perceive is to engage in self introspection to evaluate their operations and service delivery for improvement based on their strengths and opportunities to counter their recognized weaknesses and threats (Andrews, Beynon & Genc, 2017; Johansen, 2016; Nickols, 2016; Iglesias, 2015; Andrews et al. 2009; Li, Guohui & Eppler 2008). It must be stressed that institutions engage in the process of strategic planning after encountering indicators below optimum performance through external scanning of the operational and service delivery of competitors in both domestic and international economic arena (Grant, 2010: 12; Kelman & Myers, 2009). In a similar vein, Khan and Khalique (2014: 170) postulated that, "environmental scanning is used to explore new opportunities and to identify threats for making important strategic decisions". Hourani (2017: 26) also expressed that, "environmental scanning and strategic formulation are crucial to strategic management but are only the beginning of the process". The assertion by Hourani is that, generally opportunities for business are hidden in the external environment of the business (David, 2013, and Hitt et al. 2011, cited in Khan & Khalique, 2014: 171). Kelman and Myers (2009: 6) stressed that "comprehensive environmental assessment such as the SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis provide the organization more information about alternative activities and their consequences which is then used for prospective choices about goals or about broad kinds of activities in support of those goals". Iglesias (2016: 42), on the other hand, stated that, "*strategic planning in local government refers to the process of identifying, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of municipal administrative organization in order to define its mission and objectives, identify stakeholders and set up strategies that improve the efficiency of the administrative organizations*" In the same vein, Grant (2010) supported the view when he elaborated and illustrated *strategy* as the link between the firm and its environment. Contrary, in the early 1980, Kenneth Andrews defined "*strategy*" as the pattern of decisions in a company that determines and reviews its objectives, "*purposes, or goals, produces the principal plans for achieving those goals and defines the range of businesses the company is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organization it is or intend to be the nature of economic and non-economic contributions it intends to make to its shareholders, employees, customers, and communities*" (cited in Nickols, 2016: 1). Similar to the definition by Andrews (1980), is Bryson (1995) who stressed that, "Strategy is a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, actions, decisions, or resource allocations that define what an organization is, what it does and why it does that".

#### *Brief historical highlights on the concepts of strategy and strategic planning*

Strategic planning has its roots in the military (Nickols, 2016; Mainarades, Ferreira & Raposa, 2014; Blackerby, 1994). Nickols (2016: 3) highlighted that, in the military the "*strategy for a battle refers to a general plan of attack or defense. Typically, this involves arrangements made before actually engaging the enemy and intended to disadvantage that enemy. In this control, strategy is concerned with the deployment of resources*". However, it was adopted by management science experts and incorporated in business management planning particularly in the private sector institutions (Nichols 2016). In its earlier coinage, it was used to guide the military in managing battles to win rather than tactical advice about managing troops to win battles (Blackerby, 1994). Simply put and utilized in contemporary management and planning literature, strategic planning is employed by institutions and organizations to set priorities, direct and improving operations to enhance performance standards when faced with challenging economic and political conditions (Andrews, Beynon, & Genc, 2017; Ferlie & Ongaro, 2015; David, 2013; Bryson, 2011). From the military roots, strategic planning has always aimed at the big picture. Focusing on results or outcomes, rather than products or outputs Strategic planning is less concerned with how to achieve outcomes than with defining *what those outcomes should be* (Blackerby 1994). David (2013) stressed that, strategic planning includes

developing vision and mission statement performing internal (looking at the strengths and weaknesses) and external (looking at the opportunities and threats) audit establishing long term objectives and then generate and select better. Khan and Khaliq (2014: 168) reiterated that, *“the first step of strategic planning is considered as developing of a vision statement indicating what the organization wants to become. The vision serves as a motivator for the people inside and outside the organization”*

### **1.1 The question of Implementation of Strategic Plans**

The desire and drive that management of organizations exhibit to engage in strategic planning to prioritize, direct and improve their operations seem not to be realized after the plan has been formulated (see also Mwirigi, et al. 2014; Koseoglu, 2009; Li, Guohui & Eppler, 2008; Hrebiniak, 2006). Hrebiniak (2006) disclosed that formulating a consistent strategy is a difficult task for any management team; however, making the strategy work, i.e., implementing it throughout the organization is even more difficult (Hourani 2017: 13; Mwirigi et al. 2014; Schaap, 2012; Li, Guohui & Eppler 2008; and Thompson & Strickland, 2003). Mwirigi et al. (2014) stressed that implementation in itself is a challenge because it is a process of its own altogether and requires care in its handling. To that effect, Siddique and Shadbolt (2016) expressed that the effectiveness of the whole process of planning diminishes if the formulated strategies are not implemented. Hourani (2017: 26) stressed that the failure to carry out a strategic plan into day-to-day operations of the workplace is a major reason why strategic to support the crusade to raise adequate financial resources to finance planning often fails to achieve its objectives. On the same postulations, Allio (2005) reported that an Economist survey for the period 2002 and 2004 revealed that a survey of 276 senior operating executives indicated that 57 percent of the firms were unsuccessful at executing strategic initiatives. In a similar vein, in 2006, a White paper of strategy Implementation of Chinese corporations reported that 83 percent of the surveyed companies failed to implement their strategies smoothly with only 17 percent feeling that they had a consistent strategy implementation process (Li, Guohui & Eppler, 2008). Fortune Magazine (cited in Chiuri et al. 2015: 1744) reported in their study that 90% of strategies initiated by institutions and organizations are unsuccessful. Franklen et al. (2009) cited in Houran (2017: 13) indicated that organizations fail to implement 70% of their new strategies. Similarly, Kaplan and Norton (2008) disclosed in their study that more than 90% strategic initiatives fail not due to formulation but to implementation difficulties. Koseoglu (2009) and Raps (2004) also reiterated that, statistically, it has been observed that the rate of successfully implemented strategies is between 10% and 30%. Koseoglu (2009) stressed that in most governmental institutions, the implementation of the strategies fail to take off. This assertion was on the basis of the perception that, *“The execution of strategy is not merely as clear and understood as the formulation of strategy because much more is known about planning than doing, about strategy making than making strategy work. Similar sentiments were expressed by Hrebiniak (2006); Schaap (2006); and Thompson & Strickland (2003). This reveals that there is a gap between theories and practice and may prove a challenge when making the practical work. This is true of strategic planning as institutions face challenges in implementing their plans. In view of the above expositions, Iglesias (2015: 42) reiterated that, “many strategic plans are window dressing exercises and never become implemented”. In view of the postulations regarding the failure by institutions to implement their lofty ideals enshrined in the strategic plans, what then s strategy implementation?*

