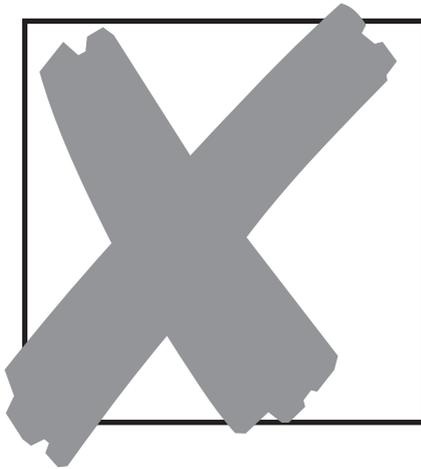


So you want to be a
**District
Councillor?**



East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Welcome from the Chairman of East Cambridgeshire District Council

Welcome to this invaluable booklet which gives you important information on all aspects of becoming a District Councillor. If you are thinking of standing for election, or if you are a new Councillor, many of the questions you need answering will be found within these pages. It will also give you an insight into the many aspects of being a Councillor and some of the potential pitfalls you will need to avoid.

People become District Councillors for a variety of reasons but the main one for most is to help improve their local community. To accomplish that will take hard work, dedication and a lot of co-operation with other Councillors (also known as Members of the Council or, more simply, Members), Council officers and representatives of local residents.

When you first become a Councillor the many different things you need to think about can be quite daunting. Help is always at hand from other Members and the Council's officers who are always prepared to offer friendly advice. You will of course be eligible for appropriate training which will help you to contribute more in the decision-making process and with shaping Council policies.

Good luck if you are standing for election and if you are fortunate enough to become a District Councillor I am sure you will find it a rewarding experience.

Chairman
East Cambridgeshire District Council

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1. Introduction

1.1 Local Government

Local authorities are creatures of statute created by Acts of Parliament; their powers and functions are limited to those permitted by law. Many aspects of Council activity are controlled or influenced by central Government; in particular there are numerous controls on how Councils raise and spend money. Within these limitations, Councils are autonomous bodies with freedom to decide most questions of local policy. For example, District Councils must, by law, make proper arrangements for refuse to be collected within their areas. But how often that refuse is collected or whether plastic sacks are used in preference to “wheelie-bins” is for the District Council to decide.

Which Council does what is also set out by legislation, so for example whereas the District Council is responsible for refuse collection and collecting Council Tax, the County Council has responsibility for highways, schools, libraries and adult and children’s services.

A full list of functions is set out under section 5.4.

1.2 Councillors and Officers

Councillors are the elected representatives of the people. Their role is to determine the direction of the Council and its policies, and to articulate the views and needs of their constituents, a role which has become increasingly predominant following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. Officers, who are politically neutral, are the paid officials employed by the Council to advise Councillors and to implement their policies. Clearly, the success of this partnership is dependent on mutual trust and respect.

2. Standing for Election

2.1 Electoral Areas

Essentially, there are six levels of government within East Cambridgeshire which are as follows:-

- **Parish Councils:** there are 34 parish councils and 1 parish meeting within the District of East Cambridgeshire which are shown in Appendix 4. Elections are held once every four years.
- **The District Council:** the District is divided into wards (see Appendix 5). Each ward returns up to three Councillors who serve on the District Council. Elections are held once every four years.
- **The County Council:** Cambridgeshire is divided into Electoral Divisions (similar to, but much bigger than, District Wards) each of which returns one or two Councillors. There are eight County Electoral Divisions covering East Cambridgeshire which are shown in Appendix 6. Elections are held once every four years.
- **The Combined Authority:** Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has a directly elected mayor who is elected every 4 years. Each of the constituent councils appoints 1 member to serve on the Combined Authority Board.
- **Central Government:** there are two parliamentary constituencies covering East Cambridgeshire (Appendix 7 refers) each of which return an MP to the House of Commons.
- **European Government:** there is one European constituency (Eastern Region) covering East Cambridgeshire which elects seven Members of the European Parliament.

2.2 Becoming a Candidate

To qualify as a candidate for election to the District Council you must be 18 years of age or over and a British subject or citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of another Member state of the European Community. (Note: British subject means a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies or of any other British Commonwealth Country).

In addition:-

- You must be a local government elector for East Cambridgeshire; or
- You must have had, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the day on which you are nominated, occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the District; or
- Your principal or only place of work in the twelve months preceding that day must have been in the District; or
- You must have resided in the District during the whole of the twelve months preceding that day.

2.3 Disqualification

You are disqualified from candidature if:-

- You hold a paid office or employment with the District Council; or if you are employed by any other Council in a politically restricted post; or
- You are an undischarged bankrupt; or
- You have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of not less than three months without the option of a fine during the five years preceding the election; or
- You hold any employment in a company which is under the control of the local authority.

