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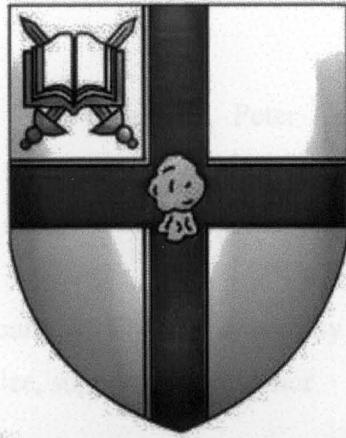
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**CHESTER**  
**BUSINESS SCHOOL**

**Management Development:**

**A Case Study**

**Of**

**Liverpool City Council**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
University of Chester  
for the degree of  
Master of Business Administration

**Chester Business School**

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## **Abstract**

Following a change in political and organisational leadership in 1999 Liverpool City Council has undergone a myriad of changes in order to improve service delivery and whilst reducing costs and bureaucracy. A key factor to achieving these aims was the recognition that for many years there had been a lack of investment in management development within the council and that service improvements were dependant on the skills and knowledge of managers at all levels and staff throughout the organisation.

As part of a strategy known as the Liverpool Way the council aimed to achieve its 'Vision and Values' objectives by radically changing the culture and the behaviours of its employees through education, and to create a learning environment through which service improvements would continue to grow.

Key to this strategy has been the development of front line managers through the Leadership Academy, middle managers through the Diploma in Management Studies (DMS) and senior managers through the Masters in Business Management (MBA) programme.

This study determines through a mixed phenomenological/positivist approach, uses epistemology, qualitative and quantitative research to identify whether the development programmes are having a greater effect than other contributing factors on influencing managers performance and attitudes whilst testing the data against established theory. The study illustrates the investigation and analysis of the data, discusses the findings and uses the results as a basis to identify possible recommendations for the future.

## **Declaration**

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic purpose.  
All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed:

Date: ...

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Public organisations in the twenty-first century have been confronted with many challenges which have been brought on by a host of dynamic environmental variables, private sector competition, rapidly advancing technology, increasing customer demands, and higher expectations from reduced budgets. All of these factors have required organisations to implement change at an unprecedented level and placed huge demands on managers (Drucker, 1999).

Many organisations have realised that in order to meet the demands being placed on them they need to develop their managers and provide them with the necessary skills. A wide body of literature covering the field of management development makes it clear that effective management development that is aligned with the needs of the organisation can produce sustainable, long-term results (Longenecker and Fink, 2000).

Jansen et al (2001) defined management development as

*'the organisation's systematic efforts to guarantee the development of qualified and motivated managers for its managerial needs'*

(Jansen et al., 2001).

In considering their objectives many organisations have focused on management development meeting the needs of the business and in turn overlooked the employer-employee psychological contract that emphasises loyalty, commitment, recognition and reward.

Many authors advocate that in today's rapidly changing environment management development needs to be a partnership between the organisation and individual employees and as such the partnership must balance the equally important needs of the organisation with the needs of the individual (Jansen et al., 2001). The outcome of such an approach is argued to yield greater levels of employee performance and satisfaction and sustainable improvements for the organisation, rather than an alternative unbalanced approach (Tsui et al., 1997).

While the success of development programmes may in part be demonstrated by the quality of the work produced by its graduates few organisations actually attempt to formally measure this (Newton et al, 1995; Jones et al, 1997; Bjornberg, 2002) preferring to rely on a gut feeling and intuition. Harrison (1996) made the point that management development programmes require rigorous and longer-term evaluation. It is also important that the effectiveness of the course for participants be clearly demonstrated and should seek to exhibit the effectiveness of learning, ensure ongoing validation, accreditation and support for the programme.

## 1.2 Research Question

*What are the perceptions of management development within Liverpool City Council?*

Many studies have focused on the value of Management Development (MD) programmes and the competitive edge they can provide to an organisation. However, little research has been conducted on how successful they actually are.

This study has attempted to understand and assess the perceptions of management development within Liverpool City Council (LCC) as a case study.

Prior research suggests that few organisations evaluate the outcomes or the return on this investment against the cost of their MD programmes.

The aim of this study is to:

- *Understand contemporary thinking on management development*
- *Investigate the perceptions of staff on their management development*
- *Investigate the evaluation of management development*

This study has been developed through theory and practice by exploring LCC's primary MD programmes, the MBA in Business Management, Diploma in Management Studies

and Leadership Academy programme. Each of these programmes has been delivered for a number of years 'on-site' by an external provider 'Chester University'

### **1.3 Justification for the Research**

LCC has invested between £5-6 million per year since 2002 on its various training and development programmes. A significant part of this investment has focused on its commitment to the development of senior and middle managers (approximately £600,000 per year) while its wider commitment to cultural change programmes for all staff raises its investment to in excess of £1m per year. These programmes are considered as fundamental in respect of the council's aim to become a premier European council.

While research has shown that many organisations (similar to LCC) see MD as a high priority with their commitment in this area remaining strong for the foreseeable future (Meldrum & Atkinson, 1998), expenditure on MD programmes seems to be one of the few areas of investment in which organisations are willing to indulge without lengthy analyses of financial payback, or measure of improved performance (Newton et al, 1995; Jones et al, 1997; Bjornberg, 2002).

Doyle (2000) found that the growing enthusiasm for MD is based on anecdotal evidence (Harrison 1993; Stewart & McGoldrick, 1996) or belief (rather than anything stronger). This belief being that MD leads to beneficial outcomes for the organisation (Newton et al, 1995), a belief further supported by Paauwe & Williams (2001) and Miller (1991) who established in their research on MD that gut feeling and intuition seemed to be an acceptable justification for continued support. As a result MD in the public sector has been the subject of much criticism and often regarded as having a bureaucratic, inefficient and unfocused approach (Beardwell et al, 2004).

### **1.4 Methodology**

This study will first examine the ideology behind MD and towards this end a literature review has been conducted to determine the current thinking on the subject. Understandings of the characteristics associated with the principles of MD have been

explored through theory and practice. Research within LCC has produced the case study material that is presented here and a theoretical model has been developed to illustrate the research.

The approach that has been adopted has been a phenomenological/interpretive approach utilising both qualitative and quantitative research. The research aims have been achieved by further adopting a hybrid approach of case study, semi-structured interviews and grounded theory.

The research for the study has been conducted through a questionnaire survey of LCC MD students. From within the survey responses 9 interview candidates were selected. In addition, the Head of Service for Learning and Development was also interviewed. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and had a duration of approximately ½ hour for the students and approximately 1 hour for the Head of Learning and Development. The interviews were recorded by the researcher via a combination of written notes and/or audio tape recording. Permission to conduct the student interviews was requested via the questionnaire survey on which students indicated their consent. The Head of Learning and Development consented verbally during an informal meeting which was subsequently confirmed in writing via an e-mail and in advance of the scheduled interview.

The interviewed students consisted of senior managers, middle managers, and front line operational managers employed either directly by LCC, or seconded to Liverpool Direct Ltd. The interviewees also represented the range of MD programmes considered within this research.

Further research methods included the examination of various LCC MD programme publications and a review of approximately 4 years of Executive Management reports (2002-2006) on the plans and progress of MD within LCC.

## **1.5 Outline of Chapters**

### ***Chapter One – Introduction***

The field of study relating to MD is outlined within this chapter. The importance of aligning the needs of the individual and the organisation is discussed and the research question ‘*What are the perceptions of management development within Liverpool City Council?*’ is presented. The aims, justification and methodology for the research are also presented.

### ***Chapter Two – Literature Review***

Literature relating to the fields of study is presented to provide an overview of why management development occurs and what organisations seek from it. The evaluation of management development is discussed in addition to an overview of the literature that considers the impact of cultural change and the strategic value of management development.

A theoretical framework model, the ‘APOD’ model, is presented to illustrate some key characteristics associated to aligning both organisation and individual development.

### ***Chapter Three – Methodology***

The methodology approach used to collect the data which answers the research question is described. The methods deemed appropriate for this research are justified and methods that were rejected are briefly discussed. The research process is outlined and includes information concerning method of the study, ethical considerations and accountability for the project.

### ***Chapter Four – Findings and Data analysis***

The findings of the study are presented in detail with explanations of the data and charts presented. Each of the areas of data sources have been analysed and presented individually to enable clarity.

### ***Chapter Five – Conclusions and Implications***

The adopted methodology is critically evaluated. Conclusions about the research objectives and the research question are offered. The limitations of the study are

considered and opportunities are presented for future research opportunities that may contribute to the knowledge of management development and evaluation is discussed.

### ***Chapter Six – Recommendations***

This chapter proposes a series of recommendations for future action and highlights where the characteristics of the literature can be seen throughout the case study. This chapter also contains a proposed implementation plan.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Management Development**

According to Craven et al (1994) and Davis (1995) decades of management development have made little change to the way in which organisations operate. Davis argues that those claiming success have delivered too little in the time they have taken, and places failure on inept methodology, the fiction that “change takes time” and (Argyris, 1994) the way in which the management population thinks.

Storey (1989, 1990) argues that much of the literature surrounding the practice of MD concentrates on its function as a device for changing the organisation in terms of its culture, success, structure or Total Quality Management (TQM) policies while Davis (1995) argues that the focus for MD needs to be on thinking and not as it appears, to be rooted at the method and design level.

### **2.2 The Purpose of MD**

As part of an overall human resource strategy, many authors argue that MD must be linked to and support the organisation’s business strategy and have the commitment of all levels of management (Armstrong, 2006) if it is to enable the questions, ‘Why are you developing this manager?’ (Beardwell et al, 2004) and ‘How do we make sure that education and training has a direct influence on practice?’ Powell (1993) to be answered.

To help address these questions Mumford (1997) argues that MD is simply:

*“An attempt to improve managerial effectiveness through learning”*

Alternatively, Nadler et al (1989), Baldwin et al (1994) & Brown (2003), considered it to be a more complex process which aimed to:

1. Improve managers’ performance in their present roles.
2. Prepare them for greater responsibilities in the future.



Whereas Farnhan & Horton (1996) defined MD as having three main purposes:

1. To develop, consolidate and use the experiences of managerial staff effectively.
2. Identify future managerial talent and develop those who have it.
3. Help managers develop their potential.

They present their definition from a strategic context in which many programmes within the public sector are considered to focus on, developing new skills and competencies not only for self-development but to enable managers to become more effective as agents of change as traditional bureaucracy is replaced by new public service management.

While MD continues to become increasingly important to organisations it faces two great pressures (Goodge, 1998). Firstly, organisations are becoming flatter, making opportunities rare, difficult and risky although jobs and structures are now more flexible and prone to change. The obsession with development often fails to consider where in the hierarchy the people who are being developed will go (Davies, 1994). Therefore apart from achieving little improvement, such a process can often stimulate dissatisfaction. Secondly, when considering the effectiveness of past MD methods and programmes senior managers often look back at the past and ask ‘what did it buy us?’ in too many cases the answer is the budget bought very little.

A further challenge that senior managers have to face is how to retain talent. According to Sadler and Milmer (1993) “talent is the only scare resource” and organisations which fail to attract, nurture and retain that resource place themselves at an impossible disadvantage.

### **2.3 The Learning Organisation**

Mumford (1997a) suggests that many organisations have now adopted a learning organisation perspective in their MD, specifically the facilitation of learning how to learn and the adoption of a learning approach to strategy (Pedler et al, 1994) while proactively facilitating major organisational change (Banham et al, 1987) and nurturing

learning within the workforce (Nadler, 1980). Organisations are now encouraging greater individual responsibility for learning (Pettigrew et al, 1988a, 1988b) and recognition of the competitive advantage MD can bring (Porter, 1980, 1985).

While Beddows (1994) argues that the practicalities of being a learning organisation are still yet to be fully understood by organisations and management developers and that there continues to be a great deal of discussion in this area, Harrison (1993) and Sparrow & Pettigrew (1988) cite many organisations where such a business-led approach to training and development has become a part of an organisations development strategy.

## **2.4 Development Strategy**

Until recently the role of MD has been seen as mainly supportive of the change process. However, this is no longer the case as it is now seen as a major driver of change by the most progressive organisations (Beddows, 1994). While senior managers now take a greater interest in the development of their organisations human resources, Garavan et al (1995) suggest that some of this interest may have been triggered by the difficulties in recruiting skilled managers, the need to integrate the potential of all employees with the business objectives, a greater emphasis on performance and the increasing necessity for human resource and succession planning.

Morley and Garavan (1995) emphasise that the demand for quality is driving many public sector organisations to develop their employees and adopt a TQM approach; they suggest that organisations need to *'harness people's commitment in the organisation towards achieving its goal of customer satisfaction'* and *'developing systems and procedures which allow for continuous improvement'*.

In order to obtain this commitment and build a flexible workforce that is empowered and able to respond to a rapidly changing environment, a greater emphasis has been placed on the perspective of development. However, Chambers (1990); Gleaves et al (1990) and Pettigrew et al (1988) argued that a careful mixture of planned experiences and activities fuelled by self-development is required for development programmes to be successful.

Brown (2003) claims that MD will continue to be driven by management's vision and corporate strategy, which will remain a form of strategic management development (SMD) which is focused on Critical Success Factors (CSF) and the development of a new culture. Therefore, organisations need to create support mechanisms, such as mentoring and coaching, in order to create a total development framework. If the organisation's framework is conducive to learning, then you can encourage individuals to pursue and take responsibility for their own development, they can become truly empowered and instead of change driving development, development can drive change (Beddows, 1994).

## **2.5 The Holistic Approach**

Gibbons (1994) argues that MD must be considered as much more than education and training and more as a holistic approach to both organisational and personal development and emphasises the significance of informal learning opportunities which need to be recognised and valued.

On the basis of a literature review Pfeffer (1994) concluded employee training and performance contingent reward systems are widely believed to improve the performance of the organisation. Prahalad and Hamel (1990); Winterton and Winterton (1996) Paauwe & Williams (2001) reinforce the assumption that investment in people brings a competitive advantage to an organisation as it promotes employees trust and satisfaction. Subsequently the relationship between development and business results is built on the premise that better deployment and use of human resources practices should correlate with better business performance (Ulrich, 1997).

## **2.6 Who Owns Management Development**

There are various perceptions of who owns MD. In the past for example, it has been considered to be the responsibility of the organisation, the trainers, managers and individuals. Although, Beddows (1994) argues that line managers are perceived to have become much more responsible and proactive with regard to development of their staff rather than it being the domain of the organisation or training managers.

However, Senge (1993) suggests that the creation of an organisational culture/climate of learning is required to facilitate the line manager's role in MD as it is line managers who suggest developmental possibilities or agree/reject individual's requests for development. While, Jones et al (1997) argue that a line manager's needs for *development must also be met if they are to discharge their obligation to manage the development of others effectively*. In this context line managers must perceive the task of managing development as a vital part of their own personal development plan.

## **2.7 Sharing the Responsibility**

The Institute for Professional Development (IPD) (1995) suggests that development plans must be a shared responsibility between individuals and the organisation and not the sole responsibility of either. Although Peel (1992) argues that while there is a necessity for individuals within an organisation to have a development plan Paauwe and Rodgers (2001) argue that individuals should take responsibility for their own development – with and without their employer.

In general research has shown that the responsibility for development programmes remains an area of conflict (Brewster & Siderstom, 1994). Specialists within many organisations often have ownership of the training and development process, while key stakeholders such as line managers have been excluded Garavan et al (1993); Goodge (1998).

This divide was evidenced through research conducted by Grace and Straub (1991) who found that line managers are often excluded from the training and development process as they were perceived not to understand the subject matter. To the contrary Sikula (2001) argues that professionals, who are often tasked with providing development programmes, are yet to be recognised as strategic partners within organisations. However, Newton et al (1995) and Hassan et al (2005) conclude that successful organisations have been able to design effective systems that understand organisational culture and incorporate MD without such conflicts.

The future challenge therefore for those responsible for developing managers may be to shift from merely '*doing*' development (designing and delivering training courses) to

managing development in ways that address the wider contextual barriers that inhibit or block effectiveness (Doyle, 2000; Mole, 2000)

## 2.8 Meeting Development Needs

Mumford (1993) notes that development needs can arise from current performance or those presumed necessary for another job. The nature of managerial activity provides a constant stream of learning opportunities and should encourage the creation of a plan for meeting individual development needs. Davis (1995) argues such development needs should begin with managers being helped to understand their purpose, arguing Deming’s picture of management which is to understand customers, understand the work and problem solve to improve the process.

The focus on meeting individuals’ learning needs is supported by Ashridge (1993) research which revealed that 51% of the organisations they surveyed said they planned to make more use of programmes that were customised closely to the individual learning needs of the participants (Table 1).

	Frequency (percentage)			
	More Use	Same Use	Less use	No Use
Structured expert courses	13%	40%	30%	16%
Interactive courses	29%	52%	15%	5%
Courses tailored to individual learning priorities	51%	25%	6%	18%

**Table 1: Meeting Individual Learners Needs**

Source: Trends for Learning Preferences, Ashridge (1993)

This demand for individual learning creates enormous challenges for organised business schools and questions many of the long held assumptions they are founded on, requiring the use of diagnostic methods, dealing with real world issues, individual projects, skilled facilitation and curriculum flexibility, with extensive feedback and continuous evaluation of progress both during and after the programme.

Whichever approach is taken Paauwe and Rodgers (2001) stress the importance of the learning styles of Honey & Mumford (1982) and the need for the four stage learning cycle of Kolb (1984) to be considered within any MD programme if it is to be effective.

