Local Government in Scotland: an overview

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Local Government in Scotland

• 32 local authorities
• Diversity:
  ➢ Rural/urban
  ➢ Geographical area
  ➢ Population size
Accountability

• Councils in Scotland operate independently of central government

• Councils are accountable to their electorates for the provision of services.

• Scottish Government works with local government and provides funding and the framework for accountability and performance.
Councils

- Each local authority is governed by a council.
- Councils are made up of councillors directly elected by the residents of the area they represent (referred to as a council ward).
- Each ward has three or four councillors.
Councils

- **Administration** - Group of councillors able to command majority support which controls the running of the council.

- **Council Leader** - normally elected by the party or coalition that forms the administration of the council.

- **Convenor** - Each local authority elects a Convenor, who chairs council meetings and represents the council on civic and ceremonial occasions.

- **Officers** - Staff within councils including administrative staff; teachers, social workers and planning officers who carry out its functions.

- **Chief Executive** - The head of its paid staff, employed by and responsible to the council.
Elections 2017

- Council elections took place on 4 May
- Proportional representation
- Election turnout was 46.9%
- All mainland councils have coalition or minority administrations
- 29% of councillors elected are women
Services

• Councils are responsible for providing a range of public services including:
  • education, social care, roads and transport, economic development, housing and planning, environmental protection, waste management, cultural and leisure services.
Powers and duties

• Councils have a number of powers and duties which are set out in legislation:
  
  ➢ **mandatory duties** - such as providing schooling for 5-16 year olds and social work services;
  
  ➢ **permissive powers** - such as economic development and recreation services; and,
  
  ➢ **regulatory powers** - such as trading standards, environmental health and licensing for taxis and public houses.
Funding

2016-17: Provisional Outturn
£11.9bn

- Social Work £3.1bn
- Roads and Transport £0.4bn
- Environmental £0.7bn
- Planning £0.2bn
- Culture £0.6bn
- Other £0.7bn
- Non-Service £1.2bn
- Education £4.9bn
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