If you have any doubt as to your position on any of these matters you are advised to seek legal advice.

2.4 Nomination to stand for Election as a District Councillor

- Your nomination paper has to be signed by a Proposer and Seconder and eight other Assentors whose names are on the current electoral list **in the ward** for which you are standing. The latest date and time for delivery of the nomination paper is 4pm on Wednesday 3rd April 2019.
- You must also complete a Consent to Nomination form which should be delivered to the Returning Officer along with the completed nomination form. All six pages including the notes must be delivered as your completed consent to nomination.

Nomination papers will be available on the council's website www.eastcamb.gov.uk and from the Returning Officer at the Council Offices in The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely.

You may withdraw your nomination by written notice signed by yourself and one other witness. The latest date and time for delivery of such notice will be 4pm on Wednesday 3rd April 2019.

Under the Registration of Political Parties Act 1998 a nomination paper may not include a description of a candidate which is likely to lead voters to associate the candidate with a registered political party. If you wish to stand on behalf of a political party, you must obtain a certificate authorised and issued by or on behalf of the registered nominating officer of the party.

2.5 Election Expenses

- The total expenditure you incur, which you must meet yourself, must not exceed the sum of £740 plus an additional 6p for every elector on the electoral register to be used at the election for your ward. (Note: These figures are currently correct, but check with the Council's elections office at the time of election campaign).
- Your return of expenses (including nil returns) must be submitted to the Returning Officer by a date of which you will be informed.

2.6 Election Count

The election verification takes place as quickly as possible after the close of the polling stations at 10.00pm on the day of election and the count for the Local Elections will take place on Friday 3rd May 2019. You, your partner and agent may attend the count at Ross Peers Sports Centre Soham, but please inform the Electoral Services office. When necessary, tickets of admission will be forwarded.

2.7 Acceptance of Office

If elected it is important that you make a declaration of acceptance of office at the earliest opportunity since you cannot act as a Councillor or

attend meetings until this is done. It must be made within two months of the day of election.

It is customary to make your declaration before the Council's Chief Executive. This is very straight forward and simply involves your signing a statement of declaration which is witnessed by the Chief Executive on a prescribed form.

3. Being a Councillor

3.1 Duties and Constraints

District Councillors, as the term implies, are elected to serve the interests of **the whole** East Cambridgeshire community. Occasionally there will be difficulty in deciding whether a matter seen as beneficial to the District as a whole should be supported against the wishes of the inhabitants of your ward who may ask you to speak and vote against the proposal.

While it is normal for residents to turn to their ward Councillors for any help and advice, a member of the public is entitled to contact any Councillor of his or her choice. Under such circumstances, it is usual practice for the Councillor who has been contacted either to refer the person to the ward Councillor or advise the appropriate ward Councillor (as a courtesy) of any action taken or advice given.

If you are elected to the Council, doubtless there will be objectives you will wish to achieve as a Councillor. It is important that your expectations are realistic. In particular it is worth remembering that:-

- To achieve anything, you will need the support of your fellow Councillors (or a majority of them, at least). In Councils like East Cambs, Councillors have no executive power as individuals, only as a collective body, i.e. as the Council or one of its committees or sub-committees.
- Local authorities cannot go beyond what is prescribed in law. For example, the District Council has no jurisdiction over education or health services. Having said this, the Council can seek to influence others, either by mobilising public opinion or through its representatives on other organisations.

Beyond these points, you must at all times abide by the Code of Conduct and take no part in any Council business in which you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or prejudicial interest.

Most District Councillors find it helpful to attend Parish Council meetings. Even if you are not an elected Member of the Parish Council you still might be interested in attending these meetings as part of your community leadership role. The Parish Clerk will be able to supply you with details of the dates of meetings. Details of the names and addresses of Parish Clerks can be obtained from the Council's website or Customer Services (01353 665555).

3.2 The Code of Conduct for Members

East Cambridgeshire District Council adopted a revised Code of Conduct in accordance with the revised national code in July 2013.

There are two very important provisions by which Members are bound at all times, namely:

1. That Members should not do anything which brings their Council or office into disrepute; and
2. That Members should not misuse their official position to their own advantage or to the advantage or disadvantage of others.

The Code applies when Members are carrying out the business of their Council or office and when they represent their Council on other bodies. However, where the other body is bound by legal obligations which conflict with the Code, the rules of the other body apply. Where Councillors are members of another authority they will be subject to the Code which applies to the authority whose business they are carrying out at the time.

