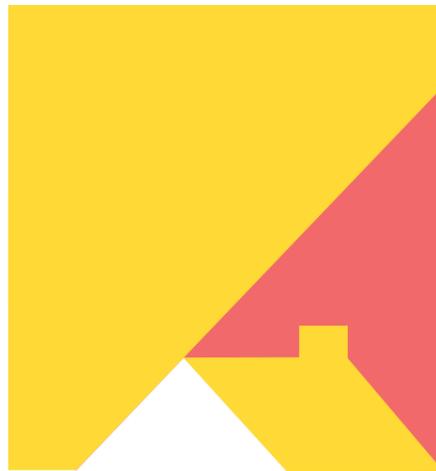




IPSWICH HOUSING STRATEGY 2017 - 2022

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FOREWORD

Housing is of interest and importance to everyone, as we all need a place to live. Having a place to call your own is an important part of creating a sense of belonging for people and helps create communities.

Your Council is delighted to bring this strategy forward, concentrating on four priorities:

- 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 strategy is focussed on creating new homes and we welcome the building of houses for private sale and for rent. Different households have different needs and houses of all shapes and sizes are required.

Maintaining a good standard of property is something we will strive for. Properties need to be in good repair, be well heated and ventilated and provide a safe place to live. We will tackle landlords who do not meet these standards.

In 20 years time, one third of Suffolk's population will be over retirement age. There is a need to start planning for

this growth, which will require a different mix of properties compared with today. There is also the need to provide for people who require support to live as independently as possible and feel part of the community.

Rough sleeping and homelessness is on the increase - a visible sign of austerity.

This strategy will ensure that our obligations to people who have fallen on hard times are met. This strategy sets out the challenges facing housing in Ipswich and sets out how they will be tackled. This strategy will deliver sustainable and affordable housing providing communities where people can live healthier and safer lives.



Councillor Neil MacDonald
Housing portfolio-holder
Ipswich Borough Council

INTRODUCTION

Ipswich Borough Council (IBC) is publishing its new strategy in the midst of an upsurge of new policy and legislation that is seeking to fundamentally alter the current housing scene. The political, social and economic implications of Brexit are unknown and uncertain.

New government initiatives and legislation are changing rapidly and creating new opportunities. We need to be ready to seize the opportunities. However it must be expected that these opportunities will come with some challenges for a local authority that has retained its housing stock and has a focus on affordable social housing.

There is a suite of documents that support this Strategy. The background and context is explained in a report 'Ipswich Housing Report' (Appendix 1) and three further documents 'National Context' (Appendix 2), 'Local Context' (Appendix 3) and 'Links to other Strategies' (Appendix 4). These give both the factual backdrop to Ipswich's housing and the national current climate that we and our partners are faced with.

This Strategy details the Council's Vision for housing in Ipswich over the next five years and what the Council will be doing to try and achieve it. The Strategy will help deliver quality housing fit for the future and contribute to the economic growth of Ipswich and Suffolk.

The purpose of this Strategy is to cover what the Council can either directly do or influence, with an emphasis on affordable housing options and increasing standards in the private rented sector. This Strategy works alongside the Local Plan and other key policies, which addresses areas such as increasing housing demand and the infrastructure required to support housing growth.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council's Housing Strategy is published at a time of change in the housing sector. The years ahead are uncertain and local authorities need to respond to the changes.

Over the five year period some of the challenges the Council faces locally include:

- Delivering truly affordable homes for Ipswich residents in the current economic climate
- The lack of land to build on within IBC boundaries
- Ensuring the infrastructure that is needed to support any new development is in place
- Improving the quality of homes within the private rented sector so that households have decent homes that are of a good standard and fuel poverty is reduced.
- Making the private rented sector more financially accessible and viable for people of all household sizes
- Addressing wider inequalities within the town to make more cohesive communities where people want to live
- Continuing to tackle homelessness against a backdrop of further welfare reform
- The introduction of further welfare reform which will impact Ipswich residents and affect future housing options
- Assessing and addressing the future housing needs of our growing ageing population
- Developing communities that embrace Ipswich's diverse multi-cultural population, that encourage healthy living and are inclusive of Ipswich's vulnerable residents.

The Council's Vision is to:

Promote sustainable communities by raising the standard of existing homes and enabling provision of quality new ones; resulting in suitable, affordable, decent housing for all Ipswich residents that meets their needs and enable them to live longer healthier lives reaching their full potential.

This Strategy has four priorities.

- 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



Promote sustainable communities by raising the standard of existing homes and enabling provision of quality new ones; resulting in suitable, affordable, decent housing for all Ipswich residents that meets their needs and enables them to live longer healthier lives reaching their full potential. Partnership working is central to this vision and will allow us to meet the Vision and aspirations and maximise the outcomes and benefits to the residents of Ipswich

VISION

The Council acknowledges that housing is more than just bricks and mortar. The Council supports independent healthy living in all it does to allow people to reach their full potential.

The Council is committed to working closely with the health and education sectors and voluntary groups to shape a positive future.

A number of key achievements since the last Strategy are highlighted within and the Council will build on these successes in the future through the action plan.

This Strategy:

- Sets out four key priorities for the forthcoming five years.
- Combines homelessness within it rather than having a separate strategy as in previous years.

This Strategy and Action Plan will:

- Strengthen links between housing, health and the economy and other partners. (More details in Appendices 1, 2 and 3)
- Ensure a partnership approach to resource and funding for unmet housing needs.
- Learn from best practice and what has gone before.
- Be reviewed and provide an annual report to ensure the Strategy remains relevant and fit for purpose.