This paper supports the views expressed by Wheelan and Hunger (2012), Harrington (2006), Homburg et al. (2004) and Hourani (2017). Wheelan and Hunger (2012), stressed that implementing a strategy involves taking ideas, decisions, plans, policies, objectives and other aspects of the chosen strategy and implementing them into action. Similarly, Harrington (2006) insisted that, strategy implementation is an iterative process of executing strategies, policies, programmes and action plans that allows a firm or institution to utilize its



resources to take advantage of opportunities in the competitive environment. On the contrary, Homburg, et al. (2004) went further to state that implementation is the actions initiated within the organization or institution and its relationship with external constituencies to realize the strategy. On the contrary, Hourani (2017: 14), highlighted that strategy execution is a broad domain that touches many different management areas from direction and goal setting to human resources operations culture, and the quality of leadership team that is in charge. It is upon this realization that the three definitions are very comprehensive to illustrate the complexities that institutions may encounter to ensure strategic objectives are implemented. In line with the definitions, the next section of the paper highlights the case study institution and the problem it perceived to have encountered with the strategy implementation

## 1.2 Case Study Institution and the Problem

A number of factors (i.e., soft, hard and mixed) are perceived to constrain the achievement of strategic objectives vis-à-vis strategic activities by institutions (Li, Guohui & Eppler, 2008). Li, Guohui and Eppler suggested that, “the factors that influence the success of strategy implementation range from the people who communicate or implement the strategy to the systems or mechanisms that are put in place for coordination and control”. This suggestion paved way for the perception of the gaps in the literature on constraints or challenges in implementing strategic plans. Thus, the empirical study by Andrews, Beynon and Genc (2017) probed on systems or mechanisms that are in place for coordination and control. In recent past, Local Authorities in Zambia have been encouraged by the Government to develop strategic plans as a means to improve their service delivery responsibilities to their citizenry and areas of jurisdictional operations at large. This is by virtue of their mandatory responsibility to execute service delivery activities to the general public at Local level (Local Government & Housing, 1991). Hence their role in implementing strategic plans is important as the challenges faced trickle down to affect the public being served.

The baffling issue is, “with or without the strategic plan, service provision has not improved, i.e., particularly, failure to accomplish strategic activities hence achieving strategic objectives. Sithole, Chirasha and Tatire (2013: 107) expressed similar sentiments from their empirical studies on Zimbabwean Local Authorities. On that note, Sterling (2003) stated that, by understanding the factors that have greatest impact on strategy success, one can respond more quickly if they change, hence the need to understand the changes affecting the implementation of strategic plans. The issue raised in most of the literature is, “*What are the challenges that constrain the realization of the strategic plan in public sector institution?*”

Kitwe City Council has had a strategic plan for the past 4 years (i.e., 2012 to 2016). Prior to that there was another strategic plan which expired at the end of 2010. A number of questions had been raised by stakeholders (i.e., both internal and external to the Local Authority) concerning the formulation of the plans and their success rates within the past 8 years.

The paper attempts to assess the implementation challenges that were faced by the Kitwe City Council during the period of the plan implementation. The research questions that guided the research were:

What were the internal and external challenges faced in implementing the Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan?

What efforts did Kitwe City Council make to address the challenges during the implementation of the strategic plan within the planned period?

How did the strategic plan direct the Management of Kitwe City Council in service provision during the plan period?

The Kitwe Strategic plan had five-year duration from the year 2012 to the year 2016; it is a blueprint for all the developmental endeavors of Kitwe City Council. This plan reviewed the 2006-2010 Kitwe Strategic Plan and built on it (i.e., re-prioritize due to the weakness constraints and opportunities). The vision of the strategic plan is towards inclusive provision of services and enhanced standards of living (Kitwe City Council, 2012). Therefore, the study focused on the challenges that the Local Authorities may have faced during the implementation of the plans.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A plethora of literature has been generated by researchers on strategic plan formulation (Andrews, Beynon & Genc, 2017; Andrews et al. 2009; Li, Guohui & Eppler, 2008). However, with respect to research documentation on the dynamics of implementation of strategic objectives in the public sector, the school of thought within the literature is that, it is seriously being given attention that it deserves. Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008) speculated in their write up on “*Making Strategy work: A literature review on the factors influencing strategy implementation review*”, that not much had been done. Even though Li, Guohui and Eppler focused their research on 60 published documentations, they reiterated their views on the intensity, depth and breadth of research on strategic implementation. Their view was supported by Andrews, Beynon and Genc (2017) when they stated that “*research on the dynamics of strategy implementation in the public sector is still in its infancy*” The subject is still a bone of contention for most researchers in management science and planning. Nearly a decade after the publication, there are more research interests on the challenges that affect institutions in their efforts to realizing strategic objectives (Iglesias, 2015; Bryson, Berry & Yang, 2010). This paper supports the perception in that, there has been a serious upsurge of research interest in the last 9 to 10 years on public institutions and strategic planning and implementation or execution as some schools of thought prefer to label the activity. This cuts across the globe, i.e., east to west and from north to south.

In the United States of America, Europe, Middle East, Asia and East and Southern Africa it has been noted that, there had been significant efforts by researchers in the academic institutions to probe into finding and understanding the possible factors constraining the successful implementation of strategic plans (Elbanna & Fobol, 2016; Iglesias, 2015; Bryson, Berry & Yang, 2010; Kelman & Myers, 2009). For instance, Bryson, Berry and Yang (2010) stated that strategic planning and related strategic management elements have become ubiquitous practices at all levels of US government and many non-profit organizations over past 20 years (see also Bryson, 2010; Poister & Streib, 2005). Furthermore, Kelman and Myers (2009) researched and produced a publication on the subject of “*Successfully Executing Ambitious Strategies in Government*”. This was a Faculty working paper series at the Harvard Kennedy School. In another publication, Poister and Streib (2005) on a case study of strategic planning and management in municipal government in the US argued that organizational decisions makers do not fully integrate the strategic plan across the entire organization to facilitate plan implementation (cited in Preciado, 2015: 2). Similarly, a study done in Canada by Elbanna, Andrew and Pollanen (2016), it was revealed that formal strategic planning has a strong positive relationship with implementation. This relationship has to be highly mediated by managerial as well as stakeholder involvement.

