

To what extent should the provincial government be involved in municipal governance?

Responses

Get more output from municipalities and be more helpful to municipalities.

Should be more help from the department (MAE).

Government not quick enough in responding (not a problem of their involvement, more a problem with them not being flexible and their lack of understanding of municipalities).

Incentives and penalties may be appropriate.

Cut access to funding if not complying to legislation.

Department Should be involved more.

Department has experience dealing with other towns. Valuable information for other towns.

Some penalties (such as jail time and large fines to councils) may not be appropriate and may be deterring people from running.

No difference in how government responds to towns, LSDs, or cities.

Good to be able to rely on the expertise of the Department.

If LSD acting without authority, government should remove them (their staff), force them to amalgamate or take away some of their power.

More help from the department would help small towns.

Make reports and budgets public would not reduce the need for government to be involved (most are making it public now anyways).

Municipalities need to be accountable to someone.

Budgets should be reviewed by the Department of MAE.

Provincial government should provide advisory support but not dictate what can and cannot be done.

The process around selling of land for tax purposes is too complicated.

We need to have approval to borrow - anything financial should be approved by minister.

Should there be less ministerial involvement? Participants saw a role for government to have oversight or involvement on all the examples that were listed in the participant workbook.

We have an elected official from Harbour Main that has never stepped foot in our LSD since being elected. That's the story from a lot of districts. They should be available more as a sounding board - that's what their role is.

More guidance from government regarding interpretation of the legislation.

Municipalities are creatures of the provincial legislation so we should be accountable to the province.

If a municipality or town acts outside their jurisdiction, government should be the one to rap the knuckles.

Legislation is vague, so support needed from government in interpretation.

Councils are accountable to the people.

The province should be looking at budgets. It should not just be the public that councils are accountable to.

Example - conflict of interest and dismissing a councillor. Town had to seek out lawyer. Greater support from government would have been beneficial.

It's not nice to take your neighbour to court over a municipal issue - we're looking out for our towns, our people, but it's hard to enforce rules. Government should be more of a governance partner with towns/municipalities. When people walk into the Confederation Building, they aren't acting the same way they do when they walk into a town office - there's more respect given to government.

All financial spending should still be open to the public even if it's sent to the province for approval and review.

Lots of infighting going on in councils.

If councillors don't uphold legislation it needs to be identified by MAE.

With respect to LSDs, should government have the same level of involvement? Participants were not sure. They don't pay taxes, so no.

Training for new councillors should be mandatory.

Reviews of the municipalities should be done by the government and the reports should be released online.

gov needs to oversee - when ppl get into town councils for their own reasons (not the right reasons) it hurts the people in the municipality.

Professional opportunities for councillors are usually available during the week, and if you have a full time job, you can't participate.

After training, follow up should occur.

It's not just a gov issue. No one has respect for anything anymore.

Would mandatory training deter people from becoming a councillor?

We can't depend on the media to keep municipal governments accountable.

There is so much to learn, perhaps module training delivered over time would be beneficial.

If a community is having difficulties operating the government should play a role in assisting to correct issues.

Training and support for communities should be customized to what they need.

Government needs more people in the local areas to assist communities (advice, support and monitoring).

Government should have online resources providing operational support (i.e. guidelines, templates, etc.).

LSD - the Minister should have power over large finances (if finances not within the town's capacity)

Yes and no

Size of municipality should determine level of government involvement.

Less involvement. Let towns have control, without the Act, towns will know what they need to do.

Government should be less involved in sales and leases - takes too much time.

If municipality has a balanced budget then they should not need Minister to be involved.

Should have involvement in budget.

Difficult question to answer, some municipalities need lots of involvement.

Municipal Affairs and Environment are providing funding but have too much involvement in where it needs to be spent.

Give Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers more power (delegate authority to others to speed up processing time and less work for Minister)

We need autonomy with town staff, if indifference, the government should get involved.

Government involvement needed for oversight but towns should have more options/power to spend money as they wish.

The new Act needs to be less restrictive.

Keep documents (such as budgets) public - keep transparency.

The selling and buying land should have less government involvement.

There needs to be a better understanding of the differences between the different levels of local governance (LSDs, towns, cities) by the government.

Provincial government should be able to intervene when needed, but if the community is doing well they should have increased power and less interference by the government.