The Council, with stakeholders has identified four key priority areas:

- 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.

ABOUT IPSWICH

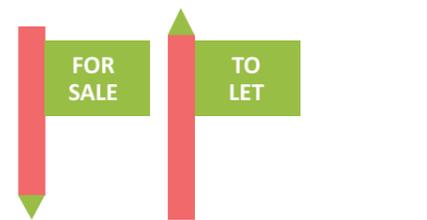
Ipswich is the county town of Suffolk, located on the estuary of the River Orwell. The town is a key employment centre with a University and a growing population. Ipswich currently has a population of 135,600 inhabiting 60,810 homes.



KEY FACTS



Of the 60,810 properties in Ipswich, 7.5% are owned by IBC



Between 2001 and 2011, Ipswich saw a drop in home ownership and rise in private renting. The fall in home ownership is starker in Ipswich than the country as a whole; a drop of 7.75% in Ipswich compared to 4.52% nationally

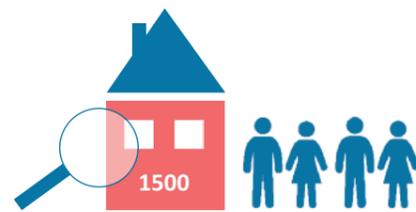


Average house prices in 2016



2016 - 2017 IBC's Private Sector Housing Team assisted bringing 50 long term empty properties back into use

The number of long-term* empty properties in Ipswich decreased by almost 49% since 2010



Households seen in 2015/16 by the Housing Options Team



Households prevented or relieved from being homeless in 2015/16; an increase of almost 20% since 2012/13



Households have been helped by the Ipswich Lettings Partnership



Rough Sleeping: 0.45 per 1000 of the population; this is greater than the rough sleeping rate in London

KEY FACTS



The supply of housing in Ipswich has increased by **3.49%** from 2010 - 2016. There has been an increase of **7,429** households in Ipswich between 2001 - 2011



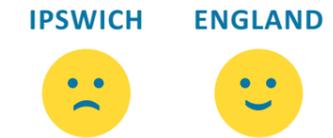
The number of households in Ipswich is projected to increase by a further **6.78%**



496 housing completions in Ipswich in 2015/16; 133 were affordable housing



Properties let in Ipswich through Choice Based Lettings in **2016/17**



Ipswich scores significantly worse than the England average for: Children in low income families, GCSEs achieved, violent crime, long-term unemployment, hospital stays for self-harm, excess winter deaths and under 75 mortality rate for cancer.



The **75 -84** age population in Ipswich is projected to increase **60%** and the **85+** age population in Ipswich is projected to increase **67%**



There are 39 traditional Sheltered Housing Schemes in Ipswich; 15 owned by IBC. There are approximately 400 Housing Related Support Units and 8 Mental Health Supported Housing Schemes in Ipswich

42 pitches



Ipswich has one Local Authority managed site for Gypsy and Travellers

ACHIEVEMENTS

The economic climate and changes in political environment since 2010 have signified a difficult time for housing in the UK. However, examples of recent achievements with partners are listed below (more details in Appendix 1 Ipswich Housing Report):

- Increase in Debt & Money advice available
- The Ipswich Lettings Partnership (ILP)
- Use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to prevent homelessness
- Working with chaotic and complex needs households
- Working with individuals discharged from prison
- Joint funding a mental health social worker to focus on households in need of housing assistance
- Moving temporary accommodation to provide more modern self-contained accommodation.
- Emergency direct access beds provided at Cavendish Lodge
- Use of warrant panel meetings
- Comprehensive customer service to customers
- Partnership working with stakeholders to include
 - MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) attendance
- A service review of Tenancy Services
- Effective Choice based lettings system
- Bringing Empty Homes back into use
- Being energy efficient in IBC stock
- Taking enforcement action on private landlords where necessary
- Use of disabled adaptations facility grant
- All IBC stock meets the Decent Homes Standard and enhanced Ipswich Standard
- A project called 'Improving the private sector' whereby Private Sector Housing (PSH) are to knock on 500 doors per year to offer an advice service.
- Supported the completion of new builds in the town
- In partnership, enabled the provision of learning disabled accommodation
- Launched a build programme to deliver council homes
- IBC Planning has been proactively working to positively determine major planning applications within the statutory time frame

THE CHALLENGES

A Housing workshop was held on 5 July 2016 as part of our consultation process for this strategy;

Stakeholders confirmed key areas of concern for the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping, meeting the needs of communities, vulnerable people and those in need of support, making the best use of and increasing access to existing stock and increasing the supply of new, affordable housing (more detail can be found in Appendix 5 Stakeholder Event)





THE CHALLENGING NATIONAL CONTEXT

There has been significant national reform over the last five years and more is expected in future years (more detail can be found in Appendix 2 National Context).

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced changes; the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy ('bedroom tax'), a capping on benefits, and the introduction of Universal Credit are examples.

National focus continues to be upon home ownership and the Government has released a number of incentive schemes to encourage this, reducing the number of homes built for affordable social rent.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has introduced new measures that will impact the social rental sector including the introduction of fixed term tenancies, the extension of Right to Buy in RSLs and a duty on local authorities regarding the sale of high value vacant council houses.

The Government White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' was published on 7th February. This key housing strategy outlines the Government vision for housing in England throughout the rest of Parliament. The paper is divided into four priorities. Planning for the right homes in the right places; Building homes faster; Diversifying the market; Helping people now.