Once elected you will be given a copy of the Code of Conduct for Members and you will be required to abide by it. You will also need to complete a registration of interests form to record relevant interests that you and your spouse/partner have.

3.3 Declaration of Interest

The Code requires declarations of interest to be made at meetings of the Council. If you are in any doubt about the application of the Code, seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer.

It is necessary for Members to decide if they have an 'interest' in a matter being discussed at a meeting. There are three types of 'interest': Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Personal Interest and Prejudicial Interest.

The definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is set out in the Localism Act 2011 and relates to your, or your spouse's/partner's, employment, contracts, land, licences and other relevant matters.

A personal interest is something which affects the Member, or partner/relative/close friend or the organisation they or the Member work for, **more than** most other people in the area.

It is then necessary for Members to decide whether that interest is also **prejudicial**, i.e. the interest is so significant that their decision is likely to be affected by it. A prejudicial interest is a matter of judgement for each Member.

If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, a Member must declare this at a meeting if there is an item on the agenda relating to it and must leave the room while the related matter is discussed.

If the interest is **personal**, Members must declare the interest at the meeting but can still discuss and vote on the issue concerned.

If the interest is **prejudicial**, a Member must declare the interest at the meeting, **withdraw from the meeting**, by leaving the room and taking no part in any discussion.

However a Member with a prejudicial interest is allowed to make a statement on the issue if the same public speaking rights exist for members of the public (i.e. at Planning Committee) but must leave the meeting before the discussion and voting on the item.

In certain circumstances, Members may be granted a dispensation to take part in a meeting even though they have a prejudicial interest. Again advice on these matters can be sought from the Monitoring Officer.

3.4 Constitution

This sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which need to be followed for such things as the conduct of meetings and Council transactions with third parties, i.e. contractors and suppliers. The full constitution is available on the Council's website and a copy can be provided to elected Members by Democratic Services.

3.5 Use of Confidential and Private Information

As a Councillor, you necessarily acquire much information that has not yet been made public and is still confidential. It is a grave betrayal of trust to use confidential information for the personal advantage of yourself or of anyone known to you and there is a general obligation on you in the Code of Conduct not to do so unless required by law; such action could lead to criminal proceedings.

3.6 Danger Zones

If you fail to attend any meetings for six consecutive months you will automatically cease to be a Councillor, unless within that period your absence has been approved by the Council. If you cease to be a Councillor, a vacancy will arise.

When taking part in a debate at a committee, sub-committee, working party or Council meeting, you are protected by qualified privilege, i.e. you will not be liable in slander unless motivated by malice. However, you should take care not to digress from the subject because your privilege is not effective unless the statement is material and pertinent to the matter under discussion.

3.7 How Decisions are Made

Members make decisions at full Council or committee/sub-committee meetings. These decisions are made based on reports presented by officers and advice given at the meetings.

Detailed reports by officers, supported by statistical information are not uncommon. A Member who hopes to influence the course of a discussion or decision must prepare in advance of the meeting.

It would be impractical for all decisions to be made in committee/sub-committee meetings, so a lot of matters of routine are determined by officers under the Council's Scheme of Delegation. Any urgent decisions taken are done so after consulting the appropriate Chairman or Vice Chairman and reported to the next relevant meeting.

When in doubt ask. Do not, especially in the early days of your life as a Councillor, hesitate to seek advice from experienced Members or officers.

3.8 Allowances Scheme

As a Member you are entitled to financial allowances from the Council.

The allowance scheme seeks to cover some of the costs of being a Councillor and is at the time of publication as follows:-

(a) Basic Allowance

Under the scheme and subject to Part 6, paragraph 6 of the Constitution, for each year a basic allowance shall be paid to each Councillor.

(b) Travelling Allowances

Members are entitled to claim travelling allowances in respect of visits to the Council Offices for purposes relating to the functions of the Council including formal meetings and informal meetings with other Members and officers.

(c) Subsistence Allowances

Members may claim subsistence allowances when absent from home or place of work and involved on official duties, e.g. conferences, external training courses.

(d) Special Responsibility Allowances

Special responsibility allowances shall be paid to those Councillors who hold special responsibilities in relation to the Council, e.g. Leader of the Council, Chairman of a Committee etc.

The current Allowance scheme is detailed in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution, available on the Council's website at www.eastcamb.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-constitution.

Further advice can be obtained from the District Council's Democratic Services Section with respect to some of your duties.

Members allowances are set by full Council following advice from an independent remuneration panel.

3.9 Members Induction and Training

A Member induction programme will be held in the weeks immediately following the elections and prior to the Annual Council Meeting held at the end of May, to introduce Councillors to the workings of the Council and their role and responsibilities as Councillors. There will also be a Member training programme to help provide Councillors with the range of personal, technical and committee based skills to carry out their role.

