



Would you like to be a City Councillor?



A guide for prospective candidates

Updated January 2019

Contents

Introduction by the Chief Executive.....	3
What is Cambridge City Council?.....	4
The City Council: some basic facts and figures.....	4
What does the Council do?	5
How do councillors take decisions on services?.....	6
What does becoming a councillor involve?.....	7
Can I stand for election?	8
How do I go about standing for election?	9
Who can I contact for further information?.....	11
Cambridge City Council Ward Boundaries 2019	13

Introduction by the Chief Executive

Current city councillors come from many walks of life: there are care assistants and nurses, statisticians and conservationists, teachers and lecturers, as well as people working in the financial and technical services. It is important for the City of Cambridge that its councillors represent the population as a whole, and are drawn from as wide a group of people as possible. Different backgrounds and experiences are needed.

The work of a city councillor is interesting and varied. There are two main elements: acting as a representative for the ward which elects you and being involved in decisions which affect the way services are run right across the City. Becoming a councillor means that you can help people to get the services they deserve, and influence the running of the City for the benefit of everyone who lives or works here.

You do not have to be a member of a political party to become a councillor; you can stand for election as an independent candidate. Whether you are a member of a party, are thinking of joining one, or just want to know more about being a councillor, this guide is for you. It aims to give you an idea of what being a councillor involves and how you go about standing for election. It is only a guide, so if you want to know more there are some useful contacts listed at the end.

Healthy local democracy is essential if the City is to offer a good quality of life to all its residents. I hope that some of you reading this guide will take the next step and stand for election.

Antoinette Jackson
Chief Executive



What is Cambridge City Council?

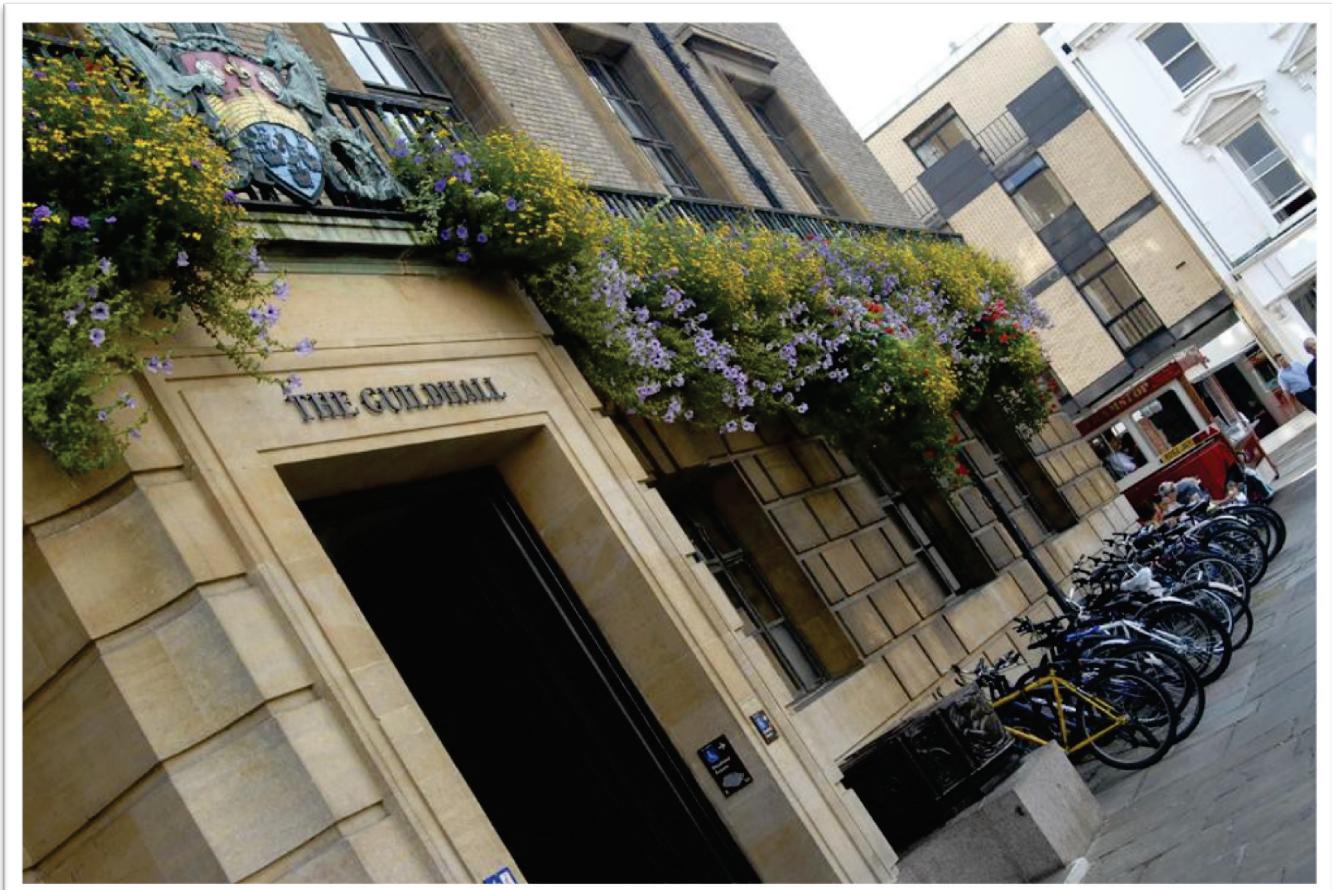
Cambridge City Council is one of the district councils in Cambridgeshire. The county council and the district councils have their own separate responsibilities. District councils are not under the authority of the county council.