## 2.9 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is one means by which organisations often choose to assess their progress and effectiveness in many areas of their business including MD. However, benchmarking is not without its critics (Campbell, 1999; Cox and Thompson, 1998; Hammer and Champy, 1993). Criticisms include claims that *'comparing existing practices between organisations is of little value and can be too slow a process'*. Furthermore, it is argued that managers may attempt to apply methods without fully understanding them or become consumed within the process itself, losing sight of the purpose. Although benchmarking appears to be an increasing trend within the public sector Davis (1998) points out the potential mismatch in using techniques designed for the for-profit sector in the not-for profit environment of the public sector and the risks involved in the mismatching.

Ford (1993) proposes a series of metrics which could be applied to MD benchmarking. Some are relatively straightforward to measure and calculate, while others are more challenging.

## 2.10 Evaluation

Evaluation as opposed to benchmarking is an important but often overlooked aspect of any human resource development programme (Bjornberg, 2002). In the past many corporate MD programmes have lacked of anything but the simplest evaluation systems. The emphasis on past evaluations has focused on the participants feed-back and costs (Craven et al, 1994) which have been considered much easier to measure than benefits. However, even where the benefits are considered, again it is usually only the easiest to measure that receive the attention. As such, these evaluation methods lack credibility when considering actual learning changes i.e. changes in behaviour on the job, or improvement in organisational performance. This is often because evaluation has been left to those responsible for providing the MD (Kirkpatrick, 1976).

Somewhat cynically, it has been suggested that there is an aversion to measuring the outcomes of MD programmes by those responsible. This may be a result of the simple fear of collecting data which shows their programmes to be ineffective and could lead to criticism and/or budget cuts (Kraiger, 2002). Nonetheless, there is a clear need within large organisations to measure the impacts of learning and development and therefore it is fitting to have an industry acceptable model for doing so. Of the many models available Kirkpatrick's is a widely accepted model. Kirkpatrick defines evaluation as meaning "*measuring changes in behaviour that occur as a result of training programs.*"





This model is actually one that has been in existence since the 1950's but continues to be accepted today using technology and creativity to maximise its benefits for modern organisations.

The original model is composed of four levels of training evaluation, these being reaction, learning, behaviour and results. However, a fifth level, Return of Investment (ROI) has been added since then. The fifth level was the brainchild of Dr. Jack J. Phillips, Ph.D., author, consultant and KnowledgeAdvisor advisory board member. The illustration below (Figure 1) and subsequent commentary summarises Kirkpatrick's Four Levels and Phillips' Fifth Level.

Albeit from a different perspective Beardwell et al (2004) argue that post development evaluation should be given a period of time ideally somewhere between 6 and 12 months for managers to judge whether knowledge and skills have been transferred from the training environment into the management role and assess attitudinal and behavioural change in the workplace.

## **2.11 Reservations**

Research suggests that the first of Kirkpatrick's levels is often as far as many evaluations go (Van Buren, 2001), focusing on the reaction of trainees through a post-program evaluation. The assumption from such measurements is that if a trainee liked the programme then learning would have occurred.

<p>Level 1 Reaction</p> 	<p>Did they like it?</p>	<p>Kirkpatrick's view is that, "evaluating reaction is the same thing as measuring customer satisfaction. If training is going to be effective, it is important that students react favourably to it."</p>
<p>Level 2 Learning</p> 	<p>Did they learn?</p>	<p>Level Two is a 'test' to determine if the learning transfer occurred. Kirkpatrick argues, "It is important to measure learning because no change in behaviour can be expected unless one or more of these learning objectives have been accomplished"</p>
<p>Level 3 Behaviours</p> 	<p>Do they use it?</p>	<p>Level Three evaluates the job impact of training. "What happens when students leave the classroom and return to their jobs? How much transfer of knowledge, skill, and attitudes occurs?" Kirkpatrick questions, "In other words, what change in job behaviour occurred because people attended a training program?"</p>
<p>Level 4 Results</p> 	<p>Did it impact the bottom line?</p>	<p>Level Four is "the most important step and perhaps the most difficult of all." Level Four attempts to look at the business results that accrued because of the training.</p>
<p>Level 5 ROI</p>		<p>In 1991 Jack Phillips added a 5<sup>th</sup> level to the Kirkpatrick approach, called ROI or Return On Investment. The question asked here is "did the training pay for itself and more?" The units of 'currency' don't have to be financial, though they often are. This 5<sup>th</sup> level introduces for the first time the need for the evaluator to appreciate the finer workings of the organisation and also employ some skill in determining costs and benefits.</p>

**Figure 1: Kirkpatrick's Four Level Evaluation Model incorp. Phillips' Fifth Level**

Research by Warr et al (1999) has shown the there is relatively little correlation between learners reactions and measures of training, or subsequent measures of changed



behaviour. But as Tamkin et al (2002) point out, organisations still look to get a reaction from training but it is with caution that any learning objectives should be perceived to be met.

## **2.12 Return of Investment**

According to Paaue & Rodgers (2001) the majority of attempts to study MD have been uniformly depressing with continual complaints about the lack of tie-in to company strategy, no clear financial evaluation (Finegold, 1998) with many managers suggesting that half of what their organisation spends on MD is probably wasted.

Where for-profit organisations can see the benefits of MD translate into increased profits, for the not-for-profit (public) sector it can be much more difficult to measure although one aspect could be the ability to achieve more from the same or diminishing resources. Whatever the difficulties are in measuring the return (or non-return) of investment in MD are, there is an argument that if it is important enough to be done, then a return should be able to be demonstrated and measured. Asserting that MD is intrinsically a 'good thing' and therefore its effectiveness need not be measured is not a sustainable argument (Smith, 2004).

Goodge (1998) found in his research that while courses, workshops and programmes often resulted in managers learning a lot, the results had little commercial benefits, with some types of training being regarded as a waste of resources, identifying 'too much theory' and 'irrelevance to the business needs' being the a fundamental problem.

Research conducted by Beddows (1994) referred to the emergence of 'significant trends in the MD market place' supporting Ashridge's (1991 & 1993) research studies that across Europe, managers were rejecting the traditional ad-hoc approach to MD particularly those that were knowledge based and directive. Alternatively they were found to be moving towards more focused, and continuous learning processes that related to corporate strategies, competitive advantages and a return on investment.

Until some rigorous and consistent techniques for evaluation are applied any assertions of value for money may be viewed by internal customers with some scepticism. A consistent framework of skills needs to be developed to deal with the evaluation of MD programmes (Craven et al, 1994).

Whatever banner MD sits under within an organisation i.e. development and training, continuous development, workplace learning etc. the benefits of development and the

return of investment need to be demonstrable Paauwe and Rodgers (2001). This proposition however, at times attracts a negative response as it is argued there are many variables and any assessment would require too many assumptions to be made (Campbell, 1994; Edwards et al, 2003).

Smith (2004) argues MD is not an optional extra but a strategic imperative and the development of managers is critical to the successful implementation of change. As such, MD has become a critical success factor (Newton et al, 1995). However the costs associated to development activities can be both direct and indirect. Direct costs may include the easily identifiable costs such as course fees, trainer/consultant costs, materials and equipment required and the hire of training venues etc. While indirect costs may include employee time spent undertaking development programmes and the cost of personnel in administering and overseeing programmes. Whatever the cost, an organisation must consider what price it would pay for not undertaking MD or not doing so effectively (Smith, 2004). This in line with previous studies shows the development of employees leads to improved skills and performance (Sandberg, 2000), commitment (Iles et al, 1990), retention (Robertson et al, 1991) leading to improved organisational capability, effectiveness and productivity (Smith, 2004).

The problem of ensuring an appropriate rate of return is suggested to be greater in the public sector due to the end product/service not ultimately being marketed in the same way as goods and services in the private sector (Craven et al, 1994).

Some commentators advocate ROI as a means of assessing the overall impact of development on organisational performance presenting the calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Benefits from training (£)} - \text{costs of training (£)}}{\text{Cost of training (£)}} \times 100$$

Kearns and Miller (1997) believe that only this sort of measure is useful in evaluating the overall impact of training. They argue that particular hard measures should be used to evaluate specific training and development.

While it is recognised that measuring the cost of development may relatively easy. The production of convincing financial assessment of the benefits can be quite difficult.

Kearns (2005) recommends 'a rule of thumb' for calculating the effect of ROI that is; it should provide a performance increase of at least 1 per cent.

However a study of MD within Bath City Council suggested the return of investment came through the changes in culture and the dynamics of the political and interactive processes. Nixon (1992) in discussing culture change says that *'it is important for one's own development to act powerfully in taking initiatives. In contrast to passing on recommendations to the power-holders and waiting for them to do the job'*. Participants of the Bath City Council MD programme felt they were enabled to become more powerful in promoting change as well as more skilled and realistic about the barriers and defences to change.

Research undertaken in the UK over 15 years ago, entitled Training in Britain: A Study of Funding, Activity and Attitudes (Lewis et al, 1994) revealed that 85 per cent of UK employers made no attempt to assess the benefits gained from undertaking training. Lewis and Thornhill (1994) put forward their views on this suggesting that evaluation had been undermined by difficulties in quantifying the effects, the cost of evaluation could outweigh the benefits, sensitivity of the trainers who are keen to be seen in a positive light and organisations not being willing to admit that incorrect decisions had been made, taking the stance of *'if you don't want to know the answer, don't ask the question'* Adams et al (2002), while Newton et al (1995) concluded in their research that the last thing an organisation headed in the wrong direction needs is to be organisationally excellent!

### **2.13 The Obstacles**

Some of the problems of integrating MD with formal planning systems were highlighted by Hirsh and Reilly (1998, 1999) who looked at skills planning within large organisations. They found that the biggest changes affecting skills needs were not in the formal (documented) corporate plans, and sometimes the big changes came and went within the planning cycle. In practice, needs were generated by specific change projects or high level messages from senior managers (about big issues or vision and values).

Alternatively, they were identified through local operating issues or job-based competency frameworks (though these tended to be focused on the current job and never caught up with developments).

Highlighting a weak link in the implementation of learning plans following formal learning Cairns (1998) suggests that although the intentions were good they were often overtaken by the demands of the business. Organisations needed to provide support arrangements to help address this.

There is another stream of literature which questions the ability of formal development programmes to provide the skills and abilities needed for managerial success. For example, manager's jobs will differ according to the tasks they are charged with e.g. managing growth areas, start-ups or turn-arounds etc, which are very different from routine areas of work. Paauwe and Rodgers (2001) suggest there is evidence that the kind of structure knowledge and skills, which business schools typically impart, is far suited to the latter than the former situation.

Furthermore, Seibert et al's (1995) survey of organisations found evidence of weak links between business and MD strategy. Their findings were based on three factors:

1. The HR function was inwardly focused rather than outwardly on their customers (i.e. line managers).
2. HR devised rigid systematic plans that were not responsive to changes in the business environment.
3. There was a false dichotomy between developing individuals and conducting business.

However, McClelland (1994) reported that the biggest obstacle to MD was that the mindset of managers was linked to improving individual effectiveness rather than organisational effectiveness.

Hussey (1996) concluded that organisations were deluding themselves over the extent to which MD was reinforcing corporate strategy. This might be because no-one had thought through the issues in implementing their corporate strategies and what new competencies managers should possess.

Within the modern organisation it is argued that those involved in Human Resource Development (HRD) are considered as stakeholders (Millstien et al, 1981; Freeman et al, 1983; Evan et al, 1993) and as such should not be treated as a means to an end but as participants in determining the direction of development activities within the organisation Garavan (1995).

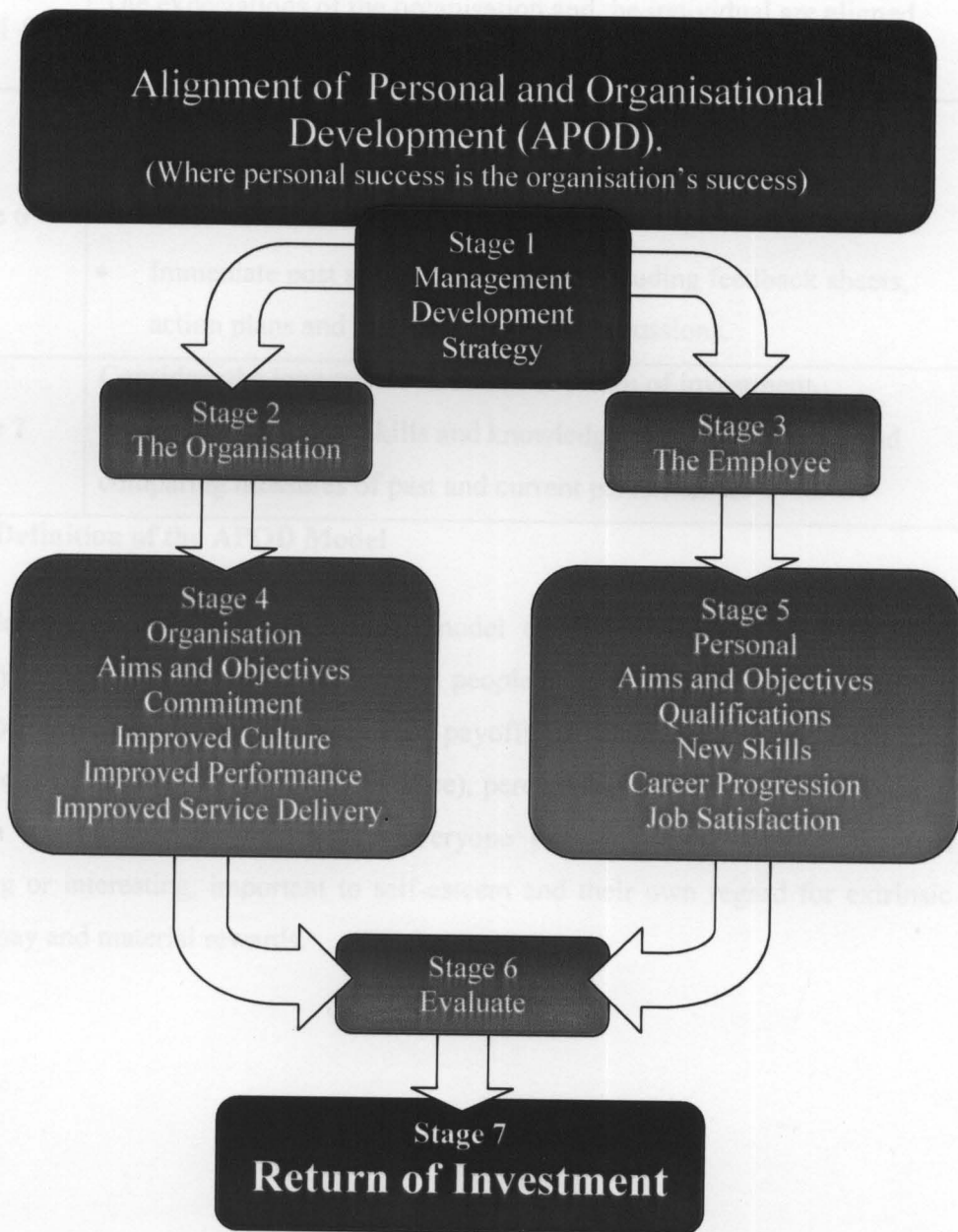
## 2.14 Conceptual Model

Although several models have evolved to look at the MD evaluation process including Tyler's (1949) Objectives approach, Scrivens' (2006) Focus on outcomes, Stufflebeam's (2002) CIPP, CIRO (Warr, Bird and Rackham 1970), the V model (Olson & Aaron, 2007) they are designed to cast a wide net and look at inputs, outputs, the context in which the training is carried out or needed, the product of the training, and the processes involved.

However, although arguably Kirkpatrick's 4 levels of evaluation doesn't readily address the question of whether a training or development was actually worth it Jack Phillips (1991) 5<sup>th</sup> level does ask what others do not – '*did the training pay for itself?*' Some thinkers on evaluation have reacted against this additional 5<sup>th</sup> level, partly because ROI is a term from the world of finance and there is an inference in some minds that training must pay for itself in financial terms or it shouldn't happen at all. There is some sympathy for this view, especially if you happen to be a shareholder or manager. The additional inference is that a lot of training that currently takes place that is seen as useful by employees but is very difficult to quantify in hard financial terms may now not pass the ROI test. But Phillips' addition to the original Kirkpatrick model doesn't eliminate the issues about the training having to be completed first, before the evaluation can be done with any certainty. While this 5<sup>th</sup> level goes some way to addressing the needs of the shareholders and managers, it is thought that perhaps it still does not go far enough.

Building on the evaluation model presented by Kirkpatrick and revised by Philips. The following conceptual 'APOD' model is presented (Figure 2).

If MD is to be effective in meeting individual needs and delivering organisational goals the whole process must be effectively evaluated to make judgements about its cost-effectiveness and aid to on-going organisational learning and improvement (Easterby-Smith, 1994). This model looks to demonstrate the need to align the organisation's aims and objectives with the aspirations of its employees.



**Figure 2: APOD – A Conceptual Model for Management Development**

Stage 1	Pre-development evaluation is considered within a planned strategy that includes the buy-in from all of the stakeholders, a training needs analysis, and considered past performance ratings.
Stage 2 & 3	Are considered in parallel. The needs of the organisation are aligned with the needs of the individual.
Stages 4 & 5	The expectations of the organisation and the individual are aligned and serve to underpin the needs of both.
Stage 6	Evaluation processes should be put in place. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued evaluation during development activities, including observation, testing and assessment.</li> <li>• Immediate post activity evaluation, including feedback sheets, action plans and informal feedback/discussions.</li> </ul>
Stage 7	Considers the long-term evaluation or return of investment, considering how new skills and knowledge have been applied and comparing measures of past and current performance.

