

About the City and the Council

Cambridge combines a rich history with the vibrancy and prosperity of outstanding educational institutions and modern businesses. It is an inspiring and attractive place in which to live and work. It is at the heart of a buoyant sub-region which is an area designated for major growth in employment and housing.

The Council is committed to supporting the sustainable growth of the City in housing, jobs and community infrastructure. This growth has to respect our climate change policies.

The City Council believes the community as a whole and every person in it matters. We are planning for future growth that preserves the City's best qualities, sustains its environmental, social and economic fabric and is supported by a first class transport infrastructure. Although Cambridge is a prosperous place, many people on low incomes face the challenge of high living costs, particularly for housing. The Council is committed to sharing the prosperity of economic growth in Cambridge fairly across the city and its communities.

Local economy and community

The City of Cambridge is in the east of England, 50 miles north of London. A beautiful place to live and work, Cambridge is an historic University City and market town with high quality architecture and attractive open spaces. It is also a city of national importance, being a world leader in higher education and many 21st century industries – information technology, telecommunications and commercial research, particularly the biotechnology sector.

The population of Cambridge is over 125,000. This is forecast to increase to 151,800 in 2031 as a result of new developments. The Council is working in partnership with other local Councils and external organisations to manage the planning for 47,500 new homes in the county by 2016. This has major implications for the way that the City Council delivers its services in the future.

At present 23% of the City's population are aged 15–24. A significant characteristic of the City's population is its large and diverse student population, totalling almost 27,000 (including post graduates). This is swollen further by language students attending “summer schools”, which adds to a high “churn” in our population. The proportion of older people in the City has not grown in the past 10 years.

The daytime population of the City increases significantly, with high levels of commuting into the City and very large numbers of tourists and visitors. Last year nearly 4 million people visited the City. The high day time population places pressure on the City's infrastructure and heavy demands on basic Council services such as street cleaning.

Over 17.5% of the City's population are from black and minority communities and a third of Cambridge's resident population were born outside of the UK. 13% have reported a long-term activity limiting illness. The Council has a strong commitment to addressing equalities issues and celebrating diversity across a range of different needs, including those influenced by gender or gender reassignment; race and ethnicity; disability; sexual orientation; age; religion/belief; pregnancy and maternity; or marriage and civil partnership.

The Council works closely with a number of community groups to ensure that services meet their specific needs and that we have a more representative workforce.

Cambridge has one of the highest qualified work forces in the East of England with 65.8% of people having NVQ4 qualifications and above, and relatively speaking, the City is affluent.

However Cambridge is not without its challenges, this affluence does mask disadvantaged communities living in the City, with substantial inequalities between wards. Some wards appear in the 25% most deprived wards in the country, whilst others are in the top 10% of the least deprived. One in eleven people living in the City live in a household claiming Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

Access to affordable housing is also a key issue. Average house prices in Cambridge are the highest in Cambridgeshire at £361,164 (September 2013). Average earnings in the City are around £32,000. This means that it can be difficult for key workers to live close to work, due to the high housing costs within the City. Homelessness is also a problem. The Council is landlord for around 8,000 homes in the City, and Registered Social Landlords hold some 3,000 properties.

Council Structure & Services - what we do

The Council's turnover is c.£140million each year. The range of services provided is very varied and complex. Increasing levels of partnership working, an ongoing drive for greater efficiency (for instance through shared services) and more focus on good customer service mean that we are starting to develop new models for service delivery that will drive change and different ways of working.

In addition to the traditional district council services, the City Council provides or commissions a comprehensive range of leisure and arts and community development activities. These include: swimming pools and sports facilities; the Corn Exchange (a regional entertainment venue); an internationally renowned Folk Festival; a number of free open air events in our parks and open spaces; and a range of community centres. From April 2015 these activities will be provided by a new cultural trust called Cambridge Live.

The Council allocates discretionary grants each year to enable the voluntary and not-for-profit sector in the City to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well being of City residents. The Council takes its role as community leader seriously and is committed to listening and responding to the concerns of local people expressed through a range of initiatives designed to consult and involve them in what the Council does.

The Council employs around 950 staff across the following departments, based at various locations across the City. These are:

- **Customer & Community** is responsible for arts and recreation, city homes, community development, estates and facilities, housing strategy and revenue and benefits.
- **Environment** is responsible for planning, refuse and environment, streets and open spaces, tourism and city centre management and specialist services including car parks and bereavement services.
- **Business Transformation** is responsible for accountancy, human resources, ICT, internal audit, legal, property and customer services.
- **Corporate Strategy** is responsible for sustainable city policies, partnerships, performance management and transparency, equalities, corporate marketing and communications, committee services, electoral and mayoral services.