In Europe, quite a number of significant empirical researches have been carried out on the public sector including local governments (Iglesias 2015). Iglesias carried out ethnographic empirical studies on strategic plan preparation and implementation of a medium sized city of Alcobendas and the local government of the city of Madrid in Spain. Iglesias highlighted two basic factors that contribute to strategic plan implementation



failures, i.e., the issue of methodology and processes used for the plan and the resources. Iglesias further stressed that there is no strategic management processes agreed between the areas or actors involved (p.51).

In the Middle East, Andrews, Beynon and Genc (2017) conducted a research to explore the implementation styles and perceived services effectiveness, efficiency and equity in Turkish municipal government departments and identified rational implementation style, incremental strategy implementation style, logical-incremental strategy implementation style and absence of strategy implementation style. This insightful research outcome was a groundbreaking on the clout surrounding the high rate of failures by institutions in realizing their strategic plan objectives. This approach to investigating the constraints and challenges requires in-depth research on strategic plan implementation. Interestingly, Andrews, Beynon and Genc in their conclusion stated that different combinations of strategic implementation styles can have varying implications for organizational outcomes. Nonetheless, the most prominent strategic implementation style utilized for success outcomes from the plans is logical-incremental strategic implementation style. It was also recognized that the adoption of rational implementation processes may hold the key to better performance (2017: 15). The conclusions by Andrews, Beynon and Genc provide significant new directions and diversities for managers of institutions (i.e., business, public sector and non-governmental), stakeholders, and researchers on strategic management processes for new pathways for strategic implementation successes.

Koseoglu et al. (2009) also did a study in Turkey regarding why strategies fail to be accomplished in business and public sector institutions highlighted some of the challenges as: *planning consequences, organizational issues, managerial issues and individual issues*. Koseoglu et al. further argued that, the challenges faced in strategic plan implementation due to poor formulation are that, a strategy is not really a strategy but "a mixture of budgets and management wish list" (see also Iglesias 2015); secondly, the strategy is not executable; and finally, the executors do not accept the strategy as "their own" because they did not participate in its formulation (see also Sial et al 2013). Sial et al. in their study focused on "*Why Do Public Sector Organizations Fail in Implementation of Strategic Plans in Pakistan?*" identified challenges such as operational plan of the implementation, incompetent management, limited resources, poor planning for execution, and lack of integration amongst departments). Similarly, the study by Kalali et al. (2011) highlighted on the challenges disclosed by Sial et al. In a much detailed exposition on the study by Kalali et al. (2011) on why strategic plans implementation fail in the health services sector of Iran, identified four factors as *context dimension*, i.e., relating to internal and external environment for strategy implementation; *content dimension*, i.e., relating to how strategies in organizations are developed, *operational dimensions*, i.e., relating to operational level problems of strategy implementation in organizations and finally, *structural dimensions*, i.e., relating organizational structure and the equality of power distribution in the organization. The research revealed that, the most important reason for strategic decisions failure in Iranian health services sector is content dimensions which included the following variables: unclear strategy, conflicting goals and priorities, lack of support by senior managers, non-commitment of decision makers and finally, non-assessable of implemented strategic decisions (Khalali et al. 2011:9835). The constitution of the content dimensions factor confirms what most researchers have reported in the literature.

In Bangladesh, a study on Khulna City Council by Rahman (2016: 22) noted that, "despite the city Council purported to have developed a strategic plan to address urban sustainability inclusive of social, economic and environmental issues the focus was more on land use planning. Hence, the major challenge of the plan implementation was it failed to draw sufficient attention of the actors involved and the city citizenry in general to uphold its position as a necessary tool for urban development". Moreover, planning was said to have no implications in the area on metropolitan development. Similarly, Rajasekar (2014) on a research to

identify factors that affect implementation stated that, the process of formulating a strategy is not only about focusing on its innovation and creativity but also on it actually working. *“Indeed, good strategic management is a function of people actively considering strategy as they make day-to-day decisions in an ever-changing world.* This statement is backed by the claim that, between 50% and 80% of strategy implementation efforts fail as in most cases execution is the most time consuming and complicated stage in the process of strategic planning. The study was concluded by stating that leadership had an important role to play in implementation as it fostered communication and directed the firm in line with the cultural influences as well as organizational structure as they have an impact on strategy implementation. This study complimented the empirical research finding by Al-Kandi, Asutay and Dixon (2013) on factors (i.e., process and personal factors, project factors and organizational factors) that influence strategy implementation process and its outcomes in Saudi Arabian Banks.

In another interesting research conducted by Norhidayah et al. (2015) on the challenges in implementation of maintenance and operational blueprint for Iskandar Malaysia among five local authorities, four challenges including *no clear direction from the management of the local authorities to implement the plan, lack of staff, inadequate time and the high cost (expensiveness of the plan’s implementation* were established.

The literature revealed some significant studies done on the African continent especially in Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Kenyan University students and researchers have engaged in a significant number of researches in establishing the factors that institutions face in strategy implementation (Chiuri et al. 2015; Opano et al. 2015; Mumbua and Mingaine 2015 Mwawasi, Wanjau & Mkala 2013). Chiuri et al. (2015) in their study disclosed that, institutional culture explained a significant variation in strategy implementation in higher education institutions in Kenya. Interestingly, the study also identified the intervening effect of quality of staff training being reasonably high on the institutional culture. In hindsight, some of the challenges revealed by the study included staff embracing creativity and innovations, being receptive to new ideas, adopt benchmarking, adhere strictly to core values and avoid any form of discrimination and communicate strategy clearly to staff. The issues raised are very cardinal to all institutions. Salih and Doll (2013) also raised the point of ineffective management of change by both top and middle management personnel. In their study, it was revealed that implementation of strategy represents change, and for some staff change is very difficult (p.36). In another study to establish the factors affecting implementation of operational strategies in Non-Governmental Organizations, Mwawasi, Wanjau and Mkala (2013) outlined resource allocation, core competencies, competitive priorities and information technology as the major challenges. Interestingly, in the study done by Mumbua and Mingaine (2015), it was realized that the implementation of the strategic plan was ran slower than the expected scheduled time. This factor relates to the issue of organizational culture, organizational commitment, lack of leadership direction and competencies. Mumbua and Mingaine further stressed that there was no proper alignment of resources with the strategic plan (see also Lehany, Reddy and Karodia, 2015; and Opano et al. 2013).