**Table 2: Definition of the APOD Model**

This model aligns with the motivational model of Porter and Lawler (1967) on expectancy theory. Their model suggests that people at work are motivated to perform because of expectations as to perceived payoffs or rewards arising from that performance. The desirability of these (valence), perception of expectancy and force of expression are intrinsic to the person. Everyone has their own view of what is challenging or interesting, important to self-esteem and their own regard for extrinsic payoffs – pay and material rewards.



## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Obtaining Feedback**

Most attempts to evaluate MD programmes are by questionnaire feedback on participant's perception of a course or programme they have completed (Craven et al, 1994). However, Porter et al (1975) noted that tension exists for most individuals regarding feedback, as the desire to gain valuable information often conflicts with a desire to avoid anything that may harm one's self concept. This desire to avoid negative feedback can be problematic when it is to be used as a development tool (Ryan et al, 2000). Although many studies have been conducted on feedback, much of the literature examines feedback that is focused on performance on a specific task (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) or in a specific job (Burke et al, 1978) or presented within the context of a supervisor/subordinate dyad.

Typically feedback is taken from questionnaires and verbal responses and can be considered highly subjective. This is because much of the value of the training is assessed on the basis of the trainees/learners relationship with the trainer and other factors such as the environment in which training has taken place and the quality of the materials. Jones et al's (1997) research identified that records of development activity – even where they are maintained – tend to be simplistic, with an emphasis on listing development input rather than development outcomes. While these are valid factors, in order for MD programmes to maintain credibility the investment should be subject to the same levels of scrutiny afforded to other forms of investment (Adams et al, 2002).

### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

A phenomenological/interpretive approach was chosen for this research as in its original formulation by Schutz (1967) it relates to how things appear to people i.e. how people experience the world. In particular applying this philosophy to the research has enabled the researcher to consider the understanding and interpretations that people within the research area have formed as they consider their own values, other people's interpretations and the compromises they experience. However, the researcher has also considered Weber's (1949) disagreement with the pure interpretivists, maintaining that

it is necessary to verify the results of subjective interpretive investigation by comparing them with the concrete course of events. Weber maintained that in order to describe social practices adequately we must understand what meaning the practices have for the participants themselves.

The study utilises both quantitative (positivist) and qualitative (anti-positivist) methods in order to produce the necessary scope of information to satisfy the stated aims and objectives (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). Qualitative data for example, was collected to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding on the perceptions of MD, while quantitative data helped illustrate these perceptions across the broader population to obtain an in depth picture with regards to their views on the outcomes of MD, and to delve more generally into the attitudes of students from different levels of the organisation.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have obvious strengths and the weaknesses, however in order to obtain as full a picture as possible it was necessary for the research to consider the two styles (Gorman & Clayton, 1997). The use of both approaches enabled data to be compared and contrasted (Gorman & Clayton, 1997).

This study in particular, aimed to get behind the facts and figures, which were provided to a great extent by the questionnaire, and to give weight to the qualitative data, provided by the interviews. A process defined by Strauss & Corbin (1994) within their 'Grounded Theory Methodology' where data is searched for meaning within a common purpose (Clarkeson, 1998).

### **3.3 Research Approach**

Although there are several approaches that could be taken to this research a critical realist approach has been chosen with a diverse tack as opposed to a more orthodox tack or realist approach as it will take the stance developed by Bhaskar (Johnson and Duberley, 2000) and is expected to consider the three levels of reality proposed by Collier (1994) of experiences, events and mechanisms. This approach considers the possibility that certain events are typical within MD and that to understand these events may require having to infer that it is the mechanisms that may actually cause them (Fisher, 2004).

### **3.4 Research Method**

A method is defined as a way of doing something, especially a systematic way; it implies an orderly logical arrangement (usually in steps). When conducting research there are typically two methods quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative research is a study presented in numbers, while in the qualitative study tries to understand how the various parts work together in relation to the whole. This study has been conducted by using both quantitative and qualitative research consisting of a survey across the research population, in-depth interviews of a sample of the research population and the analysis of organisational strategy documentation and other relevant information that has been gathered. In addition the Head of Service of LCC's Learning and Development Team was also interviewed.

However it should be noted that the Learning Development Team while originally an internal service within LCC it is now a service provided by a partner organisation, Liverpool Direct Ltd (LDL).

Various research strategies could be employed on this research project however, a Case Study strategy is considered to be the most appropriate for this research subject, as it enables the researcher to challenge existing theory and present new hypotheses.

Although Case Study is argued to lose its representation as what happens in one case is not typical of all cases (Fisher, 2004), it is recognised that the power of case study lies in its capacity to provide insights and resonance for the reader.

### **3.5 Ethical Issues**

Two perspectives were considered with regard to the ethical issues within this research. First, were the honesty, frankness and personal integrity of the researcher and secondly were the responsibilities to the subjects of the research such as privacy, confidentiality and courtesy (Walliman, 2001).

This had to be carefully considered for this research as access to individual training records was initially considered to be required to establish who the research population were. However, it was quickly established the data protection act would not allow this

information to be shared. This was validated by LCC's Data Protection Officer and any initial direct contact would have been considered inappropriate by the council. Subsequently the Head of the Learning and Development Team agreed to send out an introductory e-mail written by the researcher, requesting students to contact the researcher if they wished to participate in the research (appendix 1). Only following a direct response from students could the survey be undertaken thus ensuring there was no breach of data protection.

Further considerations suggested by Homan (1991) include for example, when selecting and involving participants the researchers should ensure that full information about the purpose and uses of participants' contributions is given, being honest and considering how sensitive material and confidentiality is handled as well as the researcher's responsibility to anonymise data.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods**

To support the research strategy the following data collection methods were employed:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Survey/Questionnaire
- Archive reports
- Internal publications

#### **3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

A sample number of semi-structured interviews were undertaken from those students who had agreed to participate. The interviews provided an opportunity to explore events and seek explanations in areas not previously considered.

The people identified to be interviewed were selected on the basis of initially agreeing to be willing to be interviewed, then banded by the scoring of the survey results and finally randomly selected using Microsoft Excel's random number generator to identify interviewees coded against a number sequence generated by the database in which the questionnaire data had been input.

Preparations for the interviews required some general groundwork (Walliman, 2001). Interviewees were contacted via e-mail and telephone to make arrangements i.e. time, date, locations and a reminder of the purpose of the interviews. Agreeing the method of recording i.e. taking notes or audio taping and preparation of the questions was also *discussed and agreed on an individual basis*. Interviewees were also reminded to ensure they had the appropriate approval from line managers to participate in the interview (e.g. take the time away from their normal duties) before attending the interview.

### **3.6.2 E-mail Survey**

Following further research into the effective distribution of questionnaires (Schaefer & Dillman, 1998). The decision to carry out an e-mail questionnaire was made which was based on several factors:

- The speed at which they can be sent,
- It is quicker to complete than paper based questionnaires.

The primary reason for using this distribution method was the volume of employees within research population who have access to e-mail. In addition (Ilieva, Baron and Healey, 2002; Taylor, 2000) suggest that it is an easy method for the researcher to form and send the survey, and that it is a simple task for the respondents to answer and return it. While Schaefer & Dillman (1998) concluded that e-mail surveys provide more detailed and comprehensive information than paper mail surveys. A mixture of both e-mail and paper based delivery could have been employed if any of the students were without e-mail addresses. However, this was found to be unnecessary.

### **3.6.3 Questionnaire.**

The questionnaire (appendix 2) was constructed and sent all those who had agreed to participate in this research. A covering letter was sent with the questionnaire (appendix 3), as this was recognised as being a useful way to try and motivate and increase the response rate (Fink, 1995). E-mail reminders were also sent to recipients of the questionnaire who failed to respond to the initial e-mail, with another copy of the

questionnaire in case the original had been misplaced. This proved effective in increasing the response rate (Robson, 1993).

One difficulty with an e-mail questionnaire is that the meaning of questions cannot be clarified to the recipient. Robson (1993) suggests that, “The wording of the questions is of crucial importance and pre-testing is essential”.

An Internet survey and use of LCC’s internal survey tool ‘SNAP’ was also considered but thought to be potentially too costly and time consuming for the purpose of this research, although the results would have been easier to collate and analyse.

The questionnaire also allowed the respondents to complete their survey at their own convenience, without demanding too much of their time. The questionnaires would ideally have been sent to a greater sample of council employees and could have included a greater number of questions. However, a decision was made to limit the numbers, for practical reasons such as distribution, complexity and time constraints, as well as further constraints set by the organisation on the use of surveys. It was also felt that this questionnaire could move the research in a ‘different’ direction, leading to a broader, less-focused study, and therefore it was decided to limit the sample.

#### **3.6.4 Content and Structure of the Questionnaire Survey**

The questions used in the survey were developed using the knowledge gained during the literature review, a review of the aims identified within the council’s strategy documents and objectives specified within the development programme brochures published by the Learning and Development Service. Questions were also based around the associated best practices. The questions from the survey further considered the relationship between the City Council’s Learning and Development strategies, and how they are operationalised in the workplace.

Care was taken to ensure that the survey was not too long and that the number of questions was limited. Wilson (1997) concluded that below twenty are recommended however, this would have proved insufficient as this survey needed to be sufficiently detailed to cover the key theme of the study.

Concerned with maximising the response rate, several factors were considered including those recommended by Fisher (2004):

- Keeping the questionnaire as short as possible as possible. Fisher (2004) recommends 2-4 sides of A4 as a guide for MBA research.
- The aesthetics of the questionnaire. To provide a professional, easy to read style.
- Structuring the questions into themed groups and logical flow.

Further considerations included question guidelines offered by, amongst others, Schuman and Presser (1981), and Hutcheson (2004) for example:

- Avoid jargon, and technical terms.
- Develop consistent response methods.
- Make questions as impersonal as possible.
- Do not bias later responses by the wording used in earlier questions.
- If closed questions are employed, try to develop exhaustive and mutually exclusive response alternatives.
- When unique and unusual terms are needed to be defined in questionnaire items, use very clear definitions.

The presentation and method of completing the questionnaire was an important consideration. It was thought to be essential to maximising the level of response by making the questionnaire quick and easy to complete (Wai-Ching Leung, 2001) therefore electronic check boxes were utilised in many of the questions. Filter questions (Fink, 1995) were considered within the questionnaire design but thought to be inappropriate due to the design of the questionnaire and the focus of the study objectives.

The questions used various formats to ensure they were appropriate to the information being sought, for example dichotomous questions provided two options to choose between i.e. Yes/No. Other questions provided multiple choice answers. However the majority of the questions being based on the requirement to provide strength of feeling used a rating scale of 1-5, which related to Strongly Disagree rated at 5 to Strongly Agree rated at 1, similar to the Likert Scale published by Rensis Likert (1932).

However, numbers were used to maintain the ease of use and aesthetics of the questionnaire.

The use of a 5-point scale also considered the potential level of middle position responses. Research carried out by Kalton et al (1980) debates its inclusion, exclusion or position within a survey. However, Schuman and Presser (1981) argue the consideration for rewording middle alternatives with more precision to define conceptually more homogenous groups.

Amongst other techniques considered for the questionnaire included the Behavioural Anchored Rating Scales (BARS). However, this was discounted as inappropriate for this researcher as too much additional/personal information would have been required for analysis. A further technique considered and discounted was Semantic Differential. This was considered as possibly being too unfamiliar to the research population and difficult to apply in an electronic questionnaire.

### **3.6.5 Sample Size**

The sample size for the questionnaire was initially based on Saunders et al (2002) formula for determining a questionnaire sample size. The formula converted into an easy to use table demonstrates the number of questionnaires that need to be returned based on a margin of error of +/- 5 per cent. On this basis a sample of 168 students would have been recommended for the approximate 360 MD student population. However Fisher (2004). Stresses that within an organisational study a return rate of 70% or more is achievable.

### **3.6.6 Restriction on the Sample Size**

The sample size for this research was to be limited to students who had undertaken an LCC MD programme within the last 3 years (approx. 360 students) as this was a restriction set by the Learning and Development Team. Therefore the results cannot reflect the views of the entire student population only those involved.



### **3.6.7 Sample Frame**

To determine who the questionnaires were to be distributed to required a list of the names and e-mail addresses of the people in the research population (the sample frame). This initially proved to be a major obstacle as provision of such a list to the researcher was deemed to be in contravention of data protection (as discussed in 3.5). However, for this research, this was overcome by agreeing to access the research population via an introductory e-mail sent via the Learning and Development Team. The e-mail requested students to contact the researcher via e-mail thus responding directly back to the researcher if they wished to be included in the survey.

### **3.6.8 Pilot Questionnaire**

The researcher considered how easy it was to assume understanding of the questions within the original draft questionnaire. Similarly it was recognised how easy it was to become blind to otherwise obvious spelling and grammatical errors etc. (Fisher, 2004). Therefore, initially the questionnaire was checked for grammar and spelling, then rechecked and clarified with a family member before being piloted with two work colleagues. Both work colleagues were advised of the aim of the questionnaire and of the objectives of the pilot. A series of minor suggestions were made for adding and amending the text for further clarity with some additional comments made regarding the length, layout, and methods of answering the questions.

*Following the initial review, the questionnaire went through a cycle of further review and change until the researcher considered it to be of a high enough standard and (as an electronic survey) fully functional before being distributed to the survey population.*

The contributions of all those involved in the pilot proved invaluable in the development and construction of the final questionnaire.

Due to a low number of people being used to pilot the questionnaire, checking the margin of error on the results was not possible although Moore's (1980) and Whitmore's (1975) nomogram formula/chart could have been a useful tool had the sample size been sufficient.

The questionnaire was an attached Microsoft Word document, with instructions on how to complete and return the questionnaire included in an e-mail covering letter (appendix 3). The researcher considered the possibility of the questionnaires being disrupted or altered due to possible differences in versions of the e-mail reader and differing versions of Microsoft Word that are being used across the organisation, hence the survey respondents were asked to contact the researcher if there were any problems.

Once the completed questionnaires were returned the data was inputted into a Microsoft Access database as this provided an easy and accurate method of data entry. The data was then exported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This allowed the data to be analysed and displayed both simply and effectively.

### 3.7 Interviews

The interview used semi-structured questions to enable the use of open-ended questions, however, the majority of questions were closed in order to give a strong set of basic background information and data that was easy to analyse, compare and present quantifiably (Bailey, 1994).

The benefit of follow-up interviews after the questionnaires was that it allowed the researcher to investigate areas that had arisen from the survey and that would be of particular interest, or which could be explored in more detail. Indeed Robson (1993) explains that,

*“... face to face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one’s line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives”.*

Other benefits of face-to-face interviews are identified within the academic literature, including the fact that the interviewer can encourage the interviewee with eye contact, body language, showing interest and putting people at their ease (Gorman & Clayton, 1997), Robson (1993) suggests that not only does the presence of the interviewer encourage participation and involvement but the interviewer can also judge the extent to which the exercise is treated seriously.

Another strategy that was considered was telephone research. This was discounted as potentially too time consuming and some theorists have expressed doubts about the validity of telephone samples Sykes & Hoinville (1985). However, Wilson and Edwards (2001) considered that where interviews are prohibitive for reasons such as; distance and access to interview facilities, telephone interviews are as equally valuable as face to face interviews.

### **3.8 Content and Structure of the Interviews**

As previously outlined, the study used an in-depth semi-structured interview process. Hertford (2001) suggested that semi-structured interviews combine aspects of structured and unstructured interviews, and allow for a balance of closed and open-ended questions. Where possible open-ended rather than closed questions were asked, in order to provide the interviewee the opportunity to describe situations in their own words and share their attitudes and perceptions (Busha & Harter, 1980). A semi-structured interview allowed key questions to be posed but provided flexibility to pursue any interesting comments made by the respondents. This style of interview also provided a good cross section of both factual and attitudinal information and allowed useful evidence to be gained that would support the study.

As with the questionnaire schedule, the questions were themed and tied directly to the study objectives. The wording of questions was kept as simple as possible and the interviewer was prepared to encourage a more in-depth response (Bryman, 1998) to questions that may have prompted a short reply, for example 'yes' or 'no' or 'don't know'. Although the questions were designed to be open in nature, it was not presumed the interviewee would be 'naturally chatty' (Wilson, 1997).

The interviews were scheduled for a ½ hour for students and 1hr for the Head of the Learning and Development Team. This duration was deemed suitable as the time constraints of the interviewees were recognised. Also, it was felt that such a length was apt for retaining the interest of the interviewee and therefore, hopefully, increasing the effectiveness of the method and the quality of the information collected. It was initially hoped that all of the interviews could have been recorded; however where the interviewee felt uncomfortable about being recorded and declined the request, notes

were taken and transcribed as soon after the dialogue as possible, while the responses and information gained was still fresh in the mind of the interviewer (Freeman & Meed, 1993).

### **3.9 Archival Research**

Archival information was extracted from a series of council reports covering almost 4 years, from 2002 to 2006. These reports were in the main written to advise the City Council's Executive Management Team (EMT) and a number of the councils Select Committees (attended by city councillors) of the plans and progress of the various MD programmes that were in place. They further outlined proposals for future developments and outlined costs for such proposals. The reports provided useful insight into the organisation's MD strategy. In addition the reports also provided the researcher with further avenues of questioning for both the survey and interviews.

### **3.10 LCC Internal Publications**

Several internal publications were made available to the researcher by the Learning and Development Team. These included Programme Content & Outline documents and a council publication titled 'Our Approach to Management'. Although many of the councils internet and intranet web sites and internal council magazines were also explored for further relevant information no new information was available from these.