Under the new Act, there should be more government involvement.

LSDs should be accountable and have increased government involvement.

LSDs and municipalities feel that the provincial government doesn't trust them.

Someone has to oversee the action of municipalities. Depending on how well they follow legislation government should be involved and provide enforcement. Councils not sure of what they are liable for and do not understand what they are taking on when elected.

Clarification of liability issues for councillors.

Government should be less involved in disposal of property, at least at the low threshold.

Should be a lot more involved in the conduct of councillors.

Provincial government should be a last stop in some ways for ensuring councils are compliant with the legislation and broader rules.

Province does not necessarily need to be involved in normal course budgeting and financial controls but perhaps in significant circumstances (irregularities in financial audits).

High level management but not micromanaging.

When town had no council and then transitioned back to having a council we had no support to help show us how things had to be done.

Need professional development support. Support to review our work to ensure we are doing things properly and assist to help us improve – audit our operations and help us, not just tell us what is wrong. Especially for communities that are struggling.

Support/training needs to go to more places – makes it hard to attend.

Support for succession planning, especially for staff.

Community sustainability agreement doesn't work for small towns as it's based on population and on old population numbers.

Province should not be able to tell us how much to charge for taxes.

Government should not be involved in day to day operations, as long as town is acting within legislation.

More involvement needed from provincial government - feels like lip service (need more support and more concerned with the day to day governance - not just finances).

Whenever a municipality is in crisis the provincial government should be involved, but government is very hesitant.

Some situations require more involvement some require less - towns should be able to choose.

Municipalities should have control of Crown Lands within their bounds.

More severe penalties for municipalities that do not follow legislation.

Province should have input into council honorariums.

Ministerial approval should not be required for all borrowing.

If, for example, a town that can afford to buy a piece of heavy equipment wants to do so, Ministerial approval should not be required.

Budgets and taxation matters should absolutely go through the provincial government.

Planning - there is too much responsibilities on towns. Towns do not have the ability to deal with it and are feeling left without support from provincial government.

Towns should have more autonomy to make decisions in the best interest of the residents.

Takes way too long to get things processed with provincial government.

Broad powers would speed up the process.

Province should still have input into budgets, as long as operating grants are being provided.

Need oversight to ensure financial well-being.

Should be less involvement for engineering.

Internal issues within council should be able to be addressed/resolved by some form of provincial authority.

Provincial funding should not be tied to something particular.

There should be some things that need minister approval.

Towns should be able to decide whether or not to hire an engineer.

Have a set turn-around time for applications.

There needs to be a way to tax local service district residents, regardless of who provides the services received.

A lot of discussion about our funding programs and red tape involved.

Less levels/steps that applications need to go through.

Municipalities should be compensated for extending supports to local service districts.

Government departments should be talking to each other!

Transparency would help with enabling and creating efficiencies for bodies conducting government oversight.

Need a change in the process of getting things done.

Councils should have more flexible and less control by government.

There should be an upper level of government able to step in if local councils are not prepared to act in compliance with legislation.

When legislation is violated provincial government needs to be involved - investigations, and sanctions relative to infraction.

For major issues rather than minor.

Make a visit each year to each town.

Visits to communities to put a face to the name.

Funding and financial well-being of communities. Financial audits.

LSDs should be required to be subject to financial audits.

Financial matters - what is long term financing? Almost anything related to town finances needs pre-approval.

To get money, need to go to bank, then to MAE, then back to bank.

If the bank is going to approve, why does it need approval higher than that?

Current involvement is adequate. No more, no less for towns and LSDs.

Maybe depends on amount of money involved or your financial status.

If you are asking for a very large loan. That would need more approval.

More advice and guidance is required in responding to issues.

Should depend on your budget.

Fair balance now on autonomy and regulatory.

LSDs don't require more involvement.

They should be involved based on the level/type of towns. The provincial government needs to have less oversight over the small towns and they should try to listen more to the people.

We would know more about town than minister, but there may be more that minister knows that town doesn't. Maybe a check rather than a stamp. (e.g. town plans)

LSDs have public meetings but no one attends. No one cares unless there's an issue.

Not much in our town that minister needs to get into to keep town in control.

If more transparent, we would not need as much involvement by Minister. Some towns try to keep things secret.

