Research Article

Strategic Change Management Practices at Municipal Council of Kiambu

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Abstract: The aim of this paper was to assess the strategic change management practices at the municipal council of Kiambu. Case study research design was used. The employees at the municipal council of Kiambu were the target population. Personal interviews using an interview guide were used to obtain the data for the study. The study revealed that the council had undertaken both structural and strategic changes. Both changes were necessary in order to for the council to be efficient and effective in service delivery and bring about transparency and accountability in running the affairs of the council. The changes involved the adoption of strategic planning, putting in place a new top management team, coming up with customer service charter, having a formal organizational structure in place, installing an ICT system, refurbishing the council library, and having cultural transformation within the council. The study concluded that conclusion that most of the changes at Kiambu municipal council were both deliberate and necessary. The changes at the council were necessitated by the need for the council to be efficient and effective in service delivery, and the need for transparency and accountability.

Keywords: Strategic Change, Change management, Strategic management and Municipal Council of Kiambu.

Introduction
Background
As the competition of modern business increase due to dynamism and other factors such as globalization and technological changes, businesses are turning to strategic management as the highway towards unveiling their full potential and enhancing performance and competitiveness. Strategic management is concerned with matching the organization to the environment in which it operates. According to Pearce and Robinson (2005), in order to achieve their goals and objectives, it is necessary for the organizations to adjust to their environment.

Profound changes are taking place in organizational life and the world of work is changing because the organizations of work are changing their ways. At the same time, however, the organizations have to adapt to a changing world of work, it's a chicken and egg situation. According to Burnes (2000), the magnitude, speed, unpredictability, and impact of change in the external environment are greater than ever before. It is crucial that organizations seek to create a competitive advantage and wherever possible innovate to improve their competitive positions. This implies the readiness to change within the organization and the ability to implement the proposed change (Ansoff and MacDonnel, 1990). Managing strategic change is about managing the unfolding non–linear dynamic processes during strategy implementation. It involves change or alignment and re-alignment or policy, systems, styles, values, staff, and skills of an organization to realize a strategy management of strategic

change is therefore how to create conditions that make proactive change a natural way of life (Thompson and Strickland, 2003). Understanding and managing change are the dominant themes of management today. Adapting to the ever–changing present is essential for success in the unpredictable future. Thompson and Strickland (2003) observe that in fast changing business environments, the capacity to introduce new strategies and organizational practices is a necessity if an organization is to achieve superior performance over long periods of time.

Changes in the public sector organizations in Kenya have been occasioned by the introduction of public sector reforms in Kenya. Rose and Lawton (1999), observe that rising and demanding population coupled with reduced resources have placed extreme pressures on public services. The introduction of performance contracting in Kenya in 2004 pointed to the rejuvenation of public sector reforms in a bid to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public sector organizations while reducing total costs, whose fundamental principle is the devolved management style where the emphasis is management by outcome rather than by process. It was therefore providing a framework for changing behaviors in the context of devolved management structures and accountability for results (Gekonge, 2005).

The Kenyan Government has decentralized some services so as to respond to the needs and priorities of its citizens. It has tried to reach the rural and urban areas through the ministry of Local Government. The Ministry of Local Government has 175 local authorities (Councils), covering the entire country, divided into City, Municipalities, Counties and Town councils as stipulated in the Local Government Act Cap 265 of the laws of Kenya (GoK, 2005). Some of the services offered by the Councils include planning, burying of the destitute, management of bus parks, development and maintenance of markets, environmental maintenance, educational services, land management, water and sewerage, street lighting among others.

The Municipal Council of Kiambu was constituted as an urban council in 1963 originally having been under the County Council of Kiambu. Later in 1974, it was elevated to a town council to cater for the increasing demands of the local community. In 1981, it was given the full status of a municipal council. The Council is within Kiambu District in Central Province of the republic of Kenya. The Local Government Act cap 265 laws of Kenya (GoK, 2005) provides for the creation and establishment of local authorities. The act defines their powers, duties and responsibilities. The Act deals with other issues inter alia powers and privileges, election, nominations, committee structures and responsibilities of the council. Municipal Council of Kiambu derives its mandate from the Local Government Act Cap 265 laws of Kenya (GoK, 2005).

