



# IPSWICH HOUSING STRATEGY 2019 - 2024

ANNUAL IPSWICH HOUSING STRATEGY REPORT:  
NOVEMBER 2019

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Ipswich Borough Council's Housing Strategy was revised and updated in 2019 to reflect national and local developments; the requirement for all local authorities to have a separate Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and to incorporate our new strategic approaches to the Private Rented Sector and to older persons housing.

The Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024 comprises of 4 identified priorities:

- Enabling building of houses of all tenures
- Improving access to and the quality of existing housing
- Meeting the housing needs of all communities and meeting the challenges of an ageing population
- Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

The Housing Strategy continues to be underpinned by a comprehensive

Action Plan. The Action Plan is 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.

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

# ACHIEVEMENTS

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In the past 12 months Housing Services at Ipswich Borough Council have:

- Published a separate Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy setting out the Council's vision and action plan for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in Ipswich over the next five years.
- Opened new temporary accommodation in the town to limit the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households.
- Established a Rent Guarantee Scheme through Ipswich Borough Council's Lettings Experience Team (LET) which pays rent directly to landlords for the duration of tenancy and during void periods.
- Launched a Landlord's Forum to develop proactive relationships and work collaboratively with the Private Rented Sector.
- Published a new Asset Management Strategy setting out the framework for developing, repairing, maintaining, refurbishing and replacing Ipswich Borough Council housing properties.
- Revised the Ipswich Standard to ensure properties not only continue to meet statutory/regulatory minimum standards but also offer a quality of accommodation which meets current and future residents' needs and aspirations.

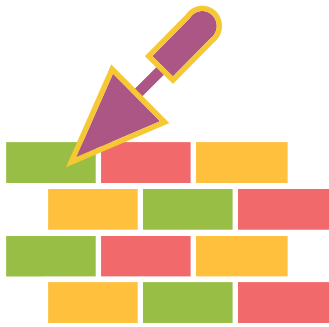








# KEY FACTS



## CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SOCIAL HOUSING

**144** new social housing homes have been constructed towards target of **1000**

A further **77** new homes have been started on site



## EMPTY PROPERTIES

**49** Empty properties bought back in to use in 2018/19



## SERVICE REQUESTS

**436** Service Requests completed by Private Sector Housing in 2018/19



## IMPROVEMENT WORKS

**494** IBC homes were fitted with new A rated boilers in 2018/19



## CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

**628** properties in Ipswich let through Choice Based Lettings in 2018/19

An average of **1316** households waiting in bands A-C for re-housing through Choice Based Lettings



## RIGHT TO BUY

**52** properties sold through the Right to Buy in Ipswich in 2018/19



## IBC STOCK

**7794** properties in IBC Stock (**4136** houses, **2603** flats, **500** bungalows, **555** sheltered)



## CHALLENGES

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The past 12 months have seen major challenges within housing services including but not limited to:

- The continued impact of benefit cuts and the roll out of Universal Credit in Ipswich.
- The stagnation of Local Housing Allowance rates making the Private Rented Sector more difficult for households in receipt of benefits to access and afford.
- The raft of legislative changes within the sphere of Private Sector Housing, that have not been supported by robust guidance.
- The dominance of Brexit within Parliament and the ensuing continued stalling of other wider national policy issues by the Government.
- The uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the impact this has on the economy and funding opportunities.
- The change of Prime Minister resulting in an apparent change of policy in relation to affordable housing.

# THE FUTURE

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Projects planned for the future include:

- Improve access to Housing Services via new service wide IT system 'Housing Online'
- Review and develop IBC Tenant Engagement Strategy
- Further develop the Lettings Experience Team
- Review the Council's housing offer to older households. Initially we are:
  - Seeking views from tenants and stakeholders
  - Developing a joined up housing offer with Partners
  - Undertaking a comprehensive review of IBC Sheltered Housing Schemes

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.





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