

## Local Government




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## Overview

- The power to run a number of services is ceded to the local authority by Parliament
- The UK is divided up in to districts
- Central Government provide bulk of finance
- The power is vested in Local government officials (councillors) who are elected
- Day to day running is by officers of the council and by services contracted out to private companies/organisations

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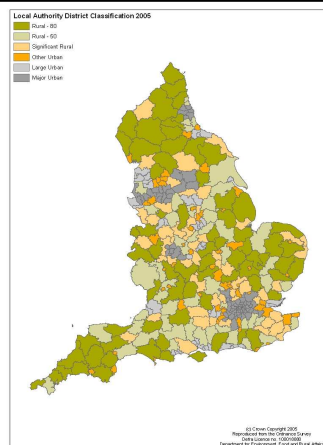
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The Country is divided in to local authorities either county or district. Each has its own law-making and administrative powers. delegated by Parliament by statute.




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### County and district councils

- In some parts of England, there are two levels: a county council and a district council. County **councils cover large areas and provide most public services, including schools, social services, and** public transportation. Recently Durham and Northumberland have changed from a two tier to a unitary county structure.

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### County & District Councils

- Each county is divided into several districts. District councils cover smaller areas and provide more local services, including council housing, gyms and leisure facilities, local planning, recycling and waste collection. District councils with borough or city status may be called borough councils or city councils instead of district council, but their role is exactly the same.

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### Unitary authorities

- In most large towns and cities, and in some small counties, there will be just one level of local government responsible for all local services. These are called a 'unitary authority'. Depending where they are in the country, these may be called metropolitan district councils, borough councils, city councils, county councils, or district councils.

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In London, each borough is a unitary authority, but the Greater London Authority (the Mayor and Assembly) provides London-wide government with responsibility for certain services like transport and police.




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### Town and parish councils

- In some parts of England there are also town and parish councils, covering a smaller area. In Wales, they are called community councils.
- Responsible for services like allotments, public toilets, parks and ponds, war memorials, and local halls and community centres. They are sometimes described as the third tier of local government.
- In Scotland there are community councils with fewer powers. There is no equivalent in Northern Ireland.

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### Joint services

- Some local authorities share services covering a wider area, like police, fire services and public transport. This may be done to avoid splitting up services when council structures are changed, or because some councils are too small to run an effective service on their own.
- e.g. Cleveland Police  
Northumbria police

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### Strategic partners, the private finance initiative (PFI)

"The days of the all-purpose [local] authority that planned and delivered everything are gone. They are finished. It is in partnership with others – public agencies, private companies, community groups and voluntary organisations – that local government's future lies.

Local authorities will deliver some services but their distinctive leadership role will be to weave and knit together the contribution of the various local stakeholders." (Tony Blair, 1998: 13)

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### PFI

- Many local authorities no longer operate any or all of their services. These are run by strategic partners or PFI companies.
- Some councils do not run any typing, pension, refuse, etc. they are all run by a strategic partner such as Carillion  
<http://www.carillionplc.com/group/group.asp>

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### North Tyneside

- 2 private sector partnerships are now running all of the council's services
- Capita Symonds and Balfour Beatty
- All staff have been seconded or transferred
- (TS seconded)
- The contract will run for ten years

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### Local government workers

More than two million people were employed by local authorities. These include school teachers, social services, the police, fire-fighters and many other office and manual workers. Education is the largest locally provided service.

However, many now employed directly by strategic partners not LA

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### FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Arts, leisure and libraries;
- Consumer Protection;
- Education;
- Environmental Health;
- Fire and Civil Defence;
- Highways;
- Housing;
- Planning;
- Police;
- Refuse collection;
- Social Services and
- Transport.



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### Who runs the council?

- Councils are run by democratically elected councillors, who are elected to office every 4 years.




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### Candidates are disqualified from being elected on the following grounds:

- Bankruptcy;
- Conviction for corrupt or illegal practices;
- Conviction and sentence of three months imprisonment within five years of the election;
- The imposition of a surcharge by the Audit Commission for unlawful local government expenditure.
- [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Government/citizensandrights/UKgovernment/Localgovernment/DG\\_073312](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Government/citizensandrights/UKgovernment/Localgovernment/DG_073312)




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### Councillors payments

- Councillors are not paid a salary or wages, but they receive travelling and subsistence allowances, attendance allowances and reimbursement for loss of earnings.
- They are not council employees. The elected councillors provide the policies, and then paid employees (council officers) put them into practice.

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### Decision making

Since 2000 most councils in England have had a small executive group that is responsible for the overall business of the council, usually referred to as the Cabinet.




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### THE PROCESS

- Powers and responsibilities are given to local authorities acting as a corporate body of the members. These powers may be delegated to committees and officers.
- Every council must hold an annual meeting at which a chair and vice chair are appointed.
- At other meetings authorities may receive reports from committees and take formal decisions. Councils may delegate powers to a committee, or empower the committee to consider the relevant issues and make recommendations to the full council for action.

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### Members/councillors and officers

- Officers are employees of the council. Unlike members they are generally specialists appointed to their posts by dint of qualification and experience.
- Chief Officers are responsible to the full council and the chair of their committee or their Cabinet member.
- Whilst control may rest with one political party, officers report to all members and, therefore, need to be seen as apolitical.

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### FINANCE

- Local councils derive their income from:
- rates (Council Tax & business rates)
- government grants
- fees and charges for certain services
- Loans
- Investments

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**Approximately 60% of Local govt.  
revenue comes in the form of  
Government grants**

- Approximately 60% of Local govt. revenue comes in the form of Government grants
- Local authorities can also generate money by levying charges for services e.g. swimming pools & leisure centres.
- The Govt. keeps a tight control on local authorities by way of audit

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**DEVELOPMENTS**

Change in policies have prevailed regarding the treatment of local government allied to the principles of competition, market forces, efficiency and accountability thus ensuring a great deal of local government services are now no longer run and operated by the council but on their behalf by private enterprise

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**Changes since the sixties**

- 60's: All local authorities provided council houses for its residents
- The 70's saw the beginnings of a sell off policy of those houses to existing council tenants
- Any houses remaining have been sold or transferred to Housing Associations or private landlords




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### Changes since the sixties

- 60's: All services were delivered by the local council. All workers were employed by the council to mend roads, run libraries, empty the bins, etc.
- Since then competitive tendering has seen many services now run by private enterprise
- Huge swathes of local authority services are run by "Partner" organisations e.g. Mouchel

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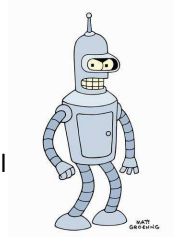
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### The future

- 2010 coalition Government Conservative/Liberal Democrats take power
- Promise of 25% reduction in Local Government budgets
- In a maximum of 3 years an election will take place and it will all change again!




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### Summary

- Powers to run a number of "local services" given by parliament to local authorities
- Most of the money provided by Parliament
- Councillors, who are elected politicians control these local authorities
- The day to day work is carried out by officers employed by the council and by services contracted out to private firms and other organisations.

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Any questions?

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