The Programme Content and Outline documents included literature that outlined the aims and objectives of each of the MD programmes and details of the programme content. This information was originally published to advise prospective students prior to admission to a programme on what exactly they were applying or being nominated for.

The publication 'Our Approach to Management' gave a general view of the council's aims and objectives of its management development initiatives.

### **3.11 Limitations of the Methodology**

A number of possible limitations have been identified and will be discussed briefly below.

The area of most concern was the initial indirect contact with the research population due to data protection issues as the researcher could not have direct access to the list of MD students. This meant that the researcher had to go through the Learning and Development Team to initiate contact which took away some of the control to this aspect of the research. While the Learning and Development Team were helpful in this matter the additional workload this placed upon them and a conflict in their priorities led to delays and unexpected limitations.

The researcher considered the management position of the individuals who attended the programmes and took part in the questionnaire survey to consider whether position within the council or pay grading had any impact on perceptions on the MD programmes. However, due to the nature of this information it was considered to be too personal to ask for and therefore this information was omitted from the survey.

Another area of limitation was the number of staff that accepted to be included within the survey and the limitations in selecting a representative number of interviewees from those willing to take part in an interview. Ideally it would have been advantageous to have perhaps increased the number. This would have given a more detailed insight and more in-depth perspective across the organisation however, it was considered to be logistically impractical for this research.

This research methodology was also limited by focusing on the views and opinions of the organisation through the Head of Learning and Development and the students of the MD programmes. This research has not explored the views of those who may well see many of the tangible and intangible aspects of the development programmes i.e. a student's line manager, their colleagues and subordinates etc.

Also any relationships between the programme and career progression within the organisation could have been considered further. These areas could in themselves provide the basis for future research projects.

## 4 Analysis of Data

The analysis of the data collected from the survey research followed three major steps:

- Cleaning and organizing the data for analysis (Data Preparation)
- Describing the data (Descriptive Statistics)
- Testing Hypotheses and Models (Inferential Statistics)

Data Preparation involved checking and logging the survey returns against those distributed; checking the data for accuracy and completion; entering the data into a computer database; transforming the data; and developing and documenting a database structure that integrates the various measures.

Descriptive Statistics have been used to describe the basic features of the data in the study and provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Graphics and tables analysis forms the basis of the quantitative analysis.

Inferential Statistics investigate questions, models and hypotheses making inferences from the data to more general conditions.

The researcher has linked the inferential analyses to specific research questions or hypotheses that were raised in the introduction, or that emerged as part of the analysis.

The analysis attempts to '*not miss the forest for the trees*' and analysis of the data reflects a proportionally stratified approach reflecting the results of the organisation as a whole and of each MD programme individually. Consideration has been given to presenting only the most critical analysis summaries within the body of the research analysis to ensure the reader is able to follow the results.

To reduce the risk of threatening the validity of the data, issues such as those described by Cohen and Manion (1994) were considered, for example internal validity i.e. faulty instrumentation and bias as well as external validity i.e. vague identification of independent variables, faulty sampling, '*Hawthorne effect*' and extraneous factors.

## 4.1 The Research Survey

The survey was broken down into several elements:

*General Details* were collected to provide some background to where the respondents were placed within the organisation and their length of service. This would help to identify any patterns in the analysis.

The *Development Programme* requested details of the MD programme each student attended to enable the identification of any possible variances between the different programmes. This section of the survey also considered the timescales of the various programmes (1-3 years) and the respondent progress within their programme i.e. in progress, completed, withdrawn, passed or failed. This would help to identify whether the stage a respondent had reached within a programme affected their views on its value.

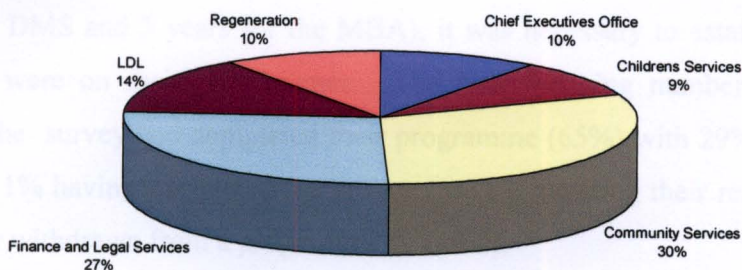
*Post Programme Evaluations* was explored to establish what (if any) degree of evaluation has taken place either by the provider of the programmes or the organisation itself. This was considered necessary to help in identifying whether any other data sources may exist that may aid this research and to discover to what (if any) extent the providers and/or organisation were evaluating the success/value of the programmes.

The section *The Value of the Programme*, looked to gather student's perceptions on why the organisation is providing the MD programmes. This was to measure student opinion on the values, benefits and outcomes of the programmes to them as individuals, within the workplace and to the organisation as a whole.

### 4.1.1 Student/Organisation Configuration (General Details)

Within the first section of the survey *General Details* the responses to Question 1 shows the Resources portfolio represented the highest number of returns equating to 32% of the total returns, with Supported Living at 23%, LDL at 14%, Regeneration at 9% and the Chief Executive's Office returned the lowest number of returns (10%) (Chart 1). However, this does not necessarily reflect a poor response across the portfolios as the

number of staff employed within each portfolio and those attending MD programmes varies significantly.



**Chart 1: Survey response by Portfolio**

Further analysis of the survey population revealed the student population was made up of DMS (43%) and MBA (42%) and Leadership Academy representing 15% (Table 3).

Portfolio	Leadership Academy	DMS	MBA
Chief Executives Office		7	1
Children's Services		2	5
Community Services	4	11	9
Finance and Legal Services	6	7	8
LDL	2	6	3
Regeneration		1	7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12 (15%)</b>	<b>34 (43%)</b>	<b>33 (42%)</b>

**Table 3: Make up of respondents by portfolio**

Question 2 became redundant as it became clear that due to a recent organisational restructure across the council many of the respondents were unclear in identifying their new service area. Therefore this particular data was unusable.

Question 3 was asked in order to ascertain if the length of service staff had worked for LCC had any particular bearing on the responses. Analysis of the data showed that there was no particular correlation between length of service with the Council and the type of response given to the other questions in the survey (Table 4).

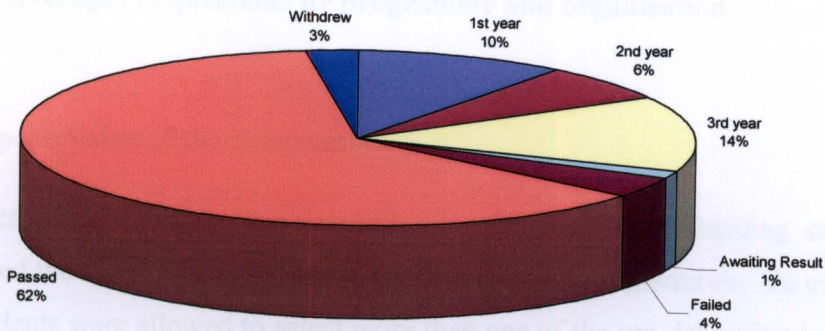
No of Years Service	No Of Students	Average Survey Score
<5	9	3.05
6-10	15	3.43
11-20	16	3.22
21-30	35	3.68
>30	4	3.94

**Table 4: Correlation of survey score against length of service**



### 4.1.2 The Development Programme (Student Position)

Given the duration of the various MD programmes (1 year for the Leadership academy, 2 years for the DMS and 3 years for the MBA), it was necessary to establish at what stage students were on their programmes. The overwhelming number of students responding to the survey had completed their programme (65%) with 29% in their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 1% having completed the programme but awaiting their result and 5% having failed or withdrawn from a programme (Chart 2).



**Chart 2: Students position in the development programmes**

Breaking the students position into the individual programmes revealed that all of the programmes had a withdrawal/failure level albeit relatively low (Table 5). This is explored further within the analysis of the interview research.

Position on Programme	Leadership Academy	DMS	MBA	Total
Passed	13	22	14	49
In Progress		7	18	25
Failed/Withdrew	1	2	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>79</b>

**Table 5: Respondents position on their programme**

### 4.1.3 Post Programme Evaluation

An assessment of the level of programme evaluation features near the start of the research questionnaire and aimed to establish what if any programme evaluation was being conducted and to consider the value of the results.

In essence the survey revealed 36 of the 79 students had participated in an evaluation survey conducted by the provider, this equates to 46% of the survey population, with 3 students participating in an end of programme evaluation survey conducted by the

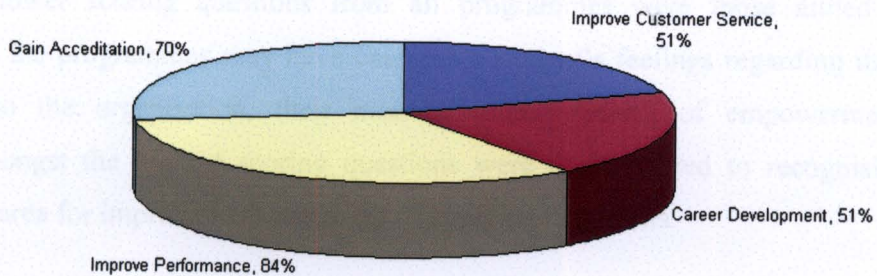
council, equating to 4% of the survey population (Table 6) with 2 students indicating they participated in a programme evaluation by both the provider and the council. Notably 50% had not participated in any programme evaluation be either the council or the provider with 2% participating in both.

Provider Evaluation	LCC Evaluation	Provider & LCC Evaluation	No Evaluation
36	3	2	40
44%	4%	2%	50%

**Table 6: Averages to questions by programme and organisation**

#### 4.1.4 The Purpose/Value of the Programme

It was considered prudent within this research to gain some understanding on why students believed the council had introduced the development programmes. To evaluate this aspect, students were allowed to select more than one of the pre-determined options available within survey. The results subsequently revealed that Improving Performance (84%) was considered the main objectives for the council for introducing the programmes, 70% viewing organisational accreditation as a primary reason, and both Improving Customer Services and Career development evenly placed at 51% (Chart 3).



**Chart 3: Perceived purpose of the programmes**

The table below (Table 7) demonstrates the consistent view drawn from the survey that the aims of each programme were fundamentally aimed at Improving Performance, with Gaining Accreditation rated 2<sup>nd</sup> and Development and Improving Customer Service, respectively rated 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

Purpose of Programme	Leadership Academy	DMS	MBA	Totals
Improve Customer Service	6	17	18	<b>41</b>
Career Development	6	18	17	<b>41</b>
Gain Accreditation	10	22	22	<b>54</b>
Improve Performance	12	26	27	<b>65</b>

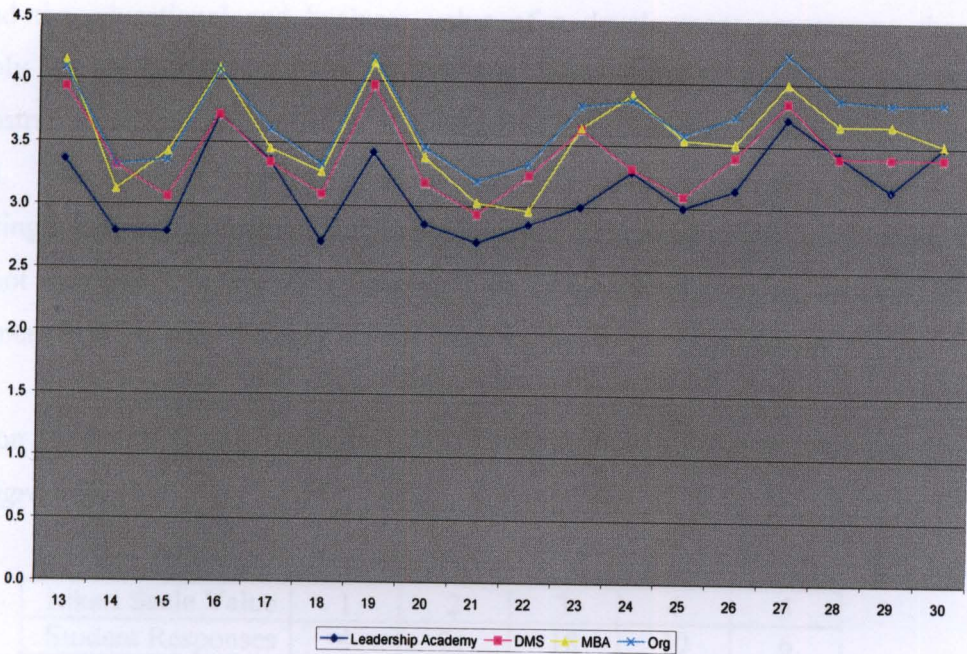
**Table 7: Respondents perception on purpose of their programme**

The remaining section of the survey focused on obtaining the perceived value of the programmes to the students themselves, the organisation as a whole and the influences and effect they or the programmes may have on others.

Students were required to weight the answers to 18 questions (questions 13-30 on the survey questionnaire) using a 5-point Likert Scale. Correlating all of the survey responses and applying an arithmetic mean shows the variances in perceptions between each of the programmes (Chart 4). In addition an organisational average for all three of the programmes is plotted on this chart. The results suggest that on average and across most of the questions asked, the Leadership Academy students responses to most of the questions were rated lowest, with the DMS and MBA programmes students rating the questions respectively slightly higher.

Notably, the lower scoring questions from all programmes were those aimed at exploring how the programmes may have changed a student's feelings regarding their commitment to the organisation, their motivation and feeling of empowerment, conversely amongst the highest scoring questions were those related to recognising organisational area for improvement acquiring or applying new skills.

The most interesting finding on this area of the research was the consistency in the responses across the three development programmes. Each of the programmes student base appearing to return a response level that reflected the hierarchal structure i.e. Team Leaders on the Leadership Academy programme were generally less positive, while senior managers on the MBA were consistently more positive, with middle managers taking the middle ground.



**Chart 4: Average scores to questions by programme and organisation**

The following analysis of the questionnaire (questions 13-30 on the survey) relates the key findings of the survey to the areas identified within the literature review.

Question 13. *The programme provided me with new skills and abilities.*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	3	4	5	51	16
	4%	5%	6%	65%	20%

**Result to question 13**

This question was asked in order to identify to what degree students felt the programme they were attending was actually providing them with what they considered to be new skills and abilities that were above what they believed they may have already had. Overall this aim of the programme appears to be being achieved with 85% of students agreeing that they had learnt new skills and abilities.

Question 14. *The programme makes me feel valued by the council.*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	7	14	25	27	6
	9%	18%	32%	34%	7%

**Result to question 14**

Beyond the educational and business value of a development programme there is arguably a feel good factor for individuals brought about by the organisations demonstration of investment in the individual which could inspire a feeling of being valued. The results of the survey show that 41% of students rated this at 4 or 5 indicating a reasonably positive outcome. However, 32% rated this at 3, indicating they were not sure and a further 27% (scoring 1 or 2) specifically feeling that despite the investment in them, they felt they are not more valued by the organisation.

Question 15. *I have become more motivated in my work as a result of being included in the programme.*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	4	21	18	30	6
	5%	27%	23%	38%	8%

**Result to question 15**

In addition to creating a feeling of value theorists suggest that professional development can help to motivate individuals. This question was asked to examine this view. Similar to question 14, the result showed that 46% were definitely more motivated and many students were either unsure 23% or disagreed 32% with this question.

Question 16. *Attending the programme has enabled me to recognise where things can be improved*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	5	3	4	52	15
	6%	4%	5%	66%	19%

**Result to question 16**

Some of the primary reasons for the introduction of the development programmes have been a means to improve organisational culture, methods of working and services delivery. Many of these require people in the right places to be able to recognise and implement the changes required. This question was asked to ascertain whether the programmes were helping students to achieve these objectives. The results clearly indicate a very positive result to this question with 85% agreeing that the programme had helped them in recognising things that could be improved within the organisation, with only 5% being unsure and 10% disagreeing with question.

Question 17. *Attending the programme has enabled me to challenge where things can be improved*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	2	17	14	40	6
	3%	4%	18%	51%	8%

**Result to question 17**

This question was asked as a means to establishing whether there was any conflict from question 16 where improvements were being recognised compared to being able to challenge existing practices and introduce improvements. Notably, the results of the survey show that while identifying improvements may have been realised, actually implementing them may remain an issue, this is indicated by 85% of the students scoring 4 or 5 on the previous question (question 16) and 59% rating this question at 4 or 5, a reduction of 26% and an increase of 13% in those who were unsure.

Question 18. *Being involved in the programme has increased my commitment to the organisation*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	6	19	22	25	7
	8%	24%	28%	32%	9%

**Result to question 18**

The council have built an employee agreement into the development programmes whereby they must commit to staying with the council for a set period following completion of the programme or personally refund the cost. Despite this it was considered prudent to explore whether students actually felt any greater commitment as this could reflect their intentions for attending the programme e.g. whether they attend the programme for personal reasons such as gaining a qualification or for professional reasons such as improving council services etc.

The results of the survey, show only a marginal difference across the range of the scale used in the survey with 8% of students strongly disagreeing to an increased committed while 9% strongly agreed. This balance was almost reflected in those less committed where 24% simply agreed and 32% disagreed while 28% took the middle ground, being uncertain about any increased commitment.

Question 19. *I have been able to apply some of the skills or knowledge learnt*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	3	4	7	45	20
	4%	5%	9%	57%	25%

**Result to question 19**

Building on an earlier question (question 13) where the 85% of students felt they had learnt new skills this question was asked as a means to exploring whether they had been able to apply them in their workplace therefore providing the council with a clear result from the programmes. With 57% agreeing that they had been able to use their skills and a further 25% strongly agreeing, a combined total 82%, there is a clear indication that the programmes must be having an impact on the organisation.

