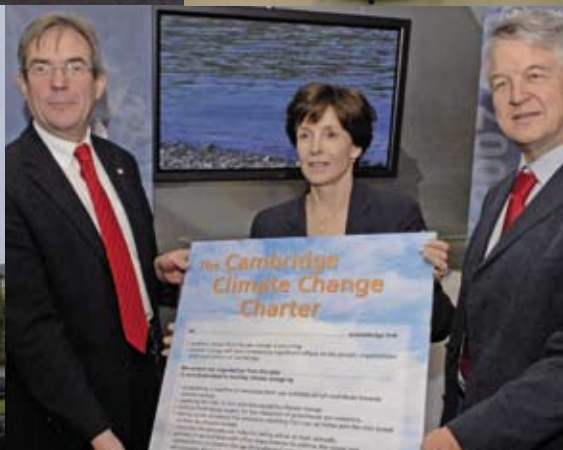


## Annual Report & **Summary** Statement of Accounts



for the year ending 31st March 2008

# Summary

This document is available on our website at [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)

# Annual Report

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## Who we are and what we do

Cambridge City Council is one of five district councils which, together with Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, provide services to the people of Cambridgeshire.

The City Council serves a population of 120,000 residents in an almost entirely urban area. As part of the 'London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough' Growth Area, that population is set to increase considerably, however. The City has been set a target for at least 19,000 new homes between 2001 and 2021, based on the Government's announcement in May 2008 of the new Regional Spatial Strategy. These new homes are planned mainly for sites on the southern, north west and eastern fringes of Cambridge. The City Council is working closely with Cambridgeshire Horizons and other local authorities and agencies to ensure a coherent and comprehensive approach to the creation of sustainable communities.

The Council employs around 1,250 full and part-time staff providing a wide range of services for residents, local businesses, commuters and visitors to the City. We work hard to ensure that we provide value for money in all of the services we provide. The main services we deliver include:

- ◆ Keeping the streets and public open spaces clean
- ◆ Championing recycling and emptying refuse and recycling bins
- ◆ Providing a range of leisure facilities including swimming pools and community centres and providing entertainment in parks and in the Corn Exchange
- ◆ Offering planning advice, progressing planning applications and making sure new buildings and alterations are safe
- ◆ Monitoring and enforcing food and drink hygiene standards together with the control of pests, diseases, noise and air pollution
- ◆ Licensing food premises, street traders and entertainment venues
- ◆ Managing council-run car parks
- ◆ Organising elections and managing the electoral register
- ◆ Providing housing advice and support and working with partners to meet peoples housing needs
- ◆ Providing and maintaining over 7,400 council dwellings
- ◆ Processing housing benefit and council tax benefit applications
- ◆ Promoting long-term policies which encourage sustainability

## Council Structure

Cambridge residents elect 42 councillors across 14 wards in the City. The full Council meets formally at least five times a year. Its main function is to approve the Council's most significant policies and its budget framework. In February each year the Council sets the level of Council Tax for the coming financial year.

During the 2007-08 financial year the Liberal Democrats, led by Councillor Ian Nimmo-Smith, were the leading group with 28 councillors.

### The Executive

The Executive comprises the Leader of the Council and six executive councillors. The Leader and each executive councillor has responsibility for a specific portfolio of services. The portfolios are currently:

- ◆ Arts and recreation
- ◆ Climate change and growth
- ◆ Community development and health
- ◆ Customer services and resources
- ◆ Environmental and waste services
- ◆ Housing, and
- ◆ Strategy

These councillors can make decisions individually, usually at a meeting of a scrutiny committee relevant to their executive area. The appropriate scrutiny committee examines and comments on recommendations relating to key decisions before the executive councillor makes the final decision. The Executive also meet once a year to determine the overall budget to be recommended to Council.

### Regulatory Committees

Regulatory Committees make decisions that are not allowed by law to be made by an executive councillor alone. These include civic affairs, licensing, planning and standards.

### Area Committees

Area committees cover four geographical areas – north, south, east and west/central.