The City Council: some basic facts and figures

Cambridge has a population of approximately 142,700 (2019 forecast by Cambridgeshire County Council). The City Council spends around £20 million a year. The City is divided into 14 wards (see the ward map at the end of this guide), and each ward has three councillors. One councillor is elected each year for three consecutive years, with each councillor having a four year-term of office. Every fourth year there is a break from City Council elections, when elections to the county council take place.

The programme for City Council elections in the next two years is:

- May 2019, for 14 of the 42 seats, which were won by candidates in 2015
- May 2020, for all 42 seats following a review of ward boundaries



What does the Council do?

The Council has a clear vision to lead a united City, ‘One Cambridge - Fair for All’, in which economic dynamism and prosperity are combined with social justice and equality. These objectives are set by the ruling administration, which is currently the Labour Group.

‘One Cambridge – Fair for All’

- A city which believes that the clearest measure of progress is the dignity and well-being of its least well-off residents, which prioritises tackling poverty and social exclusion, recognising that greater social and economic equality are the most important pre-conditions for the city’s success.
- An international city which celebrates its diversity and actively tackles discrimination on gender, race, nationality, ethnic background, religion, age, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- A city in which all citizens feel that they are listened to and have the opportunity to influence public decision making, and which values, supports and responds to individual and community initiatives.
- A city where all citizens and organisations appreciate their duties as well as their rights, where people are free to enjoy themselves but also show consideration for others, and where the community works together to reduce harm and nuisance including by education and, where needed, robust enforcement of the law.
- A city where ‘town’ and ‘gown’ combine, and where mutual understanding and partnerships are developed through joint working, community initiatives and volunteering.

Cambridge - a great place to live, learn and work

- A city which strives to ensure that all local households can secure a suitable, affordable local home, close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities.
- A city which draws inspiration from its unique qualities and environment and its iconic historic centre, and retains its sense of place across the city through positive planning, generous urban open spaces and well-designed buildings, and by providing quality council services.
- An entrepreneurial city with a thriving local economy, in which businesses are assisted to build on their global and national pre-eminence in learning, discovery and production, and develop a full range of local employment and skills development, while also recognising and delivering on their social responsibilities.

- A city where getting around is primarily by public transport, bike and on foot.

Cambridge - caring for the planet

- A city that takes robust action to tackle the local and global threat of climate change, both internally and in partnership with local organisations and residents, and to minimise its environmental impact by cutting carbon, waste and pollution.

How do councillors take decisions on services?

All 42 councillors are members of the Council, which meets five times a year to take certain decisions and to debate issues of the day.

The Executive of the Council comprises of seven councillors. Each Executive Councillor is responsible for a portfolio of council services, functions, policies, and strategies. They agree [plans for the year](#) but before most decisions are taken by an executive councillor, they are considered by a scrutiny committee. The scrutiny committee looks at these decisions before they are made.

[Council and committee meetings](#) are held both in the daytime and in the evening. This enables councillors to be members of committees to suit their personal circumstances.

