

English Local Government

Duties and structures

- Councils provide more than [800 public services](#) – with 1,200 legal duties
 - Children, vulnerable adults, cultural services, highways, transport, housing and the environment
- Outside cities, these functions are split:
 - District/borough councils (housing, planning, licensing)
 - County councils (adult social care, waste disposal, transport)
- In metropolitan areas these functions are delivered by a single authority (unitary)
- In City Regions, such as London and Greater Manchester these local delivery functions are supported by sub-national strategic authorities
 - Greater Manchester Combined Authority
 - Greater London Authority
- At the very small scale there are 9,000 parish councils
- English local government
 - 20,000 councillors
 - Over 2 million employees
 - ~£50 billion annual expenditure

Local government in England

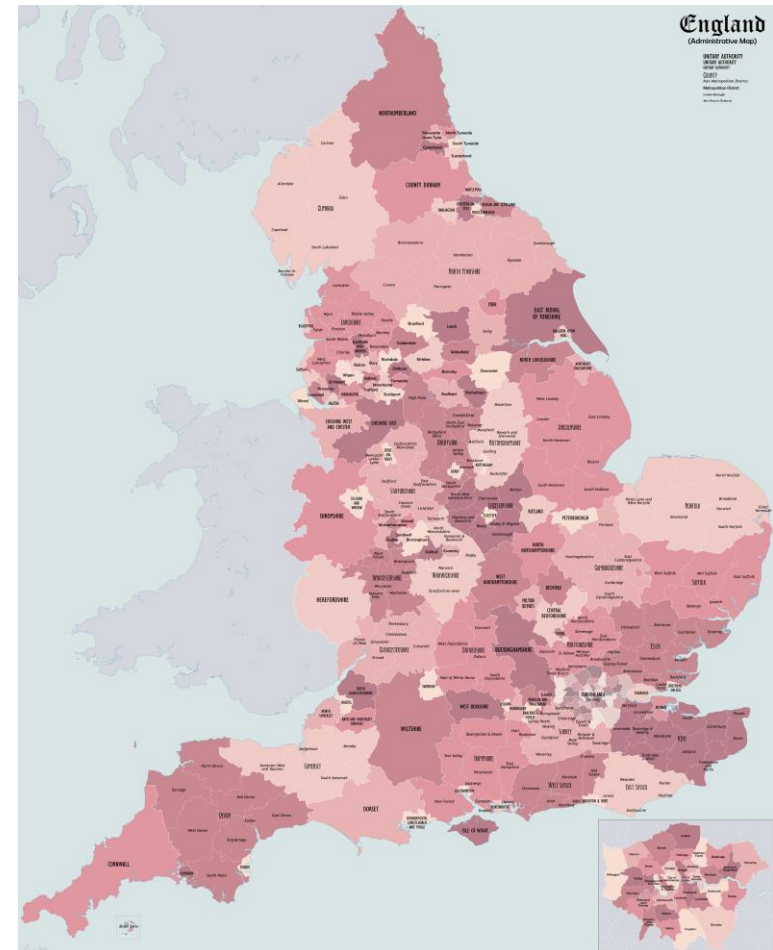
Two tier

- County councils 24
- District councils 181

Single tier

- Unitary authorities 58
- Metropolitan districts 36
- London boroughs 32
- City of London 1
- Isles of Scilly 1