The Homelessness Reduction Act received royal assent on 27 April and makes changes to the current homelessness legislation contained within Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. It places new duties on Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to secure accommodation for the household. It expands the categories of people who are eligible for assistance. The Bill consists of 13 clauses.

An overview of national changes can be found in (Appendix 2 National Context).

The following page illustrates some of the ways in which the changing national context affects Ipswich and its residents.

CHALLENGES WITHIN IPSWICH



Delivering truly affordable homes including homes for private sale

A lack of land to build upon within IBC boundaries affects the number of homes that can be built and the infrastructure that is needed to support any new development. New development needs to be viable and deliverable while supporting sustainable communities.



Addressing wider inequalities within the town to make more cohesive communities where people want to live



Continuing to tackle homelessness against a backdrop of further welfare reform



The introduction of further welfare reform will impact Ipswich residents and affect future housing options



Improving the quality of homes within the private rented sector so that households have decent homes that are of a good standard and fuel poverty is reduced



Assessing and addressing the future housing needs of our growing ageing population



Making the private rented sector more financially accessible for people of all household sizes



Developing communities that embrace Ipswich's diverse multi-cultural population, that encourage healthy living and are inclusive of Ipswich's vulnerable

OUR PRIORITIES

PRIORITY ONE ENABLING BUILDING OF HOUSES OF ALL TENURES

This chapter of the Strategy covers provision of new homes, summarises some of the key requirements in the emerging Local Plan, and outlines the Council's approach in relation to accelerating supply of affordable housing in Ipswich.

Between 2011 and 2031 the number of households in Ipswich is forecast to grow by 7,799 (DCLG, 2014 based household projections). However, because of concerns that this forecast is substantially based on unusually low levels of inward migration and household formation during recessionary years, the adopted Local Plan sets an interim target of 9,777 new dwellings to be provided over the same period, pending joint work with neighbouring local authorities to identify the objectively assessed housing need. This growth will include households formed by new arrivals to Ipswich, as a result of national and international migration, as well as those formed by natural change (ie births exceeding deaths) and the changing and emerging needs of existing residents.

There are approximately 60,810 properties in Ipswich. 47,620 of these are in the private sector. 8,040 (sheltered and general needs) are owned by IBC. The remainder are other public sector and private registered providers. 2015/16 saw the completion of 496 homes, the highest number since 2008/9. This figure represents 89% of the 15 year average for Ipswich.

In the context of Ipswich, and the Ipswich Housing Market Area, the gap between Affordable Rent and market rent is smaller than the gap between market rent and entry level home ownership. The gaps for four bedroom accommodation are particularly large. The notable gap

recorded between Affordable Rents and market entry rents for most dwelling sizes indicates that intermediate housing could potentially be useful for a large number of households. The very large gap between market entry rents and market entry purchase in all cases indicates notable potential demand for part-ownership products for households in this gap.

In all areas of the Ipswich Housing Market Area, full-time workers with earnings at the lower quartile or median level would require substantial additional income or a capital sum to deduct from the purchase price to be able to afford a lower quartile property.

As rental and house prices continue to outpace wage increases, the affordability challenge is likely to increase in the coming years.

Under National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which is due to be revised shortly as a result of the Housing White Paper, there is a requirement for Local Authorities to meet their objectively assessed housing need in full. Due to the Council's tightly constrained geographic boundaries it is not possible that this need will be met solely within the borough boundaries and, as such, Ipswich will rely on cooperation with members of the wider Ipswich Housing Market Area (Ipswich Borough, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District and Suffolk Coastal District Councils).

Funding

The Homes & Community Agency's (HCA) Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-2021 has allocated £4.7 billion to help with increasing the supply of new builds across the country; however £4.2 billion of this is targeted towards Shared Ownership at this time.

Affordable Housing

The total annual affordable housing need in Ipswich is identified through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2017 as 239 households per year.

The tenure split identified through the SHMA 2017 for all new housing over the plan period consists of 65.8% market housing, 19.4% Affordable Rented and 14.8% affordable home ownership (of which 5.0% should be Shared Ownership and 9.8% Starter Homes). This reflects the mix of housing that would best address the needs of the local population. The profile set out is a guide to the overall mix of accommodation required in the Borough, although it is acknowledged that the Council may wish to divert away from this profile in particular instances. It should also be noted that the requirement for discount home ownership/Starter Homes is less robustly evidenced than for the other tenures and should therefore be treated with caution.

The overall housing need figures are based on a projected population growth of 20,950 across the planned period by 2031.

WHAT WE WILL DO

In the current climate of austerity politics and deepening budget cuts the Council will need to consider and identify opportunities to secure the finance necessary to increase the supply of affordable and social rented accommodation. These tenures are unlikely to be delivered by the market due to lower profitability and viability issues. Based on viability studies, the affordable housing requirement incorporated into the adopted Ipswich Local Plan is 31% at the Ipswich Garden Suburb, and at least 15% elsewhere in the town.

The Council has set up a Local Authority Trading Company as a vehicle to deliver more new homes. Specialist accommodation, in particular Very Sheltered Housing, is expensive to build and the on-going revenue funding would need to be identified. The previously mentioned review of specialist accommodation will inform future work programmes and create opportunities to work in partnership, particularly with the NHS.

In the future it may be possible for the Council and partners to work together to provide a range of affordable housing options as part of private developments and bringing stalled sites forward.

The Council will continue to optimise the opportunities from future organisational and statutory changes. The Council is planning to produce an updated Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) to ascertain the supply of land which may be available for development in Ipswich. This will inform future opportunities for affordable housing sites.