The [Executive Councillor portfolios](#) are:

- **Communities**
- **Environmental Services and City Centre**
- **Finance and Resources**
- **Housing**
- **Planning Policy and Transport**
- **Strategy and External Partnerships**
- **Streets and Open Spaces**

There are other decisions the Council must undertake which cannot be agreed by Executive Councillors. These are called regulatory decisions and are decided by committees made up of a number of councillors. Planning Committee and Licensing Committee are the most frequent meetings.

Each councillor is a member of an Area Committee covering their ward and others. The City is divided into four areas: north, south, east and west /central. The public are encouraged to ask questions about their area at these meetings, and the committee makes decisions on local grants and is consulted on issues which affect

its constituents. These committees meet in the evening in their area around every 8 weeks.

What does becoming a councillor involve?

What is a councillor's work-load like?

As well as attending the five full Council meetings held each year (when all councillors meet), councillors could be asked to serve on more than one other committee and working party, as well as their local area committee. As referred to above, most committees meet four times a year but some, such as planning and licensing, meet more often and so the workload of those members is greater. An estimate provided by an independent panel convened to consider members' allowances calculated the average councillor's workload to be about 10 hours per week – some will do more.

Councillors must not let their attendance at committee meetings slip for more than six months; otherwise they will cease to be a councillor. Councillors need to spend time reading reports and become familiar with the issues they deal with so that they can make informed decisions. Some councillors take on extra responsibilities such as being a member of the executive, chairing a committee, or acting as a party spokesperson which gives the councillor a heavier workload. Councillors (if they are a member of a political group) also need to attend political group meetings in order to discuss reports and agree actions before committee meetings. Many councillors represent the Council at other organisations' meetings and attend residents' meetings in their wards. Residents contact them frequently about matters that concern them.

What help is there for councillors?

Successful candidates will receive an induction programme. In addition, all members have the opportunity to receive ongoing training.

Is there help for councillors with special needs?

If you have any special needs, you can speak to one of the support team officers, on a confidential basis, to outline your requirement prior to the elections.

Do councillors get paid?

Councillors are not paid a salary. However, they do get allowances to cover some of the cost of being a councillor.

These allowances fall into three categories:

1. Basic Allowance

All councillors receive a basic allowance which is paid in instalments. This allowance recognises the time councillors spend working in their wards and attending meetings, and seeks to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses incurred by councillors (for example stationery, broadband and telephone costs and computer consumables).

2. Special Responsibility Allowance

A special responsibility allowance is paid to those councillors who have a designated role (e.g. Executive Councillor, Chair).

3. Travelling, Meals, and Dependency Allowances

Councillors may claim travelling and meal allowances for certain approved duties. Cambridge City Council also pays a dependency allowance for approved duties. This covers things like contributing towards the cost of a child-minder or carer.

Can I stand for election?

You can stand for election to be a Councillor on Cambridge City Council if you:

- Are a British, Irish, Commonwealth or European Union citizen; and
- Are aged 18 or over on the day of your nomination; and
- Are registered to vote in the City of Cambridge or have lived or worked in the City of Cambridge for the previous twelve months.

However, you cannot stand for election to the City Council if you:

- Are an employee of Cambridge City Council or are employed by a company under the control of the Council.
- Are employed by another council in a job that has been designated as politically restricted, i.e. where the law says that you have to be politically neutral.
- Have, in the last five years, had a prison sentence (whether suspended or not) of three months or more.
- Have been declared bankrupt.
- Are disqualified from standing for election for some other reason, such as having been convicted of an election offence.

You should also know that if you have arrears of either council tax or council housing rent you would not be able to vote on finance related matters if you are elected to be a councillor. For more information on this please ask for a candidates' pack from the Electoral Services Manager, and see the note on restrictions on voting.

How do I go about standing for election?

If you are a member of a political party or thinking of joining one and you want to stand as their candidate, you need to contact that party. Websites for parties that have recently contested local elections are given at the end of this guide. You can only stand as a representative of a registered political party if you are their authorised candidate.

If you are not a member of a political party, or want to stand as an independent candidate, you can do so. The Local Government Association is a national organisation which has representatives from all the main parties involved in local government but it also has a group for independent councillors. This group has collated some guidance notes which you may find useful. See the contact section at the end of this guidance note.