Total 333

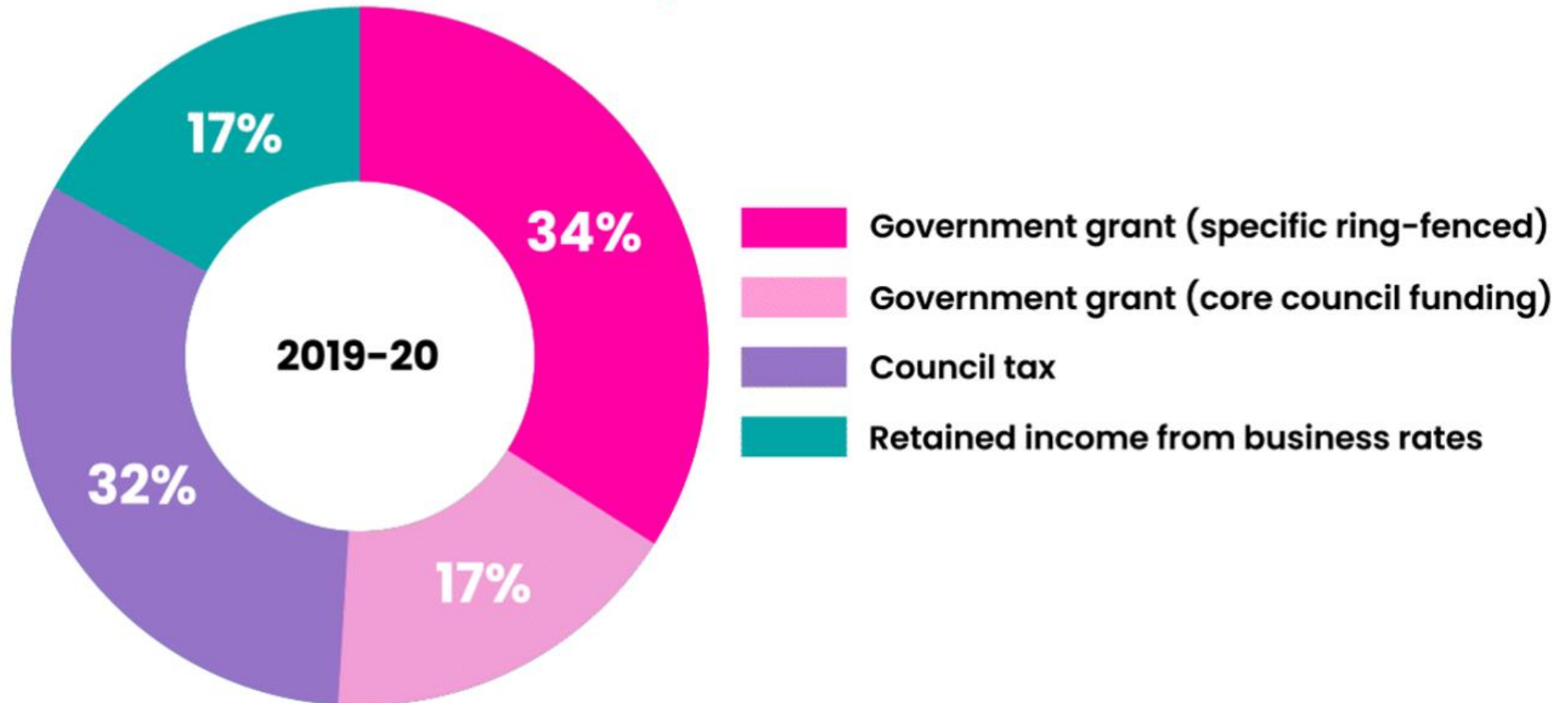


Local government funding

- Local authorities receive funding from a range of sources, including Government grants, council tax and fees and charges.
 - Council tax and business rates make up local authorities' largest source of income.
 - Local government budgets have been under pressure since the financial crisis of 2008.
 - Councils face a funding gap over £4 billion over the next two years.
 - By 2024/25 cost and demand pressures will have added £15 billion (almost 29 per cent) to the cost of delivering council services since 2021/22.
 - Funding through Government grants is fragmented, and councils often have to compete against one another.
-

