

Part I

The Norwegian municipal system

The emergence of the system of generalist municipalities

Norway is a parliamentary, democratic and unitary constitutional monarchy. All power is derived from the Constitution of Norway. The Storting sets frameworks for the municipalities through legislation, but the municipalities determine local affairs unless otherwise established by law.

The municipalities play a very important role in the welfare state and provide key services to citizens. They also have a key role in local community development and development of their geographical area. In addition, they have major executive authority tasks. Last but not least, they are a fundamental component of Norwegian democracy. It is common to refer to these functions as the municipalities' four different roles or basic tasks; local democratic actor and arena, the service provider role, the community developer role and the executive authority role.

In addition, the municipalities are major employers and the municipal council has an important employer role. The municipalities are also a geographically limited area. This is where the citizens reside and it is here they receive their services, which in turn creates a municipal identity, for many.

Local self-government

Local self-government entails that the municipalities have decision-making authority over local affairs. The municipalities can make decisions on their own initiative and responsibility. Limits to self-government must be established in legislation. Local self-government is based on the values of participation, efficiency and freedom.

Participation is about proximity between elected representatives and citizens, and proximity to what needs to be managed, locally. Local elected representatives will, through their local knowledge, have better insight into the citizens' needs and local conditions and can adapt the content of policies accordingly. It is also a value in itself that citizens can participate in local democracy, either by standing for election, or through elections and participation between elections.

The efficiency value is one of the main reasons for assigning tasks to the municipal sector. A distinction is made between prioritisation efficiency and cost efficiency. Municipalities are better suited than State sector bodies to make overall priorities and allocate limited resources. They can adapt services to needs, wants and local conditions. Thereby, the municipalities ensure prioritisation efficiency. Cost efficiency is about the municipalities, in a system of block allocations, being responsible for their own resource use, and therefore having incentives to keep costs down. If a municipality can operate efficiently and get more out of the money, the municipality also retains the profit from such savings. The requirement of

cost-efficiency is also a legitimate requirement to avoid waste of public resources and keep the level of public expenditure down.¹

Autonomy or freedom is about the municipalities needing a certain independence and local discretion in order for self-government to be genuine. Politics is about distribution and is dependent on there being something to prioritise or de-prioritise. Coordination across services also requires local discretion. The municipalities' freedom also includes the fact that they can voluntarily take on tasks that are not assigned to other bodies by law, known as *negatively limited competence*.

Municipal self-government has long been part of the social system in Norway. Until a few years ago, the principle of municipal self-government was not expressly regulated in law or the Constitution.

In the spring of 2016, however, a constitutional provision on local self-government was adopted by the Storting, cf. Document 12:19 (2011–2012). Article 49, second paragraph of the Constitution now states:

Citizens have the right to govern local affairs through local elected bodies. Specific provisions regarding the local elected level shall be laid down by law.

The provision enshrines the principle of municipal self-government in the Constitution, and stipulates that citizens have the right to manage local affairs through local elected bodies.

Municipal self-government is also established in the purpose clause of the 2018 Local Government Act. The Local Government Act clarifies self-government and representative democracy, and follows up on the provisions of the Constitution.

Through the Local Government Act, several elements of self-government are enshrined in law (Section 2-1):

- Norway is divided into municipalities and county authorities with their own elected leadership.
- Each municipality and county authority is a separate legal entity and can make decisions on its own initiative and responsibility.
- The municipalities and the county authorities exercise their self-government within national frameworks. Limitations to municipal and county authority self-government must be pursuant to law.

The Local Government Act contains statutory principles for the national authorities' relationship with the municipal and county authority self-government (Section 2-2):

- Municipal and county authority self-government should not be limited more than is necessary to safeguard national objectives.
- Public duties should preferably be assigned to the administrative level closest to the citizens.
- Within the frameworks of national economic policy, municipalities and county authorities should have local government revenue that provides an financial discretion.