In efforts to increase access to and the supply of new affordable homes of all tenures the Council aims to:

- Build 1000 homes in a decade
- Ensure the provision of quality accessible private sector homes
- Embrace any opportunities brought about by future organisational and statutory changes

Details are listed in the action plan



Build to rent

In 2012 The Coalition Government launched a review into the barriers to institutional investment in housing: The Montague Review. Following this review a number of measures were put in place; a task force charged with kick starting the sector; guidance for industry and for LAs; access to short term and long term debt finance (The Build to Rent Fund, the Private Rented Sector housing guarantee scheme and the Home Building Fund); amendments to national planning guidance.

The main benefits of build to rent are; boosting supply; quality and choice; economic growth; investment appetite. Following all of these changes the Build to Rent (BTR) market has started to grow. The British Property Federation estimates that 10,400 build to rent homes have been completed in England since 2012.

House building for private sale

The Council will continue to support the Government's message to increase the building of houses for private sale enabling those who aspire to, to become owner occupiers. To do this Council will have an enabling role through its planning department and it's Local Plan.

**PRIORITY TWO
IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EXISTING HOUSING, ESPECIALLY
PRIVATE RENTED**

Building new homes is vital to meeting the needs of Ipswich's growing population. Between 2010 and 2016 new homes only added 3.49% to the total number of dwellings

This Strategy aims to promote the best use of Ipswich's current housing stock, encompassing both social housing and the already existing private rented sector, to ensure quality housing for all. The Council wants to ensure that use of the housing stock is optimised and housing standards continue to improve.

The Council has a role to play in ensuring that existing residents of Ipswich can live settled lives in homes that are well managed, maintained and that people can stay living independently for as long as possible. There is a clear link between poor quality housing and ill health. The Suffolk Housing and Health Charter facilitates the increased integration of housing, health and social services. The Council has a key role to review housing standards to compliment the increasing focus on independence and care in the community. This includes moving towards modern fit for purpose, whole life homes, more energy efficient properties (In 2014 over 9% of households in Ipswich were in fuel poverty), reduced homelessness and more cohesive communities.

The Council, as one of the minority of local authorities which has retained its own housing stock, is the main single provider of housing in Ipswich and is responsible for managing and maintaining these homes and the estates in which they are located.



Ipswich has a large private rented sector, compared to many other parts of the country, which is growing fast.

Whilst the Council has less direct input into managing these properties, people renting privately must be able to live in decent, well-maintained homes which are properly managed.

The Council has a role to enforce and maintain private housing standards to meet legislative duties.

A continuing element of this work is to bring empty homes back into use. A quality private rented sector is good for economic growth and the well-being of residents.

Demand
The Council has over 3,000 households on the Housing Register. 1,323 households are in housing need Bands A-C. There is a mismatch between current demand and supply for council homes, with the biggest undersupply in 1 and 2 bed properties.

639 households (in Bands A-C) are currently in need of one bedroom accommodation. 332 IBC and other Registered Provider one bedroom properties were available in 2016/17. This is a shortfall of 307 properties.

There are currently 186 households who have been referred to the Ipswich Lettings Partnership (ILP) for assistance with securing private rented accommodation.

Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
There continues to be a growth in the number of HMOs in Ipswich, with 800 HMOs currently identified. HMOs need to be licenced when there are at least 5 people and a building of 3 or more storeys. Of these known 800, 78 are required to be licenced .

Moving forward, the HMO criteria may be changed to cover two storey buildings. This would significantly increase HMO licensing activity in Ipswich.

WHAT WE WILL DO

The new Care in the Community model will see a significant shift towards care in the home rather than in institutions or sheltered schemes. The recent Housing Survey also confirmed a strong preference for households to remain in the community as long as possible.

The need for accessible, affordable private rented accommodation has significant benefits including prevention of homelessness and helping people to live healthy independent lives.



The Council aims to:

- Improve access to the private rented sector
- Improve standards in the private rented sector
- Improve standards and use of IBC stock

Details are listed in the action plan.

PRIORITY THREE MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF ALL COMMUNITIES AND THE CHALLENGES OF AN AGEING POPULATION

According to the Public Health England Ipswich District Health Profile the health of the people of Ipswich is varied compared with the England average. About 20% (5,400) of children live in low income families. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average but life expectancy is seven years lower for men in the most deprived areas of Ipswich than in the least deprived areas. Health priorities in Ipswich include ensuring more children and adults are a healthy weight, preventing early deaths from cancer and reducing smoking levels

Indices of Deprivation

Ipswich has seen its 2015 ranking worsen by 12 places since 2010. In 2010, Ipswich was ranked 83rd out of 326 local authorities (1 being the most deprived and 326 being the least). In 2015, the Ipswich ranking had risen to 71st out of 326 local authorities. Ipswich has become more deprived over the 5 year period of time.

The housing needs cover a range of groups and the following paragraphs focus on the key ones.

Mental Health

The work from Suffolk County Council highlights that there are 3000 people with depression and 1000 people with a mental health problem.

There are currently 8 mental health supported Housing Schemes in Ipswich.

Housing Related Support

There are 400 Housing Related Support Units in Ipswich for marginalised adults

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

The Council has a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Team who identify those in need of signposting and support both living within IBC stock and in the private sector.

Ageing Population

Nationally, regionally and locally people are living longer. In Ipswich we are projected to see a 60% increase from 2014 -2039 in those aged 75-84 and a 66.67% increase in those aged 85+. There are an increasing number of older people in homes that may now be too large or less suited to their current need.

