

Date: 13th October-2025

INSTITUTIONAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF ASSESSING THE SOCIAL
EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE COUNCILS IN THE
CONTEXT OF SINGAPORE'S EXPERIENCE

G. Kholmurodov

Lecturer, National University of Uzbekistan

Annotation: This article analyzes the social effectiveness of the activities of local self-governing councils in Singapore, examining their governance model, mechanisms of resource utilization, and role in providing social support to the population from a scientific perspective. The study highlights the institutional evolution of local governance in Singapore and evaluates how decentralized management contributes to improving the quality of life and strengthening community participation.

Keywords: Local Self-Governing Councils, Local Councils Act, Ministry of National Development, Parliament of Singapore.

Today, the system of local self – governance is recognized as one of the key institutional factors in enhancing the efficiency of public administration, strengthening civic engagement, and consolidating civil society. This system enables broad citizen participation in local decision-making processes, ensures the representation of their interests, and promotes the targeted delivery of social services. In this context, the experience of Singapore holds particular scientific and practical significance, as it demonstrates the formation of an effective model of local governance that successfully integrates administrative efficiency with community – based participation.

In Singapore, the local governance system is organized through the institution of Town Councils, which function as the core mechanism for providing direct public services, managing social infrastructure, and improving citizens' quality of life. Each council operates within its designated jurisdiction and performs essential administrative functions such as organizing communal services, maintaining and repairing residential buildings, managing water supply and sewage systems, ensuring neighborhood safety, implementing sanitation and hygiene measures, and coordinating preventive health initiatives. Through these multifaceted responsibilities, the Town Councils play a pivotal role in fostering efficient local administration and enhancing the overall well – being of the population.

A distinctive feature of this system is that, in Singapore, Town Councils function as intermediary institutions ensuring effective interaction between the state and society. They not only play a crucial role in the development of local infrastructure but also contribute significantly to enhancing social well – being and maintaining social stability within communities. For this reason, Singapore's experience is widely recognized as an exemplary model worthy of study in the context of modernizing local governance systems and increasing their social effectiveness.

The legal foundation of this system is established by the "Town Councils Act," which was adopted by the Parliament of Singapore on May 25, 1988, and came into force



Date: 13th October-2025



on August 5, 1988 [1]. This law was designed to further democratize the system of public administration in Singapore and to grant local areas a certain degree of autonomy from central government control. According to the Act, the authority to manage residential estates and community areas was transferred from central government agencies to locally elected Town Councils, whose members are chosen directly by citizens. This reform enabled active citizen participation in addressing everyday local issues – such as housing management, sanitation and hygiene, the development of local infrastructure and public utilities, and the improvement of the social environment. Furthermore, the Act granted Town Councils financial independence, empowering them to formulate their own budgets and allocate resources according to the specific needs and priorities of their respective communities.

As a result, the “Town Councils Act” brought Singapore’s system of public administration closer to the principles of local self – governance, moving away from centralized control and creating a foundation for broader participation of community representatives and ordinary citizens in decision – making processes.

The transition to the Town Council system in Singapore was implemented gradually, with each stage carrying distinct significance. Initially, in 1986, a pilot project was launched in the Ang Mo Kio area, where three Town Councils began operating. This experimental initiative aimed to assess the effectiveness of the new governance model, identify potential organizational and financial challenges that might arise in practice, and develop appropriate mechanisms to address them. During the pilot phase, key aspects such as direct citizen participation, the degree of autonomy of local administrative bodies, and the enhancement of their financial accountability were carefully evaluated.

In the next stage, during 1988 – 1989, the first nine Town Councils were officially established. During this period, the institutional foundations of the new system were consolidated, and clear mandates were assigned to the councils in areas such as service provision within residential estates, maintenance of infrastructure, and the execution of local administrative functions. As a result, many functions that had previously been carried out in a centralized manner by the state were progressively devolved to the local level, marking a significant step toward decentralization and community – based governance in Singapore.

Finally, by 1991, the management authority in all residential areas of Singapore was fully transferred to the “Local Self – Government Councils.” This reform significantly reduced the direct intervention of the central government in the housing sector and, as a result, created the foundation for a more people – oriented, accountable, and efficient system of governance. Thus, the new model of local governance became an important stage not only in managing residential infrastructure but also in ensuring the direct participation of citizens in shaping their living environment.

In subsequent years, a series of fundamental reforms were implemented in the legislative framework to improve the local governance system. In particular, the amendments made to the “Local Councils Act” in 2017 marked a qualitatively new stage in this sphere. The main directions of these changes were aimed at strengthening the

Date: 13thOctober-2025

financial management system, enhancing accountability in the use of resources, and promoting the principles of transparency and efficiency.

As a result of these legal reforms, strict control mechanisms were introduced over the budget funds of the Local Self – Government Councils, and clear regulations were established for the regular submission of financial reports. In addition, the requirement to provide information openly to all stakeholders was expanded, which helped to strengthen public trust in the councils' activities.

At the same time, the supervisory powers of the Ministry of National Development were clearly delineated, and regulatory mechanisms ensuring the lawful operation of the councils were further strengthened. As a result, the Local Self-Government Councils assumed greater financial and organizational responsibility, while the legal foundations of state oversight over their activities were significantly reinforced.

As of June 13, 2025, a total of 19 Local Self-Government Councils are operating across Singapore [2]. These councils serve as the main institutional link of social governance within residential complexes formed during the country's urbanization process, carrying out a wide range of tasks aimed at improving living standards and enhancing the well – being of the population. At the same time, the councils provide direct social services to residents, promptly address community – level social issues, organize cultural and educational activities, and strengthen social cohesion between the youth and the elderly, thereby fostering greater civic engagement.

In addition, the activities of the councils place special emphasis on protecting the interests of persons with disabilities and ensuring their full integration into public life. To promote the development of an inclusive society, measures are taken to make residential areas and public facilities more accessible for individuals with physical limitations, to guarantee equal access to social services, and to involve them in the labor market through targeted employment programs. At the same time, by advancing inclusive education, mechanisms are implemented to expand opportunities for children and young people with disabilities in acquiring knowledge, developing vocational skills, and achieving social adaptation.

As a result of these approaches, the activities of local self – government councils play a strategic role not only in ensuring the safety and comfort of the residential environment, but also in strengthening social stability, improving the well – being and quality of life of the population, and building an inclusive social system based on equal opportunities for all [3].

The experience of Singapore demonstrates that a management system capable of responding swiftly, precisely, and effectively to the daily needs of the population yields significant results primarily when it is well – organized at the local level. This is because people's lives are directly linked to the conditions of their living environment, housing, infrastructure, and the quality of social services. Therefore, in Singapore, the local governance system is not limited merely to providing communal services or maintaining infrastructure, it also performs broader functions such as improving citizens' overall living



Date: 13thOctober-2025

standards, enhancing public welfare, and strengthening social cohesion within the community.

LIST OF REFERENCES:

- 1.The Republic of Singapore Town Councils Act 1988. URL: <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/TCA1988>
- 2.Ministry of National Development. URL: <https://www.mnd.gov.sg/newsroom/press-releases/view/formation-of-town-councils-2025>
3. Aziza, M. (2025). Application of foreign experience in the implementation of inclusive education in Uzbekistan.American Journal of Social Science, 3(2), 1-7.