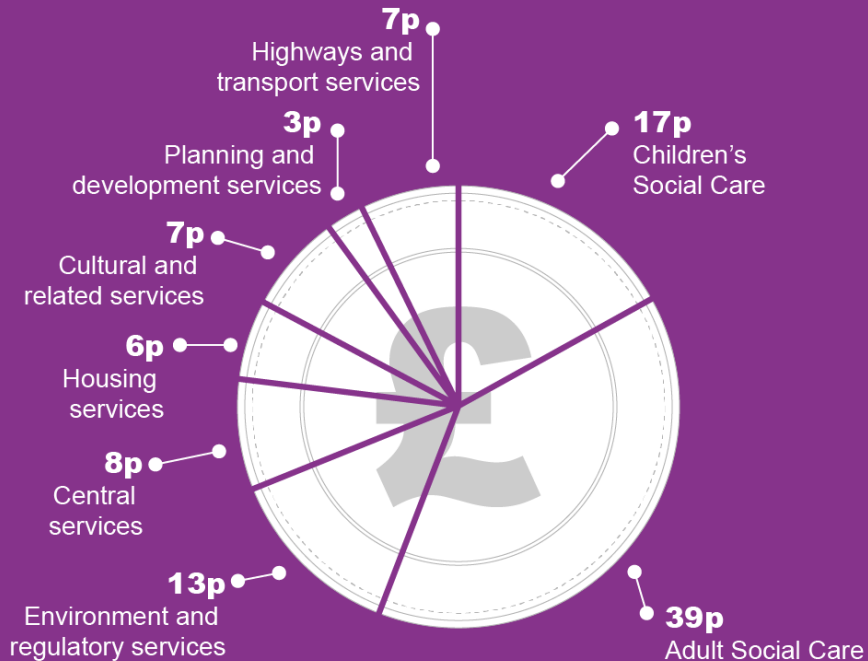


% Revenue expenditure financed by different sources 2019-20

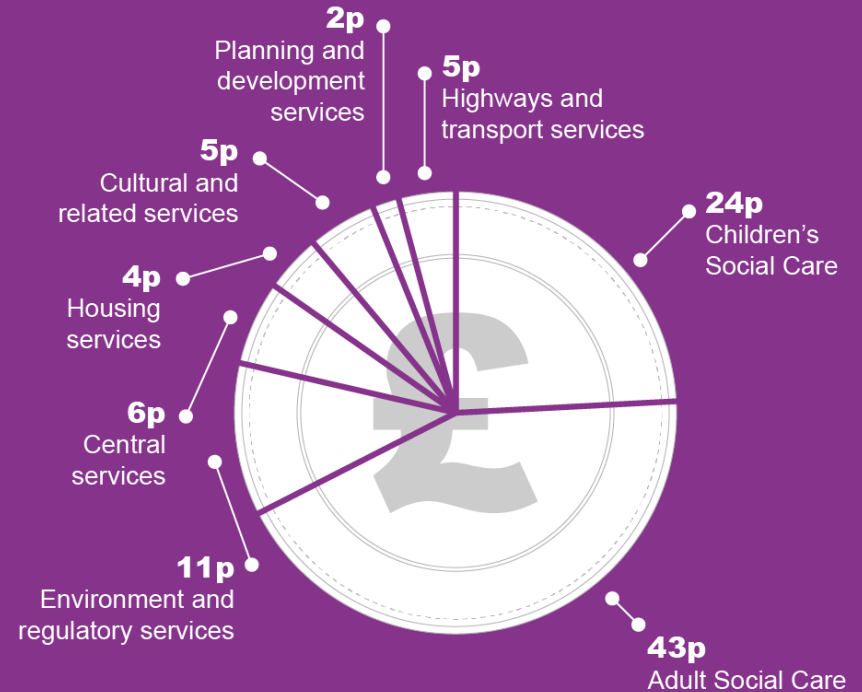


How is £1 of council funding spent?