¹Report to the Storting No. 12 (2011–2012)

Local self-government from a Nordic perspective

A comparison of local self-government in the Nordic countries shows that all the municipalities in the Nordic countries have considerable freedom in terms of tasks, as municipal self-government is negatively limited.² In a number of other countries, the municipalities' tasks must be authorised by law, or be limited in other ways. The range of tasks among the Nordic municipalities is also quite broad. The same applies to the freedom to organise the municipal apparatus according to local wishes. However, there are differences between the Nordic countries.

In terms of legal protection of local self-government, Norway has reached the level of Finland and Iceland following the enshrining of local self-government in the Constitution, as well as the introduction of *locus standi* on the part of the municipalities. The municipalities in Sweden and Denmark have somewhat weaker legal protection of local self-government.

However, Norwegian municipalities have less economic freedom than municipalities in the other countries, as Norway has fewer taxation options. Finnish and Icelandic municipalities have the greatest freedom in this regard. Borrowing autonomy is most restricted in Denmark.

In terms of breadth of tasks fulfilled by the municipalities, Finnish municipalities have had the broadest range of tasks and Icelandic municipalities the have the narrowest. This has changed from 2023, as responsibility for health and welfare tasks in Finland has been transferred from the municipalities to new regional welfare areas.

Local autonomy appears to be broadest in Sweden and Finland and narrowest in Norway, which is particularly the result of greatly restricted taxation autonomy.

The municipalities' basic roles

The municipalities' main tasks were grouped into main groups or roles by the Christiansen Committee.³ The Christiansen Committee believed that the municipalities' work could be categorised based on their roles as service provider, community developer and democratic actor and arena. It has been necessary for the municipalities to become more aware of the distinction between the service production per se and the executive authority task, and it has therefore become common to refer to executive authority as a separate role.⁴

These roles describe the entirety of the municipalities' responsibilities, tasks and roles in Norwegian democracy and the Norwegian welfare state. The municipalities' overall social responsibility, which is expressed through these four roles or tasks, is now also reflected in the purpose provision in Section 1-1, first and second paragraphs of the Local Government Act:

The purpose of the Act is to promote local self-government and provide the necessary frameworks for this. The Act shall facilitate the local elected government and a strong representative local democracy with active citizen participation.

²Baldersheim, Houlberg, Lidstrøm, Hlynsdottir and Kettunen (2019)

³NOU 1992: 15

⁴Grefsrud and Hagen (2003)

The Act shall facilitate in order for municipalities and county authorities to be able to provide services and engage in community development in the best interests of citizens. The Act shall also facilitate the exercise of public authority by municipalities and county authorities. Furthermore, the Act shall contribute to municipalities and county authorities being efficient, confidence-inspiring and sustainable.

In assessing how the municipalities function, the Committee has chosen to use the generalist municipalities' four basic tasks as a starting point. The municipalities have a large and broad portfolio of tasks within the four roles.

The municipalities' *democratic role* has become more important as the welfare state has increasingly been built around the municipality as the party responsible for important parts of public benefits and welfare. The fact that citizens have the opportunity to elect their local political leaders themselves and to hold them accountable is a core component of our entire democratic system.

Our political system is based on a representative democracy, where voters elect representatives through elections who will make decisions on their behalf. Voter turnout, as well as the participation of all groups in society, is important for democracy. The parties and the manner in which they function are also key to a representative democracy.

Democracy is also about participation and expressing opinions between elections. In addition to representative democracy, the facilitation of forms of participation and arenas that include political discussion will therefore form part of the municipalities' role as a democratic arena and actor. To achieve this, an active local organisational life is required, as well as an active local press. Furthermore, the municipalities must be aware of new arenas, channels and new ways of receiving input from citizens, especially those who are affected but do not themselves actively participate in the public debate. The municipality as a local democratic arena is also about how representative democracy works, and the ability of elected representatives to respond to citizens' needs and expectations.

The municipalities are major *service providers* and have a comprehensive responsibility for the services offered to their citizens. Citizens receive services from the municipality throughout their lives – everything from follow-up through the infant healthcare programme as a newborn, via the provision of kindergarten, before transitioning to primary school, all the way to elderly care services in old age.

In addition to major welfare services such as kindergartens, primary schools, health and care services and social services, the municipalities are responsible for important tasks such as libraries, various cultural initiatives, fire protection, ports, municipal roads, church buildings and cemeteries, local environmental protection and waste disposal. The municipalities are also responsible for more specialised tasks such as child welfare, substance abuse and mental health.