Members will be expected to commit themselves to appropriate training provided by the Council and also can attend suitable external courses. The Council's Democratic Services Section administers Members training and will make arrangements on Members behalf, e.g. organising Members seminars and booking external courses for individual Councillors.

In addition to opportunities for Members to attend relevant seminars and conferences, other training/briefings will be organised to cover the

quasi-legal functions of some committees, e.g. Planning, Licensing Committees.

Further information can be obtained from the Council's Democratic Services Section.

3.10 Members IT/Stationery

Councillors will be provided with a computer and network connection from the Council, if they wish, to help them deal with their duties. The Council's IT department will arrange this and provide ongoing support. They will also organise a programme of Members IT training.

Members who choose not to be provided with a Council computer are entitled to an annual budget set by Council.

Democratic Services can provide Members stationery (Councillor headed paper, compliment slips, business cards, plain paper) and help with general printing, administrative support and procedural advice for Councillor duties, with the exception of their party political role.

4. East Cambridgeshire District Council

4.1 East Cambridgeshire

With a population of approximately 83,800 (as of 2011), East Cambridgeshire is the smallest of the six Districts within the County. It covers an area of almost 162,000 acres. The District stretches from the Norfolk border in the north to within a few miles of Cambridge in the south; from the long straight stretch of the New Bedford River (or Hundred Foot Drain) in the west to a longer border with Suffolk to the east. Communication links with other centres, including Cambridge and London, are good.

Although predominantly rural in character, the District includes the City of Ely with its magnificent Cathedral. The northern part of the District consists of pure fenland, which contrasts with the heaths and wooded uplands to the south and east.

4.2 The District Council

The District Council was formed in 1974 with its administrative centre in Ely.

To give an impression of scale, the Council might be compared to a medium sized company with just under 200 employees. The Council of 28 Councillors or 'Members' might be compared to a Board of Directors with residents being both the shareholders and customers. The 'Company' accounts are published annually and audited by an independent external auditor. Since the voluntary transfer of all Council houses to Hereward Housing Association (now Sanctuary Hereward) in March 1993, the Council only operates a General Fund Account, which is financed (in part) by Council Tax and covers all services provided by the District Council.

4.3 The Council and its Committees

In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper “In Touch with the People” which set out the Government’s proposals for modernising local authorities. The subsequent Local Government Act 2000 tackled many issues but as far as the political process is concerned, it put forward three specific options based on the separation of the executive and back-bench or scrutiny roles.

These were:

- A directly elected mayor with cabinet
- A leader with cabinet
- A directly elected mayor and council manager

However, an additional option was also later included, known as ‘alternative arrangements or ‘4th option’, this model was only made available to District Councils with a population of less than 85,000 people. After consulting with various groups representing the public, East Cambridgeshire District Council opted to adopt the ‘alternative arrangements’. This meant the adoption of a streamlined committee structure.

In August 2001, the Council’s constitution was adopted. It set out the Council’s overall purpose, its strategic objectives, explained the key functions of the Council and how it operates, together with setting out the streamlined committee structure adopted by the Council. Additionally, citizens and stakeholders can see the way the Council makes decisions and who is responsible for those decisions, as well as the terms of reference, within which each of the Committees work. The constitution is regularly revised and updated to reflect changes within the council.

The Localism Act 2011 enabled councils nationally to choose their own governance arrangements and move from a cabinet system to a committee system. This council decided to continue with a committee system but to disband its Scrutiny Committee in May 2013 when it was statutorily able to do so.

The Council took a decision to amend the Committee structure in April 2019 and from May 2019 the Committee structure has been as follows:-

Two Policy Committees:

- Finance & Assets Committee
- Operational Services Committee

Two Regulatory Committees:

- (These Committees make decisions on quasi-legal matters)
- Licensing Committee
- Planning Committee

Sub-Committees and Working Parties

There are also other sub-committees and working parties, which may be in existence for a limited amount of time or meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss specific issues or topics, which may require special focus or attention.

4.4 Appointment of Committees

If political groups are declared following the May elections, seats on committees and sub-committees will be allocated in accordance with the political balance regulations. This means that each declared group is entitled to a percentage of the number of seats on each committee/sub-committee which reflects the number of seats each group has on the Council as a whole. It is for the group to nominate who fills the seats on each committee/sub-committee, and these nominations are ratified by Council.

4.5 Management Structure

The Council has a Chief Executive with 2 Directors and the Service Leads. The Management Structure is set out at Appendix 2.