Their purpose is to move decision-making out into the community and to make it easier for people to have a say about decisions that affect them locally.

## The Councils Objectives, Performance and Plans

The Council has set itself four key Medium-Term Objectives which determine how we prioritise our resources. These include taking steps to reduce the carbon footprint of the City, increasing our recycling rate, making sure that people have a positive experience in their dealings with the City Council, doing what we can to improve the health and safety of people in the City, ensuring that the City and its neighbourhoods thrive and that the growth of the City does not happen to the detriment of the quality of life of its residents.

So how are we performing against each of these objectives, what have we achieved and what are our plans for 2008/09?

1

**To promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and sub-region.**

During 2007/08 we:

- ◆ Increased overall recycling rates in Cambridge once again from 29.5% in 2004/05, 35.2% in 2005/06, and 40% in 2006/07 up to 41.5% in 2007/08.
- ◆ Achieved our target to improve the energy efficiency of Local Authority owned dwellings.

- ◆ Led the development of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter. The charter was launched in October 2007 at the British Antarctic Survey with the involvement of over 70 leaders from schools, universities, businesses, community groups and the public sector.



- ◆ Launched the new rechargeable electric "Mega" van, the first truly green council vehicle to operate within the city centre.
- ◆ Fitted energy saving bulbs to all lighting on stairways and communal passages in the Council's own housing stock.

- ◆ Expanded our recycling services to include a further 63 sites, including more flats and colleges.
- ◆ Established recycling facilities for dry-cell batteries and Tetra-paks



Our plans for 2008/09 include:

- ◆ Ensuring that new developments of more than 10 houses or 1,000 square metres provide at least 10% of their energy requirements from renewable energy sources where this is possible.
- ◆ Continuing to investigate different types of renewable energy technologies, including a trial with a wind turbine, to see if they could be used in the Council's housing stock.
- ◆ Continuing with works to improve the standard of the Council's housing stock, including improving insulation and energy efficiency, treating problem cold and damp rooms and renewing old bathrooms, kitchens and boilers.
- ◆ Advising elderly and low-income residents about how to make their homes more energy efficient, and offering grants and loans towards improved insulation, efficient boilers and central heating.
- ◆ Exploring options for recycling litter collected in the streets.
- ◆ Encouraging bus companies to provide better bus services in the city on Sundays.
- ◆ Extending the car club into further locations and introducing low carbon vehicles

## 2

**To ensure that residents and other service users have an entirely positive experience of dealing with the Council**

During 2007/08 we:

- ◆ Reduced the average time taken to re-let local authority housing by 7.8 days compared to 2006/07.
- ◆ Saw a 24% drop in the number of complaints sent to the Council compared to 2006/07.
- ◆ Exceeded our targets for collection of Council Tax and Business Rates, achieving 97.5% and 99.7% respectively.

- ◆ Reached our 2009/10 target for representation of disabled staff within the top 5% of earners at the Council.
- ◆ Improved our ranking in the Stonewall Index, rising to 16<sup>th</sup> place for our work, as an employer, in the field of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans-sexual (LGBT) issues. This makes us the highest placed district council in the country.
- ◆ Set up a forum of Residents Associations to improve residents' understanding of the planning process and a new forum for planning and construction professionals who work with us in the planning process.
- ◆ Helped the police to implement neighbourhood policing in the City hosted through the Council's area committees.
- ◆ Launched 'Home-Link', a lettings Scheme which allows those wanting subsidised public housing to make choices on the basis of much better information.



- ◆ Continued the development of the Customer Service Centre located at Mandela House ready for the opening in April 2008.

#### Our plans for 2008/09 include:

- ◆ Opening the new Customer Service Centre at Mandela House and providing, in phases, improved access to council services by phone and in person.
- ◆ Enabling all planning application documents and drawings to be viewed and commented upon on-line.
- ◆ Progressing the development of a new Visitor Centre for Cambridge.
- ◆ Relaunching the Neighbourhood Links programme of volunteers who will work with council officers to agree priorities for cleaning and maintaining streets and open spaces.
- ◆ Encouraging people with learning disabilities to become involved in politics and to vote by working with the 'Promote the Vote' project.
- ◆ Consulting local people on how Jesus Green should be used and improved as a local facility without adversely affecting its unique character.
- ◆ Developing our services to the homeless by promoting 'having something meaningful to do' as an important way of helping people to have greater control over their lives.