Equal services regardless of place of residence has been an important goal in the development of the Norwegian welfare state, and is today one of several national goals. The concept of equality does not necessarily imply equal services with the same form, content and scope in all municipalities, but that the municipalities and county authorities shall have opportunities to be able to provide health services, education and so forth that can best be adapted to individual needs. In 2012⁵, the majority of the Standing Committee on Local Government and

⁵Recommendation to the Storting No. 270 (Resolution) (2011–2012)

Public Administration stated that differences between municipalities are favourable if they reflect different political priorities and different local conditions.

The municipalities are *executive authorities* within a number of areas and often in connection with their role as service provider and community developer. The municipalities administer public authority that regulates basic conditions in citizens' lives and that establishes the frameworks for local community development. The municipality exercises its role as executive authority, among other things, when it makes decisions on the allocation of services, grants permits, distributes grants and subsidies, adopts regulations that apply in the municipality, makes planning decisions and carries out supervision.

The municipalities' role as *community developer* is about local community development through planning and facilitating long-term land use and development patterns, development of infrastructure, local and town centre development, business development, the environment and public health in the broadest sense. Through plans and measures, the municipalities are to ensure comprehensive local community development and good living conditions for citizens. The primary legal basis is the Planning and Building Act, where the municipality's role as the party responsible for land use within the municipality's boundaries is essential. The role encompasses more than the tasks a municipality is required to carry out pursuant to acts and regulations, and is largely based on cooperation with and mobilisation of actors within and outside their municipality.

Historical development of the system of generalist municipalities

The development of today's Norwegian municipalities dates back to 1837, with the adoption of the Alderman Acts. The municipal system has developed over time, and it took a long time for the governing bodies from 1837 to become what we today know as generalist municipalities. Flo believes that the Norwegian municipal system was clearly based on "systems thinking" from the start.⁶ The municipalities were already to function as an executive part of a national governance system subject to State legislation, in addition to local tasks they could initiate themselves. Right from the start, the municipality was given responsibility for national tasks.

But this national governance system was not a system of generalist municipalities in the beginning. There was no principled equality between the municipalities. On the contrary, there were great differences between various types of municipalities.

From urban and rural municipalities to generalist municipalities

The Alderman Acts limited the municipalities' territories, established governing bodies and laid down rules for municipal proceedings. They determined the boundaries of municipal jurisdiction and regulated the relationship between municipality and the State. The principle of popular sovereignty, that power emanates from the people, was used as the basis for the selection of the members of the local governing bodies, and this paved the way for participation in local politics for more people and advocacy groups.

The Alderman Acts consisted of two acts, one for cities (market towns) and one for villages/rural municipalities (districts), also referred to as *herredskommuner* (rural municipalities). The reason why there were two acts was both the cities' privileged position in a number of areas, and the fact that the local government apparatus and local participation

⁶Flo (2021)

were more developed in the cities. There were also two different versions of the special statutes. The urban municipalities had a higher status, and more rights related to trade and crafts.

The rural municipalities were part of the county municipalities, today's county authorities, which can be described as a support and cooperation body for the rural municipalities, until the 1970s.⁷ The county municipality can be regarded as a superstructure for the rural municipalities, as a form of institutionalised inter-municipal governance. The county municipalities were governed by a county council, which consisted of the mayors of the rural municipalities. The county municipality was required and undertook to fulfil tasks that were too burdensome for the smaller municipalities to manage.⁸

Some of the new municipalities that were created were very large, and, among other things, to make up for the considerable geographical distances, the institute of parish municipalities was included in the Alderman Acts, but only for the rural municipalities. The parish municipalities functioned as smaller entities within larger rural municipalities. It had its own board consisting of the parish's representatives in the rural municipality's executive board and representative board. The parishes were independent administrative entities within certain areas, such as church affairs and, later, the welfare and school system. The parish municipalities also had authority in matters that exclusively concerned the parish in question, and they were authorised to collect taxes.