On strategy implementation challenges faced by public sector institutions such as local authorities, a number of studies have been done. In a similar vein, the study by Opano et al. (2013) on strategic planning and implementation practices at Kisii County Government in Kenya identified the main challenges as limited human and financial resources. Contrary, the research by Messah and Mucai (2009) highlighted on the following as the main challenges: managerial actions in allocation of resources, weak institutional leadership, and weak institutional policies in influencing strategy implementation because of low awareness. Makanyeza, Kwandayi and Ikobe (2013) in a paper on strategies to improve service delivery in local authorities discovered that service delivery was poor mainly because of factors such as councillor interference and



political manipulation, corruption and lack of accountability and transparency, inadequate citizen participation, poor human resource policy, failure to manage change, lack of employee capacity, poor planning, and poor monitoring and evaluation.

Contrary to the diversity of studies carried out in Local Councils or Counties in Kenya, Buluma, Keror and Bonuke (2013), on a study to identify institutional factors affecting the implementation of strategic plans at the Municipal Council of Eldoret disclosed that inadequate technological resources, insufficient management systems, limited control over the implementation of the strategic plan, insufficient management approaches and inadequate support from the central government were the major challenges. Perhaps the focus of the study brought out the different factors unlike the similarities identified earlier on in the counties of Kenya.

Though the studies done on local government institutions highlighted factors that have been identified as part of the soft, hard and mixed by Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008), a documentation published by the Western Cape Government in the Republic of South Africa (Western Cape Government Strategic Plan 2015/2016-2019/2020) highlighted the following as the major challenges to strategic plan implementation: poor communication between municipalities and communities; aging infrastructure which is at a point risk of deterioration; and shortage of technical skills required for service delivery. Contrary to the publication by the Western Cape Government, The Gauteng Provincial Government identified different strategic plan implementation constraints as lacking the capacity to implement projects and infrastructure development; and lacking integrated development planning systems and financial management systems which result in under-spending of allocated funds (Gauteng Provincial Government-DDPLG 2003/4-2005/6 Strategic Plan). The challenges identified by two regional institutions in South Africa were complimented by the empirical study done by Lehanya, Reddy and Karodia (2015) on Matatiele Municipality in South Africa who established four categories of challenges as *vision barrier*, *management barrier*, *resources barrier* and *people barrier*. The designations are just semantics since most of the literature have identified them under the categories of *soft*, *hard* and *mixed* by Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008). The *vision barrier* refers to the institutional or organizational challenge of lower level management or workforce not sharing in or understanding the organizational vision and strategy (see also Musyoka 2013). Similarly, the *management vision* tries to stress on the issue of significant proportion of top management team in the organization spending less time on achieving the strategic objectives enshrined in the strategic plan but rather prefer to solve short term problems facing the organization. In their study, Lehanya, Reddy and Karodia established that approximately 85% of top management team, are found wanting in this respect. They also realized that, approximately 60% of organizations do not link their resources allocation plan or budget to the strategic plan. This is the *resource barrier* that most public sector institutions face as it has been highlighted in the literature discussed on Kenya (see also Musyoka, 2013). The *people barrier* is quite an intriguing challenging phenomenon perceived to affect strategic plan implementation in the case of Matatiele Municipality. This relates to the issue of rewards given to management vis-à-vis the realization of strategic objectives and outcomes. Lehanya, Reddy and Karodia indicated in their study that 25% of managers had rewards linked to strategy. The perception might be that the human resources must be more motivated to participate fully and share in the vision and mission of the strategic plan to successfully implement it.

Besides the factors highlighted herein, Ehlers and Lazenby (2010: 176) hinted that implementing strategies in an environment characterized by rapid and discontinuous change is a tremendous challenge. Lehanya, Reddy and Karodia (2015:7) supported the disclosure when they postulated that, "*sometimes strategies fail because they are ill conceived or because the market conditions they were intended to exploit change before the*



*strategy is actually put in place*”. Van der Merwe and Nienaber (2015) in their study reported that, strategy implementation fail because strategy formulation is not designed to facilitate implementation.

In a study done in Zimbabwe on the implementation of strategic plans by Zimbabwean Local Authorities Sithole, Chirasha and Tatire (2013:107), citing Musyoka (2013) supported the sentiment that if the members of the organization resisted change then implementation would not take place. On the other hand, it was observed that, resources whether financial or human, equipment or buildings were a prerequisite to implementation and if any is missing or inadequate may be a stumbling block to implementation.

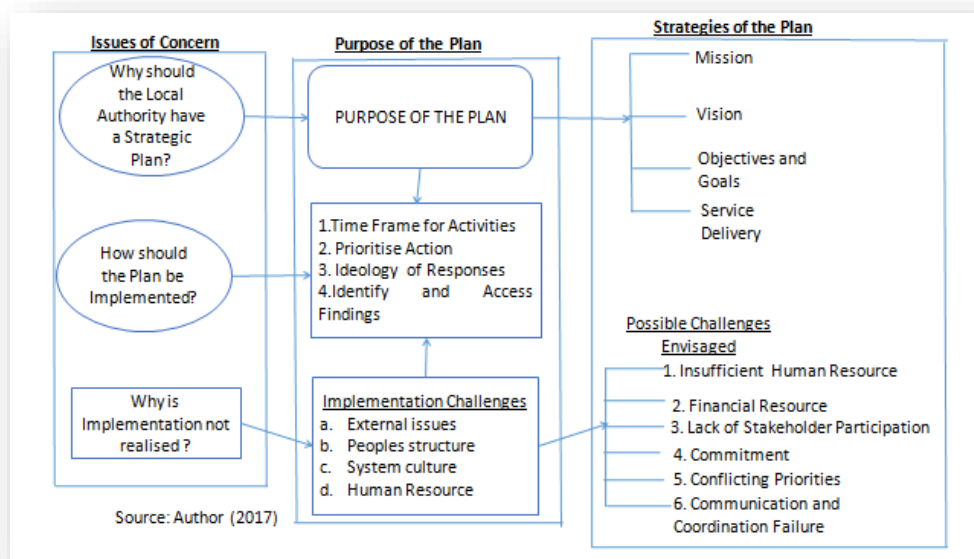
The review of the literature undoubtedly brought out diversity of factors that pose as challenges to public sector institutions particularly in the developing countries to accomplish strategic objectives and goals. Though in some of the literature different semantics seem to portray special or unique factors, this study recognized that the factor categorization by Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008), simplifies issues and assists researchers to direct their research on the subject matter. Thus, the categorizations were exploited to direct the conceptualization of the study.