Statement of the Problem
Organizations, whether private or public, profit or non-profit, have in recent times faced turbulent and rapid changing external conditions that necessitate organizations to continuously undertake change to adapt to the changing conditions. Managing this change requires the use of systematic methods to ensure that a planned organizational change is guided in the planned direction, conducted in a cost effective and efficient manner and completed within the targeted time frame and with the desired results.

Public sector reforms in Kenya have necessitated that all organizations in the public service undergo the required transformation in order to be efficient and effective in service delivery. Local authorities, Kiambu Municipal Council included, have found it necessary to undertake change in order to be efficient and effective. Over the years, the Municipal Council of Kiambu has had enormous challenges in the fulfillment of its mandate and the reforms in the

public sector have made it compulsory for the council to develop a strategic plan in order to align action with its mandate within a changing and dynamic environment.

Different aspects in the management of strategic change in various organizational contexts have been widely studied (Rukunga, 2003; Ogwora, 2003; Nyamache, 2003; Mutuku, 2004; Kasima, 2004; Mbatha, 2005; Kisunguh, 2006'; Muturi, 2006; Njiru, 2007; Kiini, 2007; among others). These studies have brought to light the approaches, practices, challenges and responses to the management of strategic change. However, only one among these studies (Mbatha, 2005) has been done in an organizational setting similar to that of Municipal Council of Kiambu. This study seeks to focus on the strategic change management practices at the Municipal Council of Kiambu in order to contribute towards narrowing the existing gap.

Objectives
✓ To establish strategic change management practices at Kiambu Municipal Council.

2.0 Literature Review
The Concept of Strategic Management and Strategic Change Management
Strategic management refers to the managerial process of forming a strategic vision, setting objectives, crafting a strategy, implementing and executing the strategy, and then over time initiating whatever corrective adjustments in the vision, objectives, strategy, and execution are appropriate. A strategy thus entails managerial choices among alternatives and signals organizational commitment to specific markets, competitive approaches, and ways of operating (Thompson and Strickland, 2003). The outcome of the strategic management process is organizational strategy (Schendel and Hofer, 1979).

Strategic change is the process of moving an organization away from its present state towards some desired future state to increase its competitive advantage (Hill and Jones, 2001). Organizations go through some kind of strategic change as their management try to strengthen their existing core competencies and build on ones to compete more effectively. Hill and Jones observe that strategic change aims at aligning structures, systems, processes, and behavior to the new strategy. They identify reengineering, restructuring, and innovation as the three kinds of strategic changes that have been pursued in the recent times. Hardy (1985) defines change management as the actions, processes and decisions that are executed by an organization's members to realize their strategic intentions.

Strategic change arises out of the need for organizations to exploit existing or emerging opportunities and deal with threats in the market. It is crucial that organizations seek to create a competitive advantage and wherever possible innovate to improve their competitive positions. This implies the readiness to change within the organization and the ability to implement the proposed change (Ansoff and MacDonnel, 1990).

Change Management in the Public Sector
As the internal and external environments change, organizations need to also change their strategies in order to achieve a strategic fit. In a dynamic world, a source of competitive advantage in one period becomes not only irrelevant but also often a source competitive disadvantage in another. Core competencies become core rigidities; valuable knowledge and skills become rapidly outdated, often at a rate faster than many people's learning capacities. Flynn (1997) defines the Public Sector as made up of Local Government, the Civil Service and other statutory agencies created by the government. In Kenya the Civil Service, Local

Authorities, Teachers Service Commission, and Statutory Organizations constitute the Public Sector (Public Service Reform Development Secretariat, 2005).