There were also special municipal administrative entities – special municipalities – alongside the *ordinary* municipalities, but with different characteristics and of distinctly less significance. The special municipalities were established to fulfil specific administrative tasks. Special municipalities, such as road, church, school and welfare municipalities, were created through special legislation, which both limited their area of authority and determined what kind of governing bodies these special bodies should have.

Later in the 19th century, a *municipalisation* occurred in that power passed from the special bodies to the representative bodies in the *ordinary* municipalities, which tied it all together.⁹

The parish municipalities as a sub-municipal level had a high degree of freedom and this contributed to undermining the generalist character of the municipality. From 1837 until 1930, a number of municipal divisions were carried out of the rural municipalities, according to the boundaries of the parish municipalities. This increase in the number of municipalities contributed to strengthening the generalist municipality.¹⁰ Additional municipalities were created, but the municipalities became more uniform and were given the same tasks and authority.

Gradually, the need for the parish municipalities as a sub-municipal level diminished, partly due to improved communication. The parish municipality was abolished in 1950, and the special municipalities gradually disappeared as an organisation and were replaced by special statutes. The municipalities received larger administrations, and the mayor was given a more central role as a representative of the municipality.

The new Local Government Act from 1955 removed the distinction between urban and rural municipalities. The various special statutes that also contained a distinction between urban

⁷NOU 1990: 13

⁸Næss (1987)

⁹Flo (2021)

¹⁰Flo (2021)

and rural municipalities were also gradually amended. Thus, there was legal equality between the municipalities. This, in addition to the abolition of the parish municipalities, was perhaps the clearest milestone on the way to a system of generalist municipalities based on a principle of generalist municipalities where all municipalities have the same responsibilities, even if these terms had not yet been put into use.

Towards a common system of governance

In addition to a legal separation between the municipalities, there was also a separation between municipalities in terms of finances. The municipalities were initially at the mercy of their own resource base, and there was no redistribution policy from the State. This created a divide between municipalities, which was not only between urban and rural, but could just as easily result in considerable differences between urban municipalities.

On the part of the State, there was widespread opposition to redistribution between municipalities well into the 20th century, because it was feared that this would undermine their self-sufficiency. The State contributed financially, but often in the form of various grants to municipalities which themselves contributed resources to fund measures the State wanted to encourage. The result of this was often that those who had the most also received the most.¹¹

During the interwar period there was an economic crisis, including in many municipalities. Many had incurred considerable debts, in many cases due to investments in power development. However, it gradually became clear that the economic crisis in the municipalities was also about a lack of a local resource base. Several municipalities were in the process of going bankrupt and were placed under State administration. A political consensus eventually emerged regarding the existence of a municipal revenue crisis, not just a debt crisis, and during the first half of the 1930s the first state equalisation and redistribution measures were implemented. A provision prohibiting bankruptcy for municipalities was also introduced during this period. This was a step in the direction of a more common funding system, where the municipalities were viewed as a whole, and an understanding that the municipalities should provide citizens with the same benefits, nationwide.

In the 1970s, municipal budgets and municipal activity increased sharply. Growth in the municipal economy was more State-driven than municipality-driven, and growth in the municipal economy was the result of scattered growth in a collection of uncoordinated transfer schemes.¹² The Ministry of Local Government and Labour was eventually given responsibility for coordinating orders that could lead to increased expenditure from other Ministries and, in 1986, the revenue system for the municipalities was introduced, which emphasised block allocations to the municipalities.

In 1976, the county authorities received directly elected bodies and the county council members were no longer elected by the municipal councils. The county authority was now no longer a *support body* for the municipalities.¹³ The municipalities and county authorities thereby became equal administrative bodies.

In the post-war period, referred to as the *municipal transformation*, several processes involving major structural and institutional reforms were carried out in relation to Norwegian municipalities. From then on, the municipalities were redesigned based on an ideal of equality

¹¹Flo (2021)

¹²Næss (1987)

¹³NOU 2000: 22

and to create the most equal conditions possible in a country with major inequalities. Efforts were made to raise the *floor*, which was also an important intention behind the new municipal structure that was implemented in the 60s.¹⁴

With the reforms and development of the municipal sector in the post-war period, it was clear that the State was in the driver's seat, and municipal self-government and local freedom of action became more restricted, as a result of which the municipalities became a clearer resource for the construction of the welfare state.¹⁵ A uniforming of the municipalities through a revenue system and a new Local Government Act in the late 80s and early 90s contributed to a more equal treatment of the municipalities, and a system of generalist municipalities based on municipalities being treated more or less equally regardless of size, population and location.