Question 20. *I feel the organisation has improved as a direct result of these development programmes*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	4	14	29	25	7
	5%	18%	37%	32%	9%

**Result to question 20**

In comparison to the results of question 19 where 82% of students have been able to use new skills and knowledge, this question has revealed that only 41% of them feel the organisation has improved as a result of the programme. An equally curious result in the findings of this question was the notable increase in those that were unsure whether the organisation was improving (37%).

Question 21. *I feel that my line manager has taken/will take advantage of my development*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	12	17	18	28	4
	15%	22%	23%	35%	5%

**Result to question 21**

Students attending the programmes cover all levels of management within the council up to Assistant Executive Director (AED) level. Therefore all students have line

managers who could or should be able to take advantage of their learning. The response indicates that 37% of students feel their development will not be utilised by their manager with only a slightly higher number 40% feeling as though their learning will be take advantage of. On the basis that a line manager must finance and support their staff member's application to attend the programme, the results may reflect a lack of confidence from students in their line manager's value of development programme. This is further supported by the relative high number of students who expressed their uncertainty in their line manager taking advantage of their learning.

Question 22. *I feel empowered as a result of attending the programme*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	6	19	25	22	7
	8%	24%	32%	28%	9%

**Result to question 22**

Having acquired various management skills, there is some expectation that such development would or should promote a sense of empowerment. However, the response from the survey indicates that little more than a third 37% of the students felt empowered as a result of attending the programme (scoring 4 or 5), while almost an equal number, 32% were uncertain (scoring 3) and 32% indicated they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were empowered by the programme.

Question 25. *I have noticed a change in the behaviour/work of others who have attended one of the management development programmes*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	5	9	32	26	7
	6%	11%	41%	33%	9%

**Result to question 25**

This question considers whether the development programmes were influencing behaviours and therefore organisational culture in any way. Notably the results show those that agreed (33%) and those that strongly agreed (9%) together equalled 42%, this being only slightly more than those who were unsure (41%). If these are considered alongside the negative responses, of disagreeing 11% and those strongly disagreeing



6%, there is a suggestion that the development programme's influence in cultural change may be limited.

Question 26. *I feel the programme I attended has changed my workplace behaviour*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	3	13	18	39	6
	4%	16%	23%	49%	8%

**Result to question 26**

This question was simply aimed at establishing whether students felt their development within a programme was having any impact specifically on their behaviours as opposed to the behaviour of others. Although 23% were unsure, more than half of the students were positive rating the question a 4 (49%) or 5(8%) producing an overall positive result of 57% of student feeling that their workplace behaviour had changed as a result of attending their programme.

Question 28. *Attending the programme was part of my development plan*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	8	12	4	41	14
	10%	15%	5%	52%	18%

**Result to question 28**

As an accredited Investor in People (IiP) organisation, LCC has established clear objectives and processes to facilitate the development of its staff. These include regular Personal Review & Development (PR&D) meetings. From the survey 70% of students either agreed (rating 4) or strongly agreed (rating 5) with this question establishing that there is a clear link between MD and PDP's. However the remaining 30% who either disagreed or were unsure (rating 1-3) was noted.

Question 29. *I was supported throughout the programme by my line manager*

Likert Scale Value	1	2	3	4	5
Student Responses	7	13	13	28	18
	9%	16%	16%	35%	23%

**Result to question 29**

Although line managers have to approve and authorise and finance from their team budget each member of their staff who attend any training and development programme, there is potential for their commitment to be more a requirement of the organisation rather than a true commitment to staff development. This question looked to establish whether there was a long term commitment to a student's development throughout the duration of the programme or whether initial interest may have waned. However, 35% of students felt that their manager did support them throughout the programme and a further 23% strongly agreed. A notable 16% of the students disagreed with the view of being supported by their manager, while 9% strongly disagreeing. The overall indication was that 58% of people felt positive about their line manager's support, 25% felt negative and 16% were uncertain.

## **4.2 The Research Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with the Head of the LCCs Learning and Development Team and 3 students from each of the MD programmes (a total of 9 students).

The Head of the Learning and Development Team interview was a semi structured interview and took approximately 1 hour. The interview took place by arrangement and in a private room. The interviewee declined to have the interview recorded and therefore notes were taken at the time and expanded on immediately after the interview to ensure clarity and understanding was retained when undertaking the later analysis.

Each of the programme student interviews were semi structured. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes and was conducted by arrangement in a private meeting room either at the researcher's or the interviewee's place of work. All of the students allowed their interview to be recorded.

All of the interviews followed a similar opening that was not recorded which thanked the interviewee for agreeing to be interviewed, explained the purpose of the interview and the research. It was further explained that the interviews would be recorded, transcribed and anonymised and would only be used for the purpose of this research, otherwise they would remain confidential. Subsequently all of the interviewees agreed to continue with the interview.

#### 4.2.1 Head of Learning and Development

The interview with the Head of the Learning and Development Team was undertaken in order to gain a broad understanding and insight from a corporate perspective of how and why the development programmes were introduced, whether the aims were being met and how successful they were perceived to be. The questions were based on the findings of the literature review, the survey results and the interviews with students that had taken place up to that time.

The interviewee's responses to the interview questions are shown below in *italics*.

To begin the interview the interviewee was asked what triggered the MD programme initiative. The interviewee explained a new executive management team had been introduced to the council following the change in political leadership and along with implementing a flatter management structure; there was

*'recognition of a need to change the culture and a lack of capabilities within managers'*

It was further explained that,

*'a previous survey conducted by MORI on council management had suggested there were problems at the middle management level'.*

As the interview continued the interviewee revealed that a previous internal review on training and development had established that

*'It could no longer be a disparate and uncoordinated process but instead had to be a strategic programme'.*

Under the banner 'The Liverpool Way' future development and training programmes were not only to consider improving employees' skills but also lead to organisational cultural change. When asked if any measures had been put in place to evaluate the impact of the development programmes that had been introduced the interviewee explained that:

*'Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model was adopted' as it measured reaction, learning, behaviours and results.*

However, in discussing this further it was established that measuring the success of these programmes actually relied on the:

*'Informal feedback on student improvements from their workplace'.*

Rather than any formal process, or long-term process.

The interviewee added that

*'The programmes are mainly aimed at improving performance and accountability etc. which is believed to have happened and also to improve recognition. Measures are usually set against national standards but also consider the 10 management competencies but this needs to be improved'.*

To help students link their MD learning to the workplace each element of the various programmes contain workplace based assignments and a workplace based project. The value of the projects was discussed in terms of their value to the organisation. The view expressed by the interviewee was

*'Some are believed to have had a direct impact and brought about significant improvements and saving to the council'.*

With many students successfully completing their development programmes, the investment and the longer term benefits for the organisation were discussed which led to how the skills and knowledge of student could be utilised. This appears to have been considered, although it was stated that

*LDL are considering using students in voluntary focus groups to utilise their skills, while it was less clear whether the Council would do the same.*

However, outside of this interview it has been established that the formation of a Council Alumni Association is being considered in order to utilise students in a similar way to LDL's consideration although this is understood to be currently in an early development stage.

With some students having stated during interviews that their development was directly linked to their career path, it was asked whether this was a consideration within the programme strategy. The response was uncertain and answered as

*'Maybe in some areas, I'm not sure'.*

Continuing this line of questioning the interviewee was asked whether the programmes were linked to a Continuous Development Programme (CPD) or were they stand-alone programmes. The response was again somewhat uncertain

*'I don't really know'.*

Given the vague answers to the previous questions this area was explored further with the question *'Who is responsible for developing individuals, line managers, the organisation, who, and why?' being asked by the researcher. The response was*

*'A combination as they need to meet the business needs and the individual's development needs'.*

The researcher was aware that the council was at the time of this research in the process of being evaluated for the Investors in People accreditation and therefore asked *'How do the programmes fit with the IiP principle of commitment, planning, action and evaluation?'* The interviewee response being

*'They fit like a glove; they demonstrate commitment to development of individuals and managers that meet the needs of the business'.*

One of the key aspects of the programmes is the potential for individuals to engage with people from other service areas within the council and potentially develop informal but effective cross-service networking. When asked if this was being realised in any way or

lost at the end of a programme and what evidence was there. The interviewee's reply was

*'Not sure'.*

Considering the cost of the programmes and the investment to/from the individuals involved, it was asked whether the programmes were considered to have any impression on staff commitment to the organisation. The response to this line of questioning was

*'Not generally'.*

Given there were understood to be strong links between the Liverpool Way ethos and the MD programmes, the direct questions were asked to the interviewee *'what, if any, are the links between the Liverpool Way and the programmes, and how are these measured'*. The reply was that

*'accountability was always the main factor this has possibly not improved. Performance is believed to have improved but this is not measured.'*

Based on the apparent lack of evaluation measures the interviewee was then asked whether the programmes are reviewed in terms of their success and modified if required. This does appear to be considered as the programmes are discussed with the provider and

*'Current priorities are discussed and reflected in the programmes'.*

The interview began to focus on any evaluation of the programmes in order to establish whether any assessment was being done on this significant investment. Several questions were asked in this area including assessment of student success, failure and withdrawal from the programmes, whether any particular programme was more or less successful than others, and what actions were being taken to change or improve programmes. In essence there appears to be little or no action of any significance to any of these questions. The final question presented to the interviewee was aimed at looking to the future of evaluating MD programmes within the city council and asked,

*'are there any plans to change the way programmes are evaluated against organisation objectives?'* , this question did bring about a more definite response when it was stated that

*'Learning and Development were looking for central improvements and liaising with other authorities...*

although no details were forthcoming.

#### **4.2.2 Student Interview Analysis**

The 8 interviews with students were based on the findings of the literature review and the results of the survey questionnaire that identified certain themes which led to the development of the interview questions. The questions allowed the interviewees to expand on the responses they may have given in the survey therefore providing a more in depth picture for this research.

Open coding has been used to identify, categorise and analyse the raw data from the 8 student interviews. The codes have then been organised into concepts or themes emerging from each interview under a coding label. From this information the researcher has been able to group the data into one of the following categories which has an impact on the student's personal perception of their development programme:

The categories were:

- Purpose
- Value and commitment
- Organisational benefits
- Personal benefits
- Culture
- Support

#### **4.2.3 Purpose**

The analysis of the interviews in general, supported the finding of the survey in that students realised why the programmes were introduced and their expected outcomes. Most of the students stating they felt the programmes were introduced for example to *'improve services'*, *'improve management skills'*, *'to raise the standard of managers'* and *'provide a better service'*. Although notably, one of the interviewees (student 4)

when asked what they expected from the programme commented they believed the programmes were introduced to 'gain accreditation' for liP, while later in the interview adding 'why did the organisation send me? I don't know'. While another (Student 8) commented 'I also think it's a government requirement that you develop your staff'.

### Interview Statements – The Purpose of the programmes

Interviewee/ Paragraph No.	Interview Statement
Student 1/2	They were introduced to give managers experience in academic awareness, how to manage teams and progress, to give new skills and turn the council around, help improve services in line with technology and legislation.
Student 1/4	It was to encourage individuals to develop.
Student 2/2	Recognition within the organisation for the skills and education, understanding, that managers had was weak and is not supporting, adopting the more business like approach to what we do... a MORI survey done a few years back that looked into the background and found that people didn't believe that managers had the skills required to be a manager.
Student 2/8	It's a retention tool
Student 3/2	I think because we never had established management training... to develop the skills that people have but didn't know they had. I also believe that the massive change that this authority went through.
Student 4/2	So they could get the tick in the box for IIP...
Student 4/14	Why did the organisation send me? I don't know
Student 5/2	The council has a lot of people who have moved up through the ranks without any formal management qualifications or experience. This was the local authority's way of introducing an opportunity to introduce formal management training.



Student 6/2	To try and raise the standard of managers... to increase accountability.
Student 7/2	They found out that in interviews managers were not up to the standard of the external managers so they were taking a risk on bringing external managers into a council environment and then wondering whether they could cope with the political involvement.
Student 8/2	To equip people with the relevant skills to enable them to do a better job, ultimately to provide a better service. I also think it's a government requirement, that you develop you staff as well.

#### 4.2.4 Values and Commitment

Building on the questions presented in the survey (question 14,15 & 18) relating to the development programmes providing a sense of being valued by the organisation and improved motivation, the interviews revealed that the majority of the students were quite clear with their responses with five of the eight students providing fairly negative responses for example: *'I have been de-skilled and demoralised'*, *'I feel de-motivated'*, *'I will be off somewhere'* and *'I have got that frustrated that I have applied for another job'*. However, the two positive responses included *'they have confidence in me and I feel valued'* and *'Yes... I feel it shows you have a level of commitment to the organisation and they must value you as a manager'*, although the uncertainty from the survey was also maintained with one of the students (student 2) giving the uncommitted statements *'I suppose you feel valued by the organisation as they are willing to put that investment in you'*.

#### Interview Statements – Value and commitment

Interviewee/ Response No.	Interview Statement
Student 1/8	<i>No, I feel as though I have been de-skilled and demoralised... I am frustrated that I can't do anything with what I've learnt...</i>

Interviewee/ Response No.	Interview Statement
Student 1/14	<i>I feel de-motivated and am looking for new opportunities</i>
Student 2/10	<i>I suppose you feel valued by the organisation as they are willing to put that investment in to you.</i>
Student 2/18	<i>I suppose from a career sense I will be off somewhere, somewhere else on the basis I'd like to use those skills and would like to get on in my career.</i>
Student 3/8	<i>But being allowed to go from one programme to the other shows that they have confidence in me and I feel valued.</i>
Student 7/10	<i>No it doesn't make me feel more valued; I think they pay lip service to management development</i>

#### 4.2.5 Organisational Benefits

The responses to the interviews revealed a mixed response when discussing this area. With comments ranging from an extremely positive *'I think the organisation has undoubtedly benefited because a lot of people have committed to it and they have questioned what they do and how they do it'* and *'my manager recognises that I have new skills and looks for me to utilise those skills'*, to those that question how the organisation responds to the development programmes itself, for example: *'I don't think the skills can impact unless you have a practical vehicle whereby they can be demonstrated to people'* and difficulties in *'transferring those skills back to the organisation'*. Notably, one student (student 2) commented *'I could never see the association, the connection with what you did'* although all of the programmes have been designed to have a clear workplace focus.

#### Interview Statements – Organisational benefits

Interviewee/ Response No.	Interview Statement
Student 1/49	<i>Personally, yes, organisationally no.</i>

Interviewee/ Response No.	Interview Statement
Student 2/12	<i>I don't know that the tutors understand what happens and how things work within the authority to deliver the course because I could never see, really, the association, the connection with what you did.</i>
Student 2/40	<i>I don't think the skills can impact unless you have a practical vehicle whereby they can be demonstrated to people.</i>
Student 2/46	<i>Its great for my CV but there may be some measures that you can't measure culturally but then how do you justify spending the money if you can't measure.</i>
Student 3/21	<i>I think my manager recognises that I have new skills and looks for me to utilise those skills.</i>
Student 4/20	<i>I think the organisation has undoubtedly benefited because a lot of people have committed to it and they have questioned what they do and how they do it.</i>

#### 4.2.6 Personal Benefits

The survey results exploring this area were quite positive with 64% of the responses being positive however, the statements from the interviews were notably more positive. Many comments followed a similar line and included, *'I got a lot out of the programme'*, *'it underpins the way you work'*, *'I felt I actually achieved something'*, and *'I have become more confident'*, invaluable to me as an individual. Of the small number of negative points raised from the personal perspective were: *'I feel very demoralised as far as career development is concerned'* and *'I can't use the skills'*. Otherwise personally, students were extremely positive about their development.

### Interview Statements – Personal benefits

Interviewee/ Response No.	Interview Statement
Student 1/12	<i>I felt that I benefited..... and got a lot out of the programme but can't use the skills.</i>
Student 1/24	<i>Yes, sometimes it underpins the way you work.</i>
Student 1/22	<i>I feel very demoralised as far as career development is concerned.</i>
Student 3/12	<i>Yes I think I have learnt how to challenge and when to challenge and what style to use when challenging. I know my confidence has grown.</i>
Student 4/9	<i>It's very difficult to measure the impact but invaluable to me as an individual.</i>
Student 6/16	<i>I feel more confident to make a decision and to run with it, without the feeling that I need to run it by my line manager.</i>
Student 6/49	<i>Sometimes I feel you take it for granted how much you have actually learnt. If I looked at myself before I did it and now there probably be a massive gap.</i>
Student 8/17	<i>I already had background knowledge and experience but what the DMS did was re-enforce what I already knew and I also taught me some new things.</i>
Student 8/27	<i>The PPD module made you look at how you learn as a person and how you behaviour impacts on others.</i>

#### 4.2.7 Culture

To explore whether the programmes were having any impact on behaviours in the workplace the students were asked whether they had noticed any changes within themselves or their colleagues back at the workplace. With regard to other peoples behaviours, most of the students appeared to consider behaviours to be relatively poor despite the Council's focus on this through its Liverpool Way initiative. Comments from students included: *'I have seen people with bad behaviours, going on the course and acting the same'*, *'changing culture needs more than just sending people on*

*development programme...there has to be a genuine commitment*, *'the Head of Service was there, she to my mind was not an advocate of the modern council'*, and *'there appears to be a fear of change'*. While this may have been the view of the majority of students interviewed, it was not unanimous. Some of the students were able to make positive statements for example: the programmes had *'created a bond and this has become part of the culture'* and *'you only need to look back to how we were in the 1990's and the (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) CPA ratings'*. However, what was noted with regard to these positive comments is that the students who gave them were all in positions of influence, in that they were managers of large number of staff (20 or more) however, one of these students also felt to a degree that *'there are still isolated pockets'* of resistance to change.