### 3 To maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods

During 2007/08 we:

- ◆ Saw a 19.5% drop in the number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 households in the City.
- ◆ Saw a 28% increase in the number of school pupils visiting museums and galleries in the City.
- ◆ Provided a new bus for the DEC youth project.
- ◆ Won a £200,000 Big Lottery bid for funding of a 3-year programme of children's play projects.
- ◆ Provided Safer City grants to schemes that encourage young people to take part in sport and divert them from involvement in anti-social behaviour.
- ◆ Refurbished Histon Road recreation ground and the outdoor learner pool at Sheep's Green.



- ◆ Conducted a successful experiment on restricting verge parking in Perne Road and Mowbray Road.
- ◆ Introduced a car club in four locations in the City: Queen Anne Terrace and Park Street car parks, Adam and Eve Street and Great Eastern Street.
- ◆ Launched a cycle-shopping-trailer scheme in conjunction with Waitrose to encourage people to cycle to the store and take their shopping home safely.

Our plans for 2008/09 include:

- ◆ Using the Big Lottery award to provide Urban Adventure play opportunities, including a Playboat to enable children to experience play activities on or near the river.
- ◆ Working with partners to provide safe activities and meeting places for teenagers.



- ◆ Replacing the Astroturf at Abbey Pool and improving the swimming pool changing facilities.
- ◆ Refurbishing the children's play area in Thorpe Way installing a new multiple use games area and BMX track and installing a multiple use games area at Nightingale Avenue.
- ◆ Working with partner organisations and community links to reduce child obesity in the city.
- ◆ Supporting projects in the city that educate people about the safe and appropriate use of alcohol.

## 4

**To lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car**

During 2007/08 we:

- ◆ Adopted an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, requiring 40% affordable housing and a new approach to placing socially rented homes alongside market homes in new developments.
- ◆ Achieved government endorsement of the Cambridge East Area Action Plan, which will result in the development 12,000 new homes.
- ◆ Adopted a Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document that sets out high standards for developers including things such as sustainable urban drainage, air quality and waste and recycling provision.
- ◆ Gave outline planning permission to developers, with County and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, for the development of Trumpington Meadows.
- ◆ Successfully steered the massive rebuilding of the shopping areas in the historic city centre, including the Grand Arcade and Christ's Lane developments.



Our plans for 2008/09 include:

- ◆ Adopting and promoting a Quality Charter for Growth in the Cambridge area that sets out a joint vision for the quality of the built environment in the area.
- ◆ Launching a new website that sets out clearly the growth plans for the City.
- ◆ Preparing a high quality residential development at Council owned land at Clay Farm.
- ◆ Working with the County Council to achieve well-designed and sustainable new schools in the new developments.
- ◆ Adopting a new Planning Obligation Strategy that builds on our success in negotiating strong S106 contributions from the new developments.
- ◆ Preparing the master plan for Cambridge East with the developer.
- ◆ Working to influence the development of the County Council's transport plans through the Joint Transport Forum.
- ◆ Reviewing local cycling policies with cycling groups with a view to producing and promoting a code of conduct for cyclists.

## How do we compare?

Information that enables us to compare our performance against that of other district councils is not yet available for 2007-08.

However, in the three years to 31 March 2007 the City Council improved its performance against 73% of the performance indicators against which our performance is measured by Government and the Audit Commission. This ranked us at 17<sup>th</sup> out of 288 authorities.

In 2006-07 performance against 32% of our indicators was at the level of the best 25% of district councils in the country.

Waste minimisation and recycling is a priority for the Council and this is a service area where we are performing well compared with other district councils.