The final confirmation of the system of generalist municipalities arrived with the new Local Government Act in 1992, wherein it was explicitly stated that responsibility for the entire municipality's activities lay with the municipal council. Thereby, the municipalities received a uniform, democratic governance.

Historical development of the terms

The terms *generalist municipality* and *system of generalist municipalities* were first used by the Christiansen Committee in 1992¹⁶, to put into words the values and considerations this Committee wanted to protect and continue through proposals for a new municipal structure.¹⁷ The Christiansen Committee's starting point for discussing new structural solutions was that the municipalities and county authorities should be developed as generalist bodies "by coordinating large parts of the public provision of services, locally and regionally, and that they are on equal footing as administrative bodies in relation to state governance". Thus, the Committee delimited the generalist municipalities both in relation to special municipalities – where each entity is adapted to a special task – and in relation to schemes involving geographically differentiated distribution of functions, i.e., differentiated responsibilities.

The two terms *generalist municipality* and *system of generalist municipalities* have since become key terms in discussions on values and principles for the administration and organisation of the municipal sector. The term *principle of generalist municipalities* was first used in the early 2000s by the Task Distribution Committee. It appears to be mostly used as a political ideal that Norway should have a system of generalist municipalities.¹⁸ The Task Distribution Committee¹⁹ stated that "the generalist municipality must be perceived as an important condition for local self-government, in that the elected bodies have several tasks which they must weigh against one another and prioritise among (...) this has been a primary justification for there being considerable breadth in the tasks fulfilled by municipalities and county authorities". Thus, the Task Distribution Committee emphasised that the municipalities' elected bodies must have a general responsibility for local conditions – that a

¹⁴Flo (2021)

¹⁵Flo (2021)

¹⁶NOU 1992: 15, p.19

¹⁷Flo (2021)

¹⁸Flo (2021)

¹⁹NOU 2000: 22, p.85

municipality "is responsible for a large number of public tasks within a territory"²⁰, which requires a "democratic basis in the affected population".

These arguments refer to another defining characteristic of the system of generalist municipalities, namely *universalism* – that "all municipalities are responsible for the same portfolio of tasks".

The democratic significance of the principle of generalist municipalities has also been highlighted in subsequent studies and reports. In *Stat og kommune – styring og samspel*²¹ [State and municipality – governance and interaction] it is stated that:

The principle of generalist municipalities is highlighted in the Local Government Act in that statutory authority shall in general be assigned to the municipal council and not to municipal bodies and entities. Thereby, the highest body in the municipality, the municipal council, is highlighted as the body responsible for solving statutory tasks. Democracy through direct elections confers legitimacy to the system.

The State has often referred to the principle of generalist municipalities as a guide for state governance of the municipalities. In the guide on State governance of municipalities and county authorities, it is emphasised that state governance shall be based on the principle of generalist municipalities, based on the following definition:²²

All municipalities shall be subject to the same tasks by law, and the same funding system applies to all municipalities. The legislation provides the same frameworks for the organisation and governance of the municipalities.

The definition is further elaborated as follows:

The principle of generalist municipalities implies that there must be the same frameworks, tasks, responsibilities and funding scheme for all municipalities. All municipalities shall safeguard democratic functions, provide the same statutory services to citizens, be executive authorities and handle planning and development tasks in the local community. This applies regardless of population, settlement structure or other characteristics. The principle implies that all citizens shall have access to the same public services, regardless of in which municipality they reside. The principle of generalist municipalities allows for unified governance, both financially and legally.

The definition in the guide on state governance is naturally characterised by a State perspective on the municipal system. In the commentary to the definition of the principle, however, it is also mentioned that all municipalities shall fulfil the four roles of service provider, community developer, executive authority and democratic arena.