There are currently 57 schemes offering older people specialist housing (sheltered, very sheltered and extra care.) in Ipswich. This excludes residential/nursing care. Of these 57 schemes, 52 offer low level support and 5 offer high level support. There are 1748 low level support places and 197 high level support places. There are a total of 1025 residential care places in Ipswich.

Physical Disability

The 2011 Census shows 10,026 household members in Ipswich who state that day to day activities are limited. This is 7.64% of the total population and less than the national average of 7.87% but more than the East of England (6.98%). Figures cover all age brackets. 25.59% of the Ipswich population over 65 state that day to day activities are limited. This is more than the regional picture of 22.27% but broadly in line with the national picture of 25%.

This highlights that advancing age brings with it more health problems and a greater negative impact on our ability to carry out our day to day activities without limitation. The Council currently makes use of available Disabled Facility Grants and makes relevant adaptations to Council stock where required.

Work is currently being undertaken by Suffolk County Council to consider future demand and supply for specialist accommodation. Findings across all age groups so far indicate there are 7000 people in Ipswich suffering from heart/blood pressure problems. This is the number 1 health problem. There are 5000 people with leg/feet issues which could be an indicator of mobility issues.

There are 4000 people with back/neck problems. There are 1000 people with learning disabilities. 1600 people in Ipswich living with dementia.

In the over 75s, the biggest health issue is 1508 people with heart/blood pressure problems. The second highest ranking health issue for over 75s in Ipswich is leg/feet (affecting 1448 people), again, a possible mobility indicator.



Gypsy and Travellers

The most recent Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment for Babergh, Ipswich, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney (May 2017) showed that there were 143 authorised pitches in the study area; on a mixture of private sites and privately managed sites.

The Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment showed that in Ipswich in the five year period 2016-2021 there was a total additional pitch requirement of 13 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. In the twenty year period from 2016 - 2036 Ipswich would need an additional 27 pitches for Gypsy and Travellers; 0 Travelling Showpeople plots and 0 Boat Moorings. The adopted Local Plan identifies a need for 24 permanent pitches by 2031. We will continue to work county wide to consider relevant transit sites.

Domestic Violence

Ipswich has a Women's Aid refuge in the town. The Council in particular work very closely with the refuge and they are included in all consultation work undertaken. The Council works in partnership with Police, social services and Women's Aid. The Council attend the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference in efforts to ensure that a holistic approach is taken to ensuring that victims are supported in every area of their lives.

Young People

It is imperative to find appropriate and suitable options to allow young people to become successfully independent. The Council has an existing protocol with Suffolk County Council to help 16 and 17 year olds who are going to/or have become homeless.



WHAT WE WILL DO

The current offer of the traditional sheltered housing does not always appeal to the existing generation of older people, who are more active than in previous years. The market for retirement homes that would suit this new generation of older people is unclear and underdeveloped nationally. This needs to be addressed to meet the growth in the ageing population.

The new SHMA looks at the needs of the ageing population and the younger population in more detail and will inform any future review.

The Council intends to map the borough wide offer of accommodation for older people to inform future supply.

The Council recognises the need for more specialist supported accommodation and aspires to work with Suffolk County Council to consider the projected demand and options available to supply the appropriate accommodation within the borough.

Moving forward the Council aims for better joint working to identify schemes to promote integration into the community.

The Council will continue to work with relevant agencies to develop a range of accommodation options for Care Leavers and actively work towards becoming a dementia friendly town.

The Council aims to:

- Review accommodation to meet the needs of older people
- Provide suitable accommodation for all, including vulnerable groups

Details are listed in our action plan.

PRIORITY FOUR PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, Housing Act 1996 and the Homeless Act 2002, placed statutory duties on local housing authorities to prevent and tackle homelessness in their areas. Preventing homelessness remains the primary focus of the Council.

The Council's recent emphasis is on preventing homelessness, offering advice and assistance to help people remain in their homes and working with housing providers to increase options available to those threatened with homelessness.

The Council offers support and help to accommodate the 'hidden homeless' who often sofa surf; this group of people are usually not entitled to any statutory duty to accommodate them and can fall between the remit of the different agencies

Homelessness in context:

Nationally the rate of homeless acceptances (where a local authority has a duty to find secure accommodation for a household) has increased in the last four years.

- 2012/13 - 2015/16 - 912 statutory homelessness presentations made to the Council and 633 (69%) of these accepted as homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless.
- In 2015/16 - 161 households accepted as homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless. 11.8% increase since 2014/15 - 144 were accepted.
- 72.9% of all households who made a homeless application accepted in 2015/16; the highest percentage of acceptances in the 12 year period.

In efforts to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping the Council aims to:

- Focus on preventing homelessness
- Continue to provide a good quality service to homeless households

Details are listed in the action plan

Rough Sleeping:

It is difficult to get a precise figure for those rough sleeping because of chaotic nature of this group and this is a sub set of larger pool of sofa surfers, transient and near homeless.

Evidence shows that there are particularly large numbers of rough sleepers in London; In 2016 Ipswich had a rough sleeping rate that was more than London per 1000 households.

Rough sleeping estimates are single night snapshots of the number of people sleeping rough in a local authority area. The latest figures for Ipswich were an informed estimate in November 2016; there were estimated to be 27 people rough sleeping in Ipswich.

- In 2016 Ipswich had a 0.45 rough sleeping rate per 1000 households
- There has been over a 200% increase from 2014 to 2016 in the number of people rough sleeping in Ipswich.

IBC/Suffolk Coastal DCLG Rough sleeper funding bid

To deal with the increasing numbers of rough sleepers IBC has been awarded just over 2 years of funding from DCLG.