### **3. RESEARCH MODEL**

Aaker’s (1998) and Pryor et al. (2007) conceptual frameworks for analyzing organization and strategy implementation requirements were identified to be the ideal to guide the research. Both Aaker (1998) and Pryor et al. (2007) incorporated in their conceptual frameworks the inter-linkages of the elements of culture, organization, people, system, structure, and external factors potentially likely to affect the implementation process. However, in Pryor et al. (2007), the 5 P’s were *Purpose* (strategic theories), *Principles* (Values and Cultural Theories), *Process* (Systems Theories), *People* (Behavioral Theories), and *Performance* (Management and Feedback Theories). Thus, based on the suggestions made by Hourani (2017: 26) that, obstacles and problems that could hinder strategy implementation or causing its failure should be included as part of the comprehensive conceptual model, this study adopting the qualitative case study approach formulated the framework shown under Figure 1. To that effect, Lehanya, Reddy and Karodia (2015) categorization of the barriers to plan implementation, i.e., vision, management, resources and people barriers were incorporated in the framework of the study. Furthermore, it was also realized that, the Holistic Strategy Implementation Theory (Palfrey, 2002), Adaptation Theory, Electric Implementation Theory (Jofre, 2011) and the Sequential Thinking Theory (Hoch, 2009) were found to provide significant directions and insights to evolve appropriate qualitative questions for the study.

Figure 1 outlines the flow of the plan as it focuses on the Local Authority as the institution comes up with the plan whose purpose is to be effective and efficient in service delivery. This is seen in the Holistic Strategy Implementation Theory that considers the goals and the institutions that are to implement them (Palfrey, 2002). These are guided by goals and objectives, a mission and a vision. For effective implementation to take place, there is need for a time frame for the various activities, prioritize the actions, have an ideology of the response and possibly identify the findings. Jofre (2011) supports this in the electric implementation theory by stating that needs have to be responded to with consideration of the capacity the institution has.

**Figure 1: Research model focusing on Issues of Concern**



Despite this, challenges are anticipated to be experienced and thus constraining the successful implementation of the plan. Hence plans are seemingly not realized. These can be achieved if the sequential thinking theory is applied to act as a guiding force that directs the thinking of the different individuals (Hoch, 2009).

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The research was a case which focused on Kitwe City Council. The unit of analysis was the Strategic Plan challenges experienced during the period of implementation. The sample population included Kitwe City Council Departmental Heads focusing more on the department of planning, the Town Clerk and Mayor, Councilors and all stakeholders related to the implementation of the plan. Amongst the people interviewed were Directors, Assistant Directors, Social and Economic Planners, Senior Planning Officers, District Administrative Officers and Section Heads of both the Government Departments and the Local Authorities. This was because each leader had a role to play in the implementation of the strategic plan. This sample was selected purposefully as there was need to collect specific information on the strategic plan, its implementation and the effects on service delivery, hence the use of a predetermined sample group. The primary data methods included interviews and focus group discussions. The secondary data methods included the use of council records, books, council minutes and reports, i.e., the Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan (2012-2016), the Mid Term Review Report in 2014, the Kitwe District Plan, Council minutes and reports as well as relevant stakeholder documents. The data was also analyzed using content analysis techniques.

#### 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

At the time the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan was being formulated for Kitwe City Council, the estimated population of Kitwe was 522, 092 with an annual growth rate of 3.3% based on the 2010 census report (Kitwe City Council, 2012). Therefore, the plan was formulated to cover the needs of that population, improve their quality of life and improve the responsiveness of the Council to public service provision (Kitwe

City Council, 2012). The plan was then formulated based on the governance principles, and the Local Government Act. As a result, the Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan was composed of projects from departments that were prioritized to take into account development activities and the scarce resources that need to be allocated efficiently (Kitwe City Council, 2012).

The Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan was scheduled to run from 2012 to 2016 as a blueprint to guide service delivery and development for that period with the theme, “*Towards inclusive provision of services and enhanced standards of living*” (KCC, 2012). The purpose of the plan was to guide the focus of the Council and the residents of Kitwe to priority areas in order to deliver quality services central to everyday lives (Kitwe City Council, 2012).

The Vision of the Strategic Plan was that, the “*City shall be a development oriented, environmentally clean, a hospitable place and appealing for residents and visitors*”. Interestingly, the theme of the plan was to improve the quality of life of the people of Kitwe through the development of a sustainable economic environment and the provision of quality affordable social services and infrastructure, with the active participation of all stakeholders. The 2012-2016 Strategic Plan reviewed the 2006-2010 Kitwe District Plan which recorded below 50% achievement levels in all the departments. The failure of the district plan was attributed to little community consultation, slow funding, inadequate monitoring and evaluation tools and efficiencies, poor information flow, inadequate of skilled manpower as well as failure to balance the departmental responsibilities (Kitwe City Council, 2012).

The four (4) general objectives of the plan according to Kitwe City Council (2012) were summarized as follows:

To review the 2006-2010 Kitwe District Strategic Plan

Integrate governance principles by undertaking a participatory development needs assessment.

Facilitating the process of developing updated strategic objectives and action plans and orient city stakeholders to the Strategic Planning process.

Recommend measures aimed at improving revenue collection and public service delivery.

The plan which incorporated monitoring and evaluation programs to gauge its progress was to be implemented by stakeholders with Kitwe City Council being the central implementing agency.

The research revealed that, the different departments had their own different priority interests that related to the needs of the City as well as the operations of the Council. Hence, each department had its own objectives and budgetary requirements to meet the priorities and achieve the laid down objectives.

### **5.1 Performance of the Strategic Plan and Achievement of Objectives**

The 2012-2016 Strategic Plan was a public document that encompassed stakeholder inputs; it was for the people and was made available to the public. Thus, the plan was formulated democratically and consensually by virtue of their service operatives in that services affect each person in the community.