Indicator	Our performance in 2006-07	Bottom 25%	Median	Top 25%	Our performance in 2007-08
Kg of household waste collected pre head	374.5	445.0	411.3	381.9	<b>385.0</b>
Recycling and composting rate (%)	39.63	24.43	29.86	36.96	<b>41.52</b>

We are also performing well on the time it takes us to process housing benefit claims and the collection of business rates.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Our performance in 2006-07</b>	<b>Bottom 25%</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Top 25%</b>	<b>Our performance in 2007-08</b>
Average time taken to process new claims (days)	24	34	29	25	<b>22</b>
Average time taken to process change of circumstances (days)	8	16	11	8	<b>8</b>
Percentage of Business Rates collected	99.6	98.44	98.97	99.3	<b>99.7</b>

Areas where we are performing less well include the time we take to process planning applications and the satisfaction of planning applicants with the planning service. The considerable demands of the growth of the City on our planning resources mean that improving our performance will be a significant challenge in the medium term and achieving stability at current levels of performance may be a more realistic aim.

## What do residents say about our services?

In the autumn of 2007 the Council surveyed 1,100 citizens to discover their views about Council services and issues facing the city. A separate sample of 200 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) citizens were asked the same questions so that their views could be compared with those of the wider community and any differences identified.

Survey respondents told us that they thought the most important services the council provided were:

- ◆ Recycling (99%)
- ◆ Refuse (99%)
- ◆ Street-cleaning (99%)
- ◆ Hygiene in restaurants and food shops (96%)
- ◆ Parks and open spaces (95%)

and that the services they were most satisfied with were:

- ◆ Recycling (83%)
- ◆ Refuse Collection (80%)
- ◆ Parks and open spaces (80%)

Lowest levels of satisfaction were with

- ◆ Council Housing waiting list (22%)
- ◆ Private sector housing advice (23%)
- ◆ Letting small commercial and industrial properties to local businesses (26%)

however, these are all services that were used by relatively few respondents and most did not express a view one way or another.

The most important local issues for respondents were:

- ◆ Traffic problems (44%)

- ◆ Litter/cleanliness/Bins (23%)
- ◆ Crime/Policing (21%)

and this was reflected in the service areas that respondents felt should be improved and be priorities for spending. The main issues for the BME community were the same as those for other citizens.

We also asked respondents about their overall satisfaction with the Council.

65% said that they were 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied with the way the Council runs things with only 13% saying they are dissatisfied. Satisfaction levels amongst the BME community were slightly lower at 59% but only 6% said they were dissatisfied.

When asked about the extent to which they agreed with a number of statements about the Council respondents agreed that we were;

- ◆ Easy to contact (89%)
- ◆ Accessible to the public (85%)
- ◆ Care about the environment (83%)
- ◆ Work in partnership with other organisations (80%)

but only 48% of respondents agreed that we consulted residents before making decisions and 49% that we took residents views into account when making decisions. At a time of considerable growth and change in the City we recognise that consulting people and keeping them informed about the changes that will affect their lives is important and this will be a key area for improvement in 2008-09.

## Climate Change

The Cambridge Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan was approved by Council on 11 September 2008. To contribute towards a reduction in the city's carbon footprint, Cambridge City Council will aim to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from its activities from 60.9 kilos per resident in 2005-06 to 54.2 kilos by 2010-11.

## How to find out more

Further information about the Council's performance and the Council's priorities for 2008-09 is available from our Best Value Performance Plan 2008 which is available on the Council's website at <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk>

# Summary Statement of Accounts

This summary provides an overview of the Council's detailed statement of Accounts for 2007/08.

## Revenue Account

The total cost of running all our services was £118.6 million. Service Income, such as fees and charges, property rents and special grants was £92.0 million. The net cost of £26.6 million is shown in our revenue account. We paid for this net expenditure from the council tax and national taxes (general government grant and our share of business rates.)

The accounting that results in the deficit of £7.1 million reported in the Income and Expenditure Account differs from the basis on which Council Tax is raised and hence, after the appropriate adjustments, there was a net surplus of £1.3 million on the Council's General Fund. This was added to the accumulated surpluses held in the Council's Reserves.

