

# Become a District Councillor



East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

## The role of a Councillor

All councils are led by democratically-elected councillors who set the vision and direction, and represent their local community.

Councillors come from all walks of life. This is very important as it means that a diverse range of local people help to shape and develop the quality and effectiveness of services provided by the council to all residents.

Each councillor has their own reasons for running but the role offers the chance to make a huge difference to the quality of life for people in their local area.

The councillor's role centres around community leadership and engagement. It also requires:

- **developing and reviewing Council policy and strategies**
- **representing the Ward for which they are elected**
- **regulatory, quasi-judicial and statutory duties**

Councillors have to balance the needs and interests of residents, the political party they represent (if any) and the Council.

East Cambridgeshire District Council has 28 District Councillors (Members) each of whom represents a particular Ward in the District.

If you require this leaflet in different formats, for example Braille, large print, audiotape/CD or other languages please contact the Council's main reception on 01353 665555 or email [translate@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:translate@eastcambs.gov.uk)



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## Age and other requirements

To be able to stand for election to the East Cambridgeshire District Council you must be:

- **at least 18 years old**
- **a British subject or citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of another Member state of the European Community who has 'retained rights' or is a qualifying citizen**

You must also fulfil at least one of the following requirements:

- **be a registered local government elector for East Cambridgeshire**
- **have lived in the District for the whole twelve months before your nomination**
- **have had your main (or only) place of work in the District during the whole 12 months before your nomination**
- **have occupied, as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the District during the whole twelve months before your nomination**

## Political party or independent

Once you've decided to stand as a councillor there are two main routes:

- **stand for one of the political parties/groups**
- **stand as an independent candidate**

If you want to represent a political party, then get involved with your party locally as soon as possible. They will advise on what is involved and ultimately select candidates.

If you're thinking of standing as an independent candidate, you will need to be aware of issues in your local area and what your local council is doing about them.

The District Council welcomes the public to attend its meetings. Why not come along to a meeting soon? Visit our website [www.eastcambs.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings-search](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings-search) for details of when meetings are due to take place. The Council also livestreams many of its meetings so you can view them online via the link on each meeting's webpage.



## Nomination

Whether you've been selected by a party or are standing as an independent candidate, you must make sure that you are officially nominated.

This means getting two people to sign your nomination papers. They must both be registered electors in the Ward where you wish to stand.

The next District Council election will take place in May 2027.

More information about nominations, election expenses or any other aspects of the election can be obtained from your political party office, from existing councillors, or from the Council's Electoral Services Team at [elections@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:elections@eastcambs.gov.uk) or telephone on 01353 665555.

## East Cambridgeshire District Council

The District Council provides a range of important services to the people of East Cambridgeshire. These include:

- **environmental services**
- **housing and community advice service**
- **local planning and building control**
- **car parks**
- **licensing**
- **economic and community development**
- **waste collection and recycling**
- **public toilets**
- **parks and open spaces**
- **emergency planning**

The Council is made up of 28 councillors (Members) who have overall responsibility for the Council's Budget and policy-making.

The Council has a formal Constitution which is a comprehensive document explaining how the Council operates, how decisions are made and what procedures are followed to ensure the Council is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. You can see the full Constitution on the Council's website [www.eastcambs.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/councils-constitution](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/councils-constitution).



The Council has a number of committees:

- **Finance and Assets**
- **Operational Services**
- **Licensing**
- **Planning**
- **Audit**

All councillors are likely to have the opportunity to serve on at least one committee. You will have the opportunity to express your preference but the final allocation of places on each committee is a matter for decision by the full Council.

The officer management structure includes a Chief Executive, five Directors and fifteen Service Lead Officers.

East Cambridgeshire District Council collaborates with many other organisations and appoints councillors to represent it on a range of outside bodies. You will have the opportunity to express your interest in serving on these outside bodies although there is no guarantee that each councillor will be appointed to all of the bodies on which they would like to serve.

## Time commitments

Being a councillor requires commitment and hard work, but the role can be done flexibly around employment, studying, caring, and other voluntary commitments. Although many employers will, within reason, allow some time off for council work, this is something you need to check before making a commitment.

The amount of time you spend on your duties as a Councillor is largely up to you and will depend on the different roles and commitments you take on. As a rough guide, the minimum number of hours is likely to average out to the equivalent of about 1 day a week. But leading Councillors, such as Political Group Leaders, Committee Chairmen and Group Spokespersons, would spend considerably more time than this.

At present, East Cambridgeshire District Council has a mixture of daytime and evening committee meetings. Full Council meetings are held in the evening.

## Pay

Each Councillor receives an annual basic allowance. Councillors with extra responsibility, for example Chairmen/Vice-Chairmen of Committees, Spokespersons and Political Group Leaders receive additional allowances. Councillors are taxed and pay National Insurance on these allowances just like normal employees.

Travelling and other expenses incurred as part of a Councillor's duties, including mileage and some subsistence costs are paid at set levels agreed by the Council.



## Training, equipment and support

East Cambridgeshire District Council offers a comprehensive programme of induction for all new Councillors. This will help you to become familiar with the Council's services, challenges and priorities. There is training for example on planning, licensing, finance, safeguarding, equality and diversity, and the code of conduct. Training is also aimed at developing and supporting councillors' personal skills to enable them to undertake the particular roles they take on most effectively.

The induction programme is designed to provide you with the information and support you will need in a phased way over your first few months in office.

Councillors can be given IT equipment and support as well as business cards and stationery, if required. You will be given a comprehensive list of activities and contacts in your initial period so that you know who to contact about queries received from your constituents.

During a councillor's term in office, Council offers continual Member development opportunities to help with knowledge of council services and to develop personal skills and confidence.

The Council's Democratic Services Team are always available to offer advice and support to all councillors.

## Contact us

If you would prefer to speak with an officer, then don't hesitate to contact Tracy Couper, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer on **(01353) 665555** or via e-mail at **[democratic.services@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@eastcambs.gov.uk)**

Good luck and we hope to welcome you to serve on our council.

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