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The oversight roles and competency of ward councilors in Midvale local municipality of South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Local government councils have widely been regarded as the closest link to the citizens. However, in South Africa local, government municipalities have been experiencing failures alluded corruption and various instances of inefficacies. Municipal councillors are assigned with the responsibility of public service delivery at the local government level as well as control of government resources thus individual councillor capabilities contribute to how decisions are made through their oversight roles at Midvaal Local Municipality. This study aimed to investigate councillor capabilities in conducting their oversight roles, the study explored the various methods used by political parties in the councillor selection processes to promote the overall effective performance of councillors at the local Municipality in their various structures committees to promote service delivery. The Midvaal Municipality has been a well-performing institution, performing considerably well winning 7 unqualified audits consecutively more evidence of performance is seen by the municipality attaining an award as the top performing municipality in Gauteng Midvaal IDP (2020/21). This is proof that the Midvaal Local Municipality is indeed delivering services to its residents it is also in good financial health.

The issue identified in this research study is that township communities still shows so much dissatisfaction with the services provided by the municipality has many causes beyond the individual ward councillor's areas of competence that largely stifles their work. Councillor competencies have certain elements that can satisfy the residents' needs in their respective wards if they are identified in each member deployment into councillorship by their political organisations. The majority of councillors who participated in this study had a welcoming attitude to the assessment of their competencies conversely some individual councillors detested the researcher's efforts to assess their competencies due to personal reasons. Councillors who participated in this study indicated that their competencies were stifled by various elements at the local Municipality, which consisted that they had little understanding of the local government policies and lacked technical skills.

The township community in the Midvaal are situated on the edge of the developed areas or in a rural setup, Township low-income communities experience limited services and infrastructure for service delivery. Low-income communities require access to social services which they lack at present, low income township communities in Midvaal has highlighted displeasure on service delivery trends in the Municipality which the affluent and the township low income has large differences. Thus a great effort is required to bridge the gap between the

poor and the affluent in the local Municipality. The findings of this study suggest that training and development of councillors should be included in Municipal legislation to give sector-specific knowledge to councillors which will enhance oversight and development.

Key words and phrases: Councillor, good governance, ethical, leadership, service delivery. Political accountability, municipal good governance, Midvaal Local Municipality