Public sector organizations are now competing with private sector organizations in providing public services. The concept of corporate strategy introduced in the private sector for analyzing opportunities and threats presented by the dynamic environment and positioning themselves through competence building to harness the opportunities and deal with threats is now commonly applied in the public sector. Public sector organizations are developing missions, visions, and strategies for their operations. Change management skills are now necessary and all public sector managers must possess them (Rowe *et al.,* 1994). Management of strategic change in the public sector is inherent in the reforms that re introduced to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery (Njiru, 2007). Public sector reforms relate to the general structure of a public sector or policy, or a business function of all the public organizations (like performance measuring, human resources management, etc). They have a broad scope and are usually designed by an external authority through a significant political process (Longo, 2007).

Forces of Change
The forces mirror those advanced by Kotter (1995) with the only difference being that Kanter adds the people dimension (labor). This may be for good reason given that she appears focused on the response to the changes. Her solution lies in the people to make decisions in response to the changes. Interestingly, even though Kanter's observations were made in 1984, at least five years before the collapse of communism and socialism that were central to the cold war, the mention of political forces by Kanter gives concurrence to the reason advanced by Kotter (1995) on the influence of politics on business.

Johnson and Scholes (2002) also identify political, economic, social, technological, and ecological factors as comprising the external business environment that present the organization with opportunities, threats and constraints. Aosa (2002) notes that managers have to constantly monitor developments in the environment and take action to maintain an appropriate relationship between their organizations and the external environment. This relationship is the strategy of an organization (Barbara, 1997). Ansoff and MacDonnell (1990) state that the environment can either be relatively stable or turbulent. They categorize the environment turbulence into five levels that are on a continuum: repetitive, expanding, changing, discontinuous, and surprise. Each of these levels requires different levels of strategic aggressiveness and organizational responsiveness.

Kazmi (2002) sums up the business environment as being complex, dynamic, and multifaceted with far reaching impact. Kazmi adds that the traditional approach to strategic management has had its emphasis on control, order, and predictability. But the environment is proving to be more unpredictable, uncertain and no linear. The environment can be summarized as characterized by ever recurring changes and herein lies the challenge for business managers.

Approaches to Change Management
Burnes (2000) observes that the way organizational changes are managed, and the appropriateness of the approach adopted, have major implications for the way people experience change and their perceptions of the outcome. In spite of the vast amount of literature on the subject, all suggested models of managing change in organizations fall under two main approaches: planned and emergent approaches.

Planned change is an iterative, cyclical, process involving diagnosis, action and evaluation, and further action and evaluation. It is an approach which recognizes that once change has taken place, it must be self-sustaining (i.e. safe from regression). The purpose of planned change is to improve effectiveness of the human side of the organization (Burnes, 2000). Planned approach to change is a term coined by Kurt Lewin to distinguish change that was consciously embarked upon and planned by an organization, as averse to types of change that might come about by accident, by impulse or that might be forced on an organization (Marrow, 1969 in Burnes, 2000). Hurkey *et al.*, 1992, in Burnes (2000) identify five values on which OD is based. They include: empowering employees to act, creating openness in communications, facilitating ownership of the change process and its outcomes, the promotion of a culture of collaboration, and the promotion of continuous learning. Therefore, the main emphasis of organizational development is on team building, personal development and participation (Burnes, 2000). Planned approach to change has been widely explored and various scholars have in the process developed a number of models for managing change in organizations. Key among them include Lewin's (1951) Three Step Model of Change and Force Field Analysis Model, Kotter's (1995) Eight Step Model, Kanter *et al.*, (1992)'s Model of Change Management, and Bullock and Battern (1985) integrated Four–Phase Model of Planned Change among others.