#### Interview Statements – Culture

Interviewee/ Response No.	Interview Statement
Student 1/10	<i>If I make suggestions that they are just paid lip service to.</i>
Student 2/22	I find the approach that some managers take, the managers that I've come across, <i>it just astounds me in terms of how un-business focused they are.</i> The awareness of standard business approaches, communications, processes...
Student 2/30	<i>I find the same with most managers and the more senior the more all this idea that were inclusive and friendly and a learning organisation its crap.</i>
Student 4/7	<i>Overall I think there was a lack of engagement, and my manager paid lip service</i>
Student 4/23	<i>My new boss says he believes in development but doesn't.</i>
Student 4/25	<i>When you come back and you don't have that support and engagement you start to question why you are burning the midnight oil.</i>

Student 5/22	I got the feeling that <i>my line manager and colleagues thought it was a pain... I wasn't asked how it was going or is everything okay.</i>
Student 6/39	I would say it's <i>the minority that still have the backward culture.</i>
Student 8/34	<i>changing culture needs more than just sending people on development programmes, other things have also got to happen, there has to be a genuine commitment... just sending people on a course, any course will not change culture. That will only change from the commitment from the staff.</i>

#### 4.2.8 Support

There was a fairly mixed response to questioning regarding line manager support during the programme. Some of the students stated that although they did not specifically look for support that it would be there if they asked *commenting 'I did feel that if I needed support it would be there' or 'absolutely but I didn't need any support'*. However, one student commented to the contrary stating *'I wasn't supported by my immediate manager... I was told that it was a waste of time'*.

#### Interview Statements – Support

Interviewee/ Response No.	Interview Statement
Student 3/29	I did most of the work in my own time. But <i>I did feel that if I needed support it would be there.</i>
Student 4/5	People were then being <i>economical with the truth when going to a (Learning Support Group) LSG just saying they were going to a meeting because it was frowned upon.</i>
Student 4/11	From an organisational point of view I found <i>I wasn't supported by my immediate manager... I was told that it was a waste of time</i> on a number of occasions

### 4.3 Secondary Data Analysis

Secondary data was obtained from a series of LCC Executive Committee Reports and Select Committee Reports on People Development as well as the most current external liP Post Recognition Report - February 2007. The Executive and Select Committee reports cover a four year period from August 2002 to July 2006 and relate to initiatives and programmes such as the Liverpool Way, liP Accreditation, Middle Managers Programme, Values Based Coaching and the Management Development Programme.

In addition a number of internal publications were reviewed which included pre-course literature relating to the MD programmes and the council's publication entitled 'Our Approach to Management'.

Analysis of the LCC reports was done chronologically and the findings extracted as follows:

In **August 2002** the council began its cultural change programme under the banner 'The Liverpool Way'. Utilising companies who had experience and expertise in managing cultural and organisation change such as Leyland Trucks, Senn Delaney and Optima the council introduced a series of one, two and three day management skills workshops.

During the early stages of the workshops it was recognised that poor communication was undermining this initiative and that '*effective communication*' was '*key to successfully managing long term sustainable cultural change*'. The approach to tackle this issue was to improve communication under a 'People First' banner, this included regular briefing using existing communications channels e.g. the intranet and council magazines *Council People* and *In the Know*. In addition the strengthening of links between portfolio champions, liP Champions and Liverpool Way facilitators was required.

**December 2002** saw the escalation of the council's desire to attain liP accreditation with an assessment scheduled for April 2003. Unfortunately the council were unsuccessful in this attempt achieving only seven of the twelve assessment criteria. Particularly in respect of this research it was noted that:

- A significant number of managers have still not been involved in management development activities to develop skills associated with training and staff development, namely PRD objectives and evaluation.
- The contribution in training and development to service improvement in a measured way was not evident in each portfolio.
- The benefits of training and development when compared to the costs incurred are not clear at a portfolio level or within the council as a whole.
- The culture change programme is still in its early stages... too soon to measure improvement.

**March 2003** a report was produced which outlined the progress of the Liverpool Way and liP. Within this report the purpose of these initiatives and the methods that will be introduced to measure the impact the change/development programmes are having are discussed for example surveys, feedback interviews, although none appear to have been implemented at this time.

**May 2003** a report to the council Executive Management Team states that

*'Organisationally many managers may not have bought into the Liverpool Way ethos'*

The report identifies how people often

*'Fail to attend scheduled workshops... have even been called out of workshops to return to work'*

**July 2003**, this report summarises issues that had emerged from liP feedback following the assessment in March 2003. The feedback reflects some of the findings and issues identified during the surveys and interviews within this research and include:

#### Accountability

- Taking responsibility for actions (including communication)
- Failure to delegate authority and demand responsibility
- Referential blame to senior management team
- Blame culture



- Permafrost of ‘middle management’
- Staff believe that some employees do not want to take responsibility and are not accountable and yet their performance is tolerated
- Powerless to make change

#### Coaching and feedback

- Lack of recognition
- Junior staff feel undervalued
- Managers not acting on employee feedback only token response
- Limited analysis of training and development needs
- Limited feedback, recognition and rewards systems
- Lack of appreciation and mutual trust

#### Performance

- Conflicting agendas and priorities
- No time set aside for reviewing or improving the way we do things
- Under performance not challenged
- Fear of challenging the ‘norm’. No freedom to change
- Limited effective team working
- Lack of functional communication/learning
- No focus on financial performance at all levels

#### Change

- Staff not involved or consulted on key decisions or have opportunity to influence
- The reasons for change are not well communicated nor always well managed
- Resistance to and fear of change particularly from middle and often senior managers

In addition this report provided the first real insight into the level of the costs the council was incurring even during the early stages of its development programmes and initiatives. These are summaries below and should be considered as indicative rather than complete:

The Senn Delaney coaching and behaviour based workshops for 250 managers	£158,700.00
Further 300 managers	£144,900.00
Training for 15 Liverpool Way and Leadership Academy Facilitators	£80,500.00
Investment for intellectual property	50,000.00
Licence fees for use of intellectual property	25,000.00
Total costs	459,100.00

**September 2003** a report to the Community, Equality and Values Select Committee of the council recommended that investment in the Liverpool Way programme continued. In addition to previously mentioned initiatives this report now includes the in-house provision of the DMS and MBA programmes. Within the summary of this report it states:

*'staff across all of the Portfolios have now had the opportunity to take part in perhaps the largest change initiation exercises in the public sector. Staff were involved in completing staff surveys and volunteering for intensive 'action planning groups'. Action planning is about sustained and continued involvement and empowerment of staff at all levels in the transformational agenda. It is about continuous improvement and continues improvement in performance'.*

**November 2003** saw the reassessment of the liP standards. This resulted in the council's success in achieving accreditation in December 2003. Areas of good practice highlighted within the assessment were:

- £6million investment in training
- Improvements in the PR&D system
- Individual participation in reviews, including structured evaluation forms immediately after events.
- The culture change programme had gathered momentum
- Greater up-take of further education and learning linked to the standards
- Service area training plans
- Stronger links between learning and service aims
- Access to hard to reach groups improved communication

This was summarised in a statement within the report that:

*'the assessors were satisfied beyond doubt that Liverpool City Council meets the requirements of the Investors in People National Standards'.*

In addition to IiP accreditation the council also gained recognition in the North West Excellence Awards for its achievements in change management and continuous improvement.

**June 2004** a report to the Executive Management Team makes reference to adopting the IiP Leadership and Management Model which it states will:

*'help the city council make sure that it has the effective role model leadership that it needs to lead Liverpool to become a world class organisation'*

This model was proposed to be applied to the top 300 managers within the organisation, who will drive and lead the Liverpool Way

**August 2004** saw the focus move towards 'middle managers'. Comments through external assessors such as IiP (2003), the Audit Commission (2003), the Local Government Improvement Project (1999), and through a MORI staff survey (2000 and 2003) included middle managers complaining about:

- Action plans being a paper exercise.
- Not getting regular performance feedback
- A lack of personal development
- Not feeling engaged in the council drive for improvement

However, the council appears to acknowledge that there is no agreed definition of a 'middle manager' and while it tries to define the role in broad terms it recognises that senior managers have been easily define but middle managers have tended to be,

*'some sort of homogenous group of people'.*

This definition is perhaps because middle managers have often been identified by their grade rather than their responsibilities. This report also presents the argument that research suggests middle managers play a pivotal role in cultural transformation.

**September 2004** a report entitled 'Evaluation of the Liverpool Way' was produced for the Customer and Corporate Select Committee of the council. The purpose of this report considered the effectiveness and outcomes of the Liverpool way up to that point in time. Feedback obtained from delegates of the various MD programmes that had been introduced included:

*'a firm desire to figure out practical ways to make this work'*  
(Liverpool Way delegate)

*'I would never have spent time problem solving, finding out how I can do things better, prior to embarking on the DMS'*  
(DMS delegate)

*'Through the MBA I have learnt to be more empowering and open'*  
(MBA delegate)

*'Improved confidence and advocacy of the organisation'*  
(Leadership Academy delegate)

In addition this report revealed that a survey of 100 staff who had attended the Liverpool Way indicated that 36% had learnt something new and 71% had good practices confirmed. A further survey of 100 managers who had attended the 3 day management skills workshop 72% agreed that their attitudes had improved as a result of the workshop.

**October 2004** a further report to EMT identifying the population of middle managers was still proving a challenge for the council and identified that 10 of the 21 assistant executive directors had failed to respond to a request for information that would help clarify this issue.

**11<sup>th</sup> November 2004** it was reported that during 2003/4 LCC had invested more than £5.1 million on Learning and Development and that the Learning and Development Team had now established a trading account whereby other service areas within the council would be charged on a course by course basis for its skills and development programmes. While this helps generate income back into learning and development opportunities and activities it also defines the Learning and Development Team as a distinct service provider to other areas of the council.

**30<sup>th</sup> June 2005** the Liverpool Way builds on the accepted thinking that effective organisational change depends for its success on a cultural response and around the change in behaviour style. The Liverpool Way has a strong emphasis on behaviour based learning. This behaviour based programme has helped unfreeze the 'old Liverpool' culture and introduced people to new ways of working and behaving. However, the report states that

*'feedback from staff still indicates that there is a perceived lack of accountability at all levels leading to misunderstanding, missed deadlines and duplication of effort. This has been defined as the 'R..eh...' syndrome'.*

The usual paradigm of thinking, is the belief *'that having information alters actions and behaviours'*. It is argued that whilst information is useful, in itself it does not necessarily alter actions.

**7<sup>th</sup> November 2005** A report to the EMT demonstrates the perceived success of the MD programmes and reveals the following:

- MBA - 75 managers have embarked upon the programme since it commenced in November 2001, with 34 leaders successfully graduating, 15 with distinctions.
- DMS - 50 managers are currently embarked on the programme which commenced in November 2002 with 34 successfully graduating.
- The leadership Academy launched in October 2003. 56 managers have successfully graduated.

The most current report reviewed for this research (4<sup>th</sup> July 2006) includes the request to seek approval for LCC to be reassessed against the Investors in Excellence Standard and the liP standard.

This request was approved and the council retained its accreditation during a re-assessment in February 2007.

## **5 Conclusions and Implications**

### **5.1 Introduction**

LCC has undoubtedly come a long way in a short period of time. It now has strong leadership and has developed many partnerships (and joint ventures) in imaginative ways that have improved services and raised the profile of the City of Liverpool.

The council has recognised the need and its responsibility in developing its employees and in particular the key role that its managers have in both maintaining the progress made to date and continuing the development of the organisation into the future.

A key element of the council's development is considered to be the 'Liverpool Way' development programmes, which have focused on the personal behaviours needed for people to perform effectively while also providing them with opportunities for development and the skills they require to do the job.

### **5.2 Critical Evaluation of Adopted Methodology**

Although the researcher undertook extensive enquiries no other local authorities were found to have undertaken an MD programme that compared to LCC's commitment or its level of investment. While it is acknowledged that some evaluation of smaller and more focused MD programmes had been undertaken within the public and private sector it was considered that as there were no direct comparisons on which to relate this research therefore it was appropriate to undertake a case study approach.

Initial studies established that while much research had been done on the purpose and benefits of MD no significant research had actually been done on the evaluation of MD or the long-term benefits particularly within the public sector.

However, the literature review provided a useful basis on which to base this study.

### 5.2.1 A Corporate View

The manager of the LCC's Learning and Development team was approached to be interviewed in order to ascertain a corporate view on the purpose and impact of the primary development programmes that had been introduced e.g. the Leadership Academy, the DMS and MBA. This informal (face to face) approach allowed an explanation of the purpose of the research and what was expected from the interview as well as ascertaining the interviewee's willingness to participate and their availability.

It was anticipated that the interview would provide:

- A clear background of the purpose of the programmes
- Links between corporate strategy and the programmes
- Measures used for the return on the investment in development programmes
- Indications of the success of the programmes against their aims and objectives

Due to the interviewees position within the organisation and the investigative nature of the interview the researcher was aware that some questioning may not elicit the desired response due to the sensitive nature of the questioning or confidentiality of the organisation.

The interview questions were forwarded to the interviewee several days prior to the interview as a result of their request and on the planned intentions of the researcher. This was to enable the interviewee to prepare for the interview. However it was revealed at the start of the interview that the questions had not been reviewed and therefore answers would be '*off the cuff*'. Unexpectedly, the interviewee also refused the request for the interview to be tape recorded. While anonymity and confidentiality was considered, it was clear to both the interviewee and the researcher that it could not be maintained due to their position as Head of the Learning and Development Team, therefore the interviewee was clear about not being recorded and their decision was respected.

While the recording of the interview was not assumed it had been hoped for. Unfortunately this meant the responses to the questions asked during the interview had



to be written in brief, these were expanded after the interview had concluded to ensure that clarity or meaning was not lost due to any delay.

Due to the interviewees' lack of opportunity to review the questions, those of a statistical nature were unable to be answered as the information had not been prepared. These were deferred to another member of the Learning and Development Team to supply at a later date, However they were not forthcoming. A further surprise to the researcher was when several questions were identified by the interviewee as confidential and subsequently not answered.

It was considered whether the refusal not to answer some of the questions, the non-committal and the uncertainly expressed within others may have been due to the inability to maintain their anonymity.

### **5.2.2 The Student/Manager Perspective**

Access to students for the purpose of the research proved to be considerably more difficult than initially expected. It was anticipated that all of the student who had or were currently undertaking a MD programme would be included within a survey. However, the only record of those who had participated was held by the Learning and Development Team who refused to provide the details under the Data Protection Act. During an informal meeting this issue was discussed with the Head of the Learning and Development Team and they subsequently offered to act as an intermediary. This meant rather than the researcher sending out the surveys directly to students, the Learning and Development Team would send out an introductory e-mail prepared by the researcher to the students inviting them to participate in the survey and responding directly to the researcher (appendix 1).

This did lead to some initial loss of control over the survey and required several prompts to the Learning and Development Team for it to be distributed and then some uncertainty on who had/had not been included. This uncertainty proved to be justifiable when later investigations into what was perceived by the researcher to be a low response revealed that the Learning and Development Team had not actually contacted all of the students requested by the researcher (and thought to have been agreed with the Head of the Learning and Development Team) but only those who had participated within the

last 3 years. This was explained as being due to the size of the task (to collate all of the student names) and a lack of resources within the Learning and Development Team to email all of the students.

Following a discussion and agreement with the Learning and Development Team, additional students were contacted directly by the researcher (appendix 4) and added to the survey and subsequently a response came from 83 students who identified themselves as willing to participate in the survey. Although in perspective from the estimated total number of 500 students that had attended the programmes, this was approximately 16%.

From this initial response, 79 students actually completed and returned the survey with 2 others returning late submissions and only 2 failures to respond.

To obtain further clarity and broaden the understanding of responses within the student survey it was planned to interview a selection of students. However, to remove the need for further support from the Learning and Development Team the survey included a question asking students to identify themselves if they would be willing to be interviewed and if so, to supply their direct contact details. This surprisingly produced a list of 50 students who were willing to be interviewed and included representatives of each of the programmes across various levels of management.

Due to the generalised use of the job title 'manager' the survey was also used to expressly identify managers who managed staff from those who do not. This enabled appropriate students/line managers to be identified for interview and provide their direct assessment on not only their own development but also that of their staff and any direct impact in the workplace. However, it was good fortune that the sample of students used for the interviews contained a balance of staff managers and non-staff managers without interfering with the random selection process that had been adopted.

A further but unexpected opportunity arising from the results of the survey, allowed students to be put into positive, negative and middle ground categories for each development programmes (Leadership Academy, DMS and MBA) and allowed a further cross-representation of the programmes within the interviews.

Each of the nine selected student interviewees were contacted and times, dates and locations were agreed. However despite the flexibility of the researcher, one of the interviewees continually put off the interview. Finally the researcher cancelled this interview and the eight remaining students were interviewed.

Although the interviews were semi-structured it (was with some of the students) difficult to maintain focus on the research subject, with some of the interviewees having a tendency to drift into complaining or generally talking about their experiences and day to day work. While this was not too difficult to bring the interviewees back on course, as the interviews were being undertaken in working time, the commitment of the interviewees to return to their normal work had to be considered and therefore deviations had to be managed.

All of the student interviews were conducted on an individual basis to enable them to speak freely and anonymously.

### **5.2.3 Archival data**

Archival data consisted of a series of internal reports covering a period over approximately 4 years (2002-2006) and was obtained with permission from the Chief Executive's office along with several external reports. In addition several internal documents and publications were reviewed along with a variety of external assessments and reports.