The implementation of the strategic plan was dependent on each department because of the different goals, objectives and priority options. It was realized that the Departments were in a better position to implement the plan with the guidance of the Directors in charge. This was based on the benchmarks the departments had set for themselves. Overall, the strategic plan was said to have scored an achievement rate of 75% in terms of service delivery improvement. The data collected however revealed that, Kitwe City Council is one of the

privileged local authorities which have the goodwill, and sufficient equipment hence placing them in an advantageous position.

The main stakeholders in the strategic plan formulation and implementation process were the Office of the District Commissioner, the District Education Board (DEBS), the Office of the District Agricultural Coordinating Committee (DACO) and the Office of the Kitwe District Board of Health (KDBHO). The stakeholders were incorporated by virtue of the Council being the Secretariat to the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC) meetings. Hence, they participate in projects that have to be approved by all the stakeholders before they can be implemented. The stakeholders played a significant role in implementation projects such as the Nkana East Community Clinic Construction through the Kitwe District Health Office as well as suitable land for agriculture with the assistance of the Office of the District Agricultural Officer. It was observed that, the stakeholders did not fail to implement the plan in any way.

In terms of Urban Governance, the different departments had clearly defined roles and responsibilities that were to be played in improving service provision in the City of Kitwe. The roles were defined independently based on each department's action plan but in sync with the vision. Hence, the different departments harmonize their roles.

The mid-term strategic plan review was done in the year 2014 assessing the adherence of the plan to the vision, track its performance in the departments, and constituencies as well as assessing the relevance and adequacy of the strategies with the aim of recommending or changing priorities (Kitwe City Council, 2014, p.4).

During the review, the Department of Legal Services reported that, they had attained at least 86.6% of targets set in the plan, Department of Housing and Social Services reported 38.46% achievement rate of targets set, the Department of Human Resource and Administration reported close to 33.33% achievement of targets set, Department of Public Health reported 29.72% of targets set, the Department of Engineering Services reported an achievement percentage of 45.61%, whilst the Department of Finance had a 54.84%, the Department of Development Planning had a performance percentage of 59.72% and finally, the Town Clerks Office reported an achievement rate of 100% (Kitwe City Council, 2014).

Despite the achievements being clearly outlined in percentage form, quantifying the works that had actually been done was not included in the review as the priority options had been generalized to encompass many priorities in one goal. This was perceived in the research as being very subjective. It was thus conceived to be cosmetic. Nonetheless, the review showed that, the overall achievement by the different Departments was 56.043% and at the Ward level, the achievements were summed up with respect to the Constituencies as follows Nkana Constituency 40.17%, Wusakile Constituency 39.64%, Kamfinsa Constituency 38.88%, Chimwemwe Constituency at 30.36% and Kwacha Constituency at 23.32% (Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan Review, 2014). The review further revealed that, the departments lacked consistency in the implementation of the plans because some of the departments did not understand the strategic plan and their responsibilities (Kitwe City Council, 2014, p.80). Finally, the plan at the time scored 56.043% performance. In terms of the Ward projects, they benefited much from the infrastructure development programs (Kitwe City Council, 2014).

## **5.2 Office of the Town Clerk**

The Office of the Town Clerk had 50.6% of the overall budget covering 4 strategic objectives outlined earlier. The priorities set out were to ensure that there was adequate capacity for the organization to undertake development projects, to enhance procurement processes of the Council, to lobby for local and foreign

investment, to facilitate the marketing of the Strategic Plan to all stakeholders, to solicit for the disbursement of government funds for various strategic plan activities, to ensure implementation of key objectives of the Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan, to enhance internal system control and to ensure implementation of activities aimed at attaining zero tolerance to corruption.

### **5.3 Department of Development Planning**

The developmental priorities were: to undertake monitoring and evaluation of the 2012-2016, to ensure that all development projects comply with the provisions of the Environmental Management Act of 2011, to re-plan Chisokone market into a commercial venture (centre), to facilitate and identify land for the process of upgrading of Informal Settlements, identify land for the creation of a new cemetery, carry out a Land Audit, create a data bank for the district, facilitate for an NGO forum, to coordinate the development projects in Kitwe and the mainstreaming of cross-cutting HIV/AIDS, gender and the environment, undertake the Kitwe Integrated Development Plan (KIDP), to initiate and facilitate the design of the land bank across Kafue River (New Kitwe), to create a social economic database for Kitwe District and finally to source land for the construction of Kitwe City Council institutional houses.

The Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan (2012-2016) was perceived as a guide for the Department of Development Planning because it stipulated clearly the processes and procedure to follow when planning. About 80% of the planned projects were implemented. The priority options were generated not by the Council alone but the community as they submitted their projects based on the hierarchy of needs approach through the area councilors.

The challenges the department faced were that of political influence. This was because the Area Councilors were the voice of the people, even though some did not actually represent the views of the people but their own interests. Finances were also a challenge as the monies were not given to the Council for the CDF projects on time. The department projected to use a total amount of 0.67% of the total budget on all the strategic objectives outlined. Considering the priority options listed, it was not adequate for the department to only cover that percentage of the budget. This seemingly led to abandonment of projects by contractors that were hired. The department also pointed out the need to have human resource to properly execute the projects outlined.

The Department of Development Planning then moved from having area Councilors as representatives of the people, to having Ward Development Committees (WDC's). This was done in order to reduce on the political influence experienced in the department. The Council was also tasked to ensure the projects that had been listed were beneficial to the community, hence they had to go to site and inspect before approving the projects brought forward.

### **5.4 Department of Housing and Social Services**

The strategic plan for the Department of Housing and Social Services gave them direction in the operations and aligned service delivery to the Local Government Strategic Plan. Therefore, based on the objectives set, the Department's aim was to harness the resources to the right objectives in order to avoid mismanagement of resources as well as facilitate easy monitoring and evaluation of the activities outlined. The projected budget for the priorities to be achieved amounted to 11.33% of the overall budget estimate. Despite the department having seven (7) sections, only 46% of their priorities were implemented. In terms of service delivery, the department took advantage of the fact that they work with the community closely hence they were in a better position to know exactly what the needs of the community were and how to improve on them. One of the Department's achievements was the setting up of the Vocational Training School in Buchi, another



remarkable achievement was resettling the residents of Musonda Compound in order for the Mufuchani Bridge to be constructed.

The priority options of this Department were made through incremental procedural methods in that, much consultation was made from the different communities within the wards and stakeholders at all levels that would be affected by the different projects. The key players in this department were the Councillors as they knew the communities they represented better. Therefore, much lobbying was done in order for the department to settle for the specific priorities.