	<b>Net Expenditure</b>
	<b>£ million</b>
Local tax collection	1.4
Cultural & related services	7.6
Environmental services	7.2
Planning & development services	0.1
Transport	(0.1)
Council housing	4.3
Other housing services	3.1
Corporate and democratic services (including elections)	2.9
Past service pensions cost	0.1
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>26.6</b>
Interest & investment income	(4.1)
Housing capital receipts payable to central government	4.1
Net return on pension assets	(0.2)
Other operating expenditure	0.2
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>	<b>26.6</b>
General government grants	(3.3)
Share of national business rates	(10.4)
Council Tax	(5.8)
<b>Net accounting deficit for the year</b>	<b>7.1</b>
Net accounting adjustments	(8.4)
<b>Net general fund surplus for the year</b>	<b>(1.3)</b>

## Balance Sheet

At the end of each financial year, we draw up a balance sheet that presents how much the Council's land and buildings are worth, what is owed to others, what others owe us and how much cash we have.

	<b>Net Assets at 31 March 2008 £ million</b>
Value of land, property, equipment & vehicles	789.0
Cash at bank & cash investments	70.4
Stock	0.4
Money owed to Cambridge City Council	15.8
Money owed by Cambridge City Council	(63.2)
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>812.4</b>
<b>Cambridge City Council's reserves</b>	<b>812.4</b>

The Council's reserves are represented by non-cash reserves of £751.4 million and cash reserves of £61.0 million.

The most significant element of non-cash reserves is the Fixed Asset Adjustment Account, which represents capital resources set aside to meet past expenditure.

## Cash Movements

The Council handled significant amounts of cash during the year.

	<b>2007/08 £ million</b>
Bank overdraft at 1 April 2007	(0.6)
Cash receipts	221.5
Cash payments	(220.6)
Cash at bank 31 March 2008	0.3

## Capital Spending

We also spend money on buying and improving our council housing and other assets. We account for this type of expenditure separately from the day-to-day running costs of services.

	<b>2007/08</b> <b>£ million</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	
Housing Investment programme	13.6
Leisure & community facilities	0.7
Environmental improvements	0.9
Renovation & disabled facilities grants & loans	0.9
City Services vehicles & equipment	0.4
Customer Service Centre	1.5
IT Systems	0.9
Other	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.5</b>
<b>Financed by</b>	
Capital receipts (from sale of council houses and other assets)	6.2
Revenue contributions	12.3
Grants & contributions	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.5</b>

## Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) records income and expenditure arising from the management and maintenance of Council housing.

During 2007/08 the Council was responsible for an average of 7,524 properties.

	<b>2007/08</b> <b>£ million</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Council House Rents	25.6
Other income	3.4
Investment income	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.6</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Repairs & maintenance	5.3
Supervision & management	6.0
Payments to government	9.1
Depreciation and impairment	12.4
Other costs	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.7</b>
<b>Net accounting deficit for the year</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Net accounting adjustments</b>	<b>(4.0)</b>
<b>Net HRA deficit for the year</b>	<b>0.1</b>

The deficit made by the HRA is added previous accumulated surpluses and deficits are 'ring-fenced' by law by use for the HRA. The accumulated surplus on the HRA at 31 March 2008 was £6.6 million.



## Director of Finance's Statement

The Council's Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2007. The figures in this summary were originally compiled having regard to proper accounting practice. To help make this summary easier to understand we have simplified the presentation of some figures.

The full 2007/08 Statement of Accounts has been audited by the Audit Commission who gave an unqualified audit opinion.

A full copy of the Council's 2007/08 audited accounts is available on our website or from:

Head of Accounting Services  
Cambridge City Council  
Lion Yard  
Lion House  
Cambridge  
CB2 3NA

The Council can also produce computer disk or large print copies. We can arrange for a summary in Braille, on tape or in another language, although this will take longer.

**David Horspool CPFA**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Horspool', with a horizontal line underneath.