The Committee's understanding and definition of the terms

In order to solve the Committee's tasks, there has been a need to clarify the understanding of terms and what they mean.

The Committee will apply the following understanding of the key concepts:

²⁰Aars in Fimreite, Flo and Aars (2002), p. 30

²¹Report to the Storting No. 12 (2011–2012), p.22

²²Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (2020b)

- A *generalist municipality* is a separate legal entity where the municipal council is responsible for managing a wide range of public tasks within its territory.
- *The principle of generalist municipalities* implies that all municipalities have the same legal status and the same responsibilities for statutory tasks, regardless of population size, settlement structure, economy or other characteristics.
- *The system of generalist municipalities* is a unified national governance system for generalist municipalities based on the principle of generalist municipalities.

The generalist municipality

The Committee applies Constitution's provision that citizens have the right to govern local affairs through local elected bodies. Furthermore, the Committee relies on the Local Government Act's provisions on municipal self-government, including the fact that municipalities and county authorities are separate legal subjects and can make decisions on their own initiative and responsibility.

In order for a municipality to be regarded as a generalist municipality, the municipality must first have a general responsibility for local conditions. This means that the municipalities and county authorities must be responsible for a large number of public tasks within their territory.

To qualify as a generalist municipality, the municipality must, secondly, have a unified, elected leadership. This means that it is the municipal council, and not municipal bodies and entities, which is responsible for municipal activities.

The Committee emphasises that a broad range of tasks and functions gathered in a single political institution is a prerequisite for being able to see connections, and coordinate, prioritise and adapt public tasks and resources within the municipality's geographical area, in line with local wants and needs. The municipalities' tasks and authority can vary over time and, in the Committee's opinion, it is not appropriate to set an absolute limit on how many functions and tasks a municipality shall have, and still qualify as a generalist municipality.

The Committee emphasises that overall governance and prioritisation shall be carried out by a democratic, directly elected body – the municipal council. The municipalities have their own elected leadership. The municipal council is the highest body in the municipality, which makes decisions on behalf of the municipality. The municipal council can delegate authority to make decisions to other elected bodies, the mayor or the chief municipal executive within the framework of the Local Government Act and other legislation, but cannot delegate responsibility. The municipal council has the highest responsibility for the municipality's activities.

Because the overall responsibility for all activities in the municipality rests with the municipal council, voters experience an unbroken chain of democratic accountability. Municipal employees are answerable to the chief municipal executive, who in turn is answerable to the municipal council, which is held accountable by the citizens, through elections. Thus, citizens can hold their own municipal council accountable for all municipal task-solving. This requires that all statutory authority rests with one body – the municipal council – and not with other municipal bodies or entities.

The principle of generalist municipalities

The principle of generalist municipalities implies that all municipalities have the same legal status and the same responsibilities for the statutory tasks, regardless of population size, settlement structure, economy or other characteristics. The municipalities have a great deal of freedom to choose how they organise the task solution – through their own organisation, inter-

municipal cooperation or by procuring services, either from other municipalities or private actors.

The Committee emphasises that the principle of generalist municipalities gives all citizens an equal opportunity to participate in and influence decisions that concern their everyday lives, and a basis for equal local self-government, nationwide. The same responsibility for tasks makes it identifiable and understandable to citizens who is responsible for public tasks, and gives the State an unambiguous system to administer.

The system of generalist municipalities

The system of generalist municipalities is a national governance system for generalist municipalities based on the principle of generalist municipalities. This means that the legislation provides the same frameworks for the organisation and governance of the municipalities, and that the same funding system applies to all municipalities. The Local Government Act, the Public Administration Act, the Freedom of Information Act and most of the special statutes treat all municipalities equally.

The Committee emphasises that a unified municipal system is easy for the State to manage and provides a basis for efficient use of public resources and fair and coordinated management of municipalities and county authorities. It is also simpler and more transparent for citizens.

The Committee's definitions differ somewhat from previous definitions, mainly in that the Committee has clarified the distinction between *generalist municipality* and the *principle of generalist municipalities*. According to the Committee's definition, a municipality can be a generalist municipality even if it deviates from the principle of generalist municipalities that all municipalities have equal responsibilities.