The challenges faced by each department were that, the department did not have funding to reach out to all the sections of the departments and the wards. Secondly, monitoring and evaluation was not done, hence the results were not as they visualized. The department also lacked the necessary manpower, these being the technocrats or experts, to assist in achieving the objectives set out. This was also as a result of transfers between Local Authorities and within the Councils of members of staff hence, continuity of projects was not there.

Though the strategic plan was not strictly followed due to political interference or resources and conflicting objectives, the plan allowed the department to come up with new ideas and themes of how to work within the time frame to meet the current needs. The department also encouraged stakeholder participation as they played a part in the implementation of the priorities. The stakeholders including Non-Governmental Organizations helped with settlement improvement (Peoples Process on Housing) as well as in terms of promoting Adult Literacy and Early Childhood Education. These assisted in the facilitation of community school construction and birth registration.

### **5.5 Department of Engineering and Services**

The Department of Engineering did not bring out much information but stated that the challenges faced were that, the plan was too vague, and it was impossible for them to properly monitor and evaluate the achievement rates of projects. Furthermore, some sections of the department had only one project to achieve in the 5-year period but even that was not done. The budget for the 5-year plan period amounted to 31.04% of the total strategic plan budget.

### **5.6 Department of Finance**

The Department of Finance understood the strategic plan as a document that informed the implementation of programs and activities in the department. Therefore, coordination was to bring competition amongst the departments in order to have relevant priorities being addressed. Hence, they projected to spend an approximate 5.5% of the total budget. The main principles were to develop resource mobilization action plans, to propose strategies for improved revenue collection, to create a city Investment and financing plan, to provide a Management Accounting Reporting Framework which stimulates managerial action and to prepare updated and audited financial statements. The department achieved 50% of planned activities at the end of the plan period. This was because the financial stability of the Council could not support the completion of the projects.

The main financial challenge was attributed to citizens of Kitwe unwilling to pay land rates and levies hence; the activities in the department were not well coordinated. This challenge could be as a result of the political influence experienced in the Councils operations. The department also stated that, the by-elections that fell within the period 2012-2016 saw a decline in the inflow of money to the Council since the Councillors advised the people not to pay any taxes to the Council as the Council was labeled as “burdening the people

with fees”. This was also based on the fact that, the Council was seen as an organization that misuses public funds. Human resource was equally a challenge in the department because they did not have enough staff to implement the priorities set. The department felt they needed local knowledge to handle the issues as the locals were part of the community. This was seen as a means to achieve better results as the staff they received was no properly qualified to solve the problems.

Whilst financially the City Council sought to engage the general public by reminding them that the Council exists for them and the money is needed for the Local Authority to function, the public and other stakeholder institutions needed to partner with the Council to support the crusade to raise adequate financial resources to finance the strategic plan implementation. Nonetheless, the economic conditions, particularly when the country experienced economic recession due to the depreciation of the Zambian Kwacha against the major currencies such as US dollar and the British Pound Sterling, it became difficult for the Council to raise funds. Consequently, the Local Authority resorted to making the land package holistic in that as people pay for plots, they also pay for services in advance as a means of raising funds. The department further went on to ensure markets function for the purpose they were created hence, they did away with street vending and ensured people are back in the markets and levied accordingly. In line with this, two (2) markets were built which were Nakadoli, Kamitondo and Ndeke, as well as the Chisokone shelter.

### **5.7 Department of Legal Services**

The Legal Department found the strategic plan relevant as it assisted the department to come up with monthly plans as well as quarterly plan. The department had a budget estimate of 0.15% of the total planned budget. This department attained their strategic objectives by working with the relevant departments such as Development Planning, Finance and Administration. The following were the developmental priorities for the department; to enhance transparency of land allocation systems, to computerize, decentralize and integrate the land administration system and carry out a land audit of serviced and offered land for development.

The challenges faced were that, the land within the city had illegal land developers. On the other hand, the department had a shortage of resources which were manpower and financial related. They employed strategies to raise the revenue base and sensitized the public on land alienation procedures.

### **5.8 The Department of Administration**

This Department understood the relevance of the strategic plan as a call for them to keep the systems running in that, they would provide the needed human power, transport and stationery. The developmental priorities of the department included the need to develop a Service Charter of Kitwe City Council, to conduct a job evaluation, to develop a human resource development policy, to formulate a performance management system and to enhance public awareness concerning Council Operations.

The department achieved approximately 90% of its strategic priorities. The priorities were based on the needs of the different departments as they needed to ensure the other departments perform efficiently. Some of the challenges encountered were that the department could not meet the time frames set because of some policy decisions that had to be made since some procedures needed more time. The department also stated that some procedures were bureaucratic in nature hence they take long time to be achieved. The overall amount the department projected was 0.63% of the total budget.

### **5.9 Ward Development**

Ward development was a critical aspect of the Strategic Plan to improve services within the different communities of the City of Kitwe. Considering the number of wards in Kitwe, the different Members of



Parliament for the constituencies then specified the ward priorities into Constituency priorities. Some of the projects that were implemented include the construction of the Mufuchani Bridge, completion of the laboratory construction at Rokana Basic School and Construction of the police post in Mulenga Compound.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the departmental analyses of their roles in ensuring that the strategic plan is implemented to expectation, the main internal and external challenges the Kitwe City Council faced were as follows: the process of plan formulation, style of plan implementation, inadequacies of resources, organizational culture, and over-ambitiousness of the plan, political influence and non-commitment of all stakeholders in the implementation process. With respect to the nature of the organization (being an arm of the Central Government under the Ministry of Local Government, many of the challenges were centered on financing of the priority projects identified within the plan. The Department of Finance disclosed that, this challenge was in two forms, i.e., difficulties in collecting revenue from the local people and delayed release of finances such as the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) from the Government. The Council was not able to generate revenue in order to finance the projects listed in the plan as the budgets that were estimated were beyond their financial capacity.