2012-13



2022-23



Council decision making

- Four models:
 - a leader and cabinet
 - a committee system
 - executive arrangements with a directly elected mayor
 - arrangements prescribed by the Secretary of State.
 - Council constitution sets out:
 - who is responsible for making decisions and how decisions are made
 - procedural matters (set out in the ‘standing orders’)
 - the role of officers
 - standards and ethical governance.
-

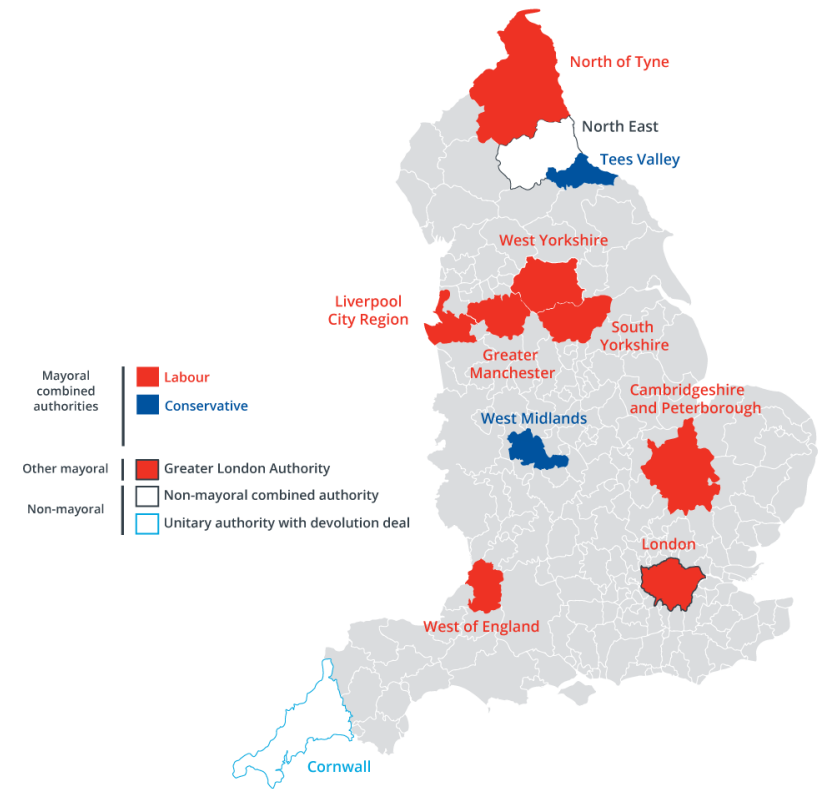
The LGA

- National voice of local government
- Membership organisation with 435 members, including Welsh local authorities
- Activities:
 - policy advice
 - public affairs and communications
 - improvement and development
 - leadership and support
- Priorities:
 - a sustainable financial future
 - stronger local economies, thriving local democracy
 - putting people first
 - championing climate change and local environments
- Different arrangements in Scotland (COSLA), Northern Ireland (NILGA) and Wales (WLGA)

Governance of the UK

- UK Government based in Westminster, highly centralised by comparable international standards.
- In England there is no national devolution, but a spread of subnational ‘devolution deals.’
- The 12 original deals were signed from 2014 onwards.

Current state of English devolution, by mayoral arrangement and metro mayor party



Source: Institute for Government analysis, May 2021.

© BY-NC

English devolution: powers

- Focus on economic interventions: skills, growth funding, transport, housing
- Some elements of public service reform: health, justice, police and crime
- The content of devolution deals depends on the willingness of different government departments to devolve
- Devolution deals negotiated within context of strong preference for a mayoral combined authority, division of powers at local level between Mayor and Combined Authority
- Greater London Authority has powers and functions defined in primary legislation (transport, policing, economic development, fire)
- Mayoral combined authorities a more mixed picture of policy co-design, secondary legislation and primary legislation (e.g. Greater Manchester health)

Where next?

- Long-term financial challenges remain
- Expected increase in pressure on services
- Challenges in recruitment and retention
- Need for better joint working on issues such as climate change, social care
- Commitment to greater local empowerment across the political spectrum

Find out more

Follow us on Twitter:
[@LGAComms](https://twitter.com/LGAComms)

[What is local government? | Local Government Association](#)

[An introduction to local government | Local Government Association](#)

Join our campaign:

[Save local services | Local Government Association](#)

More on devolution: [Devolution | Local Government Association](#)

More on climate issues: [Climate, environment and waste | Local Government Association](#)