Pettigrew (1990) in Burnes (2000) argues that the planned approach to change management as exemplified by the OD movement is too prescriptive and does not pay enough attention to the need to analyze and conceptualize organizational change. He maintains that it is essential to understand the context in which change takes place. In particular, he emphasizes the following: the interconnectedness of change over time; how the context of change shapes and is shaped by action; and the multi-casual and non-linear nature of change. For Pettigrew, change needs to be studied across different levels of analysis and different time periods. This is because organizational change cuts across functions, spans hierarchical divisions, and has no neat starting or finishing point; instead it is a 'complex analytical, political, and cultural process of challenging and changing the core beliefs, structure and strategy of the firm.

The emergent approach to change, therefore, stresses the developing and unpredictable nature of change. It views change as a process that unfolds through the interplay of multiple variables (context, political process, and consultation) within an organization (Burnes, 2000). In contrast to the preordained certainty of planned change, Dawson (1994) in particular adopts a processual approach to change which is less prescriptive and more analytical and, he argues, better able to achieve a broader understanding of the problems and practice of managing change within a complex environment.

Advocates of Emergent approach to change who adopts the processual perspective tend to stress that there can be no simple prescription for managing organizational transitions successfully, owing to time pressure and situational variables. Proponents of Emergent approach argues that power and politics play a central role in the process of organizational change. This is a major point of departure between them and proponents of planned change (Burnes, 2000). For advocates of emergent change, it is the uncertainty of the environment that makes planned change inappropriate and Emergent change more pertinent. This point is emphasized by Stickland (1998) who draws on systems theory to highlight the way that organizations are separate from but connected to their environment. Generally, proponents of Emergent change stress five features of organizations which either promote or obstruct success: structures, cultures, organizational learning, managerial behavior, and power politics (Burnes, 2000).

Change Management Practices

The change management practices are related to various activities managers do as they handle various aspects of change. Change processes are by nature comply, but they must have clear priorities in order to be manageable. Excessive complexity and an inconsistent focus are deadly to a program's executability, especially to an organization wide program. So as they ask themselves what the right change would be; organizations must systematically define what the focal points of the change will entail and what, as a result those focal points will not entail.

Another critical factor for the success of a change process is top management credibility (Simons, 1999). Therefore, as they design the change, an organization's top management must ask itself, 'what can we credibly implement?', 'What change can we really commit to?' and 'What type of change will fit our style so that we will be able to support it authentically and whole heatedly later? Change programs and projects have to make sense from the beginning, when the actual idea of change came into place. The feeling that a change is right for an organization and the necessary sense of urgency to secure its realization will only occur if it is clear that the change has been tailored to the organization and its particular businesses situation (Bruch and Ghoshal, 2003). Change is only possible when it is contextualized against the backdrop of an organization's particular past and present (Pettigrew, 1987).

Managers in Local Government who are ultimate winners in the restructured councils will rise to this challenge and respond to their environment by designing and managing organizations that: have strategy driven organizational structures and cultures that support change; incorporate commercially competitive and market focused business units; enable them to satisfy government directives regarding accountability and competition; effectively manage relationships with other organizations; and provide extensive opportunities for management development with special emphasis on strategic management, people skills and entrepreneurship (Longo, 2007).

In particular, everything that any organization needs to do to be change ready can be included in processes for strategic and business planning, organizational and job re-design, cultural change, performance management, management development, and business process reengineering among others. However it should also be remembered that most organizations do not need them all of these processes and many will have at least some of them in place. Strategic planning ensures that an organization is doing the right things. In the context of a change program, a strategic plan explains what the organization is changing to. Once it has determined what the right things to do are, it devolves accountability for doing them right to one or more business plans. In large organizations, strategic plans may be prepared at different levels in the organization and/or define the role of particular functions across the whole organization. Corporate planning is the highest form of strategic planning. Smaller organizations do not need this many plans, and often have one plan only, which is both a strategic and a Business Plan (Feldman, 2007).

The strategic planning process first identifies 'critical stakeholder needs' and environmental threats to success. It examines current organizational competencies, values and resources to determine the development needed to respond to these needs and threats. Strategic plans usually contain a vision and/or mission, values, objectives and broad strategies. The strategies define products and/or services to be delivered, markets to be served, and technologies (both hard and soft) that will be used to deliver them (Feldman, 2007).

