



ANNUAL IPSWICH HOUSING STRATEGY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2018

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Ipswich Borough Council published its Housing Strategy in November 2017. It was to cover the five year period from 2017 - 2022. The Housing Strategy, via its Action Plan has been closely monitored over the past year; with quarterly review meetings with all Housing Services Managers and a quarterly Steering Group Meeting with the Housing Operational managers and the Head of Service.

The Action Plan has been adjusted every quarter to archive what has been achieved; keep projects moving forward and to document (and thus monitor) new work. The action plan is the living document that supports the overall aims of the Housing Strategy.

The four priority areas of the Housing Strategy are:

- Enabling building of houses of all tenures
- Improving the quality of existing housing; especially private rented

- Meeting the housing needs of all communities and meeting the challenges of an ageing population.
- Prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping.

This report will look at what has been achieved towards these priorities, what the challenges have been and consider the future environment within which Ipswich Borough Council will be operating.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Handford Homes, a housing development company, has been set up to assist with the delivery of new homes within the town.
- Funding for tackling Rough Sleeping has been secured; resulting thus far in 7 additional bed spaces and additional outreach support.
- A Rent Guarantee Scheme has been established and is soon to be launched to assist with securing private rented accommodation.
- The Homeless Reduction Act has been successfully implemented; resulting in extra customers and a new emphasis on single homeless people.
- The current provision of IBC Sheltered Accommodation has been reviewed.
- Access to financial capability resources has been successfully embedded in the work of the Tenancy Support Team.
- The Ipswich Lettings Partnership has been expanded by recruiting a Senior Officer to oversee and steer its development.
- Private Sector tenancies have been used successfully to house homeless households.

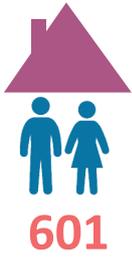
In addition, Ipswich Borough Council's Housing Services:

- Continued to prevent homelessness.
- Continued to work effectively with agencies to support marginalised adults in the town.
- Continued to work effectively with those who experience Domestic Violence.
- Continued to inspect houses in multiple occupation via reactive/proactive inspection programmes.
- Continued to return empty homes back to use via the range of options available.





KEY FACTS



Households prevented or relieved from being homeless in
April 2017 - March 2018

601



1379 advice contacts since the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act in April 2018.
Average of 42 a week



Referrals to IHAG Money Advice Service

Oct - Dec 17

78 referrals
homelessness prevented in **12** cases

Jan - March 18

101 referrals
homelessness prevented in **18** cases

April - June 18

75 referrals
homelessness prevented in **20** cases

July - Sept 18

98 referrals
homelessness prevented in **24** cases



IPSWICH LETTINGS PARTNERSHIP

Lets per quarter

Jul - Sep 2017 **3**
Oct - Dec 2017 **10**
Jan - Mar 2018 **7**
Apr - Jun 2018 **5**
Jul - Sep 2018 **9**



TOTAL £986,500

Funding over three years for tackling homelessness



Apr **17** May **42** Jun **57** Jul **61**



Aug **66** Sep **67** Oct **68**

HMO monthly proactive inspections completed YTD



CHALLENGES

The past 12 months have seen major changes within Housing Services;

- The implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act; which came in to force in April 2018 has resulted in earlier interventions for people threatened with homelessness, new IT systems, additional staff, more information on website and new online referral processes.
- The extension of Mandatory licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation came into force on the 1st October 2018; resulting in new processes and increased work for the Private Sector Housing Team.
- The impact of continued Welfare Reform and the introduction of Universal Credit in Ipswich has also been a challenge for Housing Services.
- Nationally there have been well-documented challenges relating to Funding uncertainty, Economic uncertainty and affordability and difficulties with new housing supply; the effects of which have also been felt on a local level within Ipswich.

THE FUTURE

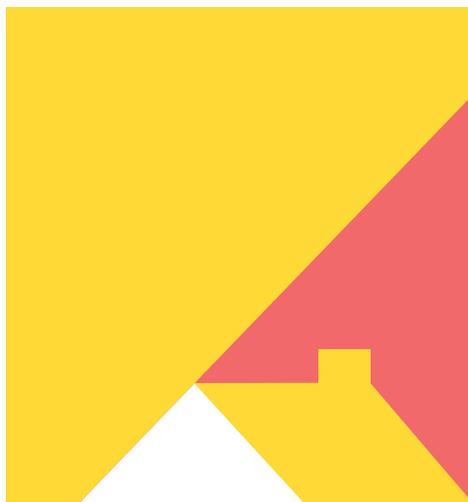
Projects planned for the future include:

- The publication of a separate Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (as required by the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy published in August 2018).
- Additional and more detailed inclusion of Older Persons Housing and Private Sector Housing sections within the existing Housing Strategy.
- Open new temporary accommodation Unit to limit use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households.
- Embed and implement the new Income Management Strategy within Tenancy Services.
- Run a 1-year Housing First pilot scheme with key partners in order to help entrenched rough sleepers in Ipswich.

Ipswich Borough Council's Housing Strategy will continue to be monitored through its robust Action Plan; which is able to respond swiftly to national policy changes and local need.



Caroline Elias-Stephenson
Policy & Strategy Officer
caroline.elias-stephenson@ipswich.gov.uk



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