Its purpose is to help those new to the streets or at imminent risk of sleeping rough to get the rapid support they need.

With this funding IBC will:

- Reduce the flow of new rough sleepers to the street through more targeted prevention.
- Ensure people have a safe place to stay while working with services to resolve the homelessness crisis.
- Help new rough sleepers off the streets and into independence through more rapid crisis interventions and support to access and sustain move-on accommodation.

Priority Need

In order for the Council to have a duty to provide accommodation for a homeless applicant they must have a 'priority need' as defined in the legislation (under the legislation, certain categories of household, such as families with children and households that include someone who is vulnerable, for example because of pregnancy, old age, or physical or mental disability, have a priority need for accommodation).

Priority need due to dependent children is the largest category every year in the five year period from 2010/11-15/16 and is clearly the area where most households need support.

- 96/161 (60%) of households being accepted in 2015/16 were in priority need due to the household having dependent children.

Causes of homelessness

The main causes of households being homeless in Ipswich are similar with national trends. The long established cause of eviction by parents, other relatives or friends is now the second biggest cause of homelessness with the loss of private rented or tied accommodation as the main cause.

- 56/161 (35%) homeless acceptance in 2015/16 were due to the loss of private rented (or tied) accommodation
- 49/161 (30%) homeless acceptances in 2015/16 were due to parents, relatives or friends no longer willing to accommodate.

WHAT WE WILL DO

The Council continues to work with partners to create a whole system approach to meeting the housing needs of individuals.

Consultation identified a need to strengthen referral pathways to other agencies and in particular for those who suffer from Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Leaving Care, Leaving the Criminal Justice System and NHS discharge.

The Council will continue to expand options available to those who are homeless where there is no duty to offer accommodation. The Council will work in partnership with supported housing providers like the Ipswich Locality Homeless Partnership (ILHP) and private sector landlords in Ipswich to facilitate this.

The Council aims to expand on the existing money advice service to include financial capability for households at risk of homelessness to enable effective budgeting.



ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING SERVICES 2017-2022

This action plan is accurate at the time of publication but will change throughout the five year period. This is the pinnacle of the strategy itself and will evolve and respond throughout the period to reflect local and national change. The Action Plan Highlights:

The Four priorities:

- 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

The nine Aims to meet the above priorities:

- IBC to aspire to build 1000 homes in ten years
- Improving access to the private rented sector
- Improve standards in the private rented sector
- Improve standards and use of IBC stock
- Review of accommodation to meet the needs of older people
- Suitable accommodation for all
- Continue to prevent homelessness
- Continue to provide a good, quality service to homeless households where it has not been possible to prevent homelessness
- Increase meaningful partnership working across all areas of Housing Services

MONITORING & GOVERNANCE

The Strategy will be reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

Monitoring reports will be available annually.

The Action Plan will be monitored monthly within IBC Housing Services.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

A

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Social rented, shared ownership, intermediate housing and starter homes for households who cannot afford to meet their housing needs through the market.

B

BEDROOM TAX

The informal name for the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy; A change to Housing Benefit Entitlement that means a social tenant receives less in housing benefit if they have one or more spare bedrooms.

C

CARE LEAVERS

A person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date.

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

A system that enables applicants for housing to choose from a range of vacant properties.

D

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

A minimum standard that requires a reasonable state of repair, modern facilities and services and thermal efficiency.

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG)

The central government department with responsibility for Local Government, housing, planning and other matters.

DEPOSIT BOND

A written agreement replacing the traditional cash deposit provided by the LA guaranteeing the Deposit value should a claim be made against it.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG)

A means-tested grant that enables the home of disabled homeowners and private tenants to be adapted to meet their needs, with for example, a walk-in shower or stair lift.

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT

An extra payment to help people who claim housing benefit and are struggling to pay the rent

F

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Improving people's ability to manage money well, both day to day and through significant life events, and their ability to handle periods of financial difficulty.

FLEXIBLE TENANCIES

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a power for local authorities to offer “flexible tenancies” to new social tenants after 1 April 2012. Flexible tenancies are secure fixed-term tenancies with a minimum term of two years.

FUEL POVERTY

A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if: they have required fuel costs that are above average and were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

G

GATEWAY TO HOMECHOICE

The choice based lettings service for all social housing in Ipswich.

GATEWAY TO HOMECHOICE: BANDS

Once an application has been assessed the applicant will be placed into one of five bands (Bands A - E), depending on assessed level of housing need. A is the highest need and E is the lowest level of housing need.

GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPERSONS ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT (GTAA)

A study of the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people.

H

HOMELESS ACCEPTANCES Local housing authorities are required to consider housing needs within their area, including the needs of homeless households, to whom local authorities have a statutory duty to provide assistance; such statutorily homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'.

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY (HCA)

The national housing and regeneration agency for England that provides investment for new affordable housing, improving existing social housing and regenerating land.

HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

A house occupied by more than two people who are not all members of the same family.

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Non-profit making organisations that provide low-cost "social housing" for people in need of a home. Any trading surplus is used to maintain existing housing and to help finance new homes.

HOUSING OPTIONS TEAM

Offer advice on a wide range of housing issues, including: Homelessness or at risk of being homeless, Private rented accommodation, Landlord and tenant issues, Rent or mortgage arrears, Eviction, Tenancy deposits, Domestic abuse and Relationship or family breakdown.

HOUSING REGISTER

A housing register is for people who are 16 and over, who are interested in being considered for council or housing association properties.

HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT

Help for vulnerable people to find or stay in their own home.