Regarding organizational re-design (or re-structure), the purpose is to ensure that people are employed within a structure that both enables and encourages them to make the full range of their expertise available to the task of implementing of the organization's strategies. Both large and small organizations and units within large organizations can benefit from a re-design of their structure. Good re-design aligns an organization's with the strategies it is pursuing. It does not necessarily cause downsizing (Brown and Einsenhardt, 1998).

Change ready organizations integrate performance management into a cycle of planning and performance measurement that extends from corporate, through business unit planning down to individual performance agreements and appraisals. A performance management system will be most effective if appropriate consequences follow the achievement (or not) of performance goals. It should also be objective, valued by both employees and managers and trusted to be fair (Feldman, 2007). Performance management fortifies change by identifying duplication of effort and initiatives that are pulling the organization in opposing directions. Inefficiency results from duplication. The presence of initiatives working in position can lead to disintegration, confusion, mistakes, 'low morale and cynicism (Feldman, 2007).

The skills needed by managers in change ready organizations are those that will enable them to manage staff, to build constructive relationships with their fellow managers and strategic partners and to help their company to achieve its strategic goals. Motivation and leadership skills are essential for effective staff management. Change ready managers build constructive relationships with their fellow managers, suppliers and customers. They communicate well and contribute as equal team members. Because change ready managers need to make strategic decisions, thye develop an ability to step back and see the big picture (Simons, 1999; Davenport and Beck, 2000).

A further change management practice is Business Process Reengineering (BPR) which is a powerful change phenomenon and an approach that has made radical and fundamental changes to the way organizations conduct business. The purpose of these changes is to redesign the existing business processes and implement new ones with the objective of cost reduction and improve efficiency and effectiveness, including profitability, customer satisfaction, return on assets, growth, and market share (Hammer and Champy, 1993). According to Manganelli and Klein (1994), reengineering embodies rapid and radical of strategic value added business processes and the systems, politics and organizational structures that support them, to optimize workflows and productivity in the organization.

Change Management Models

Successful implementation of change requires a good focus to avoid common mistakes that lead to failure. Major theories and practitioners have proposed a number of models for strategic change management. The Eight (8) stage model proposed by Kotter is a typical model. Establishing a sense of urgency which is crucial to gaining the needed co-operation. With low urgency, it is difficult to bring together a group with enough power and credibility to guide the effort or to convince key individuals to spend necessary time to create and communicate a change vision. By examining the market and competitive realities, identifying and discussing key issues, crises or opportunities establishes urgency. Creating a guiding coalition because no one individuals is able to develop the right vision and communicate it effectively to large numbers of people, eliminate key obstacles and get the change going on. Develop a vision and strategy which is necessary in helping direct the change effort for effective and successful implementation of the change. Communicating the change vision where all means possible should be used to communicate the new vision and strategies. Such

means include employee bulletins, staff meetings, memos, and newspapers, formal or informal interactions. Empowering employees which involves getting rid of obstacles, changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision and encouraging risk taking and no traditional ideas, activities and actions. Generating short term wins because running a transformation without serious attention to short term wins is extremely risky. Anchoring new approaches in the culture which entails creating better performance through better customer and productivity oriented behavior, more and better leadership, and more effective management.