4.6 The Council's Corporate Plan

The Council has a corporate plan containing a number of corporate priorities which underpin all that the Council does and provide a focus for

the Council's future work and direction. Copies of these are published on the Council's website and can be obtained from the Performance Management Officer.

4.7 Equal Opportunities Policy

In June 1999 the Council adopted an Equal Opportunities Policy as it had a duty and legal responsibility to 'promote equality of opportunity', which is regularly revised and updated when necessary.

The Policy covers all Members and officers who must ensure that equality principles and practices are reflected in everything they do. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and the Council is committed to eliminating unfair discrimination.

4.8 Complaints

The Council is keen to be seen to respond to complaints against it quickly and positively. Consequently, it has established a procedure for handling complaints. In addition to this internal procedure, members of the public can complain to the Local Ombudsman who is independent of the Council.

4.9 "Whistle-blowing" Procedure

In January 1999 the Council agreed to adopt a "whistle-blowing" procedure to provide employees with a confidential but effective way of reporting to the Council any concerns they have that wrong-doing e.g. breaches of contract, fraud, corruption, etc might be occurring within the Council. Complaints can be made in writing, via a confidential phone line or e-mail link. These are received by the Monitoring Officer and a copy of the procedure for this is given to all Members of staff.

5. Local Government: An Historic Perspective

5.1 Structure of Local Government

The current structure of local government is based on administrative areas which existed in Saxon times.

At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066, the country was divided into counties or shires, each of which was governed on the King's behalf by shire-reeves or sheriffs. Although the office of High Sheriff exists today, it is largely an honorary appointment.

In the Middle Ages, the sheriff declined in importance and was superseded as the chief local government functionary by Justices of the Peace.

English local government during the 17th and 18th century was largely parish government. Parishes were responsible for dealing with the poor, keeping the peace and highways maintenance.

Just prior to the industrial revolution, it had become the policy of Parliament to establish, by local Acts, bodies of trustees or commissioners to administer special services in a locality. These 'ad hoc' authorities normally consisted of owners of freehold property above a specified value or persons named in the Act, serving for life and filling vacancies by co-option.

With the rapid growth of towns it became necessary to establish ad hoc bodies in greater numbers to deal with matters such as the relief of destitution, the repair of stretches of road, paving, lighting and street cleansing.

The Reform Act 1832 widened the parliamentary franchise, leading to pressure for the re-organisation of local government. This was achieved largely by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 and the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 which provided in the large towns for the election of councillors for a period of three years and for the election by the councillors of aldermen who would serve for a period of six years. During the period 1830-5 the Justices of the Peace were deprived of a number of functions.

Also during this period, the establishment of local boards of health, highway boards, burial boards, school boards and school attendance committees produced a confusion of ad hoc authorities. In 1884, the Parliamentary franchise in the counties was extended to householders. This paved the way for the Local Government Act of 1888 and the creation of County Councils and County Borough Councils, Local Government Act of 1894 created Urban and Rural District Councils, Parish Councils and Parish Meetings.

The Education Act, 1902 abolished school boards and school attendance committees and transferred their functions to County and Borough Councils.

The Local Government Act of 1933 consolidated in one statute the constitution, general powers and duties of local Councils.

Almost forty years later, the Local Government Act of 1972 reformed completely the structure of local government and made important changes to the distribution of local authority functions and other matters such as elections, membership of Councils, financial administration, the admission of the press and public to committee meetings and the appointment of staff. In round figures the Act reduced the number of major local authorities from 1400 to 450. Essentially the Act created a two tier system of local government, i.e. large County Councils and smaller District (sometimes called 'City' or 'Borough') Councils. Parish Councils were largely unaffected.

East Cambridgeshire District Council was therefore created as a result of the 1972, Local Government Act. It replaced the former Ely Urban and Newmarket and Ely Rural District Councils created in 1894. Officially, East Cambridgeshire District Council 'came to life' on 1st April 1974.

Thus, the trend in local government has been for services to be transferred from the parish to larger units of local administration. Particularly since the war, there has been a strong tendency to transfer services from local authorities (mainly the large urban councils) to state or public corporations – the Trunk Road Act of 1946 saw responsibility for the maintenance of trunk roads pass from local Councils to the Electricity

and Gas Boards (which have now been replaced by public companies). Hospitals were transferred to the Minister of Health. The Local Government Act, 1948 removed responsibility for the valuation of property from local authorities to the Board of Inland Revenue. The Water Act of 1973 transferred responsibility for water supply, river pollution, sewerage and sewage disposal to nine Regional Water Authorities (which have now been replaced by public companies and the National Rivers Authority), while the National Health Service Re-organisation Act, 1973 transferred health services to District and Regional Health Authorities.