Secondly, human resource was a challenge in that the City Council did not have adequate labor to participate in the implementation process. This was attributed to the centralized system of recruitment of specialized labor and expertise by the Local Government Service Commission. The Local Government Service Commission is mandated by law to identify the appropriate expertise to supply the Local Authorities in the country with the right expertise when there is need. This process has its drawbacks and implications on the performance of the Local authorities. On this challenge, the South African Western Cape strategic plan had a similar constraint, though the problem was not the centralized system of recruitment. Besides the financial and human resources constraints, the study also identified organizational culture of the City Council as posing a challenge, i.e., some personnel did not buy into the vision of the plan; hence its implementation was not as expected. Mumbua and Mingaine (2015) stressed on this challenge in their study when they indicated that organizational culture, organizational commitment, lack of leadership direction and competencies constrain strategy implementation. This was observed through projects that had been started but were not implemented till the end. This was also the outcome of the study done by Chiuri et al. (2015). One other major internal challenge was the over-ambitiousness of the plan. As a public service institution, the observed perception had been that including every perceived project in the plan will be funded and implemented. Kalali, et al. (2011), had this proven in their empirical study indicating content dimensions as the most important reason. This included the issue of conflicting goals and priorities. In effect, the plan loses its value and purpose, hence being described as a shopping list.

Contrary to the internal challenges, There were two main external challenges, i.e., political influence and the general economic conditions experienced within the implementation period. The political influence (political interference) was based on the fact that the Council had Councilors who were in charge of the development of the Wards; in finding priority options to include in the Strategic Plan. The Councilors highly influenced the choice of projects and in some instances, made it personal to meet their own needs. Sithole, Chirasha and Tatire (2015), reported that political polarization hinders implementation of strategies because Council boardrooms are battlefields as a result of political differences. Political influence also affected the implementation of the strategic plan in that, during the period of campaign for elections, potential Councillors



promised the public that they would not need to pay for services which reduced further the amount of money the Council expected to receive to support implementation.

The other external challenge was the period between 2015 and 2016 when Zambia's currency depreciated at a very fast rate. The Zambia Kwacha depreciated against the major currencies like the United States Dollar and the British Pound Sterling. The Kwacha depreciated from K6.5 to US\$ 1.00 to K14.0 to US\$1.00 within a period of two weeks. This created instability in the financial markets. It also made it difficult for the City Council to generate as well as save adequately to finance the strategic plan projects. Basically, the inflation rate also increased which made it difficult for the general public and the business community. This is the challenge which Ehlers and Lazenby (2010) and Lehany, Reddy and Karodia (2015, p.7) alluded to that, *sometimes strategies fail because the market conditions they were intended to be exploited change before the strategy is actually implemented*. The instability in the financial markets thus becomes the concern of the government and its related institutions of governance especially at the local level.

Besides the issues of political interference and the financial markets instability, stakeholders (i.e., public organizations) considered to be directly linked to the plan implementation in the City of Kitwe had little or no information on the Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan. This is a similar case to that of Khulna City Council strategic plan which failed to incorporate the stakeholders as purported by Rahman (2015). Similarly, Sithole, Chirasha and Tatire (2015) reported this factor in their study of Nyanga Rural District in Zimbabwe. The officers in charge reported that, they had their own Strategic Plans in line with the Ministries they operated under. Their participation came in mostly where the District Development Committee (DDCC) would have to sit and accept or rule out decisions. The Officers did not participate in the formulation of the Kitwe City Council strategic plan hence implementation coincided with the plans they already had for themselves. This made cooperation difficult.

Very little has been done to improve on the challenges faced when implementing the strategic plan, though some attempts have been enforcing the decentralization policy and the introduction of Ward Development Committees (WDC's). Despite the challenges faced, no strategic plan review has been done in order for them to learn from the challenges faced. The decentralization policy was primarily formulated to improve service delivery by Local Authorities and District Administrative Officers (Ministry of Local Government and Housing, 2009). This was done to address the needs of both the urban and rural areas by considering areas of infrastructure as well as decision making. The response was devolving power from the centralized Government system of operating, to one that gives the people a voice in decision making. Therefore, the new approach to the strategic plan has been to move away from strategic planning for each individual Government department, to one strategic plan document that incorporates the priorities of the different departments. This implies that all stakeholders involved will be part of the plan with their roles clearly defined. This is why the Decentralization Implementation Policy therefore, articulates the roles that each stakeholder is supposed to play during implementation (Ministry of Local Government and Housing, 2009, p.12).

Similarly, Ward Development Committees have been introduced to the Council in order to reduce the amount of influence politics has on the implementation of the strategic plan. Some departments also stated that, in order for them to improve on implementation, they would make more realistic budgetary requests as well as making the priority options more specific to address the needs arising.

The Kitwe City Council Strategic Plan directed the Council's departments in their aim to improve service delivery by directing them through the different priority areas. Service provision was directed and improved in the projects that were prioritized in line with the resources and the needs of the people. This reduced on the amount of resources being wasted and gave the Council direction and a focus on what they would like the



City to look like. On the other hand, some projects were not taken into consideration because of the other problems that arose during the course of implementation. Hence the departments overlooked certain options as they felt need. This is why the plan was not followed consistently during implementation.

Much has been revealed about the Strategic Plan and the challenges that Kitwe City Council encountered. Therefore, the recommendations are based on the findings of the research.

There is need for Kitwe City Council to partner with Private Stakeholders as well as Non-Governmental Organizations that have the capacity to raise funds in order to reduce on the overdependence on Central Government for the financing of projects. This is based on the fact that, depending only on public institutions for resources may not yield outcomes as opposed to partnering with the private sector. Basically, the private sector is known to ensure that projects are successful and in turn get a value for their inputs hence measures can be taken for Kitwe City Council to partner with the private sector through favourable policies that benefit both parties. This will drive Kitwe City Council to successfully implementing projects and ensure they are running smoothly.

The coming of the Ward Development Committees may be a seemingly brilliant idea but ultimately, it is slowly becoming political. Kitwe City Council should make every effort to ensure that, the decentralization policy if fully implemented with the full participation of all stakeholders ensuring that all communities benefit despite the political interferences. This will be successful as the project options will not be dependent on one Government Department or Ministry but several of them as well as stakeholders, hence, there will be more accountability for finances and project success.

For the Strategic Plan to be implemented effectively there is need for all the stakeholders involved to understand fully their roles and buy into the vision of the plan. Therefore, sensitization should be done by Kitwe City Council to ensure all stakeholders are fully involved. This involvement should be encouraged right from the formulation of the plan till the project is functional and being operated.

Kitwe City Council should ensure that the citizens are well informed on projects and ensure their participation to reduce on cases of vandalism within the communities. This can be done by having workshops within the community to explain the importance of the strategic plan and the roles the community is to play.

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