The Action Research Model is based on the emphasis that change requires action and also the recognition that successful action is based on analyzing the situation, identifying possible alternative solutions, and choosing the one most appropriate to the situation at hand. An agent gathers data and solves the problem jointly with the client (Burnes, 1998). The Three Step Model proposes going through the steps of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. Unfreezing involves removing those forces maintaining the organization's behavior at its present level. Moving involves acting on the results of unfreezing i.e. take action to move to the desirable state of affairs. Refreezing seeks to stabilize the organization at the new set of equilibrium (Burnes, 1998). Rose and Lawton (1999) have proposed a model for public sector change management. They propose a dozen action steps to managing change in the public sector: assuring the support of stakeholders; using leadership to generate support for change; using symbols and language to stress the importance of change; building in stability to reduce uncertainty and anxiety; surfing dissatisfaction with the present state to demonstrate the need for change; participation in change to build ownership; rewarding behavior in support of change; making time and opportunity to discharge from the present state; developing and communicating a clear vision of the future; using multiple and consistent leverage points; developing organizational arrangements for the transition and building in feedback mechanisms.

3.0 Research Methodology
Research Design
A case study research design was adopted in the study. It involved an in depth investigation into the strategic change management practices in a local authority (The Municipal Council of Kiambu). Case study research design provides very focused and valuable insights to phenomena that may otherwise be vaguely known or understood.

Data Collection
The study used primary and secondary data which were collected based on the objectives of the study. To achieve this, an interview guide was used in which eight respondents were targeted. These include the Mayor, Town Clerk, Heads of departments of Finance, Works, Revenue, Audit and Accounts, and Social Services. These respondents were considered to be resourceful enough in providing the data because they occupy positions whose duties and responsibilities involve in part the management of strategic change at Kiambu, Municipal Council. The interview guide was administered through mail and follow up personal interviews that allowed for further probing. Secondary data were obtained from the council's documented change initiatives.

Data Analysis
Qualitative data was collected in the study hence content analysis was used. This involved making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages and using the same to relate trends.

4.0 Finding and Discussions

Nature of Change at Municipal Council of Kiambu

Organizations initiate and implement different types of change depending on the forces that define the context of change within them. The study focused on the strategic and structural changes. The study intended to establish whether the respondents were aware of the strategic and structural changes that have taken place at Municipal Council of Kiambu for the last 3–4 years. This was to form the basis of further investigation into other aspects of change at the council relevant in achieving the study objectives. All the respondents that were interviewed indicated that they were all aware of the changes that have taken place at the council for the last 3–4 years.

Strategic Changes

According to Hill and Jones (2001), strategic change is the process of moving an organization away from its present state towards some desired future state to increase its competitive advantage. According to the respondents, it was established that a number of strategic changes have been initiated at Municipal Council of Kiambu that are geared towards moving it to the future desired state. The changes were found to be concerned with efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery at the council. Key among the strategic changes that was established is the adoption of strategic planning by the council, a practice which had not been practiced since it was founded. According to the respondents, the adoption of strategic planning by the council has revolutionalized the way things are done at the council. With the vision and mission statements, the management of the council is now focused than ever in ensuring that municipal council of Kiambu delivers its mandate most efficiently and effectively. Further, strategic planning has resulted into the development of annual and quarterly action plans by each and every section in the council, a practice that has continuously improved service delivery and effective utilization and management of resources by the council.

Following the adoption of strategic planning, a number of consequential strategic changes were pointed out by the respondents. To ensure successful implementation of the strategic plan, a new top management team was put in place to offer the necessary and competent professionalism in spearheading the required changes at the council. Given this orientation, all staffs at the council were empowered to carry out the changes through training and involvement in decision making.

Moreover, the respondents pointed out that there has been a significant change of employee perception about the council and municipality of Kimbu at large with respect to its linkage with the outside world. This has in turn had a positive impact on public perception of the council's image which has resulted into collaborations with the public to identify priority areas in which the council should concentrate. This saw the implementation of the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (ILASDAP) project that was identified and prioritized by public. The project concerned maintenance of roads, improved water provision, construction of police post to improve security among others.

It was also established that being a public organization, municipal council of Kiambu realized the need to enter into contract with the customers by promising them high quality service delivery. This promise, according to the respondents, was encapsulated in the council's customer service charter. This was found to be a new initiative by the council to emulate and/or benchmark best practices in the public sector as well as private sector.