Need to have a mechanism for residents with issues between them and their community.

If people know all the facts, they can come to council with concerns. It opens up to conversation. Councils work for the people so they should know what we're doing with the money.

Pleased with the way things are running now.

If local government acts improperly, provincial government would have to hold town accountable. It would depend on the issue - penalties could involve vacate seat, probation, progressive discipline.

e.g. If councillor misses 3 council meetings in row, they are thrown out.

Need for MAE to provide opinion/guidance on legislation.

Need ability to investigate what is going on if councillors are in cahoots and swaying votes. If things are transparent, it would be known.

Communities should be fined if acting outside the legislation.

Not everything needs to be known but things like spending money should be known.

Cannot spend money on anything when you need water, sewer, roads.

LSD's don't have funds to pay fines that could be levied by MAE.

Municipalities need help from the provincial government to deal with financial issues. Smaller towns need assistance to deal with things such as the demolition of vacant properties, and issues related to a small towns budget challenges.

We need more autonomy - if we can run the show we should be able to do it.

If there is something that is done that's not sustainable then it should go to the appeal board.

Provincial - municipal relationship should change - let the municipalities go and do their own thing (up to a certain level).

Borrowing - government should only be required to be involved if they are asking for money from province.

Province lets the municipalities take on too much debt.

More of an oversight by province to make sure that the debt is not too much to take on.

Why should a municipality have a balanced budget? The provincial government has a large debt load.

The province should have less involvement.

Need to take 90/10 and will not be able to take it the way it is now at 50/50.

What activities will require approval? Advise.

If you borrow from bank then no need for input from government.

Should be no more LSDs - scrap the question.

What gets measured - that is how things get done.

If you do something that is in contravention of legislation you should be held responsible (i.e. financially, lose your seat). Civil suit is the responsibility of the municipality depending on the seriousness of the events. Should be a tier system for penalties.

Replacement of councillors need involvement by provincial government to make them accountable.

Budget review needed. Audit or budget review.

Happy with how things are now - some minor things they should be more involved with (like selling off assets in towns).

Should have less involvement in areas such as selling off town assets.

Provincial government should establish the regulations but should ensure that timelines are more efficient.

Provincial government very responsive and helpful.

Budgets should continue to be an area involvement for the provincial government.

Content with the government's involvement (feel that the areas that need minister's approval is fair).

Provincial government should be involved in long term planning.

Government should provide more training, support and mentoring.

Provincial government should provide more advice and guidance.

Should lose ability to govern yourself if you cannot follow legislation (progressive discipline).

Provincial government should have less involvement in financial matters that are on a smaller scale.

Training should be mandatory, longer, and happen within a given timeline of being elected.

Provincial government should be involved in the development of regulations.

Provide support to ensure that regulations hold the communities accountable.

Provincial government should be more involved in establishing standardized regulations.

Training should be ongoing and on rotation throughout the province.

Provincial government has to ensure that municipalities are accountable in their actions.

Transparency is important in all municipalities.

Appeal board for development - residents/businesses should have a right to appeal rejections and approvals.

Province needs more authority related to conduct.

Conflict of interest - provincial should be involved (take it out of council chambers).

Minister needs to be involved when changing classification of communities.

Majority of table - less involvement.

Criteria such as thresholds for financial matters could influence government involvement- like Debt service ratio.

Any accusation/misuse or misconduct - provincial government should be involved.

If town is doing well then they should be mostly left alone - with oversight from government.

Government should have more power.

Oversight governance - appeal board, ombudsman, etc. in place.

Loan approval should stay as is.

Hiring of key staff - an objective person should be involved to increase transparency.

Government has to provide oversight.

Increase the people applying to staff - if hiring done by town with an objective person.

Budget process should remain the same - keeps accountability - provincial government should stay involved.

Large capital works projects should have ministerial approval.

Objective person should not be a government member, should be an independent person to help hire the best person for the job.

If authority is clearly laid out - less ministerial approval is required.

An outsider would not know the town as well as the council and rest of the staff (so maybe an objective person should not help with hiring).

Government should not be involved garbage and fire services.

More transparency and accountability would mean less government intervention needed.

Financially without funding - order an election - disbanded.

215 - open documents should be reviewed and expanded.

If you contravene legislation government should correct the error (i.e. overturning a decision).