The most recent trend is, of course, to transfer services from the public to the private sector by either the selling off of state industries, e.g.. Gas and Telecom or the privatisation of local authority services.

A further reform was the introduction of Council Tax, to take the place of the Community Charge system, which has proved more manageable to administer than the previous system.

In July 1998, the government issued a White Paper “Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People”, which set out the government’s proposals for modernising local authorities.

The White Paper dealt with several issues, but in terms of the political process it put forward three specific options for modernisation which were based on the separation of the executive and scrutiny roles.

The three options were:

- A directly elected mayor with cabinet
- A leader with a cabinet
- A directly elected may and council manager

When the White Paper became a Bill and was proceeding through the “reading” stages in the House of Lords, a Liberal Democrat peer put forward an amendment to the Bill, which was accepted. The amendment was to provide Councils with a population of less than 85,000 a “fourth option” which was to be able to retain a streamlined committee structure.

This was embodied in the Local Government Act 2000 which came into force on 28th July of that year.

In addition to the above options, all local authorities are required to have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee and must establish a Standards Committee.

All local authorities had to adopt a Code of Conduct based on the mandatory provisions set out in the government's Model Code of Conduct by 5th May 2002. A revised Model Code of Conduct was produced by Central Government and adopted by the Council in May 2002. All Members (including voting co-opted Members) are required to sign up to the code within two months of becoming a councillor or its adoption by Council.

A constitution must also be adopted by all local authorities. This sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which need to be followed to ensure that the Council is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

5.2 Local Government Review

A review of local government was undertaken by the Local Government Commission which was set up in 1992.

As a result, in 1995 Peterborough split from Cambridgeshire and became a unitary authority but the remainder of Cambridgeshire remained unchanged. In other words both Cambridgeshire County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council were retained, along with the other district councils in Cambridgeshire of Fenland, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City.

5.3 Periodic Electoral Review

In 1996 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) started its programme of reviewing the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. It is an independent body set up by Parliament and makes recommendations to the electoral Commission.

The aim of the Commission is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances.

The Commission can make recommendations on the number of councillors who can serve on a Council, the number of boundaries and the names of wards. Recommendations can also be made on changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils within a local authority's area.

East Cambridgeshire's electoral arrangements were reviewed in 2002/03 in time for the 2003 district and parish elections. The total number of district councillors was increased from 37 to 39.

There were a number of changes to the boundaries of district wards and the combinations of parishes included in wards, Littleport, Soham and Woodditton parishes were also warded and these changes were reflected in the district ward boundaries.

Ely was re-warded due to its population growth and increased from 3 to 4 wards, gaining an additional 2 councillors.

Haddenham and Ely north became 3 member wards from previously being 2 member wards, due to re-working of the boundaries.

The Council in April 2014 agreed to submit a request to the LGBCE to undertake an Electoral Review with a view to reducing the Council size to a maximum of 27 councillors to be effective for the May 2019 elections. The LGBCE conducted the review which has resulted in the reduction from 39 to 28 Councillors and significant changes in Wards to take effect from the Elections in 2019.

5.4 Local Government Services

As has already been stated, the activities of Councils are largely confined to those specified in law.

Some of the services provided by Councils are obligatory (duty) whilst others are optional (power) e.g. a District Council **must** arrange for the collection of refuse; it **may** build houses and sports halls or give grants.

A brief outline of the main functions of local government is shown overleaf. A number of functions can be exercised concurrently by County and District Councils.

Combined Authority

- Local Transport – Local Transport Plan for Roads and Bus Services
- Strategic Housing Investment
- Adult Learning and Skills
- Economic Development & Growth
- Local Enterprise Partnership Transfer & Creation of Business Board
- Public Sector Reform

County Councils

- Libraries
- Registration Service (Births, Deaths, Marriages)
- Consumer Protection
- Education
- Highways (subject to claim for agency arrangements by District Councils) including highways, lighting, traffic, on street car parking and transport planning
- Refuse Disposal
- Small-holdings / Farms Estates
- Adult Care Services
- Children's Services

Some County Council functions have been or are in the process of being transferred to the Combined Authority, further details of which are shown overleaf.

District Councils

- Building Control
- Car Parking off street
- Economic Development
- Elections and Electoral Services
- Emergency Planning
- Environmental Services
- Housing including homelessness
- Human Resources and Facilities
- Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Land Charges
- Leisure and Community Services
- Markets, Town Centres and Tourism
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Planning Services
- Public toilets
- Recycling
- Refuse collection/Street cleaning
- Revenue and Benefits
- Tourism

Some District Councils maintain a housing stock. This is not the case within East Cambridgeshire as the housing stock was transferred to Hereward Housing Association (now Sanctuary Hereward) in 1993.