Structural Changes

Initiating strategic changes would not be adequate enough to bring about the desired changes in any organizations. Strategic changes have to be complemented by the structural changes in orders to efficiently and effectively implement the desired changes. The intention of the study was to establish the structural changes that accompanied the strategic changes at municipal council of Kiambu. Key among the structural changes that were pointed out by the respondents is to have an organizational structure in place. According to the respondents, the council had been operating without a formal organizational structure in place. This meant that the roles, duties and responsibilities were not clearly defined, the line of authority were unclear, and therefore accountability lacked to a large extent. Respondents also indicated that for all the time that the council has had no formal organizational structure, there has been absence of job descriptions and specifications. This was a recipe for ineffective coordination and communication within the council and even with its outside world, more so with the customers and the general public.

According to the respondents, having a formal organizational structure has resolved all the above issues and as a result, led to improved efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. This is because there is clarity in the reporting relationships up to and including clarity in who is responsible for doing what as regards implementation of the strategic plan in carrying out the council's mandate. This has been strengthened by having job descriptions and specifications which have led to recruitment of qualified and competent personnel to spearhead the council's reform agenda. It was also established that the council has installed an information and communication technology (ICT) system to enhance communication and sharing of pertinent information for decision making. According to respondents, the ICT system has led to quick decision making, significant reduction in paperwork, efficiency in service delivery and above all, it has empowered a significant number of staff in the council because of ease of access and availability of information for decision making and effective interface with customers.

Closely related to the installation of the ICT system is the refurbishment of the municipal library. Respondents pointed out that for a long time, the municipal library has been dilapidated and therefore not only the general public but also the council staff have been lacking this essential service for purposes of obtaining up to date information. The refurbishment has so far resulted into not only equipping the library with the up to date facilities and reading materials but also providing a conducive environment for reading and studying. Respondents observed that the above changes were not so easy without concerted effort from the council staff and management. Effective implementation of the changes required that employees are motivated and empowered to carry out their respective activities. To this end, the study established that hitherto delays of salary payments were now a thing of the past. The strategic and structural changes that the council initiated and carried out ensured that the council employees understand what the council's mission is and what their contributions are in carrying out that mission. As a result, the changes have witnessed an increase in council revenues which have translated into improved capacity to implement the changes and prompt salary payments to the employees.

Necessity of Change

The study sought views from respondents on whether or not they considered the changes that have been carried out in the council were necessary. The respondents indicated unanimously that the changes were necessary and provided a number of reasons why they considered the changes were necessary.

Key among the reasons why the changes were necessary was because of the need for the council to be efficient and effective in service delivery. The respondents felt that over the past, the council has been entangled by enormous inefficiencies and ineffectiveness that had resulted into massive revenue losses and tainted public image. The need for efficiency and effectiveness was also motivated by a further need to benchmark with the best practice. Another reason why the changes were necessary was the need for transparency and accountability. Several corporate governance issues at the council were wanting so much so that corruption and other malpractices characterized the council. Therefore, as a way of restoring public image (both in the eyes of the public and employees) deliberate efforts to introduce necessary changes were long overdue. Further, respondents pointed out that the changes were necessary in order to address key stakeholders interests (business community, staffs, community).

Change Management Practices

The first objective of the study was to establish the change management practices at Kiambu municipal council. It was established that a number of change management practices were adopted in managing change at the council. The study findings also show that the practices were in line with the nature of the changes that were found to be carried out at the council. The practices are discussed in this section.

First and foremost, respondents indicated that there was extensive adoption of business planning at the departmental and/or sectional/divisional level. This planning was, according to the respondents, in line with the desired strategic change at the council which necessitated the adoption of strategic planning. The study findings revealed that such planning entailed coming up with work plans for all staff, setting targets and measurement criteria. The planning for operations in the council was found to be carried out on a daily basis in all areas of the council. To ensure that this planning is efficiently and effectively done, it was established that a number of mechanisms were put in place at the council. These include putting in place an effective and efficient audit department and constituting a finance and audit committee to coordinate and ensure effective financial planning in all the departments, drawing up monthly performance plans and consolidating them for management action, and instituting an efficient monitoring and evaluation system to track implementation of the plans.