What does filling in a nomination paper involve?

From February each year candidates' packs are available for anyone interested in standing at the May elections by contacting the Electoral Services Manager. A nomination paper, combined with the other paperwork which you need to complete to submit a valid nomination, is in the pack along with a guide to help you complete the paperwork.

Do I need to have an election agent to stand for election?

No, you do not need to have an election agent. An election agent helps the candidate run their campaign. They can submit nomination papers and appoint counting agents on behalf of their candidates. They also have an important role to play in keeping track of the amount of money spent conducting the campaign, so that these figures can be included in the official return of expenses which must be made after the election. If you do not have an agent it just means that you will have to do the things the agent would have done yourself.

What happens at an election?

Elections have to be run to a timetable defined by law. All the deadlines are absolute, so it is important to know what you must do when. The deadlines are

worked out on the basis of how many days before or after polling day they must take place. The calculation does not include weekends or bank holidays. As a guide the key stages are:

- **Publication of the Notice of Election:** no later than 25 working days before the election. This official notice announces that there are seats to be contested, and says when and where nominations must be delivered.
- **Nomination period.** This starts the next working day after the Notice of Election has been published, and closes at 4pm, 19 working days before the election.
- **Withdrawal of candidature.** Notice in writing by 4pm, 19 working days before the election.
- **Appointment of election agents** must be made by 4pm, 19 working days before the election.
- **Publication of the Statement as to Persons Nominated.** This lists all the candidates standing in each of the wards. It is published as soon as practical after the close of nominations and not later than 4pm, 18 working days before election day.
- **Last date for registering to vote** at the election is 11:59pm, 12 working days before the election
- **The deadline to apply for a postal or postal proxy vote** is 5pm, 11 working days before election day. Any changes to existing postal, proxy or postal proxy votes must also be made by this deadline.
- **The deadline for receiving new proxy vote applications** is 5pm, six working days before the election.
- **Issuing of postal votes.** There is no set day for this, but for City Council elections postal votes are usually issued two weeks prior to the election
- **Appointment of counting and polling agents.** Appointments, in writing, must be made by five days before election day.
- **First opening of postal votes.** There is no set day or time for this, but for a City Council election there will be several opening sessions in the week leading up to the election.
- **Election day.** Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm. Ballot boxes are then returned to a central place for the counting of the ballot papers.
- **Last day for the return of submissions and declarations of election expenses** is 35 days after the declaration of the result. This calculation includes weekends and bank holidays.

When an election is due, actual dates for the above will be posted on the [election pages](#) of the City Council website and shared with candidates and agents.

Who can I contact for further information?

The following people would be pleased to try and answer any questions which you may have:

Councillor Lewis Herbert

Leader of the Labour Group, Cambridge City Council

Telephone: 07748536153

Email: lewis.herbert@cambridge.gov.uk



Councillor Tim Bick

Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Cambridge City Council

Telephone: 07720 413173

Email: tim.bick@cambridge.gov.uk



Councillor John Hipkin

Leader of the Independent/Green Group, Cambridge City Council

Telephone: 01223 564126

Email: castleindependent@gmail.com



Local political party websites:

cambridgelibdems.org.uk

cambridgelabour.org.uk

cambridgeconservatives.org.uk

cambridge.greenparty.org.uk

ukip-cambridge.org.uk

For guidance on standing as an independent candidate, contact the Independent Group office at the Local Government Association:

Telephone: 020 7664 3224 E-mail: independent.group@lga.local.gov.uk

Website: local.gov.uk/lga-independent

The Electoral Commission:

Telephone: 020 7271 0500 E-mail: info@electoralcommission.org.uk

Website: electoralcommission.org.uk

The Local Government Association:

Telephone: 020 7664 3000 E-mail: info@local.gov.uk

Website: local.gov.uk

Cambridge City Council Officers:

For information on the role of being a councillor:

Gary Clift, Democratic Services Manager, Cambridge City Council

Telephone: 01223 457011 E-mail: gary.clift@cambridge.gov.uk

For information on standing as a candidate and the election process:

Vicky Breading, Electoral Services Manager, Cambridge City Council

Telephone: 01223 457057 E-mail: vicky.breading@cambridge.gov.uk

Cambridge City Council Ward Boundaries 2019

