

Local Government Responsibilities:

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES	LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION <i>Police</i> <i>Civil Protection</i> <i>Criminal & Civil Justice</i> <i>Civil Status</i> <i>Electoral Register</i> <i>Statistical Office</i>	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION <i>Fire Protection</i>
EDUCATION <i>Pre-school</i> <i>Secondary</i> <i>Vocational & Technical</i> <i>Higher & Adult</i>	EDUCATION <i>Primary</i>
SOCIAL WELFARE <i>Kindergarten / Nursery</i> <i>Welfare Homes</i>	SOCIAL WELFARE <i>Family Welfare</i> <i>Social Security</i>
PUBLIC HEALTH <i>Primary Care</i> <i>Hospitals</i>	PUBLIC HEALTH <i>Health Protection</i>
HOUSING & TOWN PLANNING <i>Housing</i> <i>Regional Planning</i>	HOUSING & TOWN PLANNING <i>Town Planning</i>
TRANSPORT <i>Urban Roads & Rail</i> <i>Ports & Airports</i>	TRANSPORT <i>Roads</i> <i>Transport</i>
ENVIRONMENT <i>Water & Sanitation</i> <i>Refuse Collection & Disposal</i> <i>Slaughterhouses</i> <i>Consumer Protection</i>	ENVIRONMENT <i>Cemeteries & Crematoria</i> <i>Environmental Protection</i>
CULTURE, LEISURE & SPORTS <i>Theatres & Concerts</i> <i>Museums & Libraries</i> <i>Religious Facilities</i>	CULTURE, LEISURE & SPORTS <i>Parks & Open Spaces</i> <i>Sports & Leisure</i>
UTILITIES <i>Gas Services</i> <i>District Heating</i>	UTILITIES <i>Water Supply</i>
ECONOMIC <i>Agriculture, Forests & Fisheries</i> <i>Economic Promotion</i>	ECONOMIC <i>Trade & Industry</i>

The Team:

This leaflet was produced by:

- Local Governance Research Unit, De Montfort University, UK
- Institute of Southern African Studies, National University of Lesotho.

It is published with the support of:

- Department for Communities and Local Government, UK
- 21c Consultancy Ltd
- Swindon Borough Council, UK

We acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of the following bodies in helping us with our work:

- Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship, Lesotho
- UNDP, Lesotho
- Councillors and Chiefs within Lesotho



Copies of the report can be found at:

www.dmu.ac.uk/lgru/lesotho



A Guide to Local Government in the Kingdom of Lesotho



Since the elections of the 30th April 2005, local government in Lesotho has gone from strength to strength. It operates successfully alongside the traditional chieftainship system to ensure that the diverse needs of citizens are listened to and responded across the country.

This leaflet explains:

- Its structure
- How it works and what it does
- Elections and councillors
- Its democratic foundations and practices
- Key strengths



Parallel systems: the Community Councils and the Chiefs

The Community Council

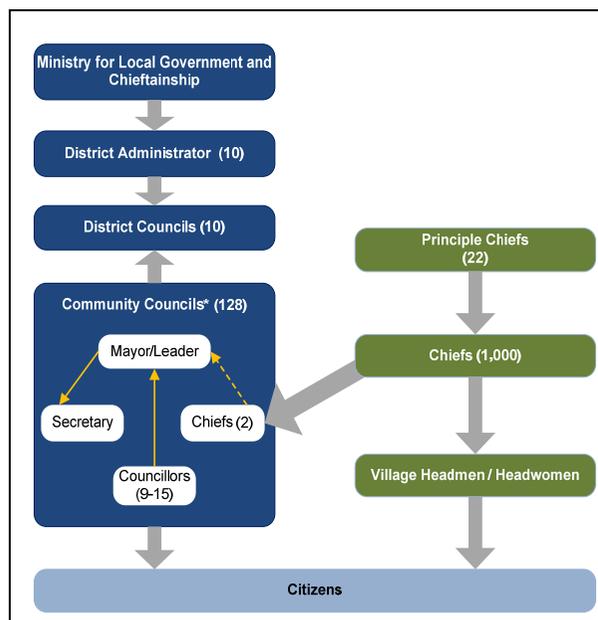
- Community councils normally span several villages.
- Each Council has between 9 and 15 councillors elected from the community
- Two chiefs also serve on each council, appointed by the chiefs of that locality
- The term of office is a maximum of five years
- Candidates for election must be over 18 years old
- One third of seats on each council is reserved for women
- Councils elect their own mayor or chairperson
- Each council has its own council secretary or town clerk
- Council meetings are open to public except when discussing confidential issues

The Chieftainship system

- Chiefs still play an important role in the governance of localities
- Law places a duty on every chief 'to contribute towards the stability, safety, peace and tranquillity of people under his or her charge'
- System works through 22 principal chiefs, who head-up approximately 1000 chiefs across the Kingdom
- In some areas, village headmen or headwomen represent chiefs at a very local level
- Chiefs normally have their own offices within their communities

The Structure of Local Government

- Main body for democratic local government in Lesotho is the Community Council
- 128 such councils, distributed between 10 administrative districts
- Plus a municipal council in Maseru



* Municipal Council of Maseru is separate

Functions and Responsibilities

While both the Councils and the Chiefs have a wide range of duties and responsibilities, their key tasks are divided as follows:

Community Councils	Chiefs
Administration of licences, building permits and regulations	Keeping the community's records (births, deaths, marriages etc)
Education, family welfare and public health, including burials and fire protection	Dealing with crime in their localities and upholding the rule of law
Land allocation and grazing rights	Resolving disputes over land and livestock
Physical planning, roads and public transport	Upholding the customs and culture of the Basotho

The success of the local governance system is based upon the ability of these parallel systems to work together

Key Strengths

The parallel systems consolidate democracy in Lesotho, ensuring that traditions can endure while also providing new forms of democratic engagement at the local level. Key strengths of the system include:

- Effective operation of local democracy in all communities across the Kingdom
- Successful elections system with a high turnout of citizens
- Above average representation of women on the Community Councils (54 per cent following the 2005 elections)
- Good cooperation between community councils and the local chiefs
- Sophisticated procedures to ensure democratic standards are maintained
- A good level of awareness among citizens of the existence and operation of local government