The internal reports were submitted to either the city council's Executive Management Team or the Customer and Corporate Select Committee. Initially it was hoped that these reports would contain a history of the plans and progress relating to the various MD programmes. However, many of the reports, 31 in total, although they covered a 4 year period were in essence, repetitions or variations of the same information. They generally identified what the problems were considered to be in management and the council staff as a whole, they discussed at length the MD or general programmes that were being introduced under the Liverpool Way ethos of introducing organisational improvements through cultural change. In addition the reports tended to have a consistent focus on the desire to meet the accreditation criteria of external assessors and the gaining of awards in MD, with little reference to internal evaluation or a ROI from

the programmes. Despite the above, several important factors were extracted from the reports with regard to the purpose, approach and costs of MD but not as much as was hoped for.

Internal publications provided similar information to the reports discussed above. These reports generally made references to external audits indicating the success of the cultural changes within the organisation as a whole rather than a direct evaluation for development programmes themselves; largely they tended to restate information on the aims and objectives of each specific development programme.

#### **5.2.4 Methodology Evaluation Summary**

Overall, the difficulties in accessing student directly for the purpose of the survey created a notable limitation in contacting the development programme population. Equally the inability to retain the anonymity of the Head of the Learning and Development Team may have affected the openness to the questions being asked. While within the survey, questions could have been refined, reduced and more focused. With regard to the interview a more structured approach may have helped retain the interviewees focus on the research topic. Generally the above could have helped improve the data captured and the analysis process.

### **5.3 Conclusions about the Research Objectives (Aims)**

The leaders of LCC and its Chief Executive have a clear vision for where they want the city council to be – that is at the top of local authority performance within the UK and Europe. To help achieve this, the Liverpool Way development programmes have been introduced. A key element of this programme has been the MD programme, which has focused on developing the personal behaviours needed by managers to facilitate the change in organisational culture as well as to provide them with new business management skills that will enable the council to develop its services. However there remains little evidence of any evaluation of the programmes by the organisation to determine what impact the programmes are having on organisational performance (if any) or to justify the costs.

### 5.3.1 Post Programme Evaluation

Post programme evaluation for the MD programmes within LCC was said to be undertaken utilising Kirkpatrick's 4 levels of evaluation. However, as with many organisations there is little evidence of this model being pursued beyond the first stage within LCC. The findings of the survey showed many students (40%) participated in programme feedback evaluations undertaken by the programme provider (Chester University), while almost none (4%) were undertaken by the programme organiser (The Learning and Development Team).

While the provider evaluation feedback may suit their specific needs in terms of ensuring they meet their own aims and objectives, the finding of this research would argue that for LCC such evaluation methods would lack credibility when considering actual learning changes in the work place i.e. changes in behaviour on the job, or improvement in organisational performance and as a way of demonstrating any long-term benefits to the organisation. Van Buren's (2001) argument that organisations who take the view that if a student liked the programme then learning would have occurred is unfounded and it would be considered unwise for this method to be the basis of LCC's evaluation process, a sentiment supported by Warr et al (1999) who argued that there is relatively little correlation between learners reactions to development and the subsequent measures to changes in behaviour or performance.

Kirkpatrick defined evaluation as meaning "*measuring changes in behaviour that occur as a result of training programs*" suggesting a long-term evaluation process that attempts to look at the business results that accrued because of the training that had taken place.

Given LCC's levels of investment in MD (£600,000+ per year) and considering Phillips (1991) amendment to Kirkpatrick's model, the city council must now ask itself what return on its investment is it getting. Goodge (1998) found in his research that the results courses, workshops and programmes often had little commercial benefits, and were '*irrelevant to the business needs*'. Aligning this view to the recent external liP report on LCCs people development programmes which highlights the need for a clear evaluation processes to be implemented and the need for the council to be able to measure what the liP assessors described as '*the specific impact of learning and*

*development against the achievement of its objectives.' And the need to establish the links between 'learning and development investment to the subsequent achievement of specific organisational objectives.'*

However, if there remains a willingness to continue the MD and other programmes without an analysis of financial payback, or the introduction of any processes that would measure performance this will only serve to support that arguments put forward by authors such as Newton et al, 1995; Jones et al, 1997; Bjornberg, 2002 and perpetuate the cynical view that there is an aversion to measuring the outcomes of MD programmes by those responsible (Kraiger, 2002).

Within the analysis of the executive reports significant value appears to have been placed on the IiP accreditation and it could be argued that it is being used as a benchmarking tool for LCC's development programmes.

If this is the case and there appears to be little to suggest otherwise, this should not be considered as an alternative to a formal evaluation process being fully implemented. As previously discussed benchmarking is not without its critics (Campbell, 1999, Cox and Thompson, 1998, Hammer and Champey, 1993). Claims include the comparing of existing practices between organisations is of little value. This researcher would suggest that the application of IiP as a benchmark for long-term development programmes is inappropriate as measures are too infrequent and too broad to effectively be applied. Such a process also supports the argument that managers can become so consumed in such processes that they losing sight of the purpose.

### **5.3.2 Purpose of the Programmes**

As discussed in Chapter 2.2, many authors have attempted to summarise the purpose of MD including Mumford (1997), Nadler et al (1989) and Baldwin et al (1994). In comparison, LCC's intentions for MD align closely to their definition. For example: to *'improve managerial effectiveness through learning'* and *'prepare them for greater responsibilities'* compared to organisational statements within the Executive and Select Committee reports such as, *'the Liverpool Way has a strong emphasis on behaviour based learning'*, and the IiP report that recognises that LCC staff *'recognise*

*what their learning and development should achieve for them, their team and the organisation'.*

While it could be argued that most students also agreed with this outcome as within the survey 84% also believe the purpose of the programme was to improve organisational performance, many students also considered the organisation's aim was to also achieve accreditation from IiP (70%). When discussing this secondary goal within the student interviews this aspect of questioning was treated with some discord. There appeared to be a strong view that the council was not so much interested in them as individuals but in achieving accreditation in the award with comments suggesting MD was a undertaken *'so they could get the tick in the box for IiP'*.

In contrast to the students' beliefs that IiP was for *'a tick in the box'* the Head of Learning and Development Team considered that the principle of IiP demonstrated the council's commitment to development in a way that also met the organisation business needs, an outcome that any organisation should consider as paramount (Goodge, 1998).

### **5.3.3 Values and Commitment**

The values and commitment aspects of this research were considered within the main part of the questionnaire (questions 13-29) and throughout the interviews and secondary data analysis.

Each aspect of these is considered within the following conclusions

#### **New Skills and Knowledge**

Although many of the authors Mumford (1997), Farnhan & Horton (1996), Baldwin et al (1994) & Brown (2003) may give different definitions of what they consider MD to be, in essence they all agreed that it is a process on learning new skills and knowledge to improve performance. In considering whether LCC's MD programmes were delivering on this students were asked whether they thought they had acquired these. The response within the questionnaire was quite staggering with 85% of students feeling they had learnt from their experience, and only a small number (9%) feeling that they had not. Equally there was strong feeling from the students that were interviewed that supported the survey findings and it could be concluded that certainly in terms of

the MD provider, the aims and objectives were being met. The providers' achievements could be further supported by the high number of students successfully completing the MD programmes (Chart 2).

When asked later in the survey whether they were able to apply their new skills and knowledge in the work place 82% of the students gave a positive response. However, when the same question was asked during the interviews several of the students gave a mixed response, some suggested they had difficulties in transferring their skills back into the work place, with comments such as *'I could never see the connection with what I did'* while others comments included *'my manager recognises that I have new skills and looks for me to utilise them'*. When considering these mixed responses it was evident that those who were positive about utilising their new skills were in higher positions of management than those who were negative or as some students indicated, their line managers were positive about MD. However, some of the interviewed students were quite vocal about what they considered to be their manager's negative attitude to MD stating *'if I make suggestions they are just paid lip service'* and *'overall I think there was a lack of engagement'*.

Storey (1989, 1990) argues that much of the literature surrounding the practice of MD concentrates on its function as a device for changing the organisation in terms of their culture and structure or Total Quality Management policies. Therefore if LCC is to utilise its investment in MD it should consider addressing the cultural and structural issues that are preventing students from utilising their new skills and knowledge.

### **Value**

Previous research into MD has shown that the development of employees should lead to improved skills and performance (Sandberg, 2000) commitment, (Iles et al, 1990) and retention (Robertson at al, 1991) leading to improved organisation effectiveness. However, this requires those skills and knowledge to be utilised back in the workplace. When exploring this area the survey suggested that many of the students felt they were not valued by the council. This was explored further within the student interviews where it became relatively clear that students who had returned to their workplace and not been able to utilise their new skill or knowledge had become frustrated and therefore felt under utilised and somewhat displaced. While the council has made great effort to develop its managers it appears that the expectations of those it is developing outweigh



the organisation's ability to satisfy them. Goodge (1998) warns of this situation in organisations (such as LCC) that have become flat structured with few opportunities for career progression and the issues of retention of employees. Davies (1994) also notes that there has been an obsession with development which fails to consider where in the hierarchy the people who are being developed will go. Porter and Lawler's (2001) expectancy theory also warns of the need to manage expectations and the negative impact this can have if it is ignored. This does appear to be the case within LCC and the consequences are being felt, with employees suggesting they are de-motivated, deskilled and looking to move on.

The issue of retention of staff who had undertaken an MD programme was discussed in the interview with the Head of the Learning and Development Team who commented that they did not know how many students who had completed their programme had since left the council, although they estimated 5 students (this was considered to be a *conservative estimate by the researcher based on personal knowledge e.g. former colleagues*). While a level of staff movement in and out of the organisation is expected, there could be probable cause for LCC to monitor this or risk losing its investment to other organisations.

### **Recognising Improvements**

Some of the primary reasons and the key drivers for the introduction of the development programmes were to improve organisational culture, methods of working and services delivery. Within the survey 85% of students indicated that they felt the MD programme had enabled them to recognise where things can be challenged in their workplace. Unfortunately when pursuing this line of questioning the number of student who felt they were able subsequently to make a challenge and introduce change dropped to 59%. Following this line of enquiry into the interviews the students generally indicated that this was mainly down to resistance to change.

While the council looks to bring about a change in its culture and further empower people with the aid of its development programmes it seems to have retained some difficulties within its culture. This could stem back to issues identified by Garavan et al (1993) and (Newton et al, 1995) where line managers have not been incorporated into the MD process which manifests itself as resistance to new ideas.

## **Commitment**

Although it may not be considered a driver for the introduction of the MD programmes, commitment is clearly an expected outcome. The council are committing millions of pounds per year across the range of training and development programmes, it would therefore be reasonable to expect staff to be more committed to the organisation. Morley and Garavan (1995) emphasise that the demand for quality that is driving the public sector to develop their employees and adopt a TQM approach requires that organisations harness peoples commitment. It could be argued that employees with new skills will give a commitment (Iles et al, 1990) which will lead to improved organisational capability, effectiveness and productivity if they can see they are valued (Smith, 2004) but this needs to be beyond the end of the programme itself.

Although at a senior level, Brown's (2003) claims that MD will continue to be driven by management's vision and corporate strategy may well relate to LCC, it appears that some of practicalities are yet to be fully understood by the organisation (Beddows, 1994) as some line managers many not yet recognise the advantages that their developed staff can bring to them, their team and the organisation as a whole (Porter, 1980, 1985). It could be argued that there is a need to proactively facilitate and nurture learning across the workforce (Nadler, 1980) and not just those undertaking development if MD is to have the organisational impact the council envisages.

## **Empowerment**

Empowerment was felt to be an aspect that the organisation considered that it was enabling within individuals through it's MD and the Liverpool Way ethos. However, only 30% of students felt this was the case. This could be attributed to some of the issues discussed earlier such as some line manager's unwillingness to make use of student's new skills etc. and the de-motivation and frustration felt by some. What such line managers may not realise is that when employees are empowered, instead of change driving development, development can drive change (Beddows, 1994) and they themselves can be a driver of what some people may think they fear – 'the empowerment of others and change'. This empowerment is strongly advocated within LCC's 'Approach to Management' publication and its MD programmes.

### **5.3.4 Organisational Benefits**

Undoubtedly the aim of MD from the organisation's perspective was to improve organisational performance and ultimately more effective and efficient service delivery to the council customers. This is quite clear within the council's Vision and Values statement, the Approach to Management publication and as seen in the Executive's and liP reports previously discussed. However, when considering organisational development (survey question 20) and the potential for line managers to take advantage of student development (survey question 21) the perception from students rated amongst the lowest scoring. In effect students didn't feel that the organisation was benefiting as a result of their MD or that their line managers were likely to take advantage of their development to change this.

### **5.3.5 Personal Benefits**

The personal benefits of the MD programme appear to greatly outweigh the perceived benefits to the council. Many students felt they had gained self-confidence, and expressed how they had got a lot out of the MD programmes, such as a feeling of achievement and satisfaction from the knowledge that the programmes were underpinning their experiences in the workplace. Others expressed the simple satisfaction of gaining a recognised qualification. However, this was offset against students who expressed dissatisfaction about their career development, wondering where they go from here, and the frustrations of not being able to utilise new skills and knowledge and potentially losing them. While Beardwell et al (2004) advocate that post development evaluation should be given a period of time before managers judge the outcomes of MD, there is a risk in the case of LCC that many of the managers may not only be unable to demonstrate their skills and knowledge but may have actually lost them. The organisation may find itself with many qualified managers who have lost the skills they learnt or individuals whose perceptions of expectancy (Porter and Lawler, 2001) are being unfulfilled and may choose to leave the organisation as a result of dissatisfaction or limited opportunities for career progression.

### **5.3.6 Culture**

Politically and operationally LCC has put significant value on its cultural change programme. The Liverpool Way branding which encompasses all of its Learning and

Development programmes is an ethos which is based on cultural change. LCC had looked to move away from its previous image of being a provider of poor quality services, poor management and high cost to being a leading council not only within the UK but within Europe. To bring about such dramatic change, the Liverpool Way was required to change the behaviours and attitudes of staff and managers at all levels of the organisation if it was to be successful. Storey (1989,1990) argued how MD can be a device for changing culture and effectively bring about change within an organisation however, as Davies (1995) argues, if the focus on MD is rooted in the method and design level it is not likely to be successful. This research would conclude that while cultural change is taking place within LCC it is being inhibited by the reasons presented by Davies. Evaluation of the outcomes of LCC's MD relies upon external verification via awards in excellence e.g. IIP and Northwest Excellence and the '*measuring against national standards*' which could reflect the analogy of '*seeing only the woods but not the trees*'. Comments to support this view were made by interviewed students stating '*I have seen people with bad behaviours going on a course and acting the same afterwards*' and during a meeting '*the Head of service was there, she to my mind was not an advocate of the modern council....there appears to be a fear of change*' and in particular the recognition that '*changing culture needs to be more than just sending people on development programmes... there has to be a genuine commitment*'. While there is no doubt that the council's commitment to change is there and positive change is happening the results of the survey and interviews indicate that positive behavioural changes are not widespread. As discussed earlier the process must go much further than the adopted method, it has to become embedded into the organisation Senge (1993) and managed effectively Jones et al (1997) if staff and managers in particular are to effectively discharge their obligations to development and culture change. Within the limited review of cultural change in Bath City Council (chapter 2.12) they stressed how it was important for one's own development to act powerfully in taking initiatives, in contrast to passing on recommendations to the power-holders and waiting for them to do the job.

### **5.3.7 Support**

Clearly the council's investment in MD suggests that there is strong support at organisational level. However this line of investigation was to evaluate how support for individuals on MD programmes was transferred down to the operational levels of the

organisation. (Armstrong, 2006) argues that MD must be linked to and support the organisation's business strategy and have the commitment of all levels of management if it is to achieve its aims. As discussed above there are still cultural change issues that need to be addressed within the authority and comments such as '*I wasn't supported by my immediate manager... I was told that it was a waste of time*' support this view. Alternatively, positive statements such as '*I did feel that if I needed support it would be there*' were common within the research findings suggesting that Beddows (1994) argument that support mechanisms for MD need to be in place if they are to be successful. While this may be the case for some students it was clear is not the case for all of them.

#### **5.4 Conclusions about the Research Question**

Literature concerning MD appears to be generally focused on the 'attempt to improve managerial effectiveness through the learning process' Mumford and Gold (2004). However, there are strong implications from the people interviewed within this research that while managers are improving their skills, the use of these skills has been limited and the long-term commitment of employees to the organisation was relatively low.

While the council may have considered its development strategy to be integral to its business strategy the qualitative evidence gained suggests that this link may have been lost. Kearns and Miller (1997) argue that in such cases the training and development should not be offered. A cost/benefit analysis is required and an acceptable return of investment in development programmes must be made (Armstrong, 2006).

Although LCC could be considered as having developed something of a learning culture through its MD programmes Reynolds (2004) notes that this should have created commitment from employees, while also providing them with opportunities to act upon their commitment and gain practical support for their learning.

Senior managers within LCC must ask the question '*to what extent is MD fulfilling its strategic role*' The answer must be a qualified one. Meldrum and Atkinson (1998) and Currie (1999) argue that failing to positively answer this question reflects a failure in fully delivering the anticipated outcomes of MD for both the organisation and the individuals involved.

Like many organisations before it, LCC appears to have placed its enthusiasm for MD on its own anecdotal evidence (Harrison 1993; Stewart & McGoldrick, 1996), and believes that it is providing beneficial outcomes for the organisation (Newton et al, 1995).