I

INTENTIONALLY HOMELESS

Local Authorities make enquiries to decide if homeless households are intentionally homeless; that is that they consider that the applicant deliberately did or didn't do something that caused them to lose their home. If the local authority decides that a homeless household is intentionally homeless, it only has a duty to provide short-term accommodation, usually for 28 days.

IPSWICH LETTINGS PARTNERSHIP Has been developed by Ipswich Borough Council to increase access to good quality homes in the private sector for anyone living in Ipswich faced with losing their existing accommodation.

IPSWICH LOCALITY HOMELESS PARTNERSHIP (ILHP)

Provides services for and with people who are socially excluded for a whole variety of reasons. They provide advice and guidance about how to find a home, sort out debt and benefits, search for employment and gain access to other services - especially health, drug and drink rehab. They work in partnership with a wide range of other services.

K

KEY WORKER ACCOMMODATION

Key workers are public sector employees who are considered to provide an essential service. There are schemes to assist these people who may find it difficult to buy property in the area where they work.

L

LOAN SHARK

A moneylender who charges extremely high rates of interest, typically under illegal conditions.

LOCAL LETTINGS SCHEME

In exceptional circumstances, the Gateway to Homechoice may decide to let properties on a slightly different basis from normal: in the interests of building a strong and sustainable community or to deal with particular local issues. The set of criteria where this applies is called a “local lettings scheme”.

M

MARGINALISED AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Lack of access to resources, opportunities and rights which leads to relegation to the edge of society. Some marginalised adults may also be vulnerable for a reason and may be unable to take care of or protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

MULTI AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE (MARAC)

A local, multi-agency victim-focused meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic violence and abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

N

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

Is the Government’s overarching planning policy document. It sets out the government's planning priorities for England and outlines an expectation for how the associated policies should be applied.

NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS

People who are subject to immigration control and have no entitlement to welfare benefits, to home office asylum support for asylum seekers or to public housing

O

OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED (OAN)

Establishes the total quantum and mix of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent, either from their own resources or with assistance from the State.

OWNER OCCUPATION

Properties owned outright by the occupier or being bought by the occupier with a mortgage.

PRIORITY NEED

A priority for accommodation given to specified groups of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

All rented property other than that rented from local authorities and housing associations.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING TEAM

Offer advice and support to tenants, homeowners and private landlords to

ensure that homes are safe and healthy environment for everyone.

PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME

A scheme run by Local Authorities to provide longer term temporary accommodation to homeless clients.

R

RIGHT TO BUY

A scheme that helps social tenants in England to buy their home at a discount.

REGISTERED PROVIDER (RP)

Provider of Social Housing registered with the HCA.

REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD (RSL)

Housing Association.

RENT DEPOSIT

A sum of money paid by the tenant to the landlord which the landlord retains as security against loss or damage or rent arrears. Landlords are required to register their deposits in a government approved scheme.

RENT IN ADVANCE

Landlords can require tenants to pay rent in advance.

ROUGH SLEEPING

Defined by the Government as ‘people sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, station).’

S

SECTION 106 PLANNING REQUIREMENT

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) established a legally enforceable mechanism to secure contributions from developers towards the provision of necessary community and social infrastructure. S106 contributions can only be sought for facilities where there is a need that has arisen, at least in part, as a result of the new development.

SHARED OWNERSHIP

A way of buying a share of a property, and paying rent for the remainder, usually to a Housing Association.

SHELTERED HOUSING

Accommodation for sale or rent exclusively to elderly or vulnerable people, often with estate management services, emergency alarm system and warden service.

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

The existence of unequal opportunities and rewards for different social positions or statuses within a group or society.

SOCIAL RENT

Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and Housing Associations.

STAKEHOLDERS

An individuals, groups or organisations with an interest or concern in something.

STARTER HOMES

A new form of Affordable Housing for first time buyers between the ages of 23 and 40. These homes will be sold at no more than 80% of open market value, capped at £450,000 in Greater London and £250,000 across the rest of England.

STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (SHMA)

A study into the local housing market that assesses housing need and demand to inform the development of the Housing Strategy and Local Plan.

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

Homes that are designed to reduce the overall environmental impact during and after construction in such a way that they can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

T

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation provided by the Local authority to homeless households pending enquiries into their homeless application AND to homeless households accepted as homeless.

U

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

A new type of benefit designed to support people who are on a low income or out of work. It will replace six existing benefits and is currently being rolled out across the UK. The new system is based on a single monthly payment, transferred directly into a bank account

W

Welfare Reform Act

Act of Parliament which made changes to the rules concerning a number of benefits offered within the social security system. It was enacted by Parliament on 8 March 2012.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE:

- 1 Enabling building of houses of all tenures
- 2 Improving the quality of existing housing, especially private rented
- 3 Meeting the housing needs of all communities and meeting the challenges of an ageing population
- 4 Prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping

ACTIONS TO DELIVER TARGET:	SERVICE AREA OF IBC:
ENABLING BUILDING OF HOUSES OF ALL TENURES: IBC to aspire to build 1000 homes in 10 years:	
1 Set up Local Authority Trading Company to provide a range of different tenures in order to cross subsidise the construction of Social Housing.	Council Corporate Management Team
2 Resource and identify external funding to enable the increase in supply of affordable new homes.	Housing Advice
IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EXISTING HOUSING, ESPECIALLY PRIVATE RENTED: Improving access to the private rented sector:	
3 Establish a Rent Guarantee Scheme.	Housing Advice
4 Launch a new landlord's forum.	Housing Advice
5 Continue to promote the Ipswich Lettings Partnership amongst private landlords.	Housing Advice
Improve standards in the private rented sector:	
6 Continue to be proactive in inspection and enforcement.	Private Sector Housing
7 Continue to review and implement the Empty Homes Policy.	Private Sector Housing
8 Continue to work with private landlords to improve housing conditions.	Private Sector Housing
9 Continue mobile home site inspections and licences.	Private Sector Housing
10 Continue to work with the Fire Service in carrying out inspections within mixed residential/commercial premises.	Private Sector Housing
11 Continue to inspect/improve the private rented sector by ensuring smoke & carbon monoxide alarms are fitted.	Private Sector Housing
Improve standards and use of IBC stock:	
12 Invest in our stock and maintain the Ipswich Standard.	Maintenance & Contracts
13 Allocate adapted stock to those most in need.	Housing Advice

ACTIONS TO DELIVER TARGET:	SERVICE AREA OF IBC:
14 Explore incentives to encourage IBC tenants under occupying properties to move to more suitable accommodation.	Policy and Strategy
15 Implement the introduction of flexible tenancies within the national (yet to be published) timescales.	Policy and Strategy & Tenancy Services
MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF ALL COMMUNITIES AND MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF AN AGING POPULATION: Review of accommodation to meet the needs of older people:	
16 Mapping of borough-wide accommodation for older people in partnership with external stakeholders.	Policy and Strategy
17 Undertake comprehensive review of sheltered housing in Ipswich.	Policy and Strategy
18 Review of IBC's Sheltered Accommodation	Policy and Strategy & Tenancy Services
Suitable accommodation for all:	
19 Continue to build wheelchair standard accommodation on new council house schemes.	Building and Design, Housing Advice, Tenancy Services
20 Review of joint working with mental health services.	Housing Advice & Tenancy Services
21 Initiate joint working with Learning disabilities team to identify schemes to promote integration into the community.	Housing Advice & Tenancy Services
22 The Anti Social Behaviour Team to continue to identify and manage vulnerable people in need of support.	Tenancy Services
23 Work towards becoming a dementia friendly town.	Housing Advice
24 Continue to adapt both Council and Private properties appropriately.	Private Sector Housing and Maintenance & Contracts
25 Continue to work with agencies to support marginalised adults in the town.	Housing Advice
26 Meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.	Policy and Strategy
PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING: Continue to prevent homelessness:	
27 Expand on existing money advice to include financial capability for households at risk of homelessness.	Housing Advice
28 Continue to work effectively with those who experience domestic violence.	Housing Advice & Tenancy Services
29 Proactively work with the successful providers of HRS provision following the tender process to develop meaningful pathways from street living to settled accommodation.	Housing Advice
30 To keep up to date with emerging legislation (especially the Homelessness Reduction Act) and the impact this could have on the work of the Housing Options Team.	Policy & Strategy and Housing Advice

ACTIONS TO DELIVER TARGET:	SERVICE AREA OF IBC:
Continue to provide a good, quality service to homeless households where it has not been possible to prevent homelessness:	
31 Housing Options staff to continue to prioritise decision making on statutory homelessness applications.	Housing Advice
32 To continue to provide suitable temporary accommodation that is of good quality to homeless households.	Housing Advice
33 Investigate obtaining private sector tenancies to place statutory homeless households in as permanent accommodation.	Housing Advice
34 To implement the functions contained with the joint IBC/ Suffolk Coastal District Council Rough Sleeping Grant Funding.	Housing Advice
35 Review the current illegal tent encampment process to explore and incorporate a better way of working to access rough sleepers at an early stage	Private Sector Housing and Housing Advice
IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ALL OF THE ABOVE AIMS WE NEED TO INCREASE MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIP WORKING: Increase meaningful partnership working across all areas of Housing Services:	
36 Increase access to and working relationships with the Hospital social work team. Focussing on improving NHS discharge where there is a risk of homelessness.	Housing Advice & Tenancy Services
37 Continue to work collaboratively with partner agencies.	All Housing Services
38 Continue to build upon existing relationships with Adult and Community Services(ACS) and Children and Young Peoples Services (CYPS) at SCC	All Housing Services
39 Housing Policy and Strategy Team to write an annual report updating on Housing Strategy and Action Plan Progress.	Policy and Strategy

CONSULTATION & FEEDBACK

In order to write the Strategy so that it is a cohesive document with a real direction for the future it was necessary to consult with internal and external partners. The consultation commenced with a housing workshop event in 2016.

A further event was held a year later on 19 July 2017 with a 3 week feedback period opened up to all.

A total of four responses were received. The responses/feedback covered the following areas:

The final step was to take the Strategy to a full Council meeting to be agreed prior to being adopted by IBC's Executive committee, this has now taken place.

- Partnership working could be utilised to achieve actions within the Action Plan
- Mis-wording in the draft Strategy

Feedback

The Feedback period ran from 19 July until 8 August 2017. The draft Strategy and Appendices were published on the IBC website and comment was invited. It was also highlighted that specific comment relating to how partnership working could be utilised to achieve the actions within the Action Plan.

- Suggestions for possible re-wording
- A specific response concerning planning and tenure split
- Welcoming the overall vision of the Strategy

Our response

Partnership working discussed at IBC Housing Services Managers Meetings going forward (no amendment to strategy itself).

The highlighting of the incorrect sentence within the draft Strategy will be acted upon and the sentence will be amended.

Monitoring & Governance

The Strategy will be reviewed annually and updated accordingly. Monitoring reports will be available following an annual review.

The Action Plan will be monitored monthly within IBC Housing Services.