Prerequisites and contextual conditions that affect the system

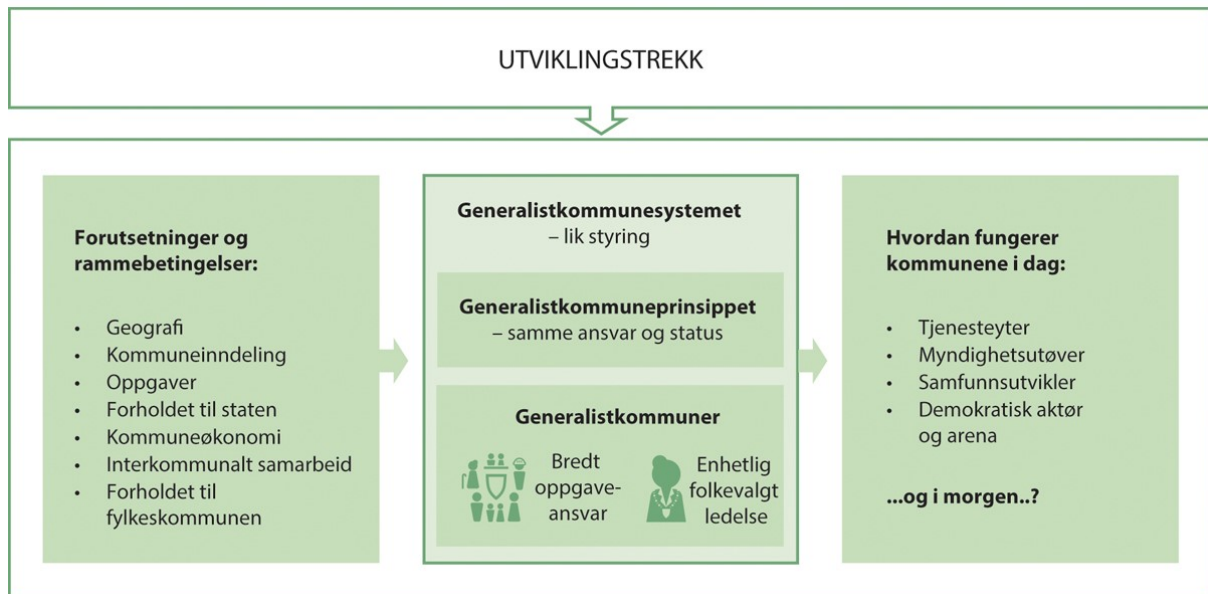
The generalist municipalities and the system of generalist municipalities have been constantly changing by adapting to changes in contextual conditions and to address new societal challenges. Today's contextual conditions affect the generalist municipalities' ability to fulfil responsibility for their tasks.

Geography, the municipal structure, which tasks have been assigned to the municipalities, the relationship between the State and the municipality, municipal finances, available schemes for inter-municipal cooperation, as well as the relationship with the county authority, are prerequisites and contextual conditions that influence how the generalist municipality and the system of generalist municipalities function.

In addition to how the framework conditions change and affect the municipalities, there are several more general trends that must also be taken into account. Demographic development, climate and environmental challenges and the national economic development are conditions that can have far-reaching consequences for both State and municipal activities in the years to come.

The Committee's model for the system of generalist municipalities

The elements of the above discussion are illustrated in the model in Figure 3.1. This model forms the basis for the Committee's analysis and assessments of how the current system of generalist municipalities functions, how this is affected by the current contextual conditions, and how well the current system of generalist municipalities is suited to meet the challenges society will be faced with in the future.



Model for the system of generalist municipalities

Committee for considering the system of generalist municipalities, 2023

The main questions the Committee shall clarify are how the system of generalist municipalities works today, whether the system of generalist municipalities is suitable to address current and future challenges, which alternatives to the system of generalist municipalities are relevant and/or whether it is appropriate to make adjustments within the system of generalist municipalities.

Prerequisites and contextual conditions for the system of generalist municipalities are described in Chapter 4. How the municipalities currently function is analysed in Chapter 5. Development trends and how these affect the municipality are discussed in Chapter 6.