While LCC is undoubtedly being recognised for its commitment to the person development of its employees through its accreditation to liP (in which it must demonstrate the links to the organisation's business objectives), there remains no notable evidence of the organisation's evaluation of MD that considers its ROI. However, there remains a willingness to continue these and other programmes without an analysis of financial payback, or the introduction of any processes that would measure performance (Newton et al, 1995; Jones et al, 1997; Bjornberg, 2002).

## **5.5 Limitations**

There were a number of limitations to this study. Firstly, results were based on a small sample of students involved in MD which may not necessarily reflect the view of the entire student population.

Secondly, the nature of the semi-structured interviews, the quantity of questions and the time constraints may be considered to have been an influence upon the type and depth of inquiry undertaken by the researcher. With this in mind, the researcher's decision to delve into and probe areas of interest or importance had to be balanced with sensitivity to and an awareness of the potential effects that such probing produced (i.e., avoidance to answering questions, attribution of blame, or defensiveness).

Thirdly, the access to the student population had to be conducted in general through the Learning and Development Team who were unable to provide access to the student population directly, therefore limiting the extent of the research population.

Further research would be required to determine how, when, and to what degree the findings of this study relate to the MD programme as a whole and the wider impact of MD across the council as a whole.

## **5.6 Opportunities for Further Research**

To determine which other factors directly contribute to the success of MD within organisations such as LCC it is suggested that further empirical research is undertaken to explore:

1. The alignment of MD in relation to business strategy
  - the links to individual benefits
  - the links to group/team benefits
  - the links to organisational benefits
2. The impact of external accreditation on MD programmes
  - does this obstruct the business focus
3. The evaluation methods that could contribute to identifying the cost/benefits of MD to an organisation.

## 6 Recommendations

This study has established that LCC implemented its MD programme as a means to achieving its vision of developing an effective workplace, through introducing new ways of working and communication across the organisation. But as discussed in Chapter 1 MD has been the subject of much criticism and often regarded as having a bureaucratic, inefficient and unfocused approach (Beardwell et al 2004).

As investment in MD programmes continues and accountability increases the willingness to indulge in MD without analyses of financial payback, or measure of improved performance (Newton et al, 1995; Jones et al, 1997; Bjornberg, 2002) will undoubtedly come to an end.

### 6.1.1 Recommendation 1

LCC reviews the aims, needs and priorities of its MD programmes.

#### *The Aims*

The aims of the MD must include the accountability for who attends what MD programme and why. While this role may currently be considered the responsibility of line managers as the budget holders for their staff development, emphasis must be placed on the line managers to understand the rationale for their staff development rather than it be considered as *'lip service'* to IiP, asking the question is the reason *anticipatory* (so that staff can contribute to the long term objectives of the organisation), *reactive* (intended to resolve or pre-empt performance difficulties), or *motivational* (geared to individual career aspirations) (Armstrong, 2006).

#### *The Needs*

The needs of the individuals and the organisation must be considered for its relevance to candidates asking the questions; *'are candidates required to'*:

- Manage people and performance
- Work across boundaries, engage with others, work as part of a team, have to consider new ways of thinking about problems and solutions



- Develop relationships, focus on customers, build partnerships
- Balance technical skills with generic skills
- Empower and develop others

Priorities should include a strengthening of the process for MD that meets both the specific needs of the business and of the individuals. This should include better information on how their learning needs link to their career development, improving the support systems and considering the potential of informal mentoring and finding ways of linking the new skills and knowledge of successful MD candidates with the needs of the individual, team and organisation.

### ***The Priorities***

Hurst et al (2000) suggest a number of priorities for MD. These include:

- Combining a strong corporate architecture that has the capability to meet the specific business needs of the organisation.
- Providing better information and advice for individual managers on how to think about their future development and career direction.
- Mainstream the skills required to manage self-development and to support the development of others, including ‘managers as coaches’ and informal career mentoring.

#### **6.1.2 Recommendation 2**

The method and responsibilities for the evaluation of MD programmes clearly need to be established. This is recommended to be the joint responsibility of the Learning and Development Team (representing the council), line managers and the individual to ensure that at all levels the expectations and outcomes of MD are being achieved. This requires:

- Learning and Development Team to take responsibility for implementing and coordinating the evaluation processes of MD across the organisation
- That managers become part of a formal evaluation process for MD which considers the return of investment for their team and the organisation

- That individuals contribute to the evaluation process and are able to identify how their learning has been transferred to the workplace, the benefits to them, the team and the organisation

### **6.1.3 Recommendation 3**

The current evaluation process i.e. Kirkpatrick's model should be fully implemented and be seen to be adopted, including Phillips' 5<sup>th</sup> (ROI) level.

This should facilitate and evidence short-term, mid-programme and long-term evaluation of development programmes, allowing modifications to be introduced if necessary rather than risking retrospective faults and failures being the potential outcome.

### **6.1.4 Recommendation 4**

Action is taken to address the cultural issues that are inhibiting the council's aims and objectives but are within the scope of MD. These include:

- Renewing and broadening the communication of the 'Liverpool Way' ethos
- Looking at methods that will allow managers and staff to tangibly demonstrate their commitment to the 'Liverpool Way'
- Challenge bad practices where they are identified

### **6.1.5 Recommendation 5**

- Reviewing the impact that accreditation is having on evaluation.

This is not to say that the pursuance or retention of the awards is in any way invalid but to explore whether it is presenting a distraction to evaluating the true outcomes of MD and evidencing a ROI.

## **6.2 Implementation Strategy**

The researcher would suggest a strategy that follows the characteristics of the 'APOD' Model presented in Chapter 2.14 and develop and introduce a Business Plan and an Implementation Plan (Chapter 6.3)

### **6.2.1 Proposed Business Plan**

The Business Plan focuses on 3 goals:

- 1). Set out a vision for future Learning and Development that includes clear aims and values
- 2). Define key strategies to support the vision
- 3). Recognise that people are key to the success of the organisation
  - improve internal communications and build a shared commitment to excellence among senior managers, staff and learning and development providers
  - develop staff skills to measure outcomes and job satisfaction
  - create focus groups/workshop programmes to increase employee awareness
  - establish an approach for rewarding and recognising
  - initiate a framework for development and training
  - introduce a performance management structure to define objectives, standards, performance, development reviews and methods of appraisal.

An important aspect of each of the above goals is the development of an internal communication strategy (Chapter 6.3.1).

### 6.3 Implementation Plan

MODEL	ENABLER	CATALYST
Stage 1	<p><b>To develop a realistic and sustainable MD strategy:</b>                      Renewal of the buy-in of senior managers and development of the goals.                      Line managers to ensure that Personal Development Plans (PDP's) with staff reflect the development needs of the organisation against the needs and aspirations of the individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> </ul>
Stage 2	<p><b>Alignment of the needs and aspirations of the individual against the organisations aims and objectives:</b>                      Encourage staff development and empowerment to promote job satisfaction, to allow for decision making, risk taking and to work creatively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align the organisation's aims and the individual's needs</li> </ul>
Stage 3	<p><b>Clearly establish the aims and objectives of the organisation</b>                      Focus on key strategies                      Align strategy with implementation plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with managers</li> </ul>
Stage 4	<p><b>Create a vision on how MD relates to:</b>                      The organisation aims and objectives and its visions and values statement                      Generate a perception of inclusion in MD from those who procure it                      Improve communications to increase employee awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved communication</li> <li>• Communicate strategies</li> </ul>
Stage 5	<p><b>Establish the needs and motivations of individuals</b>                      Consider the personal aims and objectives that motivate people                      Ensure understanding of individuals operational requirements and environment                      Personal aspirations                      Align personal goals with organisational goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Groups</li> </ul>
Stage 6	<p><b>Expand the role of Learning and Development, Line Mangers and Individuals to:</b>                      Fully consider the impact of MD within the processes of the preferred evaluation model                      Develop managers to influence behaviours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing an agreed model</li> <li>• Establish buy-in at all levels</li> </ul>
Stage 7	<p><b>Focus on ROI</b>                      Monitor the ROI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and define a suitable strategy</li> </ul>

Table 8: Implementation Plan

### 6.3.1 Considerations for Development of an Evaluation Strategy

Develop An Evaluation Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set up a joint working group to review the evaluation and ROI process</li><li>• Outline a brief.</li><li>• Report back findings.</li><li>• Turn the group's findings into an action plan.</li><li>• Implement plan within 6 months.</li><li>• Develop the concept of 'evaluation champions'.</li><li>• Include "management development" as a standing item on team meeting agendas.</li><li>• Share knowledge and learning.</li><li>• Continually recognise and report development success on the LCC intranet and internal publications.</li><li>• Consider employing an evaluation/ROI officer with the Learning and Development Team to undertake organisation's role</li></ul>

**Table 9:** Considerations for Development of an Evaluation Strategy

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## Appendix 1 - Contacting Students

The e-mail below was sent for confirmation to the Head of the Learning and Development Team for agreement. The e-mail was then e-mailed to students (the research population) by the Learning and Development Team. Responses were the direct back to the researcher as directed in the e-mail.

From: Khan, Hussein  
To: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Mon Jan 15 11:40:35 2007  
Subject: MBA Research Message

Hi [REDACTED]

I was going to call in and have speak to you but just spoke to Hilary who explained you busy most of today.

If you recall - to help me with my MBA dissertation you kindly offered to forward an email message (below) to all past and current Leadership Academy, DMS and MBA programme students.

I trust you are still able to help with my request and would ask if you could now arrange for the email (as indicated below with the start message/end message) to be sent as soon as possible.

If you have any queries please let me know.

As shown below:

[MESSAGE STARTS]

As part of my MBA dissertation on Management Development within Liverpool City Council I (Hussein Khan) would like to include you in a brief survey.

The aim of the survey is to help in establishing what value these programmes are having to students as individuals, and to the city council as a whole.

In order to create a substantial picture the survey includes any one who may not have completed a programme for any reason.

The results of the exercise will be completely anonymous and only used for the purpose of the dissertation.

I would be extremely grateful for your co-operation and hope it will provide you with an opportunity to share your views.

To comply with Data Protection this email is being sent via the Learning and Development Team.

However, to be included in the survey, could you please respond to (Click) [hussein.khan@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:hussein.khan@liverpool.gov.uk) Do not use 'reply to the sender'.

A simple note for example: 'YES' in the subject box or message would suffice.

Following which you will receive the survey form.

If you do not respond you and your views cannot be included.

Many thanks

Sein

Hussein Khan  
Systems Development Manager  
BPR Team  
Room 105, Municipal Buildings, Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 2DH.  
Telephone: 0151 225 3046  
Mobile: 07734 090 839

E-mail: [hussein.khan@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:hussein.khan@liverpool.gov.uk)

Web: <http://www.liverpool.gov.uk> <<http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/>>

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P Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail. Thank you

[MESSAGE ENDS]

Many thanks

Sein

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DISCLAIMER:

The information in this e-mail is confidential and may be read, copied or used only by the intended recipient(s). If you have received it in error please contact the sender immediately by returning the e-mail or by telephoning a number contained in the body of the e-mail then and please delete the e-mail without disclosing its contents elsewhere. No responsibility is accepted for loss or damage arising from viruses or changes made to this message after it was sent. The views contained in this email are those of the author and not necessarily those of the author's employer or service provider.

## Management Development Programme Survey

### GENERAL DETAILS

1. Portfolio ..... CLICK HERE
2. Service area (type in the grey box only).....
3. No of years service with LCC (type in the grey box only) .....

### THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

4. The programme you attended i.e. (MBA, DMS, Leadership Academy)..... CLICK HERE
5. Current progress 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, Passed, Failed, Withdrew ... CLICK HERE
6. Year the programme commenced (if applicable) ..... CLICK HERE

### POST PROGRAMME EVALUATION

If appropriate, you can select more than one of the following options.

#### *The Provider (Chester College/University)*

7. Has the programme provider include you in any post programme/module evaluation  
No (if No do not complete question 8) .....   
Yes - Surveys.....   
Interview .....   
Group meetings .....   
Other, Please specify (type in the grey box only).....
  
8. What did the post programme evaluation cover  
Room location/facilities .....   
Quality of materials used .....   
How you feel you benefited from the programme .....   
How you feel the organisation will benefit from your development ...   
Suggestions for improving the programme .....   
Opportunity to give your opinion on the programme .....   
Other, Please specify (type in the grey box only).....  
None of the above .....

**The Council**

9. Has the council include you in any post programme/module evaluation

- No (if No do not complete question 10) .....
- Surveys.....
- Interview .....
- Group meetings .....
- Other, Please specify (type in the grey box only).....

10. What did the post programme evaluation cover

- Room location/facilities .....
- Quality of materials used .....
- How you feel you benefited from the programme .....
- How you feel the organisation will benefit from your development...
- Suggestions for improving the programme .....
- Opportunity to give your opinion on the programme .....
- Other, Please specify (type in the grey box only).....
- None of the above.....

**THE VALUE OF THE PROGRAMME**

11. Why do you feel the council provides these programmes

- To improve customer services .....
- To provide career development opportunities .....
- To improve your performance.....
- To gain accreditation for staff development .....
- Other – Please specify (type in the grey box only).....

**Can you please rate your strength of feeling to the following questions**

Please select one of the ratings by clicking in the grey box next to the question:

- Rating Scale
- Strongly Disagree .. 1
  - Disagree ..... 2
  - Not Sure..... 3
  - Agree ..... 4
  - Strongly Agree..... 5

12. The programme provided me with new skills and abilities.....

13. The programme makes me feel valued by the council ..... 1 2 3 4 5
14. I have become more motivated in my work as a result of being included  
in the programme ..... 1 2 3 4 5
15. Attending the programme has enabled me to recognise where  
things can be improved ..... 1 2 3 4 5
16. Attending the programme has enabled me to challenge where things  
can be improved ..... 1 2 3 4 5
17. Being involved in the programme has increased my commitment  
to the organisation ..... 1 2 3 4 5
18. I have been able to apply some of the skills or knowledge learnt ..... 1 2 3 4 5
19. I feel the organisation has improved as a direct result of these  
development programmes ..... 1 2 3 4 5
20. I feel that my line manager has taken/will take advantage of  
my development ..... 1 2 3 4 5
21. I feel empowered as a result of attending the programme ..... 1 2 3 4 5
22. I feel the programme has helped me become more confident ..... 1 2 3 4 5
23. I have been able to share/transfer any of my learning with colleagues ..... 1 2 3 4 5
24. I have noticed a change in the behaviour/work of others who  
have attended one of the management development programmes ..... 1 2 3 4 5
25. I feel the programme I attended has changed my workplace behaviour ..... 1 2 3 4 5

26. I would recommend the programme I attended to others ..... 1 2 3 4 5

27. Attending the programme was part of my development plan ..... 1 2 3 4 5

28. I was supported throughout the programme by my line manager..... 1 2 3 4 5

29. I plan to continue my development after completing this programme ..... 1 2 3 4 5

30. I would be willing to take part in a short interview to discuss the programme I attended  
Type or click in the grey box as appropriate

Yes - please contact me on telephone number to arrange .....

Not sure - please call me on telephone number to discuss.....

No thanks.....

### Appendix 3 - Survey Covering Letter

H Khan

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 12 February 2007 10:10  
**To:** Khan, Hussein  
**Subject:** RE: Management Development Survey  
**Attachments:** Management Development Survey.doc

[REDACTED]  
Project Manager  
Liverpool City Council  
Municipal Building  
Dale Street  
Liverpool L2 2DH

Tel: 07841 725 210

E-Mail: [REDACTED]@liverpool.gov.uk

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 Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail. Thank you

---

**From:** Khan, Hussein  
**Sent:** 05 February 2007 08:59  
**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Management Development Survey  
**Importance:** High

Hi

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Management Development Survey

As you are aware LCC provides a variety of management development programmes aimed at developing both current and potential managers.

This research project aims to capture your views on the value (if any) you perceive the programme is having to you as an individual and to your service area/the organisation as a whole.

From the perspective of the programme you are attending or have completed, can you please take a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire.

Your response will remain anonymous and will only used within the analysis of this research

Once completed please follow the instructions at the end of the questionnaire.

I would appreciate it if you could return the questionnaire to me as soon as possible.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Many thanks for your help and co-operation.

Sein

Hussein Khan  
Systems Development Manager  
BPR Team  
Room 105, Municipal Buildings, Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 2DH.  
Telephone: 0151 225 3046  
Mobile: 07734 090 839  
E-mail: [hussein.khan@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:hussein.khan@liverpool.gov.uk)  
Web: <http://www.liverpool.gov.uk>

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## *Appendix 4 - Additional Students*

Additional students were recruited for the survey from a second e-mail sent directly by the researcher following agreement with the Learning and Development Team. This was to increase the sample size for the survey questionnaire.

Dear Colleague

I am currently undertaking my MBA research dissertation on Management Development within Liverpool City Council and would like to include you in a brief survey.

This research project aims to capture your views on the value (if any) you perceive the programme is having to you as an individual and to your service area/the organisation as a whole.

In order to create a substantial picture, the survey includes:

- anyone who is currently on a programme
- anyone who has completed a programme,
- anyone who may have started but not have completed a programme for any reason.

From the perspective of the programme you are attending or have completed etc., can you please take a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire.

Your response will remain anonymous and will only used within this research

Once completed please follow the instructions at the end of the questionnaire.

I would appreciate it if you could return the questionnaire to me as soon as possible.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Many thanks for your help and co-operation.

Sein

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BPR Team  
Room 105, Municipal Buildings, Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 2DH.  
Telephone: 0151 225 3046  
Mobile: 07734 090 839  
E-mail: [hussein.khan@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:hussein.khan@liverpool.gov.uk)  
Web: <http://www.liverpool.gov.uk>

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