

Annual Statement 2011-2012

Our vision

The Council has a clear vision for the future of our city, a vision which we share with Cambridge citizens and with partner organisations.

Cambridge – where people matter

- A city which is diverse and tolerant, values activities which bring people together and where everyone feels they have a stake in the community
- A city whose citizens feel they can influence public decision making and are equally keen to pursue individual and community initiatives
- A city where people behave with consideration for others and where harm and nuisance are confronted wherever possible without constraining the lives of all

Cambridge – a good place to live, learn and work

- A city which recognises and meets needs for housing of all kinds – close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities
- A city which draws inspiration from its iconic historic centre and achieves a sense of place in all of its parts with generous urban open spaces and well- designed buildings
- A city with a thriving knowledge-based economy that benefits the whole community and builds on its reputation as a global hub of ideas and learning
- A city where getting around is primarily by public transport, bike and on foot

Cambridge – caring for the planet

- A city in the forefront of low carbon living and minimising its impact on the environment from waste and pollution

Working towards this vision

1. Investing in Cambridge

For the first time this year we have expressed our 2011/12 strategy and programmes in seven portfolio plans. These plans are a clear expression of our strategic priorities and set out the steps we are taking this year towards meeting our vision.

They also express how we are investing in the future of Cambridge. We have put together a programme of investment across the city so that we can continue to build its future.

These new programmes include:

- celebrating the 2012 Olympics in Cambridge
- investing in new community facilities
- funding Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) touchscreens
- providing more weekend cover by city rangers
- planting trees
- installing new play equipment
- refurbishing Silver Street toilets
- giving Parkside Pool new changing rooms
- investing in the crematorium
- improving the market
- expanding our car club
- extending recycling to include house-to-house battery collection
- cutting our carbon footprint
- investing in photovoltaic panels
- building council housing for older people
- growing new neighbourhoods

2. Changing the way we work

Working to save money

In Cambridge we started a programme of corporate restructure and a programme of savings reviews in 2009. As a result, we were able to find £2m of savings in this financial year.

We now have £3.6m of savings to find over the period 2012 to 2015 and we have already started to identify where we can work purposefully towards this goal, in preparation for our next round of financial planning.

Our priority is to protect our services and in particular we will prioritise services for vulnerable people, protect every day services we all use, and make sure we do well what we have only one chance to get right.

Transforming how we work

To achieve the above, on fewer resources than we have previously had, we need to transform how we work.

We will review our services to ensure that they are designed with our customers' wishes and needs in mind and also offer value for money. The establishment of the Customer Service Centre and the Homelink service are excellent examples of this.

Each service in the council must search for new ways of doing things, alone or with partners, and look for more ways in which money can be saved and resources can be released. We achieved this with our joint working with other authorities on new neighbourhoods and are actively exploring the potential to make better use of council property with our public sector partners.

We must be increasingly innovative and flexible so we can maximise the value for money which we offer and remove unnecessary bureaucracy. For example, we restructured the independent living service so we could compete competitively for Supporting People contracts.

We will improve what we do by learning from our own and others' experiences. For example, we are restructuring Streets and Open Spaces to create a project delivery team dedicated to bringing forward environmental projects more quickly.

We will continue to explore a variety of models for each service including sharing services with other councils, such as our recently established internal audit shared service and the new Home Aid arrangements. We will continue to decide on a case-by-case basis whether services are best offered in-house or by others, as we did with preventative maintenance services.

We need to be one council. We need increasingly to integrate our work as a council and ensure that all services are working together towards our common goals in a common culture. Good examples of this include staff working across services on local community safety issues and individual heads of service taking lead roles for each area committee.

Working closer to residents, and closely with partners

We are developing a code for consultation and community engagement for all the council to improve the way in which we learn from users of our services and the expertise that exists in Cambridge.

We are working on more effective engagement with residents and partners at a neighbourhood level, building on the work of the area committees. The North Area Committee pilot is spearheading new community planning and involvement, and across the city more decisions will be devolved to area committees so that they are made with enhanced resident and ward councillor input.

We are seeking to maximise partner engagement with area committees to make them more meaningful to our communities and to deliver an integrated approach to the problems of local communities, and we will play our part in new strategic joint working such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and strategic planning.

3. Translating our values into action

Openness and transparency – in the interests of public scrutiny and engagement, we will work further towards opening up how the council and its partners work. We will publish data, such as developer contributions, and encourage our partners such as the LEP to work openly.

Environment – we will continue to place care for the environment at the heart of every operation in the council, resourced through the Climate Change Fund, and will work towards low carbon living and working in the city.

Equalities – we will continue to find new ways in which we can identify and satisfy the needs of the more disadvantaged or minority members of our community and we will continue to promote a fair and equal culture within the council. We have continued to protect grants to community groups and provide extensive outreach work through our community development service.

Speaking up for Cambridge – we will speak up for what is right for this city at all levels of government, as we have done in challenging government lack of financial support on concessionary fares, and in advocating the case for a new station at Chesterton.

The council will find new and better ways to serve and work closely with our residents, for the benefit of Cambridge and its people.