Parish Councils

The duties and powers of Parish Councils include those relating to:-

- Cemeteries, cremation and burial grounds (concurrent with District Councils)
- CCTV (where applicable)
- Clocks
- Commons and village greens
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106
- Ponds, ditches, footpaths, and footway lighting
- Provision and administration of allotments

- Receiving of accounts of parochial charities
- Statutory right to be consulted on applications for planning permission
- Various aspects of recreation and open spaces
- Village halls

Police and Fire

There are separate police and fire authorities for the county of Cambridgeshire, including Peterborough. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire, including Peterborough, is directly elected every 4 years.

6. Questions and Answers

Q. What is East Cambridgeshire District Council and how does it relate to other councils in Cambridgeshire?

A. East Cambridgeshire is one of five district councils within Cambridgeshire (see Appendix 7). The county and the districts operate under separate, independently-elected councils and have their own separate responsibilities. There is a separate Unitary Authority with responsibility for all functions for the Peterborough City Area.

Q. What services are East Cambridgeshire District Council responsible for?

A. See 5.4 Local Government Services.

Q. Who may stand for election to East Cambridgeshire District Council?

A. Anyone who matches the following criteria can stand for election:

- Must be a British, Commonwealth, European Union state or Republic of Ireland citizen AND
- Must be 18 or over AND
- Must be a local elector OR
- Must live or work in the district of East Cambridgeshire

But they must NOT:

- Be an employee of the Council or a company controlled by the Council
- Be employed by another council in a 'politically restricted' post
- Have been sentenced to prison for three months or more within the previous five years
- Have been declared bankrupt
- Be disqualified for some other reason

Q. Do councillors get paid?

A. Councillors are not paid a salary. However, they do get allowances for being a Councillor (see 3.8 Allowances Scheme). These fall under the following categories:

Basic Allowance

Basic Allowance is paid to each councillor each year. This is intended to recognise the time devoted by councillors to work at the Council and in their wards. It is also meant to cover incidental costs.

Special Responsibility Allowances

This allowance is paid to councillors who hold particular positions of responsibility within the Council e.g. Chairmen of Committees.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

Councillors may claim travelling allowances for “approved duties”, such as attending committee meetings. In addition East Cambridgeshire District Council pay crèche and childcare/dependent carers allowances.

Q. What is the workload of a councillor?

A. There is no single answer. In addition to meetings of “full Council” (when all councillors meet) there are a number of committees, sub-committees, working parties and consultation groups. The number of meetings of each varies. The workload will vary according to the committees you are appointed to.

All councillors receive a copy of the agenda for each meeting they are a member of. Councillors need to spend time reading reports and becoming familiar with the issues that they deal with so that they can take informed decisions. Some councillors take on extra responsibilities such as, for example, chairing a committee or working party or Service Delivery Champion and this, too, means a heavier workload.

In addition, many councillors attend meetings of other organisations as representatives of the Council. Listening and supporting local constituents is also a very important part of being an elected Councillor as part of their community leadership role.

Q. What standards of conduct are expected of councillors?

A. Members of local authorities are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct. As part of this they must declare relevant pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interests. You can get further information on the Code of Conduct from the Council's Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services on 01353 665555.

Q. What help is there for councillors?

A. After each election, the Council organises an induction and training programme for new councillors to help them become familiar with the functions of the authority and with their role as councillors. Councillors serving on the Planning and Licensing Committees are expected to undertake appropriate training.

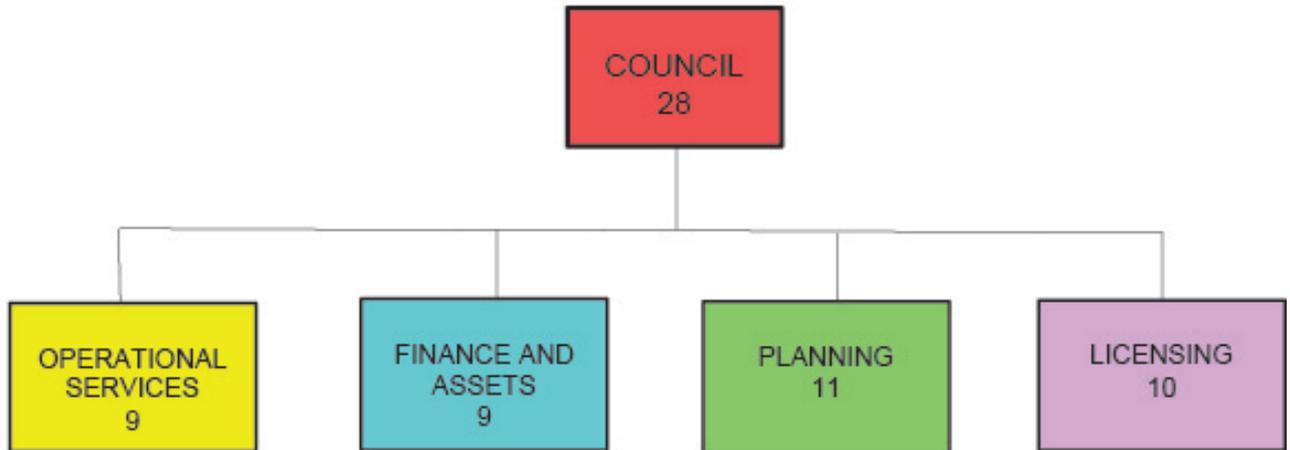
Member seminars are also held throughout the year to brief members on issues affecting the Council.