The study also found out that the council has adopted restructuring and/or redesigning of the departments and sections in order to carry out the desired changes. Respondents pointed instances of indirect restructuring whereby there was outsourcing of certain services and seeking professional services and/or personnel from the ministry to assist/advice/guide on some aspects of the change process. As part and parcel of restructuring, it was necessary to recruit qualified and competent departments and sections to enhance sharing of ideas and bring about positive change, create new units, and redefine job descriptions and designation of officers, hence leading to new titles for some job positions within the council.

It was further established that there were cultural transformation in the various departments and divisions/sections at the council. Even though respondents pointed out that it was difficult to have full cultural transformation at the council, they were upbeat to observe that there have been significant strides in cultural transformation at the council. This was made possible through training staff for more responsibilities e.g. community responsibilities, and holding seminars for sensitization and exposure among staff which has gone a long way in changing the way of doing things.

A further finding indicated that the council managed the change through instituting a performance management system. The study established that this practice was adopted up to departmental level where the various heads of departments are held responsible and accountable for their departments' performance and the individual staff therein. The system, according to the respondents, was seen as a move towards encouraging a result oriented culture from a process oriented culture at the council. To this effect, the system has a scheme for rewarding outstanding performance.

Another change management practice that was found to be adopted by the council is career development. The study established that the council undertakes career development first through carrying out needs assessment (TNA) to know areas of need and prepare staff on succession planning and management. To effect this move, employees are encouraged to go for professional and academic training in different disciplines and after securing admission, they are given time off and sponsored to undergo training.

The study findings established that the council adopts performance improvement strategies in managing change. This involves the adoption of the rapid results initiative (RRI) approach, working towards ISO certification, establishment of customer satisfaction and complaint handling unit. Breaking of annual plan into quarterly plans and allocating them to various rapid results initiative groups to gauge performance within a period of 100 days, provision of tools to achieve the targets, computerization, upgrading of markets and carrying out repairs, and carrying out regular training to equip implementers with skills to assist them achieve targets.

The respondents also pointed out that the management of change at the council had been carried out through enhanced empowerment. This was found to be done mostly through training. It was established that the staff are trained and placed on certain jobs that were initially outsourced. The training also targeted areas as ISO and ICT and involved seminars and video and visual presentation programmes on real life organizational transformations. Further empowerment was through participatory decision making, provision of open channels of communication, delegation of decision making authority, and opening up avenues for collective responsibility and accountability. A perennial problem that was delay in decision making and production of council reports. Therefore, in introducing change at the council, it was established that the council embarked on Business Process Reengineering to curb the problem and ensure that desired changes were implemented. This went a long way in shortening the process of obtaining and processing data, shortening report production and approval times, license and receipts processing times. All those were made possible through the installation of an ICT system which saw the networking of all the departments and as a process, curbed corruption and increased revenue collection.

Conclusion and Recommendations
Change is a transition from some current state which is undesirable to some desirable future state through some set of actions. Understanding and managing change are the dominant themes of management today. Adapting to the ever changing present is essential for success in unpredictable future. It was established that there has been both strategic and structural changes at Kiambu municipal council. The study concluded that the council has undertaken both strategic and structural changes in order to be both efficient and effective in service delivery. The changes involved the adoption of strategic planning, putting in place a new top management team, coming up with customer service charter, having a formal organizational structure in place, installing an ICT system, refurbishing the council library, and

spearheading cultural transformation among others. Both the strategic and structural changes at the council were managed through adoption of various change management practices. These include among others extensive adoption of business planning at departmental and sectional levels, restructuring and/or redesigning of the departments and sections.

Conflicts of interest
There is no conflict of interest of any kind.

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