Councillors can be provided with a computer from the Council to help deal with their duties. The Council's IT department will arrange this and provide ongoing support.

Democratic Services Officers can help with general printing, stationery orders and administrative support and procedural advice.

7. Appendices

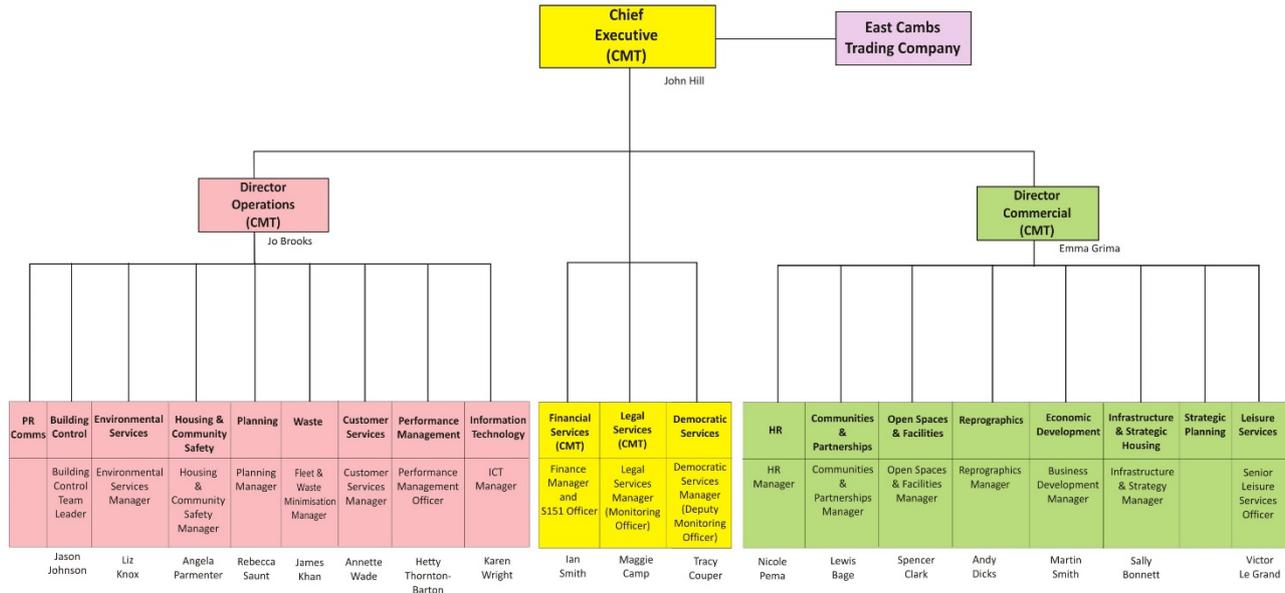
Appendix 1: Committee Structure



In addition, there is a Licensing Sub Committee (5) from the membership of the Licensing Committee.

Appendix 2: East Cambridgeshire District Management Structure [As from November 2018]

DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE



(CMT) - Member of Corporate Management Team

Appendix 3: Parishes in East Cambridgeshire



Appendix 4: District Wards in East Cambridgeshire



Appendix 5: County Electoral Divisions in East Cambridgeshire



Appendix 6: Parliamentary Constituencies in East Cambridgeshire



Appendix 7: District Councils in Cambridgeshire

East Cambridgeshire District Council
The Grange
Nutholt Lane
Ely
Cambridgeshire
CB7 4EE
Tel: (01353) 665555

Cambridge City Council
The Guildhall
Cambridge
CB2 3QJ
Tel: (01223) 457000

Fenland District Council
Fenland Hall
County Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 8NQ
Tel: (01354) 654321

Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN
Tel: (01480) 388388

South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
CB3 6EA